

## Training Funding Search Service Pilot Report 2017

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### Summary

The Trust library service ran a six month pilot of a Training Funding Search service between December 2016 and June 2017, to try to identify funding sources for members of staff who wanted to undertake development that could not be funded by the Trust.

Eight searches were carried out. A limited number of funding sources were found. Only two search recipients provided feedback and neither had followed up any of the sources, either because of timing or alternative training becoming available. Search requesters tended to be highly educated and qualified already, which limited the funding sources available.

The pilot suggested that it was not worth continuing with this service in this form. It was not clear whether a commercially produced database would be more helpful, or whether there simply are not many training funding sources available for healthcare professionals.

### 1. Project Aim and Background

Each year many staff within the Trust want to go on training courses or attend conferences or similar, but are not able to do so due to a lack of funding. Commercial databases of funding opportunities are available but these are expensive and it is not clear that they offer all organisations value for money. The Trust’s Learning and Development Group thought this was an area where the library might be able to help.

The aim of this project was to see if the library could replicate the service offered by commercial funding sources databases by identifying useful funding opportunities without it taking up too much time.

## 2. Training Funding Search Service

### 2.1. *Methodology*

The library offered a training funding search service for six months, from December 2016 to June 2017. Staff members seeking funding for professional development were encouraged to send in a form describing their requirements. People asking for a search were invited to give a deadline for receiving results – where this wasn't given a turnaround time of three weeks (initially) was used.

The service was promoted by both the Head of Learning and Leadership Development and the library service. It was advertised in the Trust newsletter, ePod, and on the library website. The form was available on the library website but most users of the service asked the library for it.

The searches were carried out mostly by the library manager and were predominantly internet-based. She also used a printed directory ('The guide to educational grants 2016/17') and the 'Healthcare Awards' spreadsheet produced by the (NHS) North West Awards Project Group. A post was sent to LIS-MEDICAL (a very active UK health librarians discussion list) to see if anyone else was offering a similar service and, if so, how they were searching. Searches took an average of 3.25 hours. A record was kept of many of the sources found, and a basic checklist developed, which meant that the searches took less time as the project went on.

Search results were sent back electronically.

A survey to find out about the usefulness (or otherwise) of the results was sent out in mid June 2017, with a reminder sent four weeks later – see Appendix 1.

### 2.2. *Activity*

Within the period covered by the pilot project, eight searches were carried out for six members of staff. A ninth search was carried out in late June and was not included in the survey because there was not enough time for the results to have been of use.

Five of the six people using the service were clinicians (psychologists, nurses or psychological therapists).

See Appendix 3 for further details of the search requesters and requests.

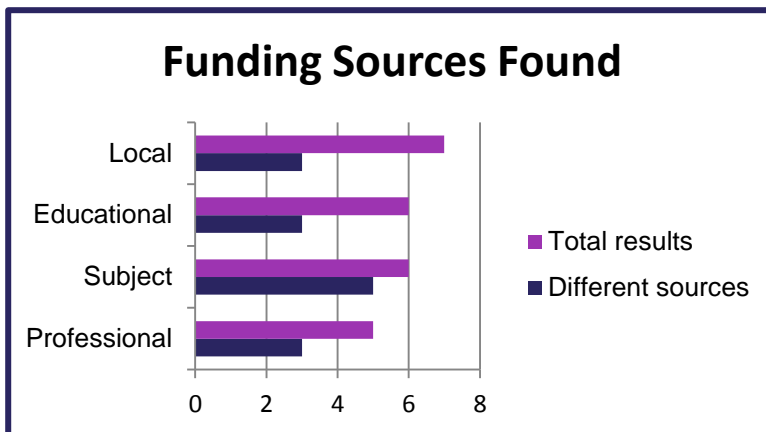
### 2.3. *Search results*

An average of three funding sources was identified in each set of search results (ranging from one to eight). The main categories of sources found were:

- Professional sources (e.g. bursaries or grants linked to professional associations)
- Subject-specific sources (i.e. bursaries or grants linked to the specific subject the requester was seeking funding to study, e.g. mindfulness)
- Educational sources (e.g. postgraduate bursaries)
- Local sources (e.g. Trust funds for people from particular areas)

Across the eight searches 24 results were given, but there were many duplicates so this only represented 14 different funding sources. One funding source was included in four sets of results, and three others were given three times each. See Appendix 2 for more detail on the search methodology and sources found.

