

# A Force For Good

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## MY BACKGROUND

I joined Costello Medical over four years ago after graduating from the University of Cambridge. I am in a client-facing role as a Consultant in the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) division, but I also collaborate with the Health Economics division. Prior to joining, I had very little knowledge of the company, the industry, medical consultancy or indeed what HTA was. The first time I heard about HTA was during the recruitment process, where it formed part of the assessment and a presentation. I had no understanding of where I would sit within the business having studied Natural Sciences, but I found these steps of the process really interesting, and the recruitment team did a great job of deciding where my ‘home’ would be.

## WORKING WITHIN THE HTA DIVISION

One of the company's aims is to be a force “for good” and I truly believe that this is demonstrated through the work that we do, both with our clients, as well as our pro bono projects. In my division, there are really tangible examples of how our work can result in meaningful contributions to improving healthcare. The aim of our work in the HTA division is to demonstrate the value of a new treatment so that it can be made available through the NHS. There's something unique about the fact that the impact is clear-cut; there's a single “yes” or “no” answer from

the HTA body, such as NICE (the organisation which decides whether a treatment is made available through the NHS in England), that forms the culmination of the project.

If it's a yes, then a treatment will be available to patients that wasn't available before. Sometimes the decisions can be quite high-profile, if, for example, a new, curative treatment is approved for patients who had no previous treatment options. Knowing that my small team played a part to get that approved on the NHS is incredible. We know that our work has a very real impact on individuals and families - I even had a family friend who received one of the treatments that I worked on!

It's not just our division where these tangible contributions are visible – in the Literature Reviews and Synthesis division, one of the major clients is the UK National Screening Committee Public Health England and the team conducts evidence reviews that help the government agency decide whether to implement national screening programmes, for conditions such as cervical cancer, prostate cancer and pre-eclampsia, which can have a huge impact on the lives of patients and their families.

## CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

I really value the client relationships that we have at Costello Medical. Often, we have nurtured them ourselves and built up a trusting, open and transparent relationship over a long period of time - much like we have with our colleagues - which is so deeply embedded in our culture. We also have some influence over who we work with and what projects we take on, which gives us a lot of autonomy, and the respect towards our teams is never compromised.

We pride ourselves on making a difference and delivering quality work so, if a client isn't on the same page, the company would take action to clarify our expectations, or ultimately, we could choose not to continue working with them. The decision not to continue working with a client is very rare (and is not something I've personally experienced in my time at the company), but it's reassuring to know that the company would protect its employees in this way if it was ever needed.

## PRO BONO PROJECTS

There are so many opportunities for employees to get involved in doing good at Costello Medical. Making a profit is not our ultimate goal, but a tool that enables everything else we do beyond our billable work, such as our pro bono work. There is no revenue generated from this work, but it allows people to give back whilst pursuing their own interests. I really value the pro bono project that I have been working on over the past few years, which involved designing and developing a model to estimate the economic burden of delays to diagnosis for patients with myeloma, a type of blood cancer.

This was initially presented to me as something that I might be interested in because it involved a lot of creative problem-solving, and our support would help fulfil a need that could ultimately contribute to improvements in healthcare. Beyond that, the project also provided new opportunities for my own professional development and for me to build my personal publication record. Whilst the company has grown over the years, we still hold all-company meetings, where it is encouraged to share and celebrate achievements with the wider team – projects with our clients and our pro bono work alike.

