

INNOVATIONS

The latest innovations to improve health and care in the North West Coast



WHAT'S INSIDE

New approach to health and wellbeing in Merseyside

AHSN Network diversity pledges

Musicians make harmonies with health data

Issue 03
Winter 2019

INTRODUCTION



Our work is about spreading proven innovations which either save money or improve care - and in most cases they do both. This issue of Innovations gives a good picture of where these innovations come from; they are a mixture of locally grown solutions and products which have been endorsed nationally by our NHS commissioners.

It isn't a simple matter to adopt an innovation, which is why AHSNs were established six years ago, offering support when introducing the new products and protocols. In particular our Coaching Academy has proved hugely popular, with long and short courses helping individuals and teams to adopt innovations and manage change. Some of our recent 'graduates' describe how the programmes have helped them, inside.

Don't forget you can find more stories, case studies and videos on our website, YouTube and podcast channels, Twitter and LinkedIn. Do follow us and if you haven't already, please subscribe for updates – a link is on the website.

Yours
Dr Liz Mear
Chief Executive

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A packed audience at Manchester Museum for a concert by the Royal Northern College of Music inspired by Connected Health Cities





The 2018-19 Coaching for Culture cohort at Sensor City, Liverpool

COACHING ACADEMY CLASS OF 2019

The Innovation Agency's Coaching Academy celebrated the culmination of two training programmes: **Coaching for a Safe and Continuously Improving Workplace Culture** and **Coaching for Spread and Adoption**.

Participants from health and care, third sector, academic and public sector organisations reported significant and effective changes to their work as a result of the learning.

Coaching for Culture addresses organisational and team culture and its relationship to patient safety. Anita Williams, Care Manager at Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, took part along with her team of district nursing team leaders:

"As part of the course I've set up explorative sessions, which we didn't have before – engagement sessions with our own coaching

department in the organisation and the staff.

"I've seen a reduction in sickness levels in the teams that have engaged with the programme. Training has improved – and the staff look happier, which isn't a bad thing!"

Hazel Hendriksen, Assistant Clinical Director North West Boroughs NHS Foundation Trust, led her team of dementia ward nurses on the programme: *"We had a really helpful session with the Coaching Academy facilitator. Her objectivity when looking at problems and her skill at facilitating were essential. What we were able to do was spend time with the team away from the ward, identifying what would make a difference. It cemented all the work we'd done in the other sessions, and we were able to identify what our priorities were."*

The Spread and Adoption programme supports individuals involved in adopting or spreading innovative approaches to self-care and social prescribing. David Scholes, from creative consultancy Freckle, joined the programme for support with a social enterprise to engage older people with health apps. He said:

"The NHS side of things was a world I didn't really know much about; my background's marketing in the third sector. I've really enjoyed the creative side of the programme but I've also been able to apply that to my project. I've gained an understanding from people around me that have more knowledge of the NHS and more knowledge of where my project could benefit people."

OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE COACHING ACADEMY

Find out more about two Coaching Academy programmes currently open to new participants; the Innovation Scouts and the Q Community:

The Innovation Scouts is a community of practice for innovation and entrepreneurial enthusiasts. Members are offered a programme of activity delivered by our Coaching Academy, including networking opportunities and skills and knowledge development, exploring the latest thinking on innovation.

If you would like to discuss the Innovation Scout community of practice please contact the Coaching Academy at coach@innovationagencynwc.nhs.uk

Q is an initiative connecting people who have improvement expertise across the UK. There are over 3,000 members and the

community continues to grow. Q's mission is to foster continuous and sustainable improvement in health and care, creating opportunities for people to come together as an improvement community to share ideas, enhance skills and collaborate to make health and care better.

We host the North West Coast Q Community on behalf of the Health Foundation, bringing together people with improvement skills in our region. We support recruitment, provide networking opportunities both face to face and online, and offer other themed learning exchanges driven by community members.

To apply or for more information please visit the Q website <https://q.health.org.uk/join-q/>

Or for informal enquires contact coach@innovationagencynwc.nhs.uk



“Our view is that happy teams mean happy patients. Culturally, if we can get that right, it will spill out into the care that we provide.”



