

HFMA AWARDS 2020



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Exemplary leader

The 2020 HFMA Finance Director of the Year **Catherine Phillips** was nominated for her exemplary contribution to NHS finance over the past 12 months, including providing financial leadership for the creation of the Bristol Nightingale Hospital.

The North Bristol NHS Trust director of finance based her approach as finance lead for the Nightingale on a determination to build on local system working, provide opportunities for finance team development and ensure value for money.

The North Bristol trust hosted the Nightingale hospital and Ms Phillips quickly established consensus in the local system that the new hospital's finance team would draw its staff from all nearby NHS organisations. This included providers, the clinical commissioning group and the regional team.

The finance lead post for the Nightingale covered the full remit of director of finance responsibilities. These ranged from governance, budget-setting and management, to ensuring value for money for local decisions, provision of back-office functions and putting in place robust processes for staffing costs from donating organisations.

The latter included validation and reporting

of the cost of donated staff from other bodies, as well as reporting back to employing organisations.

Her nomination noted that a recent internal audit report had no recommendations when reviewing the approval of spend – a significant achievement given the speed and complexity of setting up a hospital with colleagues from several organisations.

Ms Phillips' dedication to ensuring value for money during the Bristol Nightingale project was also highlighted. She oversaw the constant review and negotiation of costs, as well as comparisons of buy versus hire, for example.

Summing up her work on the Nightingale, her nomination said: 'Catherine's approach exemplifies the best of the NHS finance function, enabling the delivery of services while maintaining strong financial governance and driving for best value for the public purse.'

A diligent finance professional, who is always calm and personable, Ms Phillips welcomes challenges, while delivering her

"Catherine's approach exemplifies the best of the NHS finance function, enabling the delivery of services while maintaining strong financial governance"

thoughts constructively and respectfully.

Finance colleagues who worked with her at the Bristol Nightingale said her supportive approach underpinned her skills in building a team.

And although she had many calls on her working day, she took the time to sit with the Nightingale finance team

to discuss issues and look for solutions, while being prepared to face challenges to her proposed way forward.

Even while leading on the Nightingale project, she maintained her finance director responsibilities at North Bristol, ensuring a successful closedown of the 2020/21 financial year-end, with the trust delivering its control total. And with the usual finance regime suspended due to Covid-19, she navigated the trust through the new financial regime.

Setting aside her collaborative work on the Nightingale hospital, Ms Phillips has proved to be a leader across the system. She has worked with finance directors across the South West to produce an overview of the external audit

market. The aim was to develop a region-wide approach for all local NHS bodies.

Taking time to understand the views and concerns of each organisation, she produced recommendations for the way forward on external audit, which were supported by the local finance director community.

She also discussed the proposals with national colleagues to ensure it was aligned to current national thinking and expectations.

The panel of judges hailed Ms Phillips' commitment to system working and leadership. They said: 'We were particularly impressed with Catherine's contribution to the working of the overall system in the South West, as well as her impressive contribution to establishing the Nightingale facility.'

'Her team described her as calm and personable, good in a crisis, and clearly very supportive of new team members. A great leader for all times, as well as Covid times.'

Ms Phillips said the award was a welcome recognition that the teams at North Bristol NHS Trust (as host) and the Nightingale Bristol (from the wider NHS system)

can put aside their organisational roles and pull together – alongside other organisations such as local authorities and the army – to deliver the outcome needed for the population of the South West. This had built long-lasting relationships.

'It was important to lead this project visibly and from the front and I was privileged to work with individuals who all volunteered to work on the Nightingale project. What an amazing team, I couldn't be prouder,' she said.

It was clear that the Nightingales would be scrutinised closely on decision-making and cost, so it was important to ensure good governance and value for money, Ms Phillips added. 'A director of finance can protect their organisation through good governance. This became essential in the Nightingale project, where there was a lot of ambiguity and uncertainty, and you needed to ensure that your decisions were sound in the moment and also future-proofed should the situation evolve or change.' ○



"Good in a crisis, and clearly very supportive of new team members, Catherine is a great leader for all times, as well as Covid times"

Highly commended

Jonathan Webb (pictured top) of West Yorkshire and Harrogate Integrated Care System and Wakefield Clinical Commissioning Group was nominated for his leadership and professionalism in supporting both organisations. The judges said: 'We highly commend Jonathan Webb for his work in the West Yorkshire integrated system, and collaborating in a way that many seek to emulate.'

West Yorkshire and Harrogate became an ICS in April 2019 and Mr Webb became lead finance director shortly after, alongside his CCG role. It is the second largest ICS in England, serving a population of more than 2.6 million across six local areas.

Through the ICS, he has co-ordinated the work of finance directors across the system, leading to six successful capital bids (with a value of around £300m) and the delivery of the system control total in 2019/20 – leading to optimum transformation, provider sustainability and commissioner sustainability funding.

Described as a role model for financial leaders in the NHS, Mr Webb has achieved success since joining Wakefield CCG in 2018. The CCG was facing significant and growing financial challenges and had failed to achieve its recent financial plans. He developed and implemented a financial recovery plan,



delivering a surplus of £3m in 2019/20 – £1m better than plan – and improving the CCG's financial assessment from amber to green. As deputy chief officer, he led the overall improvement of the CCG, which achieved an outstanding rating in 2019/20.

Also shortlisted

Colin McCready of Supply Chain Co-ordination Limited, the management function of NHS Supply Chain, has made a huge impact since joining the organisation in December 2019. He was nominated for his leadership, team-building skills and his professional skills, which he used to effectively deal with the challenges in 2020 while maintaining good results.

NHS Supply Chain has played a key role in the response to Covid-19, and Mr McCready has been vital to that. NHS Supply Chain has faced challenges in ensuring personal protective equipment and intensive care unit supplies are sourced, and funds are available to pay for these consumables. His guidance, leadership and partnership working have ensured his team are focused on the response to the pandemic and motivated to deliver business as usual. He has also ensured that other important pieces of work – such as the online savings portal, which allows trusts to identify potential savings – have continued.



