

Business Plan 2020-2021

September 2020

Introduction

By Dr Liz Mear

Our business plan for 2020 to 2021 is written in summer 2020 as we continue to grapple with the challenges presented by COVID-19.

The context of our role as the Academic Health Science Network for the North West Coast changed radically in March 2020. From the outset of the pandemic we flexed our support to be relevant to the urgent needs of our local systems and partners and we will continue to provide this locally tailored approach.

At the same time we are working with our national commissioners to roll out programmes of innovations and improvements; and we continue to support local businesses and initiatives to boost local economies, which are needed more than ever.

Our mode of working is now very different, as it is for many partners. Staff are working from home except when it is necessary to have face to face meetings and our events are all online. Fortunately, our teams have been using online platforms for meetings for several years and are used to agile working across our three offices.

Collaboration across different sectors has never been so crucial to the health and wellbeing of our population and we look forward to playing our part as a connector within systems, nationally and internationally, to support our partners and our local economy.

Our vision

To transform lives through health and care innovation.

Our values

- Brave
- Innovative
- Collaborative
- Caring
- Engaging all voices

Our goals

- To increase the spread and adoption of innovations through collaboration
- To develop cultures that promote equity and allow innovation to thrive
- To stimulate economic growth and create jobs in the health and life sciences sector

Our context

The Innovation Agency is part of the AHSN Network, funded by NHS England/Improvement and the Office for Life Sciences to deliver a nationally agreed set of innovations and improvement programmes while also meeting the needs of our local systems and partner organisations from different sectors.

The balance of our workload in terms of local versus national needs changed during March as our national programmes were paused and we pivoted to focus entirely on local needs. This has evolved to a balance roughly equivalent to 70:30, with local systems and our local economy continuing to receive more of our attention and resources. We expect this to continue through to March 2021.

The impact of COVID 19 has changed the way we work, making home-based, remote working an essential reality and it is clear that the way we work and use office space will not be the same again.

We will ensure the Innovation Agency is at the forefront of using technology to enable our workforce to work effectively, away from the traditional office environment. This will include a focus on personal health and wellbeing and how we adapt to these changing times in which the office-based, travel-heavy working week is no longer necessary – or possible.

Our aim will be to transfer our approach and our learning to partners in the North West Coast, through modelling and sharing best practice.

PROGRAMMES

The programmes we deliver are either AHSN Network national commissions, from NHS England/Improvement, the Office for Life Sciences and supporting the Accelerated Access Collaborative; or they are created locally, responding to the needs of our systems.

Patient safety

We are the North West Coast element of the National Patient Safety Improvement Programme which is delivering the following work streams: Deterioration; Maternity and neonatal; Medicines safety and optimisation; and adoption and spread of selected products.

Deterioration

Following the initial focus on adopting NEWS2 (National Early Warning Score version 2) in acute hospitals and ambulance trusts, we are extending support to community settings, in a phased roll out beginning with care homes.

For our care homes we are providing training via webinars and supporting material for the use of the RESTORE2 tool. This includes the features of NEWS2 but importantly in this setting also brings softer signs of deterioration and the use of structured communications between professionals to the assessment process.

Emergency Department Safety Checklist: We are supporting the national spread and adoption of an ED checklist, to include hourly observations preferably leading to NEWS2 and pain scoring, across level 1 adult emergency departments.

The High Sensitivity Troponin pathway change (see CVD programme) will also ensure reduced risk of deterioration in ED by faster identification of heart attacks.

Maternity and neonatal

We will continue to develop and facilitate representative Safety Improvement Networks (formerly Local Learning Systems); support ongoing local improvement work; and provide a sustainable platform for system-level work that fits the aims of the National Maternal and Neonatal Safety Improvement Programme. This will include ensuring good engagement with stakeholders and providing leadership to the system to support these aims.

We will work with maternity and neonatal teams as they embark on the national Phase 2 programme, building on the quality improvement approach successfully employed for the improvement projects over the last three years for Phase 1. We will provide ongoing quality improvement coaching and support to teams through the programme milestones, working alongside national programme improvement managers.

We plan to provide measurement and project support to enable teams to regularly report progress, both locally and nationally. We will work with teams and executive sponsors to be actively engaged and able to identify and work round barriers to progress, escalating concerns to the central team as appropriate.

We will continue to assist with the co-ordination and support of the maternal and neonatal teams to undertake the SCORE culture survey (or a recognised alternative) as part of the national programme. In addition, we will support maternal and neonatal teams to facilitate the sharing of learning to the central national team and others as required, including the Safety Improvement Network, Local Maternity System and other key local and national stakeholders.

Placental Growth Factor: We are supporting the spread and adoption of this test which allows clinicians to rule out that a woman is likely to develop pre-eclampsