

INNOVATION - U1

THE HPFT FINANCE TEAM

HERTFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP UNIVERSITY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

EAST OF ENGLAND, MENTAL HEALTH



FOR INFORMATION ON THE
INNOVATION PROGRAMME
[CLICK HERE](#)

THE INNOVATORS

This innovation was originally the brain-child of Paul Ronald then Deputy DoF and implemented by Sam Garrett and her management accounts team at HPFT, including Matt Hooper, David Flint, Josie Regan, Michelle Printemps and Di Welch. Paul won HFMA Deputy Director of Finance of the Year in 2013, and as a team we won Accounts Team of the Year in the same year.

THE PROBLEM

The Finance Team **need to** be able to report an expected financial position in time for the first Executive Team meeting of the month, rather than waiting for the full month end process to complete, **because otherwise** the Executive Team do not have the information they need in order to make key financial and operational decisions for the Trust, in enough time to make a difference in the same month.

THE CHALLENGE

- **How might we** help the organisation by giving them a Flash position on Working Day 1 **so that** they can make key decisions early in the month?
- **How might we** hone in on the key areas which impact the financial position **so that** we know what to examine?
- **How might we** get the necessary data **so that** the Flash position is as accurate as possible?
- **How might we** learn to estimate realistically **so that** the Flash position is as accurate as possible, without doing the whole job early?
- **How might we** report this **so that** the necessary info is available without a full I&E?

THE INNOVATION

- We decided to summarise the I&E into those areas which a) fluctuate most and b) are largest.
- Doing this for our organisation we split the I&E into Block income, Other income, Pay (all 3 types separated), Secondary Commissioning, other direct non pay, and Overheads. Out of these we focused on block income, pay (all 3 types) and secondary commissioning as being the key areas to work on due to being the areas that make up the majority of the position and which fluctuate most.
- We designed a pro-forma which worked with this level of detail, and a narrative report to go alongside.
- We found data from our Income lead, the health roster system, the placement tracking database, and from the payroll itself, in order to complete the key areas in detail. The other areas were completed based on prior months plus or minus any known material issues.
- We added Covid impact during the Pandemic.
- We added in a review mid month which both examined how accurate we had been the previous month (and any learning) as well as a heads-up for the following month.

THE LESSONS LEARNT

- We wouldn't focus on quite so many areas at once again because this confused the picture a little early on. We wouldn't worry so much again about "getting it right" because sometimes this paralysed us and made us take longer to progress the project.
- We learned to estimate better through trial and error and monitoring trends. We learned to involve our Business Unit finance leads by realising we didn't always have the full picture. We learned to check data that felt wrong by blindly trusting several times and then realising later it was a glitch.

THE OUTPUTS

The tangible product is an excel sheet with the Flash Position on Working Day 1, and a narrative report for the Executive Team on the first Monday of month end process.


THE OUTCOMES

- Firstly as a finance team we understand our position and our data much better than we did, as we have had to examine several areas in depth, early in the month; we have needed to really understand and not just blindly accept that the "data says x" - so month end is more driven by intelligence and understanding, not process driven accrual calculations.
- Secondly as a finance team it has helped us all focus on the bigger picture and not the minutae, what really matters / will make a difference.
- Thirdly for the Exec Team and wider SLT it has been easier for them to make earlier decisions, rather than waiting for a longer formal report mid month say.
- Fourthly also for the Exec and SLT, summarising the I&E aids understanding in non-finance people, because we present what really matters, not everything.



THE QUICK WINS

- Work out what drives the financial position for your organisation- what is the biggest % of your costs and income, where is the volatility.
- Get a small team together to start with, maybe 2 or 3 people max.
- Just try and map it out in excel. Don't worry that it's wrong, just have a go, share it, and refine it.
- When you map it out, say you use Income/Pay/Non pay, put some historical figures in there, say the last 6 months, and your plan, so you have something to compare to, until you have a few months flash data to use


THE REVIEWERS SAID



IT ADDRESSED THE ISSUE OF GETTING HIGH LEVEL FINANCIAL INFORMATION IN A TIMELY MANNER TO EXECUTIVES TO SUPPORT DECISION MAKING.



HELPED CHANGE THE FOCUS OF THE SENIOR FINANCE TEAM TO LOOK AT THE WIDER (AND THEREFORE HOPEFULLY THE STRATEGIC) PICTURE.



CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF MATERIALITY ACROSS THE FINANCE TEAM MEANING THEY WILL FOCUS ON MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO WHAT 'REALLY MATTERS'



WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

If you recognise the problem stated and have implemented your own innovation to overcome it please submit this innovation to the programme and give others more examples to learn from.

SUBMIT INNOVATION

If you recognise the problem stated and would like to know more details about this innovation in particular, we will be hosting showcase and workshop sessions throughout the year, so all interested staff can gain ideas and inspiration from innovators in a manageable one-to-many format.

REGISTER INTEREST

If you have a problem but don't currently know of a solution to it, then please submit it here and in 2022 the Forum intends to crowdsource solutions to problems that don't currently have known innovations.

SUBMIT PROBLEM

If you would like to learn more about about the innovation programme please click below for more details

LEARN MORE

IN SEPTEMBER 2021 THE FORUM LAUNCHED...

- A national Innovation Programme for NHS Finance staff to submit their innovations for peer review. Successful innovations will be published and accessible to all on the One NHS Finance website
- A 'Software Skills For Finance Staff' event series taught by NHS Finance for NHS Finance including MS Excel, PowerBI, SQL etc.
- An 'Art of the Possible' briefing which explains two new technologies AI & Blockchain and discusses the opportunity for NHS Finance
- An Automation Group to review and improve the efficiency of existing national processes and returns

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

- Submit your innovations for peer review
- Sign up to be an innovation peer reviewer
- Read Art of the Possible
- Sign up for Software Skills for Finance
- Register your interest in automation and all things innovative

Innovation Programme



Software Skills



Automation sign up



Be a peer reviewer



Art of the Possible



FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: [FinanceInnovation.nhs.uk](https://financeinnovation.nhs.uk)

Email: finance.innovation@nhs.net

LinkedIn: [One NHS Finance](#)

Twitter: [@OneNHSFinance](#)

ENDORSEMENT DISCLAIMER

The Finance Innovation Forum's Innovation Programme asks NHS Finance peer reviewers whether the "Innovation overcomes, successfully addresses, or solves the problem identified". The programme does not endorse, recommend or provide any assurance of software used or mentioned in any of the published innovations. If you think a published innovation is being used to falsely validate a commercial product or company please contact finance.innovation@nhs.net



One NHS Finance brings together the Future-Focused Finance, National Finance Academy, and the Finance Innovation Forum programmes and networks to make sure that everyone working in NHS Finance has access to skills, knowledge, methods, and opportunities to influence and enhance patient services.



Identifying and developing innovative ways of working and new areas of improvement.