



# The University of Edinburgh

We supported the University of Edinburgh through our Cloud Funding Program.

Key Services

Cloud Funding Program



In December 2019, the first case of coronavirus (COVID-19) was reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO). Ten months later, it still presents a global problem which is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.

Strategic Blue and other involved partners, have introduced a Cloud Funding Program, to help continue the battle against COVID-19. The Cloud Funding Program has been designed to help two groups; researchers and those running community projects – particularly those in education. Strategic Blue's aim is to provide a funded budget for your initial cloud costs and support to fast-track your cloud adoption. This enables groups who are working on projects to lessen the impact of COVID-19 to get up and running in the cloud, without having to wait for large funding applications to be approved.

One research group that Strategic Blue has been lucky to work with over the years, is at the University of Edinburgh with Professor Rowland Kao and his team, who focus on epidemiology. Strategic Blue and Professor Kao got in contact over the Cloud Funding Program, as it demonstrated the epitome of why the Cloud Funding Program had been set up. Strategic Blue provided some initial funding, and Professor Kao and the research team began working with Health Protection Scotland (HPS) to investigate the potential impact of COVID-19 across the country, with specific focus on the impact in rural communities and the wider population, which have a likely greater proportion of at risk individuals, and relatively poor critical care facilities.



Our funding helped The University of Edinburgh to provide insight into the impact of COVID-19



We developed a strong relationship with the The University of Edinburgh

With the help of Strategic Blue's Cloud Funding from AWS, Professor Rowland Kao and his team developed a model which simulated the epidemiological behaviour of the Scottish population. Professor Kao ran simulations to see what would've happened to the spread of the virus if Scotland had initially locked down on 9th March, rather than waiting until the 23rd March. The model predicted that the death toll in Scotland would've been about 80% lower than the actual total. As a result of this work, we are now contributing advice to Public Health Scotland on better approaches to surveillance and early detection of COVID-19.

The work of Professor Rowland Kao and the research team has helped provide insight into the impact of COVID-19 on wastewater treatment sites, as fragments of the Virus's genetic material could be identified in human waste. Crucially, virus fragments can be detected even when there are only asymptomatic COVID-19 cases in the community. This has helped local governments track the success of lockdown measures during the first wave.

These types of simulations and analysis have proved invaluable over the past ten months, and with Scotland and the UK entering the second lockdown, models such as these provide the necessary lessons learnt. This fantastic, on-going work has been recognised in two BBC programmes, which Professor Kao and his team contributed to, one of which was recently nominated for a Scottish BAFTA.

Strategic Blue is proud to be involved in such projects, and to have provided the initial funding that this model needed to be developed at the University of Edinburgh. Strategic Blue continues to support Professor Kao and other research projects throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, in the hope of overcoming these uncertain times.

“ **This timely funding via Strategic Blue allowed us to rapidly develop a large-scale simulation model to describe COVID-19 transmission in Scotland.**

Professor Rowland Kao, Chair of Veterinary Epidemiology and Data Science, University of Edinburgh

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