



How we can help you respond to your financial challenges

Back to Balance

The last three years have undoubtedly been some of the hardest in the 75-year history of the NHS. The pandemic, Brexit, workforce burnout and shortages, growing waiting lists, and the cost-of-living crisis have all taken their toll on budgets. There is not a simple or quick solution. The need for financial recovery must be balanced against delivering patient centred care.

Continuing as-is is not sustainable.

We Can Help

We understand the challenges you are facing. Now, more than ever, it is essential to:

- make robust, informed decisions;
- deliver improvements and efficiencies; and
- collaborate across partners.

We are supporting ICSs, provider collaboratives, primary care, mental health and acute providers and local authorities to do this.

Systems must make changes to respond to the challenges they are facing. To do this, leaders need to make good, informed decisions. We can help you ensure these decisions are robust and evidenced. We are currently working with systems to help them understand the benefits and risks of their transformational change programmes. This is helping them make data driven decisions.

Swift action is required to improve the financial position. We have a track record of delivering improvements and efficiencies. We work across acute providers, mental health providers and ICBs to help understand where efficiencies can be made.

We know collaboration is not easy, but it can yield innovative results. Our experienced and senior team can help broker those difficult conversations, bringing to the surface those hidden issues, finding a way forward.

Examples of our impact:



£23m savings identified with back-office collaboration in Lancashire and South Cumbria



£13k/month saved by automating contact with care providers in Lancashire



We **reduced average payment time** of jointly funded care from 376 to 30 days, avoiding £9.2 million of debt



Our analysis informed interventions resulting in expected **savings of £1m, fewer admissions and reduced length of stay**

Our Financial Consultancy team

Our Financial Consultancy team is made up from dedicated NHS employees with both depth and breadth of NHS experience. The team combines former Directors of Finance, deep technical knowledge of NHS financial processes and decades of healthcare consultancy experience. We can help clients with:

Making robust decisions

- Identifying/ understanding potential financial opportunities for projects and schemes
- Modelling the financial impact of clinical service redesign options
- Identifying, prioritising and quantifying project costs and benefits
- Preparing business cases
- Advising on business case best practice

Driving improvements and efficiencies

- Financial modelling of recovery and productivity transformation initiatives
- CIP/QIPP identification and delivery
- Lean review of finance processes (organisation or system level)
- Implementing standardised solutions at scale including shared services across systems
- Supporting system-wide cost reduction initiatives, (e.g. through lean and automation), including corporate and back office cost reduction

Facilitating financial collaboration across partners

- Establishing a common financial framework across a system
- Supporting policy alignment (including IFRS alignment)
- Developing Place/System reporting
- Brokering system conversations to enable transformation
- Financial planning including Joint Forward Plans (JFPs)
- Financial input to bids/ grants/allocations
- Ledger implementation or reconfiguration



Case study

Driving Improvements and Efficiencies: Managing Cost Improvement Programmes

Background

Cheshire and Merseyside ICB approached MLCSU to provide CIP support to the Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (COCH).

Action

We worked collaboratively with the finance team and Divisional Directors, undertaking the following:

- Setting out the organisation's vision, policy, and strategy for CIPs;
- Putting in place arrangements for managing CIPs through the PMO;
- Reviewing benchmarking data including model hospital which involved working with NHSE colleagues;

- Drawing up detailed plans for each scheme with finance and clinical input ensuring there was clear accountability for each scheme and there were peer reviews in place to improve deliverability;
- Establishing monitoring and reporting undertaken at directorate, organisational and board level.

Impact

- Supported the delivery of £12.3m of CIP schemes including £5.2m recurrently;
- Produced CIP documentation including a PMO approach approved by the Finance and Performance Committee;
- Put in place a robust process for developing and monitoring CIPs;
- Identified £5.3m of schemes in support of 2023-24 finance plan.



Case study Facilitating Financial Collaboration Across Partners: Merging and New Ledgers

The introduction of ICSs and ICBs necessitated a transition from CCG to ICB Integrated Single Financial Environments (ISFE). Our team has many years' experience in supporting systems to develop, re-configure and implement ledger platforms.

Background

MLCSU project managed the transition for 11 CCGs to ICB ledgers. We also provided critical friend support for a further 8 CCGs. Prior to that we merged CCG and CSU ledgers.

Action

Our team facilitated close collaboration between the SBS team and the new ICBs to ensure a smooth transition.

Our tasks included:

- co-chairing the Project Boards;
- data management including cleansing data, populating 'set up' templates and data migration;
- integrating ICB specific requirements into the build including procurement rules and establishment hierarchy;
- providing weekly updates, communications and training documents;
- leading cutover activities - invoice management, PIMS support, ESR, access management and banking forms.

Impact

All ledger reconfigurations and implementation programmes were delivered on time. We enabled effective mitigation of all project risks and meeting of all project milestones.



Case study Making Robust Decisions: Securing Capital Investment

We support our clients to develop business cases for a wide range of change initiatives. Our team brings expert accredited knowledge to the financial and economic elements of business cases.

Background

NHSX's Digital community pharmacy, optometry, dentistry, ambulance, and community health services (PODAC) programme required support to produce a Green Book compliant business case. The programme aims to digitally level-up.

Action

Our support included:

- Workshops to identify benefits using a logic model approach;
- Quantifying benefits based on local knowledge and national benchmarks;
- Working with the project team to cost the initiatives;
- Providing robust modelling including benefits, costs and risks;
- Demonstrating affordability and compiling the financial statements;
- Authoring the economic and finance cases.

Impact

We secured an investment of £30.3m approved by the NHS England Investment Committee. The programme has now progressed to Year 1 of implementation.

About the CSU

We understand, as health and care decision-makers, you want to make a difference – for both patients and services to develop an all-round healthier population.

NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit (MLCSU) can help you achieve your goals and deliver the support you are looking for. Our size and scale enable us to provide the bold innovation, ideas, leadership, and the confidence to face your challenges and opportunities with you.

Of the NHS and for the NHS, we have grown to become a strong and resilient organisation of more than 1,900 highly skilled NHS professionals and subject matter experts, many of them leaders in their field.

Our geographical reach means we have experience of serving diverse urban and rural populations with the full range of NHS challenges in planning, commissioning, and providing health and care services. Our existing client base includes nine health systems (covering one quarter of England's population with £14.9 billion total healthcare spend). We also work with several NHS trusts, as well as diverse clients across government, health and social care. Our expertise is reflected in our leading performance in customer satisfaction scores.



Contact us

Get in touch with Jules, Andy or Alison to find out more.



Jules Harrhy

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Jules has extensive accountancy, audit and project management experience in the public and private sector. She currently leads a very successful award winning team of 90+ permanent staff and access to over 30 Finance associates supporting a wide range of NHS clients with all aspects of financial support including innovation.



Andy Chandler

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Andy is a senior transformational and professionally qualified NHS leader, with extensive experience at board and executive level in a variety of NHS organisations. He is a previous CCG Chief Finance Officer and a Trust Director of Finance with over 25 years' NHS experience.



Alison Wright

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Alison is a mathematics graduate who trained in accountancy with PwC. She is an expert in transformational finance at an ICS level. She combines specialist technical skills with excellent stakeholder management. Alison breaks down complex problems with pragmatic, logical modelling. These models support decision-making by senior leaders.