



INNOVATION AGENCY



Innovation and health connected



The **AHSN** Network



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund

Introduction

The Innovation Agency is part of the NHS and our role is to spread innovations that improve health and care and generate economic growth.

This is done in partnership with organisations around the North West Coast, with our fellow Academic Health Science Networks in the national AHSN Network, and with national commissioners and funders.

As well as our supportive role in North West Coast NHS and social care organisations and systems, we provide leadership and strategic influence. We do this through convening think tank sessions and workshops, chairing events and discussions, through our membership of key boards, and by making connections between local and national policy makers.

Our region is the North West Coast: Cheshire, Merseyside, Lancashire and South Cumbria, with around 4.1m residents, but our remit is to work both nationally and locally.

We are **connectors** of people and organisations; we **create** the right environment for innovations to develop and spread; and we **collaborate** with partners to improve patient safety and the quality of care.

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Our goals

We have six goals, which reflect the needs of our region and the aims of our national NHS commissioners:

- Support system transformation through the adoption of innovations that enhance quality and value
- Deliver an Innovation Exchange to accelerate innovation into practice and drive economic growth
- Develop and connect the digital health and care sector
- Deliver the NHS Improvement Patient Safety Collaborative programme
- Collaborate with the national AHSN Network
- Support a culture for innovation



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Supporting transformation

We are supporting health and care organisations throughout the North West Coast to deliver improvements and transformations, by working at a system leadership level and directly with innovators.

The work is based on the priorities of our local partners and the innovation goals of our national NHS commissioners. We ensure that partners' plans are supported by well-evaluated solutions and that local teams can develop the capacity and capability to implement them. And we act as a conduit for nationally endorsed products to accelerate their uptake throughout the country.

Well-evidenced products and technologies are available through various sources and with different levels of support. Our Transformation Team curates appropriate innovations and identifies those which are relevant to local needs, acting as a single point of contact to match needs with innovations, through our Innovation Agency Exchange.

The team:

- Curates appropriate innovations
- Identifies those which are relevant to local needs
- Acts as a single point of contact to match needs with innovations

Consultant Cardiologist Dr Tim Fairbairn of Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust said:

“If you care about trying to make a difference for patients, it's all about bringing in new technologies, new innovations and new forms of treatment”

The patient's perspective

We organise two patient and public involvement groups, known as Senates, which meet in Lancashire/South Cumbria and Cheshire/Merseyside. We also regularly hold focus groups to provide feedback on new products and technologies.

Lancashire and South Cumbria Senate member Jim Organ said: *“With the advances of technologies that can improve wellbeing, I feel that by being involved at an early stage, I can help to keep patients' requirements at the centre of the development.”*



Leading the Patient Safety Collaborative

The North West Coast Patient Safety Collaborative is led by the Innovation Agency, working alongside the national AHSN Network and helping to deliver NHS Improvement's National Patient Safety Improvement Programme.

We work with staff in hospitals, community settings, primary care and care homes.

Our national work streams include:

- Early recognition and response to physical deterioration
- Improving maternal and neonatal safety
- Adoption and spread of patient safety innovations
- Medicines safety

Through our Coaching Academy, we offer opportunities for improvement and learning to support the adoption and spread of innovations (see page 11).

Hassan Argomandkhah, Chair of Pharmacy Local Professional Network, said:

“The Innovation Agency's work on implementing the Transfer of Care Around Medicines project has not only led to better and safer communication between hospital and community pharmacies but has also improved patient safety by reducing medication-related errors”



Preventing strokes

Innovation Agency Exchange

Our work to prevent strokes is a flagship programme and we are very proud to have helped identify more than 7,000 people with atrial fibrillation (AF) in five years. AF is an irregular pulse that can lead to stroke.

There are estimated to be more than 15,000 undiagnosed cases of AF in the North West Coast. Our work has focused on testing people using simple mobile ECG devices and recruiting AF 'ambassadors' to convey key messages and test pulses.

We have held a series of focused campaigns across the region and supported staff to carry out testing in a range of settings such as care homes, community pharmacists and with fire and rescue services.

We have also delivered an improvement programme in GP practices that resulted in more than 1,600 patients starting anticoagulation therapy, while a similar number were added to AF registers. This is likely to have prevented around 70 strokes every year, and will continue to do so.

Warrington GP Dr Quincy Chuka said:

“This is a high-impact, sustainable, evidence-based project with improvement of care for patients with AF at its core”



AHSN Innovation Exchanges operate regionally and nationally to identify local needs, signpost innovators to relevant support, validate innovations in practice and drive spread and adoption.

In the North West Coast, the Innovation Agency Exchange shares local challenges and promotes a range of solutions.