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PRIME

Can-do deputy

It's been quite a year for **Jonny Gamble**. He has been closely involved in the financial improvements at his trust, he has been finance lead for his local Nightingale hospital, and he has now been crowned 2020 Deputy Finance Director of the Year.

Deputy director of finance for financial management at The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Mr Gamble was quick to volunteer to be the finance director at the Nightingale Hospital, Yorkshire and Humber, set up at the Harrogate Convention Centre.

He quickly gained the confidence of colleagues, both at the new hospital and at regional and national level, delivering a high level of leadership and assurance that the project was well-managed and being delivered successfully from a financial point of view.

The Nightingale was a career landmark, but Mr Gamble was also a key figure in the Leeds trust's financial achievements over the last year. He was central to the trust's surplus – achieved for the third year running – of £13.9m, with record capital spending of £66m. He was responsible for ensuring financial sustainability goals were achieved, leading all the key financial management processes.

He was also pivotal in the finance department achieving Future-Focused Finance level 3 accreditation, fostering a top-class finance skills development programme, and empowering the trust's value-makers. Leeds is the first trust outside North West England to achieve this level, and the largest to date.

Hugely committed to staff development, Mr Gamble was one of the first cohort of FFF value-makers, and leads his team's implementation of the finance staff development scheme, Finance the Leeds Way.

He also played a full role in the trust's response to Covid-19 before taking on the Nightingale role, ensuring finance staff were able to work from home, and supporting procurement colleagues by delivering personal protective equipment to the wards.

In all this work, he has embodied Leeds Way values, said trust finance director Simon Worthington – patient-centred, accountable, fair, empowered and collaborative.

While being impressed with all the candidates in a challenging year for NHS

"We were impressed by Jonny's empowering style and his can-do approach to drive continuous improvement of the Leeds way"



staff, the judges unanimously agreed with the choice of Mr Gamble, highlighting his work on the Nightingale, the trust surplus and the level 3 accreditation. 'We were impressed by Jonny's empowering style and his can-do approach to drive continuous improvement of the Leeds Way even during the current pandemic,' they said.

Mr Gamble said the Leeds Way was the cornerstone of the finance department's work, and as a long-time HFMA member and

supporter, he was honoured to have won the award. 'Winning this award would not have been possible without the support of Simon [Worthington], but more importantly the finance team at Leeds Teaching Hospitals, who worked tirelessly in difficult circumstances to continue to deliver an excellent service supporting the trust. This award is a validation of the continuous improvement work at LTHT (which saw us awarded level 3 accreditation), delivering the trust's financial position, and my work supporting the Nightingale.' ○

Highly commended

Bola Agboola of Northampton General NHS Trust was highly commended for going over and above her responsibilities throughout the response to Covid-19. She was part of the trust senior incident team from the beginning of the pandemic in addition to her deputy director duties, working seven days a week to fulfil both roles. Then, the trust finance director fell ill as the final accounts were being closed.

The judges said: 'Bola has had an exceptional year, stepping up to cover the director of finance role during year-end while also having significant gaps in her team, and of course dealing with the impact of Covid-19. This included supporting the chief executive and board.

'She was able to cover these responsibilities in addition to driving forward improvements in the finance team, morale and performance. Her calm and effective leadership has enabled her to step up to the challenges she has faced this year.'

Also shortlisted

Guy Dentith, East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, led delivery of the trust's financial plan for 2019/20, requiring cost improvements of £30m. The trust has been in special measures since March 2017 and this is the first time the plan has been delivered in many years.

Nicola Burnett, Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group and Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICS/STP, pulled together the information needed for system-level decision-making. Alongside her leadership of the local CCG finance team, which covers three CCGs, she supports 14 organisations.

Karen Seabridge, Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, is 'respected, caring and genuinely invested in developing the best of everyone'. She helped deliver an outstanding Care Quality Commission rating and sustainable financial surplus.

Flexible working solution

Many NHS finance teams had to move rapidly to home working as part of the response to Covid-19. But **Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust** – this year's HFMA Finance Team of the Year – was better prepared than most. Having spent two and a half years in dispersed locations, the team had already started to implement a flexible working solution.

This had been a result of a fire that destroyed trust offices in 2018 – the finance directorate only came back together in a single location this year. So, when the pandemic struck and home working became widespread, the trust was able to move seamlessly to support the changing needs of the organisation.

With a robust and tested business continuity plan to lean on, the directorate implemented an onsite rota that allowed the focus to shift at once to how it could best support the trust and patients, maintain governance and aid staff wellbeing.

Personal protective equipment was a big focus. Trust chief finance officer and deputy chief executive Andrea McGee established and chaired the Covid-19 supply resource group across the Cheshire and Merseyside system and all levels of staff got involved with collecting stock, including deputy finance director Jane Hurst and chairman Steve McGuirk.

Finance staff quickly mobilised to support procurement with seven-day stocktakes – essential for determining how much PPE would be supplied. And training was given to all finance staff, reflecting an 'all in this together' approach, to support logistics in the delivery of consumables and PPE around the organisation.

The trust did not run out of PPE and the team can point to several contributions they made to this result, including the establishment of a stock control system, good spot buying and engagement with clinicians.

The team also set up a paid childcare facility for trust staff, supported the setup of paid accommodation for staff needing to live outside the family home, and negotiated an additional laundry contract for scrubs, which saved money in the process.

As part of its business as usual, the team also strives to improve the financial sustainability of services. Under a slogan the 'right way to yes', it supports the organisation to use the right governance processes around the use of business cases and appropriate approvals.




The trust improved its performance in the Shared Business Services client metrics, moving from 12th to first out of 31 peer organisations on metrics covering ordering, paying, billing and financial controls.

The team also kept its annual accounts process on track despite the challenges of the external audit function working from home. Annual accounts were submitted a working day earlier than the original timetable and two weeks ahead of the revised dates. The trust was the first NHS body to be audited remotely by Grant Thornton and this presented challenges, including the verification of assets. It required creative collaboration with clinical

staff, involving photographs and newspapers (to prove the date!). The audit report contained no recommendations and the trust achieved a positive value-for-money conclusion.

The judges praised the finance team's wide-ranging submission and its proactive and comprehensive support to the trust and the wider system.

Ms McGee said: 'This recognition has been such a huge boost to morale after what has been a very challenging year for all.'

'It has been amazing to see the team pull together to not only support one another, but to also become an essential part of the trust's response to Covid-19.' 

Highly commended

Wigan Borough Clinical Commissioning

Group believes world-class training leads to world-class innovation. The CCG can demonstrate many examples of developing staff internally. It was also the first CCG to achieve the Towards Excellence accreditation at level 3 in the North West. Achievements during the past year include: delivering a clean set of accounts; a successful apprentice programme; collaborative listening in action sessions with local authority colleagues; and developing a finance training support web page.

Also shortlisted

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has been re-accredited at level 3 for the third time as an FFF Towards Excellence organisation. Developments to support budget holders include the introduction of finance and procurement induction training and an intranet update to include more support. The team also formalised its approach to delivering value by setting up continuous improvement working groups. This led to improvements in a number of month-end processes.

Early warning success

An electronic early warning system introduced by **Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust** reduced unplanned admissions to critical care, following in-hospital deterioration, by 32% in the first year and reduced costs. This work won this year's HFMA Value and Innovation Award.

More than 4,000 children per year require unplanned admission to intensive care following deterioration in hospital in the UK. Nationally and internationally detecting in-patient deterioration early, so that care can be increased, is acknowledged as a challenge. But analysis suggests that some of these admissions may be preventable with the aid of smart technology.

A technological solution was identified involving handheld devices to record nurse observations, an early warning score (EWS) to highlight at-risk patients and an audible and vibrating phone alarm to alert staff. Such a system had been shown to reduce mortality in two large UK hospitals. However, the solution for children was more complex to develop, because the signs that staff look for alter significantly across the age range.

Although there are a number of bespoke paediatric EWS (PEWS) used across the NHS, robust evaluation of their implementation and effectiveness has been limited. The trust's solution was to undertake the first large-scale implementation and evaluation of the use of self-measuring and reporting technology (Smart) to improve the recognition of deterioration and response in a large paediatric hospital. This was delivered using System C's CareFlow Vitals and Connect software.

The technology was implemented across 10 inpatient wards and six associated clinical areas. The provision of real-time vital signs has improved clinicians' situation awareness about the patients who are getting sicker. Compliance reports capture the timeliness and completeness of patient monitoring and track alerts for patients with high or critical PEWS and new sepsis concerns. This enables a more proactive process to manage deterioration.



"We were impressed with the collaboration between finance and clinical colleagues"

At the end of the first year, the trust had seen a 32% reduction in unplanned transfers to critical care and a 30% reduction in critical care bed day utilisation, releasing capacity equivalent to three critical care bed days per day, which can be used for post-operative care following major elective surgery or regional referrals in for critical care. The trust saved £1.1m in the first three months, representing an 89% return on the investment.

The local health economy has benefited from a decrease in morbidity, as well as from a reduction in the actual and opportunity cost of unnecessary critical care admissions.

The judges said the system improved care and reduced suffering, stress and waste. 'We were impressed with the collaboration between

finance and clinical colleagues, the innovative solution found by Alder Hey and the potential for the approach to be shared with other children's hospitals,' they said.

Claire Liddy, director of research and innovation at Alder Hey, said the trust was excited to have this clinical-led, finance-supported research recognised.

'From the very top, Alder Hey believes our clinicians have the ideas and skills to conceive of and introduce game-changing innovations that will profoundly improve the lives of patients and significantly reduce resource use,' she said. 'Our world-leading Innovation Hub ensures that experts in business management, entrepreneurship, costing, data science and intellectual property are available to help our clinicians make these dreams reality.' ○

Highly commended

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic the **NHS England** and **NHS Improvement** national finance team realised that the existing financial framework and financial planning process were not fit for purpose for what was about to happen. Over a matter of days, the national team developed a robust financial framework that enabled NHS organisations to reshape services to respond to Covid-19 – without funding or access to cash being a barrier. The judges were impressed with the speed at which such significant changes were made. They also highlighted the learning gained that is helping to shape the 2021/22 financial regime.

Also shortlisted

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust has been performing robotic procedures since 2014, particularly for prostatectomies. More recently, it has leased a second robot to undertake procedures in other service areas, including urology, ENT, gynaecology and colorectal. To provide evidence-based justifications for decisions, it needed a central recording system for procedures and outcome data. A new system simplifies the recording of data for clinical staff, supports improved costing and helps to highlight areas for further investigation.

Key members honoured

Honorary fellowships

Rod Smith (right), nominated by the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Branch, is stepping down from his longstanding branch committee role on his retirement. He has also been active in the HFMA nationally as a key member of the HFMA Environmental Sustainability Special Interest Group.



David Bacon (below) has been chair of the Accounting and Standards Committee since 2010, where he has helped to steer the NHS through some significant accounting challenges. He has taken a lead role at the annual HFMA pre-accounts planning conferences.



John Graham (below), the cornerstone of the North West Branch for many years, has helped it to move from strength to strength. He has also chaired the HFMA Costing Practitioners' Groups and the Healthcare Costing for Value Institute.