A North West Coast Q Community leadership workshop

NEW SOCIAL CARE DATABASE HELPING PATIENTS IN CHESHIRE

A new social care database is being used by 50 GP practices in Cheshire, signposting patients to support, advice and social opportunities – and improving local health and wellbeing.

GP practices report that a significant proportion of patients making appointments don't need to see a GP. They may have issues such as loneliness or a need for advice and support with simple daily tasks. Many GP practices provide a wealth of literature about charities and social organisations, but it can be difficult to direct patients to information relevant to their needs.

One practice manager in Cheshire decided to address the problem by creating an accessible online database of non-clinical resources available to local communities. **Carehub.info Limited** is now being used by 50 GP practices across the county to provide patients with easy access to relevant information about local organisations and community groups who can help.

Carehub is a website that lists services ranging from major charities like Macmillan Cancer Support to local groups such as knitting circles and sports clubs. Many GP practices in

Cheshire provide access to the service through their practice websites, and some provide access via touch screens in their waiting rooms.

Its creator Tracey Palmer has been working with the Innovation Agency, which has helped introduce Carehub to health and care systems in the region.

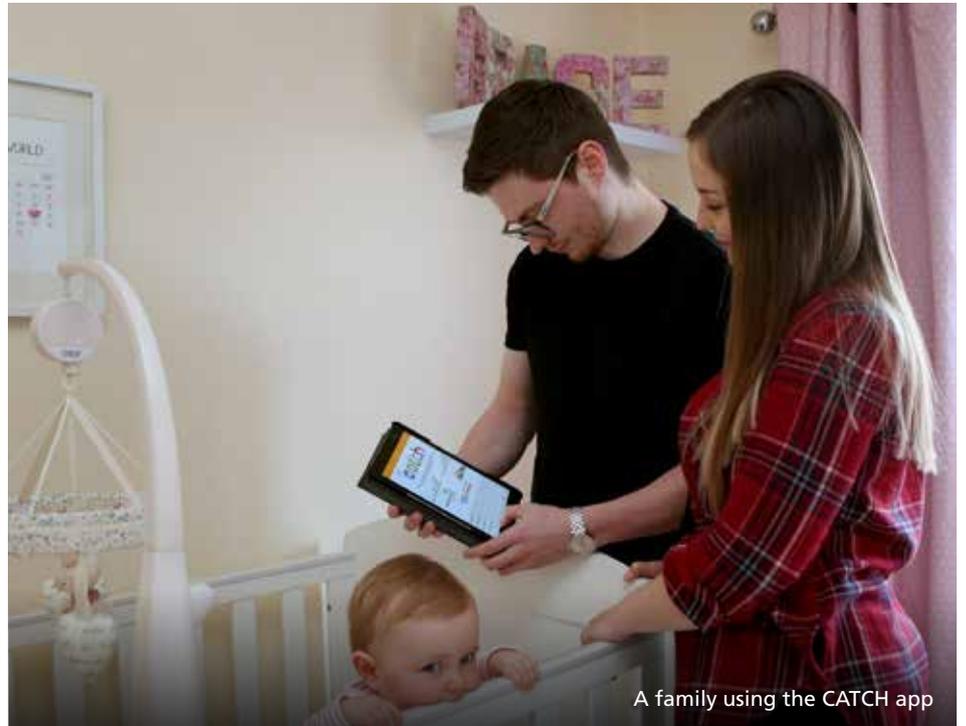
Tracey said: ***"When I worked as a practice manager we were getting patients coming in who really didn't need to come and see us, but they didn't know where else to go. We'd get retirees who were suffering from boredom or loneliness, or new mums who were struggling. What they needed were social connections."***

Dr Claire Baker, a GP at Kelsall Medical Centre, said: ***"Social isolation is one of our biggest problems. We see so many people who are lonely, but as clinicians we're not always very good at social prescribing. It's not because we don't want to do it, it's because it's not very easy for us; we don't have many things beyond medicines in our toolkit. Carehub gives us the ability to direct patients to a signposting tool that we know is up to date."***



Tracey Palmer, Carehub, with the Innovation Agency's Indi Singh

"The Innovation Agency has opened doors for us. I didn't have the resources to contact 7,000 GP practices, but the Innovation Agency has introduced me to the right people at the right meetings."



