Stirling Bryan (1998-2008)

I joined the Health Economics Facility (HEF) at HSMC in 1998 as a Senior Lecturer. For me this was a 'coming home'. I grew up in Birmingham and so I saw the opportunity to raise my sons as Brummies, and ensure that they became loyal Villa fans! They are now both staunch Villans and so they accuse me of inflicting on them a lifetime of pain and disappointment!

I look back at my time at HSMC with great fondness. I worked alongside some outstanding colleagues, many of whom I retain close connections with to this very day. It was the place where my research knowledge and experience broadened to encompass both 'rigour and relevance' aspects (to coin Chris Ham's phrase). This desire to undertake research that directly informs policy and practice led me to spend time in the US on a Harkness Fellowship at Stanford University, and then onto Canada. I am now based at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. My current chair is sponsored by one of the largest regional health authorities in British Columbia, Vancouver Coastal Health, and so my research programme engages with, and is guided by, senior policy leaders in BC.

HSMC provided the opportunity for HEF to launch its new Masters programme in Health Economics and Health Policy, given the existing infrastructure supporting a suite of HSMC Masters courses. The course has attracted many outstanding students, many of whom have gone on to significant roles in both the academic and policy worlds, and continues to thrive in the new Health Economics Unit.

Personally, I remain indebted to my colleagues at HSMC in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and I wish the current staff and faculty every success as they build a strong future for the Centre.

Health Economics Facility

The Health Economics Facility (HEF) was established in 1996 through a grant from the NHS West Midlands R&D Office. The Facility, the brainchild of Professor Richard Liford, was established to facilitate high quality health economics research, and to support clinical research teams in the West Midlands to include cost-effectiveness components in their research work. The founding director was Professor James Raftery and he rapidly brought together a very strong team, including both senior and junior faculty.

The Birmingham Health Economics Unit (as it is now called) has established itself as one of the leading UK health economics groups. The quality of the collaborative research undertaken by the team is demonstrated by many outstanding publications, including several papers in the Lancet and the BMJ. The original mandate for the group also required the establishment of a new Masters level course in health economics. The course has attracted many outstanding students, many of whom have gone on to significant roles in both the academic and policy worlds, and continues to thrive in the new Health Economics Unit.

The major policy development in the NHS at that time, of direct relevance to HEF, was the creation of NICE. The HSMC-based group secured a contract to undertake cost-effectiveness work to inform NICE's technology coverage decisions, and remained for many years one of the key supporting partner organisations for the Institute.

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