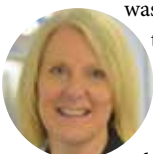


Scott Jarvis has recently retired and stepped down as treasurer of the East Midland Branch, a role he held for nine years. Mr Jarvis also developed and led the branch's senior finance leaders network.

David Ellcock (below) is a major supporter of workforce development through the North West Branch and as programme director for Future-Focused Finance. In August, he left FFF to take up the role of director of the North West Skills Development Network.



Carol Potter (below) has been an active supporter of HFMA for the past 20 years and was a prominent organiser of the 'new profiles' Scottish conference. More recently, she represented Scotland on the HFMA board, stepping down in July.



Outstanding contribution awards

Andy Ray is a six-year veteran of the branch committee and a major supporter of staff development through the HFMA. An active member of the national Technical Issues Group, he is now chair of the Accounting and Standards Committee.

Simon Crowther (right) spent six years as chair of the HFMA East Midlands Branch, stepping down in November 2019 when he became an HFMA trustee. He re-invigorated the annual branch conference and has built links with the local Future-Focused Finance and Skills Development Network.



Key contributors

Bronze awards

• **Elizabeth Taylor** (below) was nominated by the KSS branch for going the extra mile in support of the branch and its activities. An integral part of the branch committee, she has been instrumental in delivering successful branch conferences.



• **John Hasson** Nominated for his support of the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Branch, Mr Hasson has for the last 16 years single-handedly organised the golf tournament that is an integral part of the branch conference.

• **Catherine Grant** As skills development co-ordinator and HFMA Northern Branch administrator, she has commissioned a three-day personal development programme for bands 2 to 4, and been involved in a local procurement-to-pay implementation.

• **Sarah James** (right) The South West Branch treasurer was nominated for a key contributor award to recognise how she has been 'loyal, hardworking and extremely efficient in her role' and to show the branch's gratitude for her work.




• **Paul Nicholson** (right), **Brian Baker**, **Andrea Henderson** and **Helen O'Neill** All four of the Northern Ireland branch members jointly organise the branch's 'patient client experience' conference. This has led to a diverse programme covering topics such as: no health without mental health; teenagers affecting change; and dying, death and bereavement.



Silver awards

• **Maureen Edwards**
• **Wendy Thompson**
Ms Edwards and Ms Thompson continue to be active and enthusiastic members of the Northern Ireland Branch committee. They organise the successful annual accounts workshop, including sessions on accounting standard internal and external audit.

The awards will be presented at a key supporters' dinner in July 2021. 

FFF Award

Natasha Munro, NHS England and NHS Improvement (London), was announced as winner of the award, which recognises an individual's commitment to the FFF programme, at the HFMA virtual annual conference. She is an active member of the value-maker network and has provided invaluable support on FFF's diversity, inclusion and equality projects. She has led on building a network of sponsees, and has been the driving force behind the sponsorship programme's growth and success this year.



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Playing to win

Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust has won this year's HFMA Costing Award for the work it has done to improve data quality and raise awareness of patient-level costing across the trust.

But it was the use of a board game to help engage staff outside the finance department that really caught the judges' eyes.

The trust has an experienced costing team and an established patient-level information and costing system (PLICS). But given just 15 minutes to present to administration staff on the importance of data quality, the team decided to get creative. Rather than reaching for the usual PowerPoint slides, the team devised a PLICS board game.

Using a traditional board game concept, players move around the board landing on different parts of the hospital

"The trust has made huge strides to improve the quality of costing, with a focus on improving data quality in novel ways"

and picking up the costs associated with those points of care and activities – for example, £3.51 for a pathology test or £300 for an overnight stay on a ward. Other squares require data quality questions to be answered – for example, a patient has a theatre cost of £96,000, but is this because the theatre session end time was entered incorrectly, the data wasn't entered at all or because an expensive prosthesis was used?

The game aims to raise awareness of how much different parts of a patient stay cost. It also highlights the importance of accurate data.

Since it was launched, more than 500 participants have played it – even being demonstrated at the finance committee. As a result, engagement has increased and people have become more open to having data quality conversations. Plans to roll out the game across the trust and explore commercial aspects have been put on hold during the Covid pandemic.

The costing professionals also engage with specific teams at a more detailed level, recognising that initiatives such as the Model Hospital and Getting it Right First Time have created a demand for support to navigate



different data sources. Simple specialty packs have been created for different care groups, showing high-level opportunities available within the specialty.

And with Covid having a major impact on face-to-face discussions, the team has moved some of its training online. Earlier in 2020 it ran its first Microsoft Teams interactive training session for the urgent, emergency and trauma care group senior leaders, providing general information and a drill down into neck of femur patients.

The costing team has built its engagement work on solid technical foundations, with a substantial assurance rating in the national audit programme. There was only one medium finding on future information requirements.

The judges said they were 'extremely impressed' by the level of creativity and imagination in general and the use of the innovative board game in particular. 'The trust has made huge strides to improve the quality of costing, with a particular focus on improving data quality in several novel ways,' they said.

Ian Dean, associate director of finance at the trust, said the costing team was delighted with the award. 'Our focus is all about improving engagement and use of costing data within the trust to support better patient care and outcomes. So, as a team and a broader trust, it's great that this work is recognised, which in itself increases the awareness and engagement.'

He added that there were plans to develop an online version of the game. ●

Highly commended

Malcolm Redman, finance information manager for Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust, was commended for the design and development of the trust's SOLAR (Service line Opportunities Linked to Activity and Resource) portal. The portal delivers costing data in an informative, engaging format. It gives divisions access to their service line reports, while also highlighting their highest resource value patient pathways, frequent attenders and largest variations within the same healthcare resource group. The judges highlighted the work to present and visualise costing data as a particular strength. 'These new tools have clearly enabled a variety of

service improvements that have benefited care and the service users,' they said.