As bursaries and grants from these funding sources tended to be limited in number, and open to a large range of



**Most cited funding source:**  
 Postgrad Solutions Study Bursaries.  
 £500 bursaries: 2 open to anyone in the UK regardless of subject, 1 distance learning and 1 computer science/IT

people, the chance of success in obtaining any money was very low.

The most common reasons why funding sources found were not included in search results was that the search requester was ineligible particularly on the grounds of age, existing level of educational qualifications and seeking funding for taught rather than research-based study. In addition many funding

sources were restricted to people in particular financial circumstances, with protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act or with links to a very specific geographical area – one of the difficulties in the project was the sensitivity and specificity of the eligibility criteria for funding awards and the extent to which it was appropriate to ask requesters for this information when asking what they were looking for. The search form was worded to leave it up to the requester how much information they chose to supply.

At the end of the project, details of the funding sources found were used to update the 'Bursaries and Funding' tab of the 'Healthcare Awards' spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is shared widely across NHS library services in England.

**2.4. How search results were used**

Two people responded to the survey asking if and how they had used the search results. Both were nursing staff (one staff nurse and one service manager). Both were seeking funding for postgraduate academic qualifications in mental health. Neither had followed up any of the funding source suggestions, one because of timing and the other because an alternative source of training without cost implications had become available. One commented that the service was a good idea and she would have followed up some of the suggestions if the timing had been right.

### 3. Conclusions

The Training Funding Search pilot project showed that there was some demand for this type of search, but the results found were of limited use to users of the service. It is clearly impossible for an NHS library service to replicate the range of funding sources available within a commercial database compiled by dedicated researchers; but it is not clear from this project whether the reason for results not being of use was due to the searcher missing relevant sources or because the sources available rarely matched the requirements of those using the service, who were generally already very well educated and professionally qualified. Informal comparison against resources from other NHS libraries (including the 'Healthcare Awards' spreadsheet) suggested that search results were in line with those found by other NHS librarians. This makes it hard to tell whether it would be worth investing in a commercial product in this area.

### 4. Recommendations and Action Points

Given the results of the pilot project, it does not seem worth continuing with this service in this form. If the Trust does want the library to continue to offer a service along these lines, the most feasible options would be:

- A very brief search following a strict protocol which limited the search to a few sources that had previously been identified
- Developing an online resource (possibly a web page) listing the most relevant funding sources for staff to check for themselves

It would also be worth looking at the audience for this service – it seems likely that it could carry more benefits for staff in lower bands.

## Appendix 1 – Impact Survey

### Training Funding Searches Impact Survey

This survey aims to evaluate whether it is worth continuing with the pilot Training Funding Search service. We would appreciate your feedback on how helpful you found the search results.

#### 1. Job title/occupation/profession

#### 2. What level training/development were you seeking funding for?

- Masters
- Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma
- First degree
- Other vocational/academic course
- Conference
- Other (please specify):

#### 3. Which broad subject area did your planned training/development cover?

- Mental health
- Physical healthcare
- IT/Informatics
- Other (please specify):

**4. Did you follow up any of the suggested funding sources?**

- Yes
- No

If yes, which? If no, why not?

