

CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

1 Introduction

The National Institute for Health Research Service Delivery and Organisation Programme (NIHR SDO) wishes to commission a review of the literature in the area of knowledge management in health care organisations to help inform the SDO Programme and other NIHR programmes, NHS institutes etc on approaches to knowledge management and translation that can be implemented in the UK. The intention is to add to the evidence base that is relevant to:

- Knowledge management in health care organisations in England;
- How research evidence impacts on clinical and general management.

This call is for a review that synthesises the literature on knowledge management and provides recommendations for NIHR on approaches to knowledge management. This brief sets out the context for this topic area and indicates issues that might fruitfully be investigated. For those interested in making an application the Full Proposal Application form and associated guidance notes are available from the SDO website (www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/ecashome.html) and should be read in conjunction with this Research Brief.

2 Current call for proposals

This current call for a review on the practice of knowledge management forms part of a programme of research arising from concerns that evidence on health services delivery and organisation is not well utilised by organisational decision makers. Studying health care organisations to understand the most effective ways to organise health care services is a fundamental programme of work for the SDO. The research programme has to-date covered a wide range of topics examining health care services delivery and organisation. A key part of the programmes work has, however, also been to examine how research is used by health care organisations. Previous studies commissioned by SDO have included research on the diffusion of innovations (Greenhalgh et al SDO/38/2002) and work on change management (Iles and Sutherland SDO/4/2000). Following the Cooksey review of health research the SDO Programme has been given a specific remit to develop its knowledge translation and mobilisation role. As part of the Programmes work in this area we wish to commission research on knowledge management with particular reference to the utilisation of research evidence by health care organisations to provide

evidence on how health care organisations make best use of such knowledge and research evidence.

Nutley et al (2007) have argued that there is a gap in understanding about research impact at a *meso-organisational* level which lies between the micro level of clinical practice and the macro level of health policy. Recent analysis by the SDO Programme suggests that identifying research impact at an organisational level is complex and that identifying organisational approaches to knowledge utilisation requires further research (Allen et al 2007, Peckham et al Forthcoming). To this end SDO intends to commission a number of empirical projects that examine the process and experience of knowledge management in health care contexts. In advance of this empirical work SDO wishes, however, to commission a review of the existing literature and practice on research utilisation in health care organisations. The aim of this review will be to provide advice to the SDO Programme and other NIHR programmes, NHS institutes etc on approaches to knowledge management and translation that can be implemented in the UK and provide a comprehensive source of evidence for health care organizations in England. The results of this synthesis project should be available in early Autumn 2008 in order to inform the empirical research to be commissioned by SDO.

This programme of research is closely related to other SDO themes and applicants should familiarise themselves with research previously commissioned by SDO (see <http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/commissionedprojects.htm>). Of particular relevance are projects on organisational relationships, change management and organisational culture. SDO is also commissioning research on innovation adoption and is currently commissioning a review of the literature on the adoption of technological innovations in health care organisations. There is likely to be some overlap with this proposed literature and scoping review.

Applicants should familiarise themselves with relevant research already commissioned by other NHS R&D programmes (such as the Policy Research Programme PRP) and the Health Technology Assessment Programme) to ensure that they can demonstrate that their proposals do not duplicate other research.

3 The scoping review

SDO is primarily interested in the uptake of research knowledge in different organisational settings including primary and secondary care providers and within commissioning organisations. The focus of the review should be on organisational processes for knowledge management and research utilisation providing a synthesis of the literature on how research knowledge is used in areas such as service development, management decision-making, developing local policy (eg commissioning strategies, service configuration), supporting implementation of guidelines, introducing new working practices and organisational change.

Knowledge management is a rapidly developing branch of generic organisational and management studies. The literature includes international authors including Japanese (Ichijo and Nonaka, 2006) and American authors (Pfeffer and Sutton,

1999) as well as UK authors (Newell et al, 2004). Overviews, integrated models and critiques are also beginning to appear (Hislop, 2004; Jashapara, 2004).

The literature review should seek to locate the most influential work and models which has emerged from this expanding generic literature base. Of particular interest will be work which looks at knowledge management within other professionalized settings such as law firms (Empson, 2007), accounting or consulting. Particular implications for knowledge management in health care organisations should be brought out and any substream of literature on knowledge management within specifically health care settings reviewed.

Previous research has identified a range of key potential research questions relevant to a knowledge management perspective. For example Alavi and Leidner (2001) suggest a generic research agenda that examines knowledge creation, knowledge storage and retrieval, knowledge transfer and knowledge application. Within the specific domain of health care, Nutley et al (2004) identify five key questions:

- Can we distinguish between different types of knowledge and what implications this has for knowledge management strategies?
- What are the key processes and approaches involved in creating and using knowledge in organisations? Can these be blended or do they contain largely irreconcilable tensions?
- Is it possible to identify best practice(s) in knowledge management?
- What do knowledge management practices imply for the design of key roles and responsibilities?
- What are the main challenges for knowledge management, what are the barriers and enablers?

