

# sdo news

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## Increase in budget for SDO

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SDO Centre Director,  
Pamela Baker

The SDO Programme has been handed a resounding vote of confidence with the news that its annual commissioning budget is to be increased up to £15 million over time.

The exciting news was announced in conjunction with the January launch of the Department of Health's new national health research strategy: **Best Research for Best Health**.

"We not only see this as a major vote of confidence, but it also signals a challenging turning point in the life of our still relatively young Programme", responds SDO Centre Director, Pamela Baker.

According to Baker the timing of the increased funding announcement was fortuitous in that the Programme had just commenced work on commissioning a critical strategic review of its work activities in order to inform its future research agenda and possibly new ways of working.

"We have entered a process of developing a new five-year strategy for the Programme. We feel the further funding could well make it easier for us to consider additional or expanded streams of work", Baker adds.

At a more practical level she is of the opinion that the Programme's academic leads would need to move swiftly to identify new ways of best utilising the money in that "commissioning needs to start straight away".

Additional staff and resources might also need to be deployed in order for the Programme to remain "targeted, timely and relevant", she added.

### New strategic partner

In another interesting development, the SDO Programme has begun the process of investigating a strategic alliance with the newly-established NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement (NIII).

At a recent meeting of the two organisations it was agreed that there were indeed many areas of

common interest and scope for co-operation.

Representatives from both sides are currently working on drawing-up a **memorandum of understanding** to define the practicalities of what is hoped will turn out to be an innovative new working relationship.

Speaking at the meeting SDO Programme Director Stephen Davies commented that one of the SDO Programme's greatest challenges was that organisations were often judged by perceptions.

"I'm afraid that in our case the picture isn't rosy. We still have a low profile among NHS managers which directly affects our ability to influence the services they deliver".

He felt that the SDO Programme needed the assistance of high-profile organisations such as the NHS Institute to understand NHS user-communities and get research evidence into practice.

"This is an exciting time and there are indeed opportunities for us to do innovative things together", he concluded.

Institute Chief Executive, Professor Bernard Crump, said that although the new organisation didn't have the same delivery mandate as the former NHS Modernisation Agency, the research evidence-base nevertheless remained central to what his organisation did.

"We take care not to produce recommendations for the NHS counter to the research evidence-base, unless help is needed quickly and there isn't an evidence-base," he explained.

"There are indeed a number of overlaps and synergies between our organisations that need to be explored."



Exploring links: Bernard Crump and Stephen Davies

## Director's message



The new national strategy for health research, 'Best Research for Best Health', announced a doubling of the SDO Programme's budget over the next few years.

I am very mindful that not many parts of the health service will be seeing funding growth on this scale over the next few years and this places an even greater responsibility upon us to make sure that what SDO does is of real value to the service.

The questions of how we make the knowledge we commission relevant to current issues but also enduring, and how we ensure its transfer to those who can best make use of it, remain at the heart of our mission. To respond to the new national strategy, we have launched SDO's own process of strategic review and we aim to publish a draft five-year strategy this summer. We will ensure that this draft is made widely available for comment and I hope you will let us know your views when the time comes.

**Stephen Davies**  
Programme Director

## SDO looks to simplify commissioning projects

Mountains of paper work associated with preparing SDO project proposals will hopefully soon be a relic of the past.

In a determined effort to streamline its commissioning process the SDO Programme, in collaboration with the Big Oxford Computer Company (BOCC), has developed an innovative electronic commissioning and appraisal system, dubbed 'e-CAS'.

The system has been designed in such a way that it will allow for the online submission of proposals and thereby eliminate multiple form filling and bulky, last minute parcel deliveries.

According to SDO Programme Manager, Damian O'Boyle, three immediate advantages for the researcher spring to mind:

- Firstly, there will be no need for the researchers to send in the 25 hard copies historically required, as applicants will simply provide all the details online.

- Secondly, e-CAS will provide each applicant with a unique identification number against which they will be able to store their curricula vitae and access their previous proposals.
- Finally, the system will provide alerts when data is missing or deadlines for submission are approaching, thus reducing application error.

He adds: "e-CAS is an effort on behalf of the SDO Programme to make the commissioning experience that much more efficient and user-friendly for applicants and administrator alike.

