

**NIHR Collaborations for Leadership in Applied
Health Research and Care South West Peninsula (PenCLAHRC)**

Case Study Example of the Value of NIHR CLAHRC Funding

1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017

HEALTH SERVICE MODELLING ASSOCIATE (HSMA) PROGRAMME

PenCLAHRC has developed expertise in the use of operational research modelling to investigate service delivery limitations and challenges, and explore potential solutions ahead of change. Demand from our partners for greater access to modelling and interest in our capacity development programme for OR led to the idea of the Health Service Modelling Associate (HSMA) scheme.

This novel partnership programme was piloted over twelve months in 2016/17. Six employees from NHS Trusts across the region were released one day a week to work, supported by PenCLAHRC researchers, in addressing problems of high priority to their trusts and develop advanced skills in OR modelling. The associates also formed a “learning set” for mutual support.

All the projects undertaken by HSMAs have produced influential findings for their organisations e.g. informing business cases, supporting change programmes, and informing local Sustainability Transformation Plans (STPs). For example, a project undertaken by the Associate based at Devon Partnership Trust has informed the Devon STP on a number of changes that can be made to the Urgent Care Pathway and that will significantly reduce spend on out-of-area beds.

In addition to the training in operational research techniques, the Associates have developed softer skills around engaging stakeholders, structuring problems, and communicating project findings. They are now acting as ambassadors for the use of modelling in their organisations. As part of our collaboration with CLAHRC NT and CLAHRC YH we are now exploring an extension of the HSMA scheme across CLAHRCs.

Please visit the [PenCLAHRC HSMA webpage](#) for further details on the programme and its impact.

CONTRIBUTION OF NIHR CLAHRC

The HSMA programme was developed and delivered by PenCLAHRC through our operational research team, PenCHORD. We provided high quality teaching, mentoring, and support for participants throughout the programme. This included a two-day residential training course, monthly learning-set meetings for both the associates and their mentors, weekly mentoring support, and a final showcase event. We are also offering ongoing support for associates, primarily through a webinar series.

PenCLAHRC is undertaking an evaluation of the programme to better understand what impact the programme has made, why it was able to achieve that impact, and what would enable the next iteration to be even more successful.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

We are working with our NHS partners and local AHSN to repeat the HSMA programme and are supporting Trusts in developing OR capabilities and advanced data analytics. For instance, one Trust has now purchased modelling software and formally included modelling as part of the HSMA's job role.

There is strong national interest in the programme and we are building links with other CLAHRCs across the country to implement similar programmes. We have published an overview of the HSMA programme (["A novel modelling and simulation capacity development initiative for the National Health Service"](#)) and are completing a more comprehensive evaluation.