It is expected that the review will draw on these and similar frameworks to scope the existing literature on research utilisation within an organisational context, identify and examine different approaches to supporting knowledge management and research utilisation in health care organisations. The review should examine relevant literature from areas similar to health care including other professional organisations and health agencies in the UK and in other relevant countries. The review should also include some empirical work which ensures the views of key stakeholders in knowledge generating organisations such as NIHR, agencies engaged in knowledge translation or transfer (eg NICE) and those responsible for using knowledge in NHS organisations are adequately surfaced. Our specific interest is in the processes that support or hinder knowledge utilisation in health care agencies and how organisations identify and then use 'best knowledge' in relation to health care organisations at the 'meso' level referred to above (eg 'best' HRM policies; 'best' approaches to strategy making or education and training).

The key objectives are to:

- Examine the literature on knowledge management and research utilisation from a UK and international perspective
- Examine the organisational processes that support knowledge management and the use of research evidence in organisations

- Identify models and approaches to knowledge management and translation
- Identify criteria for successful knowledge management in NHS organisations
- Identify what factors support research uptake and utilisation by NHS organisations
- Identify key areas requiring further research
- Make recommendations to SDO and NIHR on how to develop knowledge management activities that support research utilisation by NHS organisations in England.

There is already an extensive literature on many aspects of knowledge management and research utilisation although only part of this is specifically related to the NHS. It is expected that this review will synthesise existing knowledge and identify gaps for further research.

References:

Alavi M and Leidner D (2001) Review. Knowledge management and knowledge management systems: conceptual foundations and research issues. *MIS Quarterly* 25(1), 107-136.

Allen P, Peckham S, Anderson A and Goodwin N (2007) Commissioning research which is used: The experience of the NHS Service Delivery and Organisation Research and Development Programme. *Evidence and Policy*. 3(1): 119-134.

Empson, L. (2007) *'Managing The Modern Law Firm'* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Greenhalgh T, Robert G, Bate P, Kryakidou O, Macfarlane F and Peacock R (2004) *How to Spread Good Ideas: A systematic review of the literature on diffusion, dissemination and sustainability of innovations in health service delivery and organisation* London: NCCSDO. (<http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/files/project/38-final-report.pdf>)

Hislop. D. (2004) *'Knowledge Management in Organisations'* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Ichijo, K. and Nonaka, I. (2006) *'Knowledge Creation and Management'*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Jashapara, A. (2004) *'Knowledge Management – An Integrated Approach'*, London: FT Prentice Hall

Newell, S., Robertson, M., Scarborough, H. and Swan, J. (2004) *'Managing Knowledge Work'*, Basingstoke: Palgrave

Nutley S, Davies H and Walter I (2004) *Conceptual synthesis 2. Learning from knowledge Management*. Research Unit for Research Utilisation, University of St Andrews.

Nutley S, Walter I and Davies H (2007). *Using Evidence: How Research can Inform Public Services* Bristol: Policy Press.

Peckham S, Willmott M, Allen P, Anderson S and Goodwin N 'Assessing research impact: the SDO experience' *Evidence and Policy*

Pfeffer, J. and Sutton, R. (1999) '*The Knowing Doing Gap*', Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press.

Sheaff, R, Schofield, J., Mannion, R., Dowling, B., Marshall, MN. And McNally, R. (2004) Organisational factors and performance: a review of the literature. London: SDO.

4 Call for Proposals

The SDO Programme is seeking applications for a review that builds on previous SDO work that is linked to research utilization and organizational decision making. The project will last for a maximum of 12 months and will be funded to a maximum of £100,000. Value for money will be an important consideration in decision making and all costs must be justified.

The application process will be in one stage and proposal applicants are invited to take into consideration the following important points of guidance.

5 Appropriate areas of investigation

- The proposed project should be clearly linked to the objectives of the SDO Programme
- It should develop work clearly located within the key topic areas identified above.
- The proposed project should be fully cognisant of current policy priorities, managerial concerns and practice-level preoccupations. It should draw on and clearly relate to, for example, National Service Frameworks (NSFs), national implementation programmes, pressing and emergent policy issues, and the research priorities as articulated by other important national bodies and The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).
- Although there is no restriction on where in the UK funded work can take place, all work proposed should have clear and demonstrable relevance to the English health care system.

6 Involvement of stakeholders

- SDO research is largely stakeholder-driven. Applicants should demonstrate clear involvement of all relevant stakeholders (including where relevant, local communities, lay people, service users, carers and minority ethnic communities as well as health care practitioners and managers) during the design, execution and communication of the research.