The Innovation Exchanges support the national Accelerated Access Collaborative, or AAC. This is the umbrella body across the UK health innovation eco-system, providing more joined-up support for innovators and setting the strategy for innovation in the health system.

The AAC is a partnership of organisations including NHS England and NHS Improvement, the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, NICE, the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry and the AHSNs.

AHSNs are introducing AAC 'Rapid Uptake Products' into their regions, so that patients benefit from receiving the best innovations faster, no matter where they are treated.

Visit the Innovation Agency Exchange here:

www.innovationagencyexchange.org.uk



Digital transformation

Our involvement in a number of national digital initiatives allows us to offer significant support to local partners and system transformation plans.

We work with commissioner, provider and ICS/STP colleagues to boost digital skills and share best practice. In particular, we support the Empower the Person and primary care transformation objectives. This includes the rollout of the NHS Login, the NHS App, the digital child health record eRedbook and the adoption of person-held records.

We also work with local leaders to ensure the effective use of data to benefit our population. Our key objectives include supporting the Share2Care programme for our region which will deliver an electronic shared health and care record as the basis for safe, timely and effective care. We also support the Liverpool City Region 5G test bed programme which explores how innovative technologies can improve health and care services.

Our digital team works with small businesses and our system partners to prepare for forthcoming digital programmes, and we help promote standardisation and regulation in the sector.

Jim Hughes, Strategic Advisor for Digital Programmes at Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, said:

“The Innovation Agency played a vital role in gathering the data around Personal Health Records and this accelerated engagement has helped shape the thinking in this space in Cheshire and Merseyside”



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Supporting economic growth

Our Commercial Team connects businesses with healthcare and has had a tangible impact on economic growth: 99 companies reported a benefit from having worked with us in 2018, while we helped secure £8.2m in new investment and helped create 73 new jobs in the same period.

The team supports small and medium-sized companies whose innovative products and services improve healthcare and deliver savings. We receive European funding to work with companies based in the Liverpool City Region, Lancashire and South Cumbria, and Cheshire and Warrington. We also introduce best-in-class innovators from Europe to our region, through the European Institute for Innovation and Technology (EIT).

Recent successes include the St Helens-based surgical training device manufacturer Inovus Medical, which secured £1m funding from SBRI Healthcare, an NHS programme backed by the Innovation Agency and the AHSN Network, following a grant from EIT Health. Inovus co-founder Dr Elliot Street is an NHS Clinical Entrepreneur.



NHS England National Clinical Director for Innovation Professor Tony Young said:

“This is what innovation is all about – let our frontline clinical staff highlight unmet needs and then support and empower them to solve those needs”

Lancashire business owner Fenner Pearson of Meantime IT said:

“We are delighted to be working with the Innovation Agency, who are helping us share our story of who we are and how we are working closely with the NHS. They believe our product has the potential to make the capture, analysis, reporting and evidencing of actions from ward to board better, safer and faster”

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National collaborations

We are part of the AHSN Network, through which we spread nationally endorsed innovations throughout England, and we work together to identify products and best practices in our regions ready to be 'exported' across the country.

We support national NHS programmes such as NHS Clinical Entrepreneurs, the NHS Innovation Accelerator and the Accelerated Access Collaborative, helping our partners in the region to make the most of opportunities.

Charles MacKinnon, director of Cheshire based IEG4, said:

“The Innovation Agency were catalysts for this right from the start. They were the ones who gave me confidence to apply for funding, for instance, when I didn't think a small digital company in Cheshire would be in the running for it”



Coaching Academy

The Innovation Agency Coaching Academy supports individuals and teams to coach, innovate and improve.

Our skilled team delivers a wide range of courses that aim to build a healthy culture for spreading and adopting innovation. At a system level, the programmes seek to shift outlooks, build capacity for transformation and support implementation.

Alongside bespoke programmes, we offer a course for a safe and improving workplace culture. This addresses organisational issues and how they relate to patient safety. We also offer a programme focused on supporting individuals involved in adopting or spreading innovative approaches to self-care and social prescribing.

We support communities of practice to connect, share and transfer knowledge about innovation and improvement. The Innovation Scouts programme provides opportunities for clinical entrepreneurs and innovators to develop through connections, gaining skills and expert



coaching and mentoring. Meanwhile, the Q community connects improvers across health and care to develop and grow.

Programmes are designed around a single competency framework that allows participants to assess their own skills and behaviours and create a learning plan to deliver individual development goals.

Hazel Hendriksen, Assistant Clinical Director, North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, said of the Coaching for Culture programme:

“Happy teams mean happy patients. Culturally, if we can get that right, it will spill out into the care that we provide. We weren't untypical of other groups in the coaching programme, but burnout among our staff was particularly high. We've started to see an improvement in that”



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