"Our annual evaluation questionnaire alerted us to the need for a new system and e-CAS is good evidence of how we're listening to our stakeholders and improving processes wherever necessary."

It is anticipated that, following testing, e-CAS will be up and running by the end of the year.

## Focus on the researcher: Rob Horne and concordance



Professor Rob Horne (Professor of Psychology in Health Care) of the University of Brighton was the successful applicant in an SDO call for proposals to undertake a scoping exercise on:

'Concordance,

adherence and compliance in medicine taking'.

Medicine-taking is an important part of ensuring improved health care outcomes. This work, commissioned on behalf of the Medicines Partnership, was designed to draw together current thinking on medicine-taking and strengthen the evidence base in this particular area of service delivery.

Said Professor Horne: "Nonadherence to appropriately prescribed medicines is a major health burden in its own right... this project was timely and set out to provide a conceptual map of this complex area and identify priorities for future research to optimise patient care and

service delivery".

"Working with the SDO enabled my team and I to apply our academic work to hopefully improve the delivery of services at the sharp end of the NHS".

Amongst other findings, the report suggests that:

- nonadherence to appropriately prescribed medicines is a global health problem of major relevance to the NHS;
- nonadherence prevents patients from gaining access to the best treatment, and this may be particularly problematic in chronic medical conditions, including current NHS priorities, and;
- the challenges for research in medication adherence are similar to those for other health-related behaviours such as smoking cessation, exercise and diet: how to influence and change behaviour.

Professor Horne's final report will shortly be available on the SDO website at [www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk](http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk). An SDO briefing paper is also currently under production.

# Commissioned projects

Since November 2005, the date of the last newsletter, the SDO Programme has contracted the following projects. They are listed by theme. Further details may be found on the SDO Programme website at [www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk](http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk)

## Evaluating Models

- SDO 107 – The transition from paediatric to adult diabetes services: what works, for whom and in what circumstances?
- SDO 109 – Developing evidence based & acceptable stepped care systems in mental health care: an operational research project
- SDO 112 – What is the optimum model of service delivery for transient ischaemic attack?
- SDO 119 – A multi-context, multi-method assessment of the contribution of nurses to chronic disease management in England and Wales
- SDO 120 – Evaluation of the National Infarct Angioplasty project pilots
- SDO 121 – The nursing, midwifery and health visiting contribution to CDM: a whole systems approach
- SDO 122 – Evaluating the nursing, midwifery and health visiting contribution to models of chronic disease management
- SDO 131 – In-depth study of three e-Health approaches to the enhancement of clinical care and its delivery
- SDO 132 – Specialist rehabilitation for neurological conditions: literature review and mapping study

## Patient and Carer Centred Services

- SDO 113 – User & carer-centred respite care for people with dementia: developing methods of evaluating the effectiveness of different models
- SDO 116 – Attitudes towards & satisfaction with services among deliberate self-harm patients: a systematic review of the literature
- SDO 117 – Transition from CAMHS to adult mental health services (TRACK): a study of policies, process and user & carer perspective
- SDO 123 – Needs and experiences of services by individuals with progressive disabling neurological conditions and their carers: a bench-marking study
- SDO 124 – Integrated services for people with long-term neurological conditions: evaluation of the impact of the National Framework

## Workforce Issues

- SDO 114 – Integration of social care staff within community mental health teams

## SDO Research Methods

- SDO 118 – Knowledge transfer and exchange assessor project

# Centre Director's message



The start to 2006 has been a very positive one.

As the lead article explains, the SDO Programme has been given a resounding vote

of confidence and we look forward to commissioning even more exciting and valuable projects with the additional monies supplied by the Department. New areas for the Programme include SDO interests within public health and those matched under UKCRC themes.

In January 2006 we commissioned RAND Europe to undertake a strategic review of the Programme which culminated in March with a Programme strategy day. The final report will guide SDO policy over the coming years and we await the recommendations with great interest.

Some exciting projects have recently come to fruition. Our joint briefing paper with the charity Rethink has been a great success and at the time of printing, been requested by over 25,000 individuals. Additionally, Professor Matthew Cooke's project on 'Reducing attendance and waits in A&E departments' is to be reproduced in the Canadian journal 'Healthcare Quarterly' and will be accompanied by the comments of three CEO's on how the lessons apply in their organisations.

