UKCRC Information Systems Operational Group Recruitment sub-group

Recruitment Report and Survey findings – June 2017

UKCRC Information Systems Operation Group

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Recruitment Report and Survey findings

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Executive Summary

The first survey addressed the initial remit of the Recruitment working group, specifically to 'explore issues affecting Recruitment and Retention in IT'.

In order to achieve the remit, a survey was sent to the UK CRC Registered CTUs with the following questions:

1. How many IT staff (FTE) are there in your CTU supporting clinical trials-related IT activities?

2. Are you currently recruiting, or have you recently recruited to an IT position?

    If you answered yes to question 3 please provide answers to the following:

    a. The position title and grade

    b. How many rounds of advertising and interviews have been completed so far to recruit the position?

    c. Why is the new recruit needed (Replace Leaver, Retirement, New position, Other)

3. During this round of recruitment, how many applications were received?

4. Of the applications received during this round of recruitment, how many were shortlisted for interview?

5. Where do you usually advertise IT positions?

6. Would you be willing to add your IT position information (Job Descriptions etc.) to a central repository which would then be made available on the forum site to other CTUs?

    a. If you would like to discuss this further please add your email address here.

7. A more detailed survey will be distributed after the November meeting, to help inform that, please indicate your biggest barrier to successful recruitment at the moment?

8. Would you happy for us to contact you or someone else in your CTU for more information? If so please provide details below.

A web-based survey (SurveyMonkey™) was distributed to the UK CRC registered CTUs on October 20 2016 and the survey closed on October 27 2016.

The introductory rubric stated: 'This short survey is intended to capture the experiences of CTUs when they are attempting to fill IT roles. We would be grateful if you could complete it on behalf of your CTU. We hope to present the results of this survey at the ISOG national meeting in Birmingham on 1 November 2016 so responses will be anonymised. Individuals may be contacted for further information after that date.

In total, 27 of the 49 registered CTUs responded to the survey, a response rate of 55%.

In analysing responses, the group were looking for patterns across CTUs to ascertain whether there was any commonality in issues facing CTUs.

- Number of IT employees ranged from the very small CTU (1) to 24 (Larger) with an average of 7.2 members of IT staff.
- 15 out of 27 CTUs (55%) were recruiting at the time of the survey
- CTUs were using a variety of roles, job titles and grades
- 6 CTUs (22%) had carried out more than one round of recruitment
- 5 out of 15 (33%) of CTUs currently recruiting were recruiting to a new post. 10 out of 15 (66%) were recruiting to replace leavers

Following analysis of the data, the results were presented at the UK CRC Information Systems Working Group meeting on November 1 2016.

2nd Telephone Survey

A subsequent telephone survey was carried out between 23 February 2017 and 22 March 2017 with the 12 UK CRC registered CTUs that had agreed to be contacted in the first survey, with the following additional questions:

1. Is there a data management team in the CTU?
   a. If yes, are the data management and IT teams separate, or is data management included within the IT team?
2. How is the team structured / number of FTE staff and titles/grades of roles?
3. What is the total number of FTE staff in the CTU?
4. Who manages the data management team, is it at the trial level or are data managers managed by IT?
5. Does the data management team work on development of eForms within the clinical DBMS?
6. Do the data managers follow the same (technical) grade structure as the IT staff / programmers?
7. Do you have trouble recruiting to IT posts?
   a. If yes, does the level of IT post effect recruitment?
8. Is it easier to recruit to more junior roles?

Responses were obtained from 15 CTUs.

In analysing responses, the group were looking for patterns across CTUs to ascertain whether there was any difference in recruitment issues between those CTUs where data management positions were incorporated into the IT section, rather than where data management positions were outside of the IT section, and a designated separate activity. This is in addition to looking at whether technical work is assigned to a data management position, either within an IT section, or in a data management section.

1. Only 1/15 CTUs did not have a data management section in the CTU.

   a) Of the remaining 14 CTUs, 5 (35%) had a distinct data management section, 5 (35%) carried out data management activities under the management of the IT section, 4 (28%) had data management positions embedded within trial teams, rather than as a separate data management function, or as part of the IT team.