Also shortlisted

The costing team at **United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust** completed work to understand the trust cost base as a result of Covid-19 – ensuring shared information took account of both increased costs and reduced activity. The team also increased the detail and availability of marginal costing information – important in a year when activity levels were fluctuating drastically and planning assumptions were impacted on a day-to-day basis.

A clear governance structure underpinning **East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust's** Covid response has scooped it the HFMA Governance Award for 2020.

Once the level 4 national incident was declared in March, the trust (ESNEFT) established a governance structure quickly to provide trust-wide leadership, allocate resources, ensure timely decision-making, manage demand, maintain safety for patients and staff, and keep the board informed.

As part of its pre-Covid governance arrangements, three committees – finance and performance; people and organisational development; and quality and patient safety – reported to the board. But post-Covid, the trust brought these together in an integrated assurance committee, allowing the establishment of a time-limited strategic incident management group (SIMG).

The SIMG was supported by tactical incident management groups, which met daily, with workforce, clinical reference and ethical groups. Its role was to oversee the tactical incident management groups' decisions and approve funding requests of more than £50,000. The tactical groups provided day-to-day co-ordination of the trust's response to Covid, implementing SIMG decisions and identifying and addressing operational issues.

Meetings were held via Microsoft Teams, helping keep staff safe and providing an audit trail without the need for minutes. It provided assurance and information internally and externally to regional and national levels. A real-time investment data capture and reporting tool set up by the finance team

tracked requests, helped management groups make decisions and provided a clear audit trail.


A review of the governance structure by internal audit said key issues such as governance, employee relations, finance and the impact of Covid on elective care were regularly reported to the board. The structure was logical, considered and clearly set out, it said, and the board could be substantially assured that controls were applied effectively.

The judges were impressed with the clear passion and commitment to changing governance structures and processes, as well as mindset, to ensure nimble decisions were enabled and unnecessary elements removed.

'This enabled the board to maintain appropriate checks and balances while frontline staff received appropriate speedy decisions,' the panel said. 'This applied to both the approach taken during the pandemic and

as part of recovery. The changes were clear, simple and well thought through.'

The team said: 'To be able to recognise the work done and demonstrate within our team that we have celebrated our success is a fantastic catalyst to encourage more of our colleagues to share the great work they do with other finance teams and have the confidence to submit more award entries going forward.'

'The pandemic has put a great strain on all staff within the organisation. To be able to help make changes to reduce meeting commitments, streamline our decision-making and receive the assurance that we maintained a strong governance structure, ensured we were contributing to supporting the care and safety of our patients and staff. It has also shown us we can use digital technology to improve the effectiveness of more of our systems and processes moving forward.' 



Clear oversight

Highly commended

Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group and **Portsmouth City Council** used established integrated working arrangements to respond to the pandemic. With rapid discharge a priority, they set up a mechanism to support the operational and financial resilience of local social care providers. The council's IT system was used to: enable submissions for support via an online portal; review and authorise claims; and provide a clear audit trail. The judges were keen to

celebrate the success of this partnership across health and social care, which enabled a patient-centric approach. They hailed its ability to work together across a system, at pace, to manage provider viability risks.

Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was joint highly commended for an innovative plan to raise the profile of the organisation's standing financial instructions (SFIs). A

survey identified some awareness of the SFIs, but there was little active engagement. It employed a marketing approach, rather than a financial one, to address this, initially via email signatures and posters, to create staff interest. This included workshops, a condensed version of the 55-page SFIs, inclusion in induction packs and terms of employment, posters, pins and Twitter. The judges praised the energy used to bring alive important documents often seen as dry and technical.

Also shortlisted

Paul Bulman, assistant director of finance at United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust, was nominated for his efforts to improve the trust's business case process. He was responsible for sharing the new process with other trusts within the sustainability and transformation partnership. He also created a *Dragon's Den*-style opportunity for clinical divisions to present their business cases.

Power of automation

Technology has a major part to play in transforming the NHS and this will include changing the way finance teams operate. The HFMA's new Embracing Technology Award recognises the importance of this agenda and has named **East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust** as its first winner.

The trust was singled out for two systems it has developed in-house to automate parts of the finance and reporting process, removing non-value-adding tasks.

The trust's Petals program (Programmable Extract Transform and Loading System) automates the connection between reports such as an Excel forecast with the ledger database. While many trusts can import ledger data into their report, this is two-way; the reconciliation, investigation and adjustment feedback a finance manager adds to their report can

be loaded into the ledger database. This enables it to be added to all other reports simultaneously, reducing duplication and sharing information more widely.

The trust describes the software as providing

360° data flow and networking and it means notes added to a report one month are automatically pulled into subsequent reports. The automatic importing of data takes 10 to 30 seconds when a workbook is opened.

A separate computer program – Fast or Forecast Analysis Statistical Tool – uses statistical analysis such as standard deviation to highlight cost centre and account code line items that the team needs to look into because they are a statistical outlier. According to the trust, this means 80% of line items are checked by the system, leaving the team to only have to check the other 20% regularly.

For example, the program analyses the last 24 months' run rate of each cost centre and account code combination, and calculates the mathematical probability that this is a normal or abnormal movement. Additional functions include: standard deviation rank; actual in-month value movement; new codes flag; ceased codes flag; and whole-time equivalents on a non-pay code.



The trust says the two systems are helping to reduce time spent on non-value-adding tasks and freeing up staff to help colleagues deliver more effective and efficient services.

Both Fast and Petals use the integration power of a Microsoft SQL server database and a computer code language called Transact-SQL. The programs were developed using agile methodology, so improvements were introduced incrementally to the reporting system's features and functions.

The work done on the projects also enabled the trust to model the local Covid pandemic, providing insight into possible admissions.

The judges were impressed by the approach to faster closedown and automation of variance reporting. 'The work was set in a wider

framework of how the finance function could and should deliver most value, which was also of note. There had been strong moves to tailor the financial information to individual stakeholders and budget holders to improve financial reporting and understanding.'