**5. Did you obtain any funding as a result of the search?**

- Yes
- No
- Waiting to hear
- Not applicable

If yes, please give details

**6. Any other comments about the Training Funding Search service**

## Appendix 2 – Search Methods and Sources

After some trial and error the following grid was developed to provide some structure to the search process:

Funding Source	Details	Searched?
Professional		
Subject-related sources		
Sources relating to level of study		
Educational institution		
Guide to Educational Grants 2016/17		

### Typical sources searched:

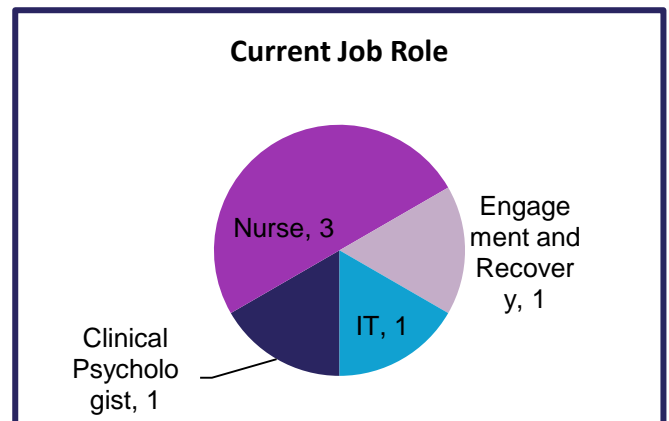
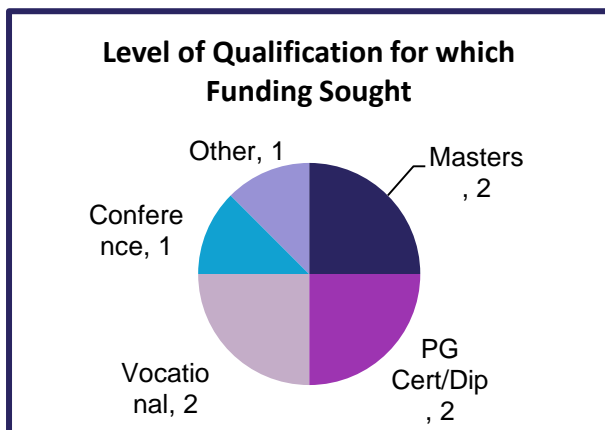
Source type	Typical sources searched
Professional	Royal College of Nursing British Psychological Society PsyPag
Subject-related sources	Specialist institutes/research organisations, e.g. Society for the Study of Addiction, Society for Reproductive and Infant Psychology
Sources relating to level of study	Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding Postgraduatestudentships.co.uk
Educational	University websites City and Guilds
Guide to Educational Grants 2016/17	[Grants linked to a wide range of criteria including geographical, professional, parental connections and social factors]

### Common reasons why requesters were ineligible for funds:

- Overqualified
- Not in receipt of benefits (that searcher was aware of)
- No connections to specific geographical location
- Seeking funding for taught course rather than research-based qualification

### Appendix 3 – Search Requests and Requesters

- 6 requesters
- Highest current qualifications ranged from Foundation Degree to PhD (all but one had a minimum of first/undergraduate degree)
- 8 requests – 6 mental health-related
- Half requests received were for postgraduate level taught courses





## Appendix 4 – Impact Survey Responses


### 1. Job title/occupation/profession

- Staff nurse
- Service manager/nurse


### 2. What level training/development were you seeking funding for?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Masters		50.00%	1
2	Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma		50.00%	1
3	First degree		0.00%	0
4	Other vocational/academic course		0.00%	0
5	Conference		0.00%	0
6	Other (please specify):		0.00%	0


### 3. Which broad subject area did your planned training/development cover?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Mental health		100.00%	2
2	Physical healthcare		0.00%	0
3	IT/Informatics		0.00%	0
4	Other (please specify):		0.00%	0

### 4. Did you follow up any of the suggested funding sources?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		0.00%	0
2	No		100.00%	2
If yes, which? If no, why not? (2) <a href="#">Hide</a>				
1	21/06/17 6:36PM ID: 59615445	Timing		
2	03/07/17 10:17PM ID: 60212046	Training has become available through regional clinical network which has no cost implications.		

### 5. Did you obtain any funding as a result of the search?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		0.00%	0
2	No		0.00%	0
3	Waiting to hear		0.00%	0
4	Not applicable		100.00%	2

### 6. Any other comments about the Training Funding Search service

1	21/06/17 6:36PM ID: 59615445	It is a very good idea, I liked that my workplace offered this and would have applied if the timing had been better.
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