A family using the CATCH app

HEALTH APP REDUCES CHILD A&E ATTENDANCES

A health app that provides parents of young children with NHS-approved information has been shown to reduce attendances at emergency departments.

The Common Approach to Children's Health (CATCH) service and app is now live in seven CCGs in Cheshire and Merseyside. It uses information from NHS Choices and is regularly updated. The aim of using the app is to inform and empower parents in caring for their young children, to reduce inappropriate hospital admissions and to support children's health and improve care.

By April 2019 there had been **2,840 reads of articles** via the service, based on **315 articles**, including information about keeping children active, post-pregnancy health, depression after birth, first aid, vaccinations and coping with stress.

A survey of users found that **92 per cent would recommend the service**

to friends and family. **58 per cent said it had helped them treat their child at home** rather than visit their GP or an A&E department.

The implementation of CATCH corresponds with a reduction in unnecessary A&E attendances across the CCGs in the year to 2019. The majority of users surveyed believe CATCH will have a positive impact on unnecessary A&E and GP appointments in future, through the provision of reliable and accurate information.

The Innovation Agency has provided support to the company who developed the app, Damibu, since 2014. Damibu has received £30,000 in direct Innovation Agency funding as well as £180,000 SBRI funding, £44,000 EIT Health funding and £20,000 from the NHS Innovation Accelerator. The Innovation Agency has funded access to localised A&E data to support an evaluation of the impact of the app.





Phil Blything, Glow New Media, with the Innovation Agency's Andy Cairns

IMPROVING LONE WORKER SAFETY IN COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

An innovative lone worker device is improving safety for community health workers at an NHS trust in Merseyside – and providing real-time data about the services they provide.

Glow New Media, a Liverpool-based developer with a background in transport software, had developed a Rail Commander System which combined mobile apps with a desktop command dashboard. Glow repurposed the system for NHS community team applications through an ERDF-funded business support programme in which the Innovation Agency is a partner.

In 2018, Glow's SafeTeam Guardian was deployed in a pilot across four of Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust's community teams over a period of months.

In a survey of staff who participated, 100 per cent of respondents found SafeTeam Guardian easy to use. Additionally, 70 per cent of staff said they felt safer, with none saying they felt less safe.

Following the pilot, Alder Hey Community and Mental Health Divisional Board allocated a budget for **342 SafeTeam Guardian users**, and recommended a rollout across the division.

Phil Blything, Managing Director of Glow New Media, said: ***"Commercial opportunity in the NHS is extraordinary – it's the fifth largest employer in the world, but it's also one of the most difficult environments to sell into, especially if you're innovating.***

Ambitious and innovative SMEs face a risky environment and need any support they can get to succeed.

"Without doubt, Glow would not have been able to commercialise in this market without support from the business support programme and the Innovation Agency."

Funded prototyping

Glow New Media is offering anyone with a concept for improving healthcare the chance to turn their idea into an early stage prototype. The Innovation Agency, HealthTec Cluster and KSS AHSN are among the partners who will choose one winner each month to create an app, software or piece of tech for user testing. Find out more at www.glow-internet.com

AWARDS HONOUR OUTSTANDING SUPPLIERS

A host of health and care organisations and small businesses from across the North West Coast have collected honours in this year's NHS in the North Excellence in Supply Awards.

The awards, hosted by the NHS Northern Customer Board and the Innovation Agency, celebrate the work of businesses, third sector organisations and the NHS in collaborating to deliver great patient care.

The awards are sponsored by the Innovation Agency, Health Innovation Manchester and Yorkshire and Humber Academic Health Science Network.

Cheshire company Healthcare Communications won the prestigious Supplier of the Year award, as well as carrying off the Support Services award.

NHS award-winners included Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust, North West Shared Infrastructure Services and Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria, which jointly won the NHS Procurement Innovation Award.

Meanwhile, Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (now part of Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) were awarded the NHS Supplier Engagement award.

Dr Liz Mear, Chief Executive of the Innovation Agency, said: *"All the award winners deserve huge congratulations. At their heart, these awards showcase some fantastic collaborations between NHS organisations and their partners that ensure improved patient care."*

Mick Guymer, Chair of the NHS Northern Customer Board, added: *"The quality and diversity of the work that's being rolled out across the region is very impressive. It's very encouraging that so many collaborations are taking place to overcome the challenges we face and deliver efficiencies and better care."*



Dr Liz Mear addresses guests at the awards dinner

THE WINNERS IN ALL CATEGORIES WERE...

SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR 2019 **Healthcare Communications**

INNOVATION AWARD
Digital transformation of continuing healthcare
IEG4 Limited

ACUTE SECTOR AWARD
Transforming outpatient services through digital collaboration
DrDoctor and Intouch with Health

PATIENT EXPERIENCE AWARD
Nature Art support: Ingleside Birth and Community Centre
Moving Essence Limited

MENTAL HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SECTOR AWARD
A new model for a needle exchange programme
Frontier Medical Group

SMALL BUSINESS AWARD
Kitman
Olympus Associates Limited

SUPPORT SERVICES AWARD
Patient portal: digital-first patient letters and communications
Healthcare Communications

VALUE BASED PROCUREMENT AWARD
Helping the NHS save money and increase efficiency through better utilisation of in-house radiology resources
Radiology Management Solutions

NHS PROCUREMENT CHAMPION AWARD
Satpal Singh, Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust

NHS PROCUREMENT RISING STAR
Ben McKeogh, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

NHS PROCUREMENT INNOVATION AWARD
Procuring the HSCN compliant future of Lancashire's NHS Wide Area Network
Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust, North West Shared Infrastructure Services, Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria

NHS SUPPLIER ENGAGEMENT AWARD
Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (now part of Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust), nominated by Lexmark

MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR PUPILS IN CHESHIRE

A new approach to wellbeing is being delivered to children in Cheshire schools.

The REST EASY method teaches emotional intelligence, resilience, empathy and self-awareness to schoolchildren – with the aim of helping young people improve their mental health.

The approach was developed by innovator Emily Gearing to prevent mental illness in young people. Emily has been working with the Innovation Agency's commercial team to explore how the approach could be spread more widely and engage with more young people in the region.

Emily said: ***"Many of the methods incorporated by REST EASY are only usually available for young people after a mental health problem has been diagnosed. Access to treatment by specialist practitioners is often restricted by long waiting lists.***

"I believe that mental illness can be prevented if children and young people are offered the right tools and techniques to manage their emotions. It's my mission to educate 6-25 year olds and their



Emily Gearing delivering a REST EASY session to pupils in Cheshire

parents or carers in the REST EASY method as a way of achieving this."

Indi Singh, Innovation Agency Commercial Programme Manager for Cheshire, said: ***"Poor mental health is a significant and growing issue among young people but access to the right treatment is often limited due to increasing pressures on healthcare.***

"REST EASY is an example of how an innovative approach, bringing skills and knowledge to young people in the classroom, can help prevent mental health problems

from developing – and help reduce pressures on valuable healthcare services."

Emily and her team of trained REST EASY coaches are currently delivering the programme in schools in Cheshire and Shropshire. Emily hopes to expand the programme nationally and internationally. REST EASY was recently commended by think tank Parliament Street in a report about education and mental health.



"REST EASY is an example of how an innovative approach, bringing skills and knowledge to young people in the classroom, can help prevent mental health problems from developing – and help reduce pressures on valuable healthcare services."

BOOST FOR STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH IN LIVERPOOL

A University of Liverpool-led partnership has been awarded £575,000 by the Office for Students for a project to further develop mental health provision for students.

The partnership, which includes the Innovation Agency, is behind a project that will employ staff in Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust's Hope Clinic, which supports people following self-harm.

