
Briefing summary

- **Who:** For people running funded health care improvement projects in the NHS who may need to secure future funding.
- **Why:** To sustain the benefits of your work, it is sometimes necessary to plan how it will be funded over the longer term.
- **What:** The briefing provides advice on how to maximise the chances of future funding.

Funding improvement work

“Securing future funding after an initial grant is very difficult. It’s important to consider before you start the work whether you can change the way things are done so that improvements become ‘business as usual’ during the period of the grant and are not dependent on additional resource thereafter. If extra funding is necessary, establish early on whether this will come from internal or external sources, and the information funders will require.”

Dr Peter Lachman, Deputy Medical Director for Safety, Great Ormond Street Hospital,
and Health Foundation Quality Improvement Fellow

Projects that win initial funding for improvement work may need to consider their future funding to ensure the benefits are sustained.

When should you consider future funding opportunities?

Future funding sources need to be considered at an early stage. Typically, this means having a funding strategy in place at least six months into a one-year funded programme, or at least one year into a two-year funded programme. The strategy will also need to reflect the funding criteria and timescales of potential funders. Some suggest that it is easier to access NHS funding towards the end of a financial year when potential funders will have identified areas of under-spend.

How to win future funding?

The following practical tips, which involve communications and engagement approaches, may be helpful in planning your future funding strategy:

- 1 Involve potential funders in your advisory or governance groups, and align your project with their strategic objectives.** If you are dependent on future internal funding, the support and active involvement of an executive sponsor may be essential. If you are likely to need external funding, you may benefit from involving a commissioner in your decision making from the outset. Your success will depend on your ability to align your work with their objectives.
- 2 Understand how you will measure and communicate impact from day one.** Funders and commissioners will need to see evidence of impact. The impact of your work may be measured in terms of clinical outcomes, efficiency or productivity benefits and/or benefits in patient experience. It will be important to liaise with commissioners early on in your project so that you understand what evidence they will require to commission your work. This will help ensure that you collect the right data to be able to demonstrate impact at the end of the project. For larger projects, consider involving an independent academic partner to help run a formal evaluation. You may also be able to refer to existing evidence in support of the intervention in academic literature.
- 3 Keep your communications focused on benefits and impact.** Find ways to make the impact of the work feel tangible to potential funders; and, in describing your project, focus on the outcomes on the frontline.
- 4 Even when dealing with funders, do not underestimate the power of **storytelling**.** Alongside the data measures, stories that demonstrate a change in a person's or team's life can be powerful.
- 5 Ensure you have the skills in place to understand your costs and the potential financial benefits of the work, and to develop a business case.** If you have the support of your Finance Director or other managers or members of your finance/data teams in your organisation, you will be better placed to tap into people with these skills. They can help you identify who might pay for, and who benefits financially from, the work. For example, some improvements can be cash-releasing or can boost productivity. They can also help you build the messages about potential cost savings.
- 6 Have a clear 'unique selling point' (USP) message for your project.** Be clear about the key benefit it brings and stick to this line when talking about your project.
- 7 Expand your networks.** By engaging senior clinical, policy or managerial champions, you may be better placed to influence potential funders, particularly if independent champions will endorse your work. You may also be able to get advice on your business case or potential funding sources by tapping into improvement networks, such as members of the Q initiative, the UK Improvement Alliance and Academic Health Science Networks.



COMMUNICATIONS TO SECURE FUNDING TO SUSTAIN SPREAD: a guide



What others say

“Of course clinical outcomes are key, but you also have to address the business case. In a challenging environment how do you show that what you are proposing adds value and improves efficiency? You have to show why your intervention is better than the next idea.”

Michael Nation, Development Director, Kidney Research UK

“We have found it really helpful to have an independent evaluation partner who has brought added rigour to the way we assess and measure our impact. Her independence increases credibility, and the formative evaluation work has helped us keep our executive sponsor engaged and supportive.”

Tom Downes, Consultant Physician and Geriatrician and Health Foundation Quality Improvement Fellow

Resources

Download an example business case from NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement that has been used successfully to secure resources for regular case reviews.

http://www.institute.nhs.uk/safer_care/paediatric_safer_care/get_started.html