As usual, keep an eye on our website over the coming months for more final reports and briefing papers. Amongst others you can expect the outcomes from Dr. Marianna Fotaki's work on 'Patient choice and the organisation and delivery of health services'.

**Pamela Baker**  
Centre Director

# New SDO publications



## Sharing mental health information with carers: pointers to good practice for service providers

This briefing paper summarises research undertaken by the Health Services Research Department, Institute of Psychiatry, Kings College London and the charity Rethink and suggests that more information and a recognition of the importance of the carer, can lead to better outcomes for both service users and carers.

This briefing paper and full report can be accessed at [www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/carers.htm](http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/carers.htm)



## Achieving high performance in health care systems: the impact and influence of organisational arrangements

This briefing, based upon a literature review by Sheaff *et al* (2004) at Manchester University illustrates what is known and not known about how organisational factors influence performance.

The briefing paper and full report can be accessed at [www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/studyinghealthcare.htm](http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/studyinghealthcare.htm)



## Extending the practice of allied health professionals in the NHS

This briefing summarises work undertaken by McPherson *et al* (2004). It presents the main findings of a review of the literature evaluating extended practice in five allied health professional groups and concludes that an extension of roles may help to solve medical workforce shortages and reduce waiting lists.

The briefing paper and full report can be accessed at [www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/evaluatingmodels.htm](http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/evaluatingmodels.htm)

# SDO/CEO Research Network

During 2005 the idea of an NHS Trust Research Support Network was formulated following discussions with a Forum of Trust Chief Executives that supports the SDO's programme of research.

The need for this Network has since been given added impetus in response to the launch of the National Institute for Innovation and Improvement and the publication of the Department's strategy for NHS R&D, Best Research for Best Health.

As such, the SDO Programme is currently canvassing for interest in being part of the Network.

NCCSDO Academic Nick Goodwin explained that the network proposal emerged from the following findings about research into NHS organisations:

- there is a gap between research and practice which limits the extent to which knowledge

acquired is translated into practice

- the number of current NHS Trust sites participating in organisational research is limited and needs to be increased
- research design and methods need to be developed in partnership with NHS Trusts so they meet their relevant research needs and help improve the usefulness of findings
- there is a need to improve the process of gaining research governance locally which often suffer from significant delays
- a need to gain support from NHS Trusts through a commitment to test or pilot research findings.

SDO intends to test and develop the concept of the Network at a CEO meeting on 25 May and launch in June.

## ABOUT THE SDO PROGRAMME

The NHS Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) R&D Programme is a national programme of research funded as part of the Department of Health's research and delivery agenda.

The SDO Programme has been established to produce and promote the use of research evidence about how the organisation and delivery of services can be improved to increase the quality of patient care, ensure better strategic outcomes and contribute to improved public health.

The National Co-ordinating Centre for the SDO Programme (NCCSDO) is based at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and manages the SDO Programme.

For further information about the NCCSDO or the SDO Programme visit our website at: [www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk](http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk)

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In order to produce a newsletter that is both informative and newsworthy your feedback would be greatly appreciated. Please email comments, suggestions or ideas to: [emma.hawkrige@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:emma.hawkrige@lshtm.ac.uk) or call 020 7612 7984.

## New SDO calls advertised

### Within the Access to Healthcare theme

- PC144 – The effect of patient choice on access to care
- PC171 – The use of information by patients and carers to make choices. General study on information
- PC172 – The use of information by patients and carers to make choices. Study on information to facilitate appropriate choices by children and young people
- PC173 – The effect of different patient choice regimes in the United Kingdom
- PT154 – To evaluate a new model improving access to psychological therapies

### Within the Studying Healthcare Organisations theme

- CN147 – Clinical networks for the care of children and young people

### Within the Patient and Carer-centred Services theme

- ELC141 – Research on generalist services for people at the end of life
- LD164 – Research priorities for people with learning disabilities

The next call for proposals will be advertised on 17 May 2006.

## The Fifth National SDO Conference CME Accredited

# Delivering Better Health Services

A one day conference for those concerned with the delivery and management of effective, evidence-based healthcare

Tuesday 9 May 2006  
Savoy Place, London

With keynote speakers:

**Professor Bernard Crump**  
Chief Executive – NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement

**Dr David Colin-Thome**  
National Clinical Director for Primary Care – Department of Health

For more information, please contact  
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