The project will also offer assessment and support to people experiencing a mental health crisis and will develop group interventions for a range of mental health issues including eating disorders, anxiety and depression.

The partnership includes representatives from the University of Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust and Brownlow Health.

Dr Paula Harrison Woods, Director of Student Administration and Support at the University of Liverpool, said: *"This project gives us a great opportunity to further develop mental health provision for students across Liverpool and to ensure that the NHS and universities learn from each other to deliver the best possible services for students. We are looking forward to working with our students on this exciting initiative."*

Yvonne Turnbull, Director of Student Advice and Wellbeing Services at Liverpool John Moores University, said:

"It is fantastic news that we have been successful in our bid for funding to enhance mental health provision for students in our city. It is absolutely vital that the appropriate referral routes are in place for students to access timely and effective NHS support in Liverpool when they need it most. This project is part of LJMU's commitment to support our students with their health and wellbeing."



"This project gives us a great opportunity to further develop mental health provision for students across Liverpool and to ensure that the NHS and universities learn from each other to deliver the best possible services for students. We are looking forward to working with our students on this exciting initiative."



Image courtesy of the University of Liverpool

A NEW APPROACH TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN MERSEYSIDE

A Liverpool man has described how Mersey Care's Life Rooms 'saved his life'.

Sean Masterson, aged 28, came to the Walton Life Rooms in 2018. Following the death of his grandfather, for whom he was a carer, Sean was suffering with depression and anxiety. After referral to a mental health clinic he was also diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome: *"I felt angry a lot and frustrated. I came to the Life Rooms while still being assessed. It was like a crossroads really, waiting to see what happened. When I got my diagnosis I was already here doing courses with the Recovery College. I realised I needed to stop feeling sorry for myself.*

"The Life Rooms isn't far from where I live. I don't need to mess around getting buses and trains, it's a five-minute walk. They were doing things that interested me and kept me occupied. I did

creative writing, a stand-up comedy course, I learned about depression and anxiety.

"Through the Recovery College I gained a sense of achievement. I started to feel better about myself. I could say I've come to a class today, I've sat through it, I've learned something. The stand-up course was great. I've always enjoyed comedy and then I was doing it. I got to the point where I was co-facilitating the class, then in the last three months I've been going into town and doing gigs.

"After I'd been here a few months one of the facilitators asked if I wanted to be a volunteer. I signed up to do it, and I haven't looked back since. It's an amazing place - it's probably saved my life."

There are now three Life Rooms, set up by Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust to deliver health and wellbeing support in community

settings. In four years they have recorded more than 80,000 visits.

The first was created in a former public library in Walton in 2014, with funding support from the Innovation Agency. A second Life Rooms was opened in Southport in 2017, and a third in Bootle in 2019. They offer access to health services, employment and housing advice and support, and social, community and volunteering opportunities.

The Life Rooms have established relationships with more than 100 partner organisations across Merseyside which offer support and activities in the community. This social prescribing model, based on each hub's local environment and local people's needs, has become an essential component of the Life Rooms model.

Sean Masterson at Walton Life Rooms



"After I'd been here a few months one of the facilitators asked if I wanted to be a volunteer. I signed up to do it, and I haven't looked back since. It's an amazing place - it's probably saved my life."

NEW PARTNER IN STROKE PREVENTION



A community safety advisor from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service tests a resident's pulse during a home safety check

A trailblazing partnership is spreading through the North West Coast to help prevent strokes.

As part of our programme to reduce atrial fibrillation (AF)-related strokes, the Innovation Agency is trying to detect as many people with AF as possible by testing pulses throughout the region. We have joined forces with a number of partners, including fire and rescue services.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service has now come on board and its community safety advisors in Chorley, Bamber Bridge and Leyland have been testing pulses during home safety checks for people aged over 65.

They are using mobile ECG devices to carry out simple pulse checks with

the target of preventing around 300 AF-related strokes. The six-month trial will be evaluated and considered for wider rollout across Lancashire.

