

# PenCLAHRC Health Service Modelling Associates (HSMA) Programme

A Capacity Building Initiative Developed by PenCHORD (Peninsula Collaboration for Health Operational Research and Development)

## What is it?

The Health Service Modelling Associates (HSMA) Programme seeks to appoint selected individuals working in NHS organisations in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset as associates, who are released for a portion of their time to undertake advanced modelling, simulation and analysis work (“Operational Research”) for their own organisation. HSMA’s will receive ongoing mentoring, support and training from PenCHORD, and will be supported in their own organisation by a nominated individual (“HSMA Workplace Supervisor”) who will facilitate the implementation of the HSMA’s projects, and help to champion their work within the organisation.

## Why are we doing this?

We want to :

1. Work towards a culture in which Operational Research methods are routinely used to support decisions in the NHS
2. Build capacity within the NHS to generate and use evidence from models
3. Increase the potential impact of modelling and simulation projects within the NHS
4. Build towards a collaborative culture within and between NHS organisations, and between NHS and research organisations
5. Evaluate how best to integrate Operational Research methods within the NHS

## What work will HSMA’s undertake?

HSMA’s will work on a modelling project chosen by their own organisation in response to their needs that seeks to provide evidence to inform a decision and / or identify bottlenecks within a system. The specific project will be identified during the application phase (see “How do organisations apply?”). The HSMA will use advanced simulation-building software (Simul8) to build a simulation model of relevant pathways within the system, and use “what if?” analysis to explore the potential impact of different future scenarios. These predictions will then be reported back to the relevant decision-makers within the organisation to help them make a decision.

## How will PenCHORD help?

Each HSMA will be allocated a PenCHORD Mentor at the start of the programme, who is a member of the PenCHORD team with experience building simulation models. The PenCHORD Mentor will provide ongoing responsive support to answer queries, concerns or technical questions arising from the HSMA’s projects. In addition, PenCHORD and Simul8 will provide all HSMA’s with training to use the Simul8 software, along with other bespoke training needs identified throughout the course of the programme.

## What is the time commitment for the role?

HSMA's are expected to be released from their regular role for one day per week (the specific day being mutually agreed by the HSMA's organisation and their PenCHORD Mentor) for a period of 12 months. During this time, the HSMA is expected to exclusively work on their HSMA project, and their PenCHORD Mentor will be available by phone or email to answer any queries they may have.

In addition, HSMA's will be expected to attend a monthly two-hour learning set meeting, facilitated by PenCHORD, in which all HSMA's have an opportunity to meet, discuss their projects and any challenges they've faced, and provide support to each other through the sharing of their experiences building simulation models. This will also provide an opportunity for HSMA's to meet with their PenCHORD Mentor face-to-face. Learning Set meetings will take place in various venues across the region.

Initial Simul8 training will be provided by PenCHORD and Simul8 towards the start of the programme. Attendance by all appointed HSMA's is compulsory, and the training is expected to last 3-5 days.

## What is the role of the HSMA Workplace Supervisor?

Each HSMA will be supported in their role by a nominated HSMA Workplace Supervisor, a relatively senior member of their organisation that will support and provide oversight for the project. Specifically, the Workplace Supervisor will help to ensure that project work undertaken by the HSMA is integrated into the service improvement function of the organisation and communication is maintained with appropriate staff. They will help ensure the HSMA has access to the data and stakeholders needed to undertake the project, and will help with the implementation of the outputs from the project in their organisation where appropriate. Their specific duties may include :

- helping to arrange meetings with stakeholders to map out the system being modelled
- helping to arrange ongoing meetings to discuss progress with key stakeholders
- putting in place plans to implement the results of the project
- identifying and overcoming barriers to implementation of the project
- championing the work of the HSMA (and Operational Research generally) within the organisation.

The Workplace Supervisor will also act as a conduit for feedback on the HSMA's progress, both in terms of feedback *to* the organisation from their PenCHORD Mentor, and *from* the organisation to PenCHORD. In addition, the HSMA Workplace Supervisor will help PenCHORD to assess the impact of the HSMA programme for their organisation at the end of the programme.

## When will the programme begin and for how long will it run?

The initial run of the HSMA programme will serve as a 'pilot', and should be understood in this way. The pilot will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and will run for a period of 12 months. Successful applicants will be expected to attend an event to meet their PenCHORD Mentors on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

## Are there any costs involved?

- Simul8 Corporation will provide Simul8 licences to HSMA's free of charge for the 12 month duration of the programme. After this time, organisations who would like to continue using the software must purchase a licence.

- Training provided by PenCHORD and Simul8 (including the initial Simul8 training) will be provided free of charge. If the HSMA's organisation wishes them to attend any other relevant external training, these costs will be met by the NHS organisation.
- The cost of travel to and from Learning Set meetings, venue hire and refreshments will all be met by PenCLAHRC.

## How many HSMAs will there be for the pilot of the programme?

For the pilot programme, there will be a total of six Health Service Modelling Associates from across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. Due to high demand and limited places, each organisation will be limited to a maximum of one HSMA, and HSMAs will be selected via an application process (see "How do organisations apply?"). Organisations who submit applications for the pilot but are unsuccessful in being allocated a HSMA will be given priority for future iterations of this programme.

## Who can apply?

Due to the focus on pathway modelling during the pilot phase of the programme, it is anticipated that the programme would be most suitable for acute trusts in the region. However, there may be other NHS organisations who have projects that would be suitable for pathway modelling. Therefore any NHS organisation in the NIHR South West CLAHRC area is permitted to submit an application, and applications will be judged on merit. Guidance will be provided to help organisations identify suitable HSMA candidates and projects. HSMA candidates will generally be expected to have completed at least Module 1 and Module 3 of the PenCHORD Training Programme, or complete them prior to starting their role.

## How do organisations apply?

Applications will open on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 and close on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016. Applicants will be told whether or not they were successful by 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015, application packs will be distributed to the PenCHORD Reference Network, as well as key contacts from across NHS organisations in the region (including those contacts identified via discussion of the programme with executive-level contacts in 2015). The application packs will contain an application form, a person specification and guidance on how to complete and submit the application.

Applications will consist of a nominated individual to be the HSMA for the organisation, a nominated individual to be the HSMA Workplace Supervisor for the organisation, and a project specification outlining the proposed project the HSMA would undertake. To help organisations to submit project proposals that are as focused and suitable for modelling as possible, PenCHORD will run their 'Structuring Problems for Modelling' one-day course (Module 3 of the training programme) on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 in Exeter and 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 in Plymouth. Attendance at one of these sessions is compulsory for all applicants unless they have already attended this course. Applicants who have already attended may attend again in order to work on structuring the specific problem associated with their application.

## Will this programme replace the existing capacity building initiatives run by PenCHORD?

No – the PenCHORD Training Programme and PenCHORD Seminar, Showcase and Workshop series will continue to run alongside the HSMA Programme and remain open to everyone. HSMAs will be

invited to present their projects at the PenCHORD Seminar series to help disseminate their work to the local NHS.

### What about publishing the research?

PenCHORD may choose to write up the project work of the HSMA's for submission to peer-reviewed journals. Ideally, this will be co-authored by the HSMA, HSMA Workplace Supervisor and any other relevant project stakeholders. If the NHS organisation states that they wish to remain anonymous in the publication, the work will be authored solely by PenCHORD.

### How do I find out more?

If you have any queries not answered in this document, please contact [penchord@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:penchord@exeter.ac.uk) for further information.