- A core issue is the practical application, communication and uptake of research findings. Applicants are invited to consider the nature of expected research outputs and how these might be better communicated to important policy, managerial and practice audiences in ways that are likely to enhance impact.
- Given the core research concerns of the SDO Programme, and the need to build robust bodies of knowledge, successful projects are most likely to involve partnership working between experienced academic teams and those more closely involved in the design and delivery of services.
- It is a core concern of the SDO Programme that all commissioned projects should pay full attention to the needs and experiences of services users and their carers. Thus proposed projects should be explicit in communicating how the proposed work has potential implications for service delivery that could lead to enhanced public and community engagement.

7 Nature of the investigations

- In addressing issues in a way likely to lead to the wide applicability of findings, **firm theoretical and conceptual underpinnings in tandem with substantial empirical work are likely to be important features.** Approaches that utilise and take forward wider social science theories are encouraged.
- Appropriate frameworks for analysis of secondary data should be used.
- Relevant stakeholders should be engaged in the process of the study.

8 Outputs from the proposed work:

- In outlining your research plans, you should make clear how findings will be communicated effectively to a wide variety of academic, policy and service audiences.
- Outputs from the review will inform SDO commissioning on empirical research on knowledge management and it is anticipated that such research will commence in late 2008.
- At a minimum, you will be expected to deliver the following written outputs from any proposed research: an executive summary (500 words) and research summary (5000 words) with clearly identified policy, managerial and practice implications; a full report detailing all the work undertaken; supporting technical appendices (80,000 words).
- In addition, on completion of the project, you should be prepared to work with the SDO to develop summaries of their work for wider audiences (for example, see the *Research Briefs* already developed from many completed SDO projects; www.sdo.LSHTM.ac.uk).
- You should outline plans for conference, seminar and other forms of dissemination to go alongside written communications.

- Where appropriate, the proposed work should be designed and delivered in a way that is likely to lead to significant high-quality peer-reviewed publications.

9 Application process and schedule

- The process of commissioning the study will be in **one stage** and a **full proposal** should be submitted via the online SDO electronic Commissioning and Appraisal System (eCAS): www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/ecashome.html

Further guidance regarding online submission is available on the eCAS website using the help guidance on each page. If you are a first time applicant you will need to register with eCAS. All applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with eCAS before the deadline for proposals.

All questions about this research call should be sent by e-mail only to **Phillip.Restarick@LSHTM.ac.uk** with the words '**RU244 Query**' in the subject/header.

- **Your full proposal should be submitted by 1pm on Friday 22 February 2008.** No paper-based submissions will be considered.
- Following submission of the proposal you will be notified no later than **April 2008**. The project should start no later than **June 2008**. **Please note that these dates are approximate and may be subject to change.**
- **The project will last a maximum of twelve months duration and will be funded up to a maximum of £100,000.** Proposed costs of the project should not exceed the limits stated. NHS R&D Programmes are currently funding Higher Education Institutions (HEI) at a maximum of 80% of Full Economic Cost (except for equipment over £50,000 – 100%). For non-HEI institutions, NHS R&D may fund 100% of costs. However, the SDO Programme reserves the right to award a grant for less than this maximum where appropriate.
- The SDO Programme will look favourably on proposals that include an element of research capacity building.
- You should indicate how you will work with the SDO Programme and relevant stakeholders to build in an active program for disseminating their research findings in policy, practice and research contexts. Where appropriate consideration should be given to linking your study with the appropriate Topic Specific Clinical Research Networks. Further information on these can be found at <http://www.ukcrn.org.uk/>
- You should ensure that your proposal complies with the Research Governance Framework. You will be required to provide proof of research ethics

committee approval for their project, if this is required. Further guidance on requirements can be found on the SDO website <http://www.sdo.lshtm.ac.uk/proposalresources.html>

- You will be expected to attend at least one meeting with the SDO Programme at their central London offices during the project lifetime and, as such, should ensure that travel costs are appropriately costed within the proposal budget. We anticipate that there will be informal discussions with NCCSDO throughout the duration of the project regarding the final report.
- Your final report will consist of three components. NCCSDO will provide templates and guidance notes for:
 - a 500-word executive summary
 - a 5000-word summary (content for a publishable SDO research summary)
 - a main report (plus appendices) which should not exceed 80,000 words.

Addendum

This document was published by the National Coordinating Centre for the Service Delivery and Organisation (NCCSDO) research programme, managed by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

The management of the Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) programme has now transferred to the National Institute for Health Research Evaluations, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC) based at the University of Southampton. Prior to April 2009, NETSCC had no involvement in the commissioning or production of this document and therefore we may not be able to comment on the background or technical detail of this document. Should you have any queries please contact sdo@southampton.ac.uk.