

Qualitative skills development of Management Fellows

KM Team Members involved	James Rooney (JR, Management Fellow round 2), Becca Robinson (BR, Management Fellow round 2), Lesley Wye (LW, KM team lead), Helen Cramer (HC, Researcher in Residence round 2)
Aim	Developing transferable research and evaluation skills for Management Fellows
Collaborators	CAPC researchers
Lead organisation	University of Bristol

What happened?

Each Management Fellow was attached to a research team. Under the supervision of the project manager from the Discovery cancer research team, JR first collected and analysed interview data from commissioners and clinicians for a project, which investigated the implementation of new cancer pathways. In total, he completed 14 interviews. This project used realist evaluation methodology.

BR was attached to the 3D research team, focusing on developing patient-centred care in general practice. Under the supervision of the process evaluation researcher, BR carried out a telephone survey of all 32 GP practices on usual care and interviewed commissioners from four CCGs.

As their confidence grew, the Management Fellows also collected and analysed data for commissioner-led evaluations. For example, under the supervision of LW with advice from HC, JR interviewed telehealth service users and analysed the data using framework analysis. BR worked closely with HC to collect observational and interview data using template analysis for an evaluation of a commissioner-led diabetes intervention.

Formal skills development included attendance at a course called 'Introduction to Qualitative Research' offered at the university. Further support included a monthly 'qualitative skills development' action learning set which the Discovery programme manager, the 3D process evaluator and LW attended regularly, with sporadic attendance from past Management Fellows and other researchers. In addition, the KM team established quarterly 'wine and literature' evenings where each member presented a paper relating to KM which was then discussed by the wider group.

The outcome of this work was that the Management Fellows became much more confident about carrying out evaluations. For example, JR designed and conducted his own study on the integration of health and social care locally in the last 6 months

Case study written June 2016 with data from quarterly KM team progress reports and KM team member reflective logs.

of his fellowship. They also became more knowledgeable about when, why and how to evaluate commissioning projects. However, applying this knowledge was often frustrated within commissioning settings, because of time limitations. The usual resource allocation for a commissioner-led evaluation is one to two days, while more robust researcher methods require weeks, if not months. Consequently, the Management Fellow have had to adapt. For example in his commissioning role, JR was recently asked to map out the evidence in stroke. Instead of just consulting the top five hits in Google Scholar, JR looked at the citations of the hits, identified key studies, analysed them in-depth and took a more wide-ranging approach.

At the CCG BR is currently working on a Front Door project looking to set up a primary care urgent care centre in front of the emergency department. A robust evaluation of a primary care streaming pilot is currently being designed in collaboration with the CLAHRC to inform the design of the proposed urgent care centre.

What helped?	What didn't help?
The combination of formal, informal and experiential learning	Challenges in applying evaluation skills in commissioning
Exposing the Management Fellows to different qualitative researchers and methods	Different tensions about time for each organisation
Starting slowly with close supervision and moving towards more independent, self-led projects	Slippage in CCG project timelines due to staff turnover.
Working in partnership with academic colleagues to develop topic guides and templates for analysis	
LW's knowledge of different studies and possible research groups to place the Management Fellows	

What can we learn from this?

- We have not yet learnt ***how to design a hybrid evaluation approach that meets commissioning organisations need for timeliness and researchers' requirements*** for rigour.
- ***Applying evaluation skills*** learning ***in the commissioning environment is challenging*** as time and money is so tight.