Reducing waste and defects when claiming research income

Theme | Research & Innovation (R&I) and Finance
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SaTH Improvement Hub

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

REASON WHY?

The trust hosts a number of commercial and non-commercial research projects, which generate income. It has been identified that this process takes on average at least 0.1 WTE of a Band 6 Research Governance & Quality Assurance leads time. This impacts on daily productivity and time available for other important tasks. Additionally, it is believed that the process results in defects that result in loss of income.

SMART AIM

S SPECIFIC **M** MEASUREABLE **A** ACHIEVABLE **R** RELEVANT **T** TIME-BOUND | AIM | To reduce waste and defects when claiming research income by 50% by 1 September 2023

PLAN

Stevie Barre (Western General Hospital) and Mat Davis (University Hospitals Dorset Foundation Trust) have created tools which are intended to speed up and reduce errors in the process for claiming research income at NHS Trusts. These tools are available via basecamp.com:
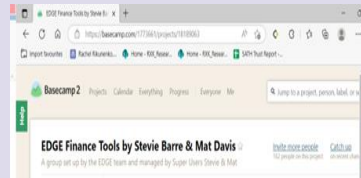
The tools are used in conjunction with EDGE Local Performance Management System, which is a database used to capture all research activity at the Trust and has a finance feature.

This project aimed to identify constraints and defects within our current process of claiming research income for commercial and non-commercial research projects to see if these tools and potentially other interventions could help reduce time taken and errors.

DO

A review of the current process was undertaken using process mapping, and the waste wheel. This helped identify that the current process is multifaceted with 7 main steps. Time and defects were the main wastes.

It was decided that PDSA would be completed for 5 out of the 7 steps:

- The tools created by Stevie and Mat would be utilised for steps 2, 4 and 6 to identify any improvement in time and error.

- The 7 whys and Idea Sorting Priority Matrix would be used at step 3 to generate new ideas for any improvement in errors.

- The use of a new function within EDGE 3 would be utilised for step 7 to identify any improvement in time and error.

STUDY

Step 2: Agreed costs are uploaded onto EDGE
The time taken to complete this step, as well as errors prior and post implementation of the ICT Import tool were calculated. The use of the ICT import tool reduced time and defects for commercial and non-commercial research projects by 50%. Prior to the use of the ICT Import tool costs from contracts were being manually entered into an Excel spreadsheet and calculations were undertaken to determine how each cost should be apportioned to Trust departments. This was then uploaded to EDGE. The ICT tool does not allow the apportionment of direct, indirect or capacity building costs to be recorded on EDGE at this stage.

**Step 3: Payments are added to EDGE by research team**
The amount of income lost in error was calculated and it was identified that the research team forget to add payments to EDGE at times. Particularly, those relating to set-up, training, patient expenses, amendment monitoring and archiving The 7 whys generated the following ideas about how the research team could be reminded to add payments.

Step 4: Payments entered onto EDGE are extracted into a report and invoice amount is calculated
The time taken to complete this step, as well as errors prior and post the implementation of the Finance Tracker tool were calculated. The use of the Finance Tracker tool reduced time and defects for commercial and non-commercial research projects by 50%.

Average time per research project (Minutes)
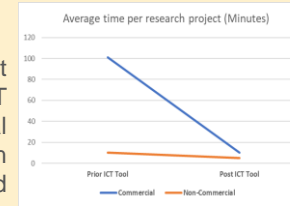
- Poster/Sticker
- Email/Phone/Calendar reminder
- Computer reminder
- Reminder as part of work instructions/patient file
- Reminder on EDGE
- Incentives
- Huddle
- Reviewing missing data
- SOP
- EDGE drop in space

Average time per invoice (Minutes)
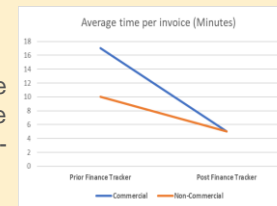
ACT

We have decided to adopt the use of the ICT Import Tool at Step 2 and Finance Tracker Tool at Step 4. Collaboration with a Trust finance representation is required to use these tools to their full potential.

PDSA still needs to be completed for:

- **Step 3: Payments are added to EDGE by research team.**

- **Step 6: Payment amounts are reconciled to the relevant department**

- **Step 7: Invoices are reconciled on EDGE.**

A new case study will be written to show the outcome of this.

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