

Summary

Providers of NHS services have increasingly large amounts of data about their patients following the roll-out of patient-level costing (PLICS) across the NHS. The challenge is how to make the most of patient-level cost data to deliver efficiencies and support improvements in patient care.

The Institute briefing *Costing skills in the NHS*¹ noted:

“The implementation and use of PLICS systems, as well as the embedding of the national healthcare costing standards is anticipated to be a challenge for many NHS trusts. In addition, there needs to be a new focus on the engagement of clinicians and operational managers to ensure costing and activity data is used to drive improvements in patient care.

These developments place new and challenging demands on the costing staff within NHS finance teams, where costing has traditionally been a “back room” finance function, with the focus being on the completion of national reference cost collections using average specialty costs.”

Like many other trusts, the small costing team at Stockport has limited capacity to both develop its patient-level costing and mainstream its use across the wider organisation. However, the Stockport approach of formally engaging the wider finance team through training, staff objectives and joint working as ambassadors for PLICS has extended the reach of PLICS across the trust. This has provided extra capacity to both improve the quality of PLICS output and increase the ability of the finance team as a whole to support clinical and operational services.

¹ *Costing skills in the NHS* Healthcare Costing for Value Institute June 2018
<https://www.hfma.org.uk/publications/details/costing-skills-in-the-nhs>