



Midlands DSU Network

Decision Support Centre

Decision Support
Unit Network
Newsletter
May 2021

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Publications

[Evaluation guide](#)

[DSU Design Guide](#)

Introduction

Welcome to the May newsletter for the Midlands Decision Support Unit (DSU) Network. This edition of the newsletter looks back at the progress we have made in 2020/21 and how we are supporting local systems to make use of this work. It also looks forward to the work programme that we have agreed with the network for 2021/22.

We are continuing to work with local systems to support the development of local DSUs to provide each Integrated Care System (ICS) and NHSE/I Directly Commissioned Services with:

- Independent analytical insight for questions of strategic importance
- Access to knowledge
- Support for effective, evidence-informed translation of analysis into action
- Ensuring that the ICS becomes a learning system and embraces evaluation as a fundamental part of implementation
- Advancing decision quality

We have published our [DSU design guide](#) and are looking forward to running locally-tailored DSU design sessions with each of our systems.

Applied Analytics Projects, Chief Analyst Steven Wyatt

We have started to launch the findings from our 2020/21 analytics projects:

- Inequalities in access to planned care: causes and consequences
- Classifying outpatient activity by function
- Inequalities in access to mental health services for children and young people

For each project, there will be a regional report and a report for each ICS. We will also publish the code that was used to generate the analysis to enable local systems to replicate the analysis. The findings will be presented to the system at a regional webinar, as well as presenting the technical details of the projects to the Midlands Analysts Network. We are also planning a series of locally tailored workshops to support local systems in their action planning to help you to respond to the challenges presented in the reports.

Our 1st project, **Inequalities in access to elective hospital care**, is currently being launched. It was presented at the **Midlands Analyst Network Huddle** on 22 April 2021. We will be hosting a webinar on **12 May 2021** to present the findings from the project. This session will be recorded and will be made available after the event. The webinar is the precursor to supporting your systems to consider action planning around elective care, and we are working with colleagues to facilitate these sessions.

Register [here](#) for this webinar.

Feedback

[How can analysis help clinicians improve services? Interview with Dr Anna Lock](#)

Some reflections from Dr Anna Lock, in discussion with Justine Wiltshire and Lucy Hawkins, on how the Strategy Unit's innovative [end of life care analysis](#) can be used to help clinicians to improve services.



Upcoming Events

Applied Analytics

12 May
Inequalities in access to elective hospital care

Analysts Network

6 May
Introducing the **Health Service Modelling Associates** Programme

20 May
Inequalities in Access to Mental Health Services for Children and Young People

17 June
Classifying Outpatient Activity by Function

Evaluation Network

2 June
Introduction to evaluation

16 June
Qualitative research 1

30 June
Qualitative research 2

2021/22 Work Programme

The DSU Strategic Board have agreed the following priorities to support the next phase of evolution for the decision support units in 2021/22:

- Formation of an active DSU in each ICS and NHSE/I Midlands
- Agreement of our next wave of analytical projects
- Agreement on the priorities for our training and development programme
- Development of a communities of practice approach to supporting local and cross system implementation and improvement - insight into action
- Start to undertake collaborative projects across the network
- Build the profile of the DSU Network to attract further resource on behalf of the system

Applied Analytics – Chief Analyst Steven Wyatt

We have agreed the following priority projects in 2021/22:

1. Strategies to reduce health inequalities in planned hospital care
2. Patterns of healthcare use amongst people with learning difficulties
3. What are the health implications of reduced access to care during the COVID 19 pandemic?

More details will follow as these projects are developed

Training and Development Programme - Programme Lead: Mohammed Mohammed

The programmes planned for 2021/22 are:

- System dynamics for analysts
- Leadership development for analysts
- Population health management for analysts
- Evaluating complex interventions for analysts
- Decision quality and critical thinking for leaders

We are developing a more detailed prospectus of our training opportunities and will share this soon.

Plans are underway for **INSIGHT 2021** and we will update you as soon as we can. If you have any ideas for local contributions, please do get in touch rachel.caswell@nhs.net

Opportunities for DSU Partners

Post-COVID Care - the Strategy Unit are working with regional NHS and public health colleagues on a rapid learning approach to build capacity for teams to adapt and improve service delivery based on the **learning health system** model. This is to meet the needs of the estimated 1 in 10 people who have had COVID who continue to experience symptoms beyond 12 weeks and to support the development of new assessment services.

We see the **DSU network** as a key partner in developing this learning health system and will share more with you in coming weeks. In the meantime, if you're interested in finding out more or would like to get involved, please get in touch with alison.turner14@nhs.net



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The DSU Networks

Evaluation Network - Head of Evaluation: Paul Mason

Building on the publication of the [evaluation guide](#), the evaluation network has planned a series of seminars for anyone interested in developing their evaluation skills. The purpose of the training is to:

- Promote better understanding of evaluation as essential to service improvement
- Increase qualitative research skills alongside existing courses for Midlands analysts
- Build capacity for evaluation as commissioners and/or internal projects

Each session will introduce different evaluation methods and demonstrate how and when to employ them.

02/06 Session 1: **Introduction to evaluation**

16/06 Session 2: **Qualitative research 1**

30/06 Session 3: **Qualitative research 2**

For more information about the evaluation network, contact paul.mason14@nhs.net. To register for your **free** place, please contact david.callaghan@nhs.net

Analysts Network - Network Lead: Rachel Caswell

The analysts network meets for a fortnightly huddle. Our most recent and upcoming events include:

22/04: **Inequalities in access to planned care**: causes and consequences

06/05: Introducing the **Health Service Modelling Associates (HSMA)** Programme - a training opportunity

20/05: **Inequalities in Access to Mental Health Services for Children and Young People**

17/06: **Classifying Outpatient Activity by Function**

For more information about the **Midlands Analyst Network** or **the huddles** contact rachel.caswell@nhs.net

Evidence Network - Head of Knowledge: Alison Turner

We are setting up the knowledge and evidence network, aiming for a first meeting in June or July 2021. Work is underway to create a 'who's who' of network members to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaborative working. We are planning training and development activities and would be interested to hear your views on what would be most useful. We are here to support evidence review and knowledge mobilisation throughout the DSU network and will be engaging in activities which aim to develop:

- A clear, transparent and explicit knowledge base
- Capacity to use evidence within the DSU network
- Proactive knowledge sharing
- Awareness of knowledge gaps to inform evaluation/innovation
- Sustainable collaborative learning

Lastly, a reminder to share your publications so we can include them in the DSU Knowledge Library. If you're in an evidence/knowledge role, please do get in touch alison.turner14@nhs.net

News from the Strategy Unit

Strategy Unit and Health Economics Unit appointed to provide analytical support to the 'New Hospitals Programme' - The Strategy Unit, working in collaboration with their sister team the Health Economics Unit, have been appointed to support the Department for Health and Social Care's 'New Hospitals Programme'.

Share your good practice in increasing vaccine uptake - The Strategy Unit will undertake a rapid qualitative project to identify, collate and share, good practice across England in increasing COVID-19 vaccine uptake.