Finance director Michelle Brown said the award recognised the tremendous work of the finance team to improve information accuracy and reduce non-value-added tasks. Costing consultant Darrell Tobin (above left) said the plan was to remove about 40% of non-value-added time over the next two years. 'The reports where we've applied this technology so far have reduced the processing time by 50%', he said. 'The system becomes incrementally better each month, as it stores all feedback.'

Also shortlisted

The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS

Trust finance team built its Microsoft Teams environment from scratch over a weekend and rolled it out across the finance team in three days as part of the response to Covid-19.

With a cloud-based ledger, using Teams meant the department could share files, maintain live reporting and support the new personal protective equipment service, which was handling distribution across seven sites. Over the next month, the trust completed month-end on working day one, finished year-end and submitted ahead of timetable, and coped with more than 6,000 messages, 300 one-to-one calls and 150 meetings per week. This was

despite limited support from IT, which was focused elsewhere, and only 10% of the team having access to mobile trust devices.

Increased business growth for ELFS Shared Services

meant it needed to bring a number of new NHS trust clients on board, each with accounts payable activity ranging between 50,000 and 120,000 invoices per year. This led to the introduction of an Ask AP web portal built on a cognitive technology platform. Piloted in 2019, the service started to be rolled out to more than 6,000 suppliers from April. It has reduced queries to the helpdesk, and feedback from suppliers has been positive.



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Keen partner

The 2020 Working with Finance – Clinician of the Year Award winner, **Kulandaivel Sakthivel**, has proved himself a keen partner to finance staff, willing to challenge them and his clinical colleagues in the pursuit of better care for patients and the reduction of waste.

The award acknowledges the importance of clinical engagement in financial management and recognises a clinician who has taken financial responsibility for their services, led efficiency or improvement programmes or provided an example for other clinicians by engaging with the financial agenda.

Mr Sakthivel, a consultant trauma and orthopaedic (T&O) surgeon at United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust, was involved throughout a Getting it Right First Time (GIRFT) pilot, and the subsequent and ongoing changes in trauma and orthopaedics following the review.

Many temporary changes were needed to carry out the GIRFT pilot, including gaining support to switch staff to new locations and change job plans. But the aim was to provide a better pathway and service to patients and reduce cancellations, which were often notified on the day. When the project began, there were about 1,000 cancellations a year, often due to lack of beds, with referral-to-treatment performance at 80% and poor theatre efficiency leading to higher cost per patient activity.

The T&O service line loss had been £6.3m (before corporate overhead), but the pilot reduced this loss to £2m – it shortened lengths of stay by concentrating elective activity on one site. Elective lengths of stay fell from 2.7 days to 1.7 days, and towards the end of 2019, day-case knee replacements were being piloted successfully. All day lists rose from an average of three to an average of five before the Covid-19 crisis hit hospital elective care.

The 80% target for cemented hips for patients over 70 has been exceeded (87%). As well as benefiting patient recovery, this has produced a financial gain of about £800 per patient.

Mr Sakthivel has taken the time to understand service line reporting, theatre benchmarking data, and procurement and tender processes. And, with sound information, he initiated swift action,

“The trust has created a can-do approach to change based on clinical and financial collaboration”

including increasing theatre activity, reducing expenditure on prostheses through standardisation, and introducing a sign-off process for loan kit hire.

The judges commented: ‘We are impressed by the very close collaboration between the clinical, finance and management teams to address the reorganisation of orthopaedic services at United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust using GIRFT data, and winning hearts and minds.

‘A blueprint and momentum have been produced to use the same approach across the trust in other clinical services and have created a can-do approach to change based on clinical and financial collaboration.’

Highly commended

Sandy Anderson, associate specialist and specialty lead for dermatology at the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, was highly commended for his work on clinical and financial improvements.

Dr Anderson took the time to understand the finances of the dermatology service and identified an opportunity to reduce costs and improve care from outsourced activity. He presented change and investment proposals to the care group board, which led to the release of recurrent funding as a cost improvement programme.

The plan required investment in staff and associated non-pay costs totalling £805,000, while reducing outsourcing expenditure by more than £1m to produce the net cost improvement

of £258,000 per year. The benefits of moving patients from an outsourced service back to the trust included pathway length and improved assurance on governance.

There were also indirect benefits, such as supporting consultants to supervise clinical staff, raising the number of consultants to GIRFT-recommended levels, and on-call cover.

The judges said: ‘Sandy has addressed a longstanding workforce shortage in dermatology by innovating together with the finance team to introduce extended nurse practitioners into the dermatology service.

‘They used staffing models introduced through the dermatology national GIRFT report and established clinical and financial collaboration to quickly solve a wicked problem.’



Working wellbeing

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust has won the 2020 John Havelock Award for a scheme that set out to improve finance staff satisfaction and wellbeing by ensuring they are empowered to deliver their roles.

The Havelock Award recognises a contribution to finance skills development, best practice in the training of finance staff or the raising of financial awareness among non-finance staff. Established in 1999, the award is named after former Department of Health deputy finance director Jon Havelock.

The Alder Hey scheme, *Number one place to work*, was developed under the trust's people plan and the finance team's strategic vision: 'to develop a diverse, appropriately skilled, adaptable workforce and resilient finance function and workforce to ensure value for money and quality services for patients.' This was achieved by embedding five objectives: innovate; partner; brilliant basics; number one place to work; and support and develop. A small group of finance staff brought these themes together, engaging with staff to promote and improve existing resources.

New thematic initiatives identified and shared best practice, and also provided bespoke support for staff personal and professional development beyond the traditional academic and professional qualifications.

