

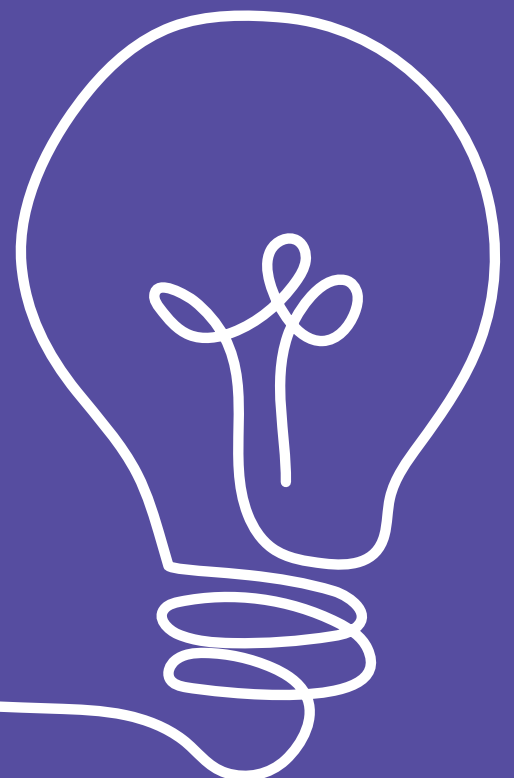
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# **DELIVERING YEAR-END ACCOUNTS TRAINING THROUGH GAMIFIED SIMULATION**

**LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

**NORTH WEST, ACUTE**



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INNOVATION PROGRAMME  
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# THE INNOVATORS

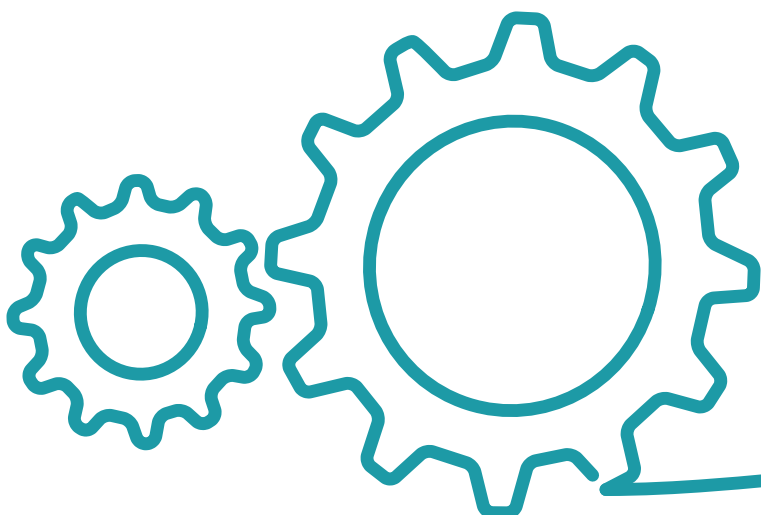
Jennifer Foster, Dawn Gerrard, assistant director of finance and Gayle Wells, skills development manager, from the Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (LUHFT) finance skills development team.

## THE PROBLEM

LUHFT's finance team needed to adapt their delivery method for finance training and awareness to accommodate and future proof a hybrid working approach adopted by the trust since the pandemic. We needed to move away from traditional classroom facilitation and PowerPoint presentations, otherwise, we would not have the opportunity to continue to engage our budget holders and finance staff effectively or provide quality finance training, by relying on traditional face to face classroom approaches which paused during the pandemic.

## THE CHALLENGES

- **How might we maintain effective finance training that incorporates fun and encourages interaction with others? We needed to also ensure it is provided in an engaging way for our colleagues across the organisation and maintains suitability for a post-pandemic environment so that we continue to reach all relevant stakeholders and increase the financial awareness and knowledge by providing virtual training that can be accessed 24/7 via mobile and online technology.**
- **How might we develop something practical and engaging for a new generation so that we give an insight into what is little understood by some of the team and our non-finance colleagues, but an equally important task, which was the annual year-end process?**



# THE INNOVATION

We identified we needed to enhance our finance training offer aiming to continue to support finance and non-finance colleagues across the organisation during and post-pandemic.