Jane Williams, Prevention Support Manager at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, said: ***"Our home visits to provide fire safety advice and to fit smoke alarms enable us to deliver a lot more to enhance the safety and wellbeing of the often vulnerable people that we visit."***

"It's a natural progression for us to offer AF testing when carrying out our Safe and Well visits, making the best use of our contact with people who are unlikely to seek out services for themselves and tend to miss out on essential health screening."

COLLABORATION AIMS TO BOOST HEALTH AND CARE

The Innovation Agency is part of a newly launched three-year collaborative programme to improve health and care by supporting businesses across the Liverpool City Region.

Health Matters is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and aims to catalyse businesses in the Liverpool City Region to become market leaders in health, wellbeing and care by encouraging the development of products, services and solutions.

The £1.9 million Health Matters programme will help businesses take advantage of the knowledge and expertise the partnership can offer to develop solutions to challenges, receive guidance on funding opportunities and navigate the health system. The programme will also provide real-world validation of products and services.

The collaboration also features Liverpool John Moores University and Growth Platform, the Liverpool City Region Growth Company.

Over three years, the programme aims to provide support for 70 businesses based in the Liverpool City Region, developing products or services in the health and care sector.

The Innovation Agency's Dr Liz Mear said: ***"Building on earlier programmes, LCR Health Matters will support innovative Liverpool City Region businesses capable of moving into, or growing within, the health and care sectors with new or existing services or products."***

Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, said: ***"The health and life sciences sector is a major source of world-leading***



Dr Liz Mear, Chief Executive of the Innovation Agency, Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of Liverpool City Region, and Mark Basnett, MD of the Growth Platform

innovation in our city region. This programme will help build on our existing strengths by supporting local businesses to become market leaders in health, wellbeing and care, delivering solutions to health challenges as well as high-quality jobs for local people."

NAOMI CHAMPIONS DIVERSITY IN INNOVATION

Merseyside-based entrepreneur Naomi Mwasambili features in a national publication aimed at increasing diversity in innovation.

Naomi co-founded Chanua, aimed at improving outcomes in mental health through human-centred approaches complemented by technology.

The company's flagship programme is Neuro Champions, in which games and technology are used to create preventative and early intervention services for children and young people aged between eight and 25.

Naomi was born in West Yorkshire to parents of Tanzanian and Jamaican heritage, with her grandmother being part of the Windrush generation.

Her story appears in 'Diversity and innovation' launched by the AHSN Network at the Healthcare Expo in September. She is one of 13 innovators from around the country selected as role models for the publication, which also describes a number of pledges agreed by all 15 AHSNs, including the Innovation Agency.

Naomi said: *"We have games built from 3D printers; use virtual reality to identify emotions and support young people to develop digital safety skills while learning how the brain works and how it relates to their emotional and mental health.*

"The feedback from teachers, children, clinicians and youth workers is amazing. They tell us it is often the first time they have

learnt about their brain and it really helps them express their emotions alongside managing stress and isolation."

Naomi is principal investigator for a New Minds EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) study looking at managing mental health in the school environment. She is also a trustee and fellow of the School for Social Entrepreneurs.

Naomi is a graduate of the Innovation Agency's Coaching for Spread and Adoption programme. She is also a finalist in the Great British Entrepreneur Awards North West. This year Naomi has presented at conferences in New York, Montreal and Eindhoven, and extended Neuro Champions to the North East of England.

Naomi Mwasambili of Chanua, whose flagship programme Neuro Champions helps educate young people about how the brain works



OUR DIVERSITY PLEDGES

The report 'Diversity and innovation – a celebration of BAME innovators and our pledges to do more' shares the stories of innovators from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and sets out pledges by all AHSNs to further support the diversity and innovation agenda.

Richard Stubbs, Chief Executive Officer at Yorkshire and Humber AHSN who leads the initiative, said: *"The AHSN Network recognises that we have a leadership role to play in championing and developing diversity within our NHS innovation pipeline."*

"This is why we are making some key pledges as a national network that demonstrate our commitment to this agenda. We will use these pledges to hold ourselves to account for the way that we identify and nurture innovations and the innovators behind them, both inside and outside the NHS, and we will publish our progress annually."