An hour a week is dedicated to individuals' development – a Finance Fridays initiative has been one of the most successful of the project, the trust said. Sessions have ranged from basic Excel training to budget-setting and forecasting tools. The overall project has not been hampered by Covid-19. Indeed, with most staff working from home, it has allowed the team to build on the success of Finance Fridays by introducing Webinar Wednesdays.

The finance team at Alder Hey is committed to developing its staff through mentoring, coaching and apprenticeships. It highlighted staff who joined the trust at lower grades, but developed their skills, gained qualifications and have moved into higher grades.

Providing support to other organisations is also important to the team, which it believes is vital to successful skills development.

Jenny Foster, business accountant, said: 'It is a fantastic feeling and really humbling to have the scheme recognised. Winning the award has certainly boosted the team morale and



motivation to continue to grow the scheme, and validated the team effort that went into designing and implementing the project.

'It highlighted relationships the team built outside of finance, and outside of the organisation, and further recognised the fantastic reputation of Alder Hey finance.'

The project has impacted the culture of the team, contributing to it reaching the level 3 skills development accreditation.

Ms Foster added: 'The success of Finance Fridays/Webinar Wednesdays is attributed to their informal nature, and the fact that the content comes from the team themselves.'

The judges said: 'Alder Hey's submission highlights its journey of innovation to provide wide-ranging and inspiring training and development initiatives, which have been embedded over the last three years.'

'The project promotes a values-driven culture and offers diverse opportunities and a highly supportive environment for all staff. The team demonstrated passion and commitment, and were able to evidence the positive impact the project is having on the organisation, individuals and patients. A worthy winner and a strong commitment to development, driven and owned by the team.' 

Highly commended

The judges described **Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's** increased commitment to finance staff development during the pandemic as a highly supportive initiative, with clear and tangible outcomes making a real difference. 'Every member of the finance team is an FFF value-maker and there is a clear commitment to upskilling the workforce and developing skills and qualifications in a transferable way. The team also demonstrated how it has adapted to the Covid-19 challenges and is providing support to all staff throughout the pandemic. An excellent submission demonstrating a very clear and comprehensive commitment to FSD across a wide range of teams and bandings within finance as well as budget holders and staff throughout the organisation.'

Also shortlisted

Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust demonstrated its commitment to the Future-Focused Finance Towards Excellence accreditation. Areas of improvement included a self-assessment skills matrix, a learning library and a course map signposting HFMA, SDN and FFF learning resources, and finance teams have delivered training to trust colleagues.

Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

has overhauled its finance training and development over the past two years. There is now no limit on the number of staff studying formally for AAT or other professional qualifications, it has developed its entry level training and reinvigorated its financial awareness training to the wider trust.

Arm's length

NHS Business Services Authority

collaborated at pace with the Department of Health and Social Care and other arm's-length bodies to set up more than 30 different services to support the national coronavirus response, and the finance team played a key role. Its work has earned it the HFMA Overcoming Adversity Award.

Services that needed to be set up rapidly at the start of the pandemic included: informing at risk patients; a self-isolation text service; Nightingale network connectivity; keyworker testing; a coronavirus status checker; updating the electronic staff record to record Covid absence; and cashflow support for pharmacists. But there were lots more too.

As part of this programme, the finance department faced key challenges. For example, it moved rapidly to remote working, even though 60% of the 130-strong team did not initially have access to crucial technology. Workload basically doubled to meet the financial management, reporting and planning demands of the new services.

Robust financial governance and processes had to be put in place at pace to meet demand, while maintaining existing key services, including ensuring frontline staff were paid through the authority's systems.

Spikes in demand from the general public had to be managed – for example, applications for the NHS low-income scheme for prescriptions. There was also the challenge of putting new services in place without having funding confirmed and developing robust systems to allow for financial scrutiny of expenditure related to Covid-19.

The team also had to find ways to streamline processes to maximise efficiency and reduce the time taken on financial processing tasks.

To meet these challenges, a senior finance forum was established with the Department, NHSX and NHS England/NHS Improvement. A Covid-19 reporting tool was developed and adopted by all partners to track spend, manage risk and understand where agreements were needed to ensure costs were fully understood.

Financial processes were redesigned to reduce end-to-end processing time and there was a move to paperless systems. For example, the employer contributions allocation process

"NHS BSA is looking to use this collaboration as a springboard for further work with other organisations, using the skills and services it provides"



for pensions was automated and new invoice and expenses e-approval processes were established. BACS processing was also made possible for remote workers.

Staff have responded well to the changes, with 85% saying they enjoyed working from home. As well as the reduction in environmental footprint from homeworking, less use of paper and printing has benefited the environment and saved costs. In addition, several members of the finance team were redeployed to support non-finance activities, including strategy development and helping to find ways to support the workforce.

The judges were impressed the team had taken time at the start of the pandemic to

consider how its services and skills could be best used. 'The pandemic has opened doors previously closed to NHS BSA, such as Care England and the social care sector,' they said. 'They are now looking to use this collaboration as a springboard for further work with other organisations, using the skills and services they provide, as well as the data that they hold.'

Andy McKinlay (pictured), NHS BSA director of finance and commercial services, said the organisation was 'thrilled' to win. '2020 has been an extraordinary year and we are proud of the role played by NHS BSA and our finance team, developing new and lasting partnerships and supporting the government and NHS to deliver critical changes through this continuing public health emergency.' 🟡

Also shortlisted

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust tripled intensive care capacity as part of its response to Covid-19 to support paediatric care across the region and the treatment of adult patients. The finance team managed the change to working practices and led innovative solutions to supply personal protective equipment. While some staff were redeployed to frontline services, the team achieved good year-end results and audit.

The finance teams at **Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust, Salford Clinical Commissioning Group and Salford City Council** redesigned processes, broke down

boundaries and developed new ways of working in response to Covid-19. Their work facilitated hospital discharges, promoted infection control and protected the adult social care market and those receiving care.