2. The number of IT and DM FTE staff, where DM and IT staff were a combined team ranged from 4 to 20 FTE positions.

   The number of FTE staff in a CTU with only IT staff in the IT section ranged from 5 to 15 FTE positions.

   Numerous titles are in use across the CTUs, including: Head of IT, Information Systems Manager, Clinical Trials IT Manager, Senior database manager, Database Programmer, Data Manager, Assistant data manager, Data Management Support Officer, Data Specialist, Data Management Assistant, IT Support Officer and Data Management Support Officer

3. The number of FTE staff in the CTU ranged from 30 to 150.

4. In 4 (28%) CTUs, data management staff were managed by a data management section, In 4 (28%) CTUs data management staff were managed within a trial management structure, in 2 CTUs data management staff were managed within the IT section. 4 CTUs had a different management structure, or a combination of the above.

5. In 4 (28%) CTUs, data management staff work on development of eForms within the clinical DBMS. In 10/14 (72%) data management staff do not developed eForms within the clinical DBMS. The remaining CTU did not carry out data management activities.

6. 10/15 (66%) of CTUs followed the same grade structure across both teams, 4/15 (27%) did not follow the same structure. The remaining CTU did not carry out data management activities.

7. 10/15 (66%) of CTUs have trouble recruiting to IT posts. 0 CTUs have no problems recruiting to IT posts. 5 (33%) of CTUs provided a different response ('No IT dept. therefore N/A', 'Sometimes', 'N/A', 'only to positions that require 5-6 years' experience', 'No or N/A-outsourced to university software house')

   - 10/15 (66%) of CTUs responded 'Yes', the level of IT post effects recruitment.

   - 1/15 (7%) CTU responded 'No' all levels of IT posts are difficult to recruit to.

   - 3/15 (33%) CTUs responded 'N/A'.

- 1 CTU provided a different response: 'More the type of person – has people at opposite ends of the age spectrum'.

8. 8/15 (53%) CTUs think it is easier to recruit to more junior roles. 1/15 responded No, ('all levels are difficult to recruit to'), 1/15 CTU responded 'No' (it's a developer's market'). 3 CTUs responded 'N/A', 2 CTUs provided a different response: ('Never done', 'Haven't done so yet.')

Methods and Findings

General comments

- CTUs have different structures – no one size fits all.
- CTUs have different definitions for the IT and data management roles – some perform programming tasks, some do not.
- Regardless of size, set up, and position definitions most CTUs struggle to recruit to both junior and senior positions.
- Generic wording explaining the position funding method in CTUs may encourage more applicants to apply for a position with a short contract of 12 months

How do we differentiate?
- Highlight job satisfaction
- Emphasise the altruistic contribution to the area of cancer research

Other types of benefits were discussed including:
- job sharing
- homeworking
- part-time hours

Appendix A – Copy of questionnaire for first survey

UK CRC Information Systems Operational Group

Recruitment questionnaire

1. **Please confirm the name of your Unit.**

   ....

2. **How many IT staff (FTE) are there in your CTU supporting clinical trials-related IT activities? (NB: Please do not include organisational-level IT staff that maintain the organisation's main IT infrastructure.)**

   ....

3. **Are you currently recruiting, or have you recently recruited to an IT position?**

   ....

4. **If you answered yes to question 3 please provide answers to the following:**

4a. **The position title and grade**

   ....

4b. **How many rounds of advertising and interviews have been completed so far to recruit the position?**

   ....

4c. **Why is the new recruit needed (Replace Leaver, Retirement, New position, Other.)**

   ....

4d. **During this round of recruitment, how many applications were received?**

   ....

4e. Of the applications received during this round of recruitment, how many were shortlisted for interview?

....

5. Where do you usually advertise IT positions?

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6. Would you be willing to add your IT position information (Job Descriptions etc.) to a central repository which would then be made available on the forum site to other CTUs?

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If you would like to discuss this further please add your email address here.

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7. A more detailed survey will be distributed after the November meeting, to help inform that, please indicate your biggest barrier to successful recruitment at the moment?

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8. Would you be happy for us to contact you or someone else in your CTU for more information? If so please provide details below.

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Thank you for participating in this survey.