The pledges include commitments to:

- **Implement a recognised process** to self-assess and improve equality performance in each of our organisations
- **Empower and support staff** to be positive role models for equality and diversity
- **Understand the impact of our work** on all members of our communities and ensure our work reflects the equality and diversity within these communities



Naomi Mwasambili, Taz Aldawoud of Doc Abode and Yorkshire and Humber AHSN Chief Executive Richard Stubbs launching 'Diversity and Innovation' at Health and Care Expo 2019

Innovation Agency Chair Gideon Ben-Tovim said: *"It is fundamentally important to achieving equality in healthcare that we recognise the needs of all our communities; and that requires diversity in leadership – and in innovation. We need innovators from all backgrounds so that the solutions they develop will address the needs of people from all backgrounds."*

Research shows that when at least one member of a team has traits in common with the end user, the entire team better understands that user. A team with a member who shares a client's ethnicity is 152 per cent more likely than another team to understand that client.

The report can be found on our website:
www.innovationagencynwc.nhs.uk/publications

BRINGING MORE BUSINESSES INTO THE FOLD



MUSICIANS MAKE HARMONIES WITH

Manchester Museum came alive with the sound of health data at a special concert to celebrate our Connected Health Cities (CHC) programme.

Composers from the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) met researchers from the four CHC regions in the North of England to transform five key projects into contemporary musical pieces to show how health data is being used in harmony with research.

Doctoral composers, from the RNCM's Centre for Practice and Research in Science and Music (PRiSM) performed their pieces before a packed audience at

#MusicSaysDataSavesLives – a concert inspired by health data projects ranging from tackling antibiotic resistance to improving care for stroke patients.

The new pieces were created by Caroline Bordignon, Nate Chivers, Tywi Roberts, Isabel Benito Gutiérrez and Zakiya Leeming and performed by RNCM wind quintet, Festivo Winds, interspersed with conversations between each composer and a researcher from the project that inspired them.

Composer Nate Chivers worked with the North West Coast CHC's Public Involvement and Engagement Senate (PIES) for his

commission, to learn how data is improving care pathways for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), epilepsy and alcohol-related illnesses.

From this, Nate created a musical piece entitled Connected.

He explained: *"After meeting the PIES group, I spent the train ride home thinking about how to put my piece of music together."*

"I came up with the concept of the electric guitar representing the patient while the wind quartet would be the data travelling through the hospitals."

The Innovation Agency is successfully supporting small businesses to make inroads into the NHS market, according to a new report.

Our Healthcare Business Connect (HBC) programme – funded by the European Regional Development Fund – is helping health and life sciences SMEs with innovative products and services to gain access to key health service decision-makers.

However, small businesses continue to face obstacles in bringing their products and technologies to the NHS, despite the best efforts of programmes designed to help them.

Research by Dr Kostas Selviaridis and Professor Martin Spring, of Lancaster University Management School's Centre for Productivity and Efficiency, looked at the perceived

impact of the support given to small firms across Lancashire, Liverpool City Region and Cheshire and Warrington.

Most businesses were either very satisfied or satisfied with the Innovation Agency support. Firms reported benefiting from better links with NHS decision-makers, and from funding-related support, and being better able to build a profile in the NHS and to understand health service structures.

Benefits for those companies that had already developed a product or technology included help in securing NHS contracts, attracting additional funding, and creating jobs.

Mike Kenny, Associate Commercial Director at the Innovation Agency, said: *"The NHS is not a single organisation but many hundreds of organisations and any business*

requires formidable resources to navigate the system. The Innovation Agency and our fellow AHSNs support businesses in this respect.

"AHSNs have a clear role in driving economic growth and job creation, which the Office for Life Sciences recognises and supports."