The **Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust** finance team was central to ensuring staff had enough of the right PPE to protect them during the first wave of the virus. It created an on-demand delivery service and finance staff delivered stock to the wards, repacked items into usable quantities and drove stock to where it was needed. They also helped check PPE quality and improve storage.

Past winners

Finance Team*/Accounts Team of the Year

- 2019* Hampshire and Isle of Wight Partnership of CCGs
- 2018* Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHST
- 2017* Alder Hey Children's NHS FT
- 2016 Hull CCG
- 2015 Nottingham University Hospitals NHST
- 2014 Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS FT
- 2013 Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS FT
- 2012 Alder Hey Children's NHS FT
- 2011 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS FT
- 2010 NHS Bournemouth and Poole
- 2009 Mersey Care NHST
- 2008 Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHST
- 2007 North West Ambulance Service NHST

Clinician of the Year/Clinical Engagement*

- 2019 Maggie Davies, Western Sussex Hospitals NHS FT
- 2018 David Berridge, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHST
- 2017 Paul Buss, Aneurin Bevan UHB
- 2016 Tara Kearney, Salford Royal NHS FT
- 2015 Stephen Liversedge, Bolton CCG
- 2014 Rob Duncombe, The Christie NHS FT
- 2013 David Fearnley, Mersey Care NHST **photo 1**
- 2012 Malik Ramadhan, Barts Health NHST
- 2011 Jason Leitch, Scottish Government
- 2010 Philip Thomas, Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals Trust
- 2009 Ellen Wilkinson, Cornwall Partnership NHST
- 2008* South Manchester PBC and NHS Manchester
- 2007* The Christie Hospital NHS FT

Costing

- 2019 Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS FT
- 2018 Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS FT **photo 2**
- 2017 Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHST
- 2016 North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHST
- 2015 Alder Hey Children's NHS FT
- 2014 Derby Hospitals NHS FT
- 2013 Nottingham University Hospitals NHST
- 2012 The Christie NHS FT
- 2011 Cardiff and Vale UHB

Deputy Finance Director of the Year

- 2019 Eva Horgan, Liverpool Women's NHS FT
- 2018 Duncan Orme, Nottingham University Hospitals NHST
- 2017 Claire Liddy, Alder Hey Children's NHS FT
- 2016 Sheila Stenson, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHST
- 2015 Chris Lewis, Cardiff and Vale UHB
- 2014 Tim Jaggard, UCLH NHS FT
- 2013 Paul Ronald, Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS FT
- 2012 Richard Wheeler, Oxford University Hospitals NHST
- 2011 Joanne Fitzpatrick, The Christie NHS FT
- 2010 Elaine Konieczny, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHST **photo 3**

Finance Director of the Year

- 2019 Karen Geoghegan, Brighton and Sussex Hospitals NHST/Western Sussex Hospitals NHS FT
- 2018 Kathy Roe, Tameside and Glossop CCG/Tameside MBC **photo 4**
- 2017 Adrian Roberts, Manchester University NHS FT
- 2016 Annette Walker, Bolton CCG
- 2015 Simon Worthington, Bolton NHS FT
- 2014 Alan Brace, Aneurin Bevan UHB
- 2013 Colin Martin, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS FT and Bill Shields, Imperial College Healthcare NHST

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- 2012 Caroline Clarke, Royal Free London NHS FT
- 2011 David Melbourne, Birmingham Children's Hospital NHS FT
- 2010 Steve Webster, North Bristol NHST
- 2009 Paul Hinnigan, NHS Blackburn with Darwen PCT
- 2008 Sue Jacques, County Durham and Darlington NHS FT
- 2007 Jane Tomkinson, Countess of Chester NHS FT

Innovation*/Efficiency

- 2019* Cheshire and Merseyside HCP, with MIAA
- 2018* Devon Partnership NHST
- 2017* Lancashire Care NHS FT
- 2016* Bolton CCG and Bolton NHS FT
- 2015* Dorset CCG
- 2014 Alder Hey Children's NHS FT
- 2013 Portsmouth CCG
- 2012 Countess of Chester Hospital NHS FT/Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS FT
- 2011 NHS Oldham
- 2010 Basildon & Thurrock University Hospitals NHS FT
- 2009 Newham University Hospital NHST
- 2008 2gether NHS FT

FFF Award

- 2019 Ken Godber, East Midlands regional lead
- 2018 Mark Songhurst, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHST
- 2017 John McLoughlin, NHS England **photo 5**
- 2016 Ben Roberts, Bolton NHS FT
- 2015 Gayle Wells, Wigan Borough CCG

Governance

- 2019 Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHST, Sutton CCG and Surrey Downs CCG
- 2018 Northern Care Alliance NHS Group and Mersey Internal Audit Agency
- 2017 Chorley and South Ribble CCG and Greater Preston CCG
- 2016 Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS FT
- 2015 North East Lincolnshire CCG, North Lincolnshire CCG, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS FT, Navigo Health and Social Care CIC and Care Plus Group
- 2014 South Warwickshire NHS FT
- 2013 Imperial College Healthcare NHST
- 2012 Leicestershire Partnership NHST/EMIAS
- 2011 University Hospital of South Manchester NHS FT
- 2010 Plymouth Hospitals NHST and Audit South West
- 2009 The Ipswich Hospital NHST
- 2008 Plymouth Hospitals NHST
- 2007 Redbridge PCT
- 2006 Oldham PCT

Havelock Training

- 2019 Countess of Chester Hospital NHS FT
- 2018 Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS FT
- 2017 North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHST
- 2016 London Ambulance Service NHST **photo 6**
- 2015 Liverpool CCG
- 2014 The Walton Centre NHS FT
- 2013 Nottingham University Hospitals NHST
- 2012 Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS FT
- 2011 East Kent Hospitals University NHS FT
- 2010 NHS Central Lancashire
- 2009 Heart of England NHS FT
- 2008 NHS London
- 2007 Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS FT

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