We wanted to make our training fun and interactive to engage our stakeholders. We also recognised the need to ensure it was accessible for all, this was especially important because the pandemic had made communication and face to face delivery increasingly challenging across the organisation, which was compounded by the finance department working remotely. The innovation needed to ensure our finance training was delivered remotely, while also being interactive, fun, and engaging to the audience.

Our 2020 audit identified that the preparation of annual statutory accounts was an area of limited understanding within the team. It was perceived as a daunting area for our non-finance colleagues. We, therefore, selected this problem as the pilot innovation for our first topic.

We decided to develop a hybrid of traditional finance training using a gaming app. We created the world's first interactive mobile training game, and the term 'traiming' was born.

This gave us a limited period to design, develop and launch the training app because the 2020/21 year-end process was imminent. We wanted to ensure the training was implemented in time to support our team members remotely through the year-end process, while also educating our non-finance peers on the processes and procedures we carry out as a finance department at year-end, alongside enhancing their understanding of why we include the service areas in the process.

The content was identified by collective discussions within the department and external colleagues. We decided that training materials in the form of a game would provide an interactive and informative way of building knowledge.

Twelve key themes were created, including:

- the auditor

- dates and deliverables
- accounting information
- key accounting principles
- capital and revenue expenditure
- impairments
- receivables and payables
- financial accounts preparation
- balance sheet
- income and expenditure.

The development of the game recognised the challenges of providing wider staff development during a pandemic while staff continued to work remotely.

A team of six key senior people across the department was mobilised in early March 2021. They worked collaboratively to design and develop twelve modules of key principles and steps involved in developing financial statements and following the year-end process requirements.

The team then worked closely with global industry experts who specialise in gaming simulation (global software development company Attensi) to put the plans into reality. The technical support provided by Attensi alongside the knowledge and ideas of the finance department resulted in the creation of the annual accounts game.

The game is an interactive app which creates personalised profiles for staff to conduct their individual training in a fun and protected environment. There is a leader board within the game to promote healthy competition between the users or the game can be completed anonymously. The app can be accessed both online and on smartphones making it easily accessible in all environments.

# THE LESSONS LEARNT

**We learnt that LUFT finance handled not only the significant Covid-19 and merger challenges, but also never lost sight of the importance of effective finance training for all stakeholders by creating alternative methods of training suitable for all, in the virtual world we now work in.**

## THE OUTPUTS

- The tangible product that has come from our innovation is an established finance training app. The app includes leader boards and battle modes to encourage learning and social interaction.
- The app can be expanded and developed with further content for our organisation.
- It can also be shared with peer organisations (including education settings for accountancy students) for them to adapt and implement effective accessible finance training.

## THE OUTCOMES

The benefits the team experienced as a result of the innovation were as follows:

- Established effective training mechanism with unlimited opportunity to be expanded and developed with further topics and content.
- A mobile and fully accessible training function which can be accessed by staff working remotely.
- Support and development provided to finance staff colleagues working remotely during year-end.
- Increased knowledge and confidence within the finance team and wider clinical teams of our annual accounts process leading to a commendation from our external auditors.
- Increased social interaction in times of isolation via battle modes, which encouraged wellbeing while working at home.

## THE QUICK WINS

The training can easily be replicated, as the development and design has already been undertaken.

# THE REVIEWERS SAID

**“FANTASTIC INNOVATION, A NEW WAY OF DELIVERING TRAINING ACROSS THE ORGANISATION WHICH MEETS THE NEED.”**

**“EXACTLY WHAT IS NEEDED TO ENGAGE PEOPLE IN LEARNING THESE DAYS. WITTY AND CAPTURING TRAILER VIDEO AND WELL THOUGHT THROUGH CONTENT.”**

**“THIS IS A GREAT WAY OF USING GAMING TOOLS TO GET THE MESSAGE ABOUT ACCOUNTS ACROSS TO ALL INVOLVED STAFF, IN A FUN WAY.”**



# WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

## SUBMIT INNOVATION

**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.

## REGISTER INTEREST

**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.

## SUBMIT PROBLEM

**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.

## LEARN MORE

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

## 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](mailto:finance.innovation@nhs.net)



## 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: [FinanceInnovation@nhs.uk](mailto:FinanceInnovation@nhs.uk)

LinkedIn: [One NHS Finance](#)

Twitter: [@OneNHSFinance](#)



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.



An NHS Finance platform for the discovery and development of problems, ideas and innovations.