Professor Martin Spring, Director of the Centre for Productivity and Efficiency, said: *"Many productivity improvements arise from innovation of one form or another. Given the scale of NHS procurement and the importance of SMEs to the economy as a whole, getting this policy right has great potential to improve private sector productivity as well as deliver significant healthcare benefits."*

HEALTH DATA

"The motives pass from the guitar to the quintet with their different sounds. Yet, all these differences contribute, connect and work with each other to create a harmonious piece like what the PIES team and CHC are trying to do."

CHC's deputy director and chief operating officer, Dr Amanda Lamb, added: *"Communication through music has expanded our #DataSavesLives message by bringing together two complementary worlds. To hear our journey explained through this medium has been a moving experience."*



A packed audience at Manchester Museum

INNOVATIONS ON THE FAST TRACK

Patients in the North West Coast will benefit from a 3D heart modelling service to rapidly diagnose coronary disease and an advanced blood test that can cut the time it takes to rule out a heart attack by 75 per cent.

The Innovation Agency and fellow Academic Health Science Networks are responsible for accelerating the uptake of these and a number of other technologies across England.

The new tests, procedures and treatments are being introduced as part of the NHS Long Term Plan. In future, pregnant women will benefit from a new pre-eclampsia test, while people who suffer from cluster headaches will have access to a handheld gadget which uses low levels of electric current to reduce pain.

The new treatments and tests are being delivered as part of the NHS Innovation and Technology Payment (ITP) programme, which is fast-tracking the rollout of latest technology by helping to overcome barriers such as funding and procurement.



“These innovations are sure to benefit patient safety in our region. NHS England has paid for them centrally and so removed one of the barriers to their adoption, which means patients will benefit more quickly.”



The latest innovations are:

SpaceOAR Hydrogel: a gel that aims to reduce the side effects for men undergoing radiation treatment for prostate cancer

gammaCore: a handheld, patient-controlled vagus nerve stimulator to treat cluster headaches

Placental growth factor (PIGF): a test that can be used with other diagnostic tests to help diagnose suspected pre-eclampsia

High-sensitivity troponin: high sensitivity troponin assays detect lower levels of troponin in the blood earlier than older standard assays, leading to improved early detection of acute heart attacks

Two existing products have received additional support this year. They are:

HeartFlow: advanced image analysis software that creates a 3D model of the coronary arteries and analyses the impact that blockages have on blood flow to rapidly diagnose patients with suspected coronary artery disease

UroLift: a minimally invasive approach to treating an enlarged prostate

Sue Critchley, Innovation Agency Transformation Programme Manager for Cheshire and Merseyside, said: *“These innovations are sure to benefit patient safety in our region. NHS England has paid for them centrally and so removed one of the barriers to their adoption, which means patients will benefit more quickly.”*

MEDICINES PROJECT DELIVERS £14M SAVINGS – AND SAFER CARE

Working with NHS England in Cheshire and Merseyside, the Innovation Agency has supported the rollout of an innovative medicines safety programme which is improving patient care in the region.

The initiative, called Transfer of Care Around Medicines (TCAM), allows community pharmacies to be notified by their local hospital when a patient is discharged who might need help and advice with their medication. This means pharmacists can directly assist patients with new medicines, reducing the number of hospital readmissions due to medicine errors.

Una Harding, a pharmacist at Day Lewis Pharmacy in Aintree, welcomed the initiative: *“We now get notifications on our system on a daily basis. It’s a platform we use every day. New discharges or referrals are the first thing you see when you log on. If we see a patient has recently been in hospital we can make a note to speak to them about their medication when they next come in.*

“Patients now understand we can deliver more for them. There’s a culture now where people are realising that their GP doesn’t always have to be the first port of call. They know now that if they come into the pharmacy we can talk to them about the changes to their medication.

“It’s fabulous. Finally we’re getting more information so we can make more clinical decisions without having to hunt for information from different sources.”

TCAM is one of the programmes the AHSN network has identified for national spread. Thanks to the successful collaboration between the Innovation Agency and NHS England in Cheshire and Merseyside, the programme locally has seen the widest spread and fastest adoption in the country.



Una Harding, Day Lewis Pharmacy



Winners of last year's North West Coast Research and Innovation Awards

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