Reviewer's report

Title: Health research systems in change The case of Push the Pace in the National Institute for Health Research

Version: 0 Date: 30 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Pavel Ovseiko

Reviewer's report:

This is an expertly put together account of a continuous improvement programme at the UK's National Institute for Health Research. Its unique contribution lays in combining the authors' first-hand experience of programme design and implementation with critical reflection and insights from a substantial body of literature. The topic is clearly of national importance in the UK, and it is highly likely to be of considerable interest world-wide. I recommend that it is accepted for publication with minor discretionary revisions.

Title: consider replacing "story" with "case" to improve the visibility and discoverability of this opinion piece. Although "story" aptly describes the rich and beautifully flowing narrative, its logic is not dissimilar to the logic of business case studies (which is further alluded to by a reference to the Cranfield and so it might be usefully included in the curricular of the Cranfield, Ashridge, and other business schools).

Abstract: consider replacing "Main body" with "Discussion".

Some of the decision-makers mentioned in the text are co-authors, consider adding "(one of the co-authors of this paper)" or similar the first time they are mentioned in the text


Consider adding a textbox with bullet points summarising key lessons.

An apparent paucity of references to other health research funders signifies the novelty and importance of this paper in terms of leading the way in sharing best practice across the global community of health research funders. The authors might want to add a paragraph reflecting on how their experience and lessons might be generalised beyond the NIHR to inform similar programmes in other health research funding organisations, e.g. members of the UK's Association of Medical Research Charities, Irish Health Research Board, NIH, CIHR, etc.
**Level of interest**  
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English**  
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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Some of my research is currently funded by the NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre, rather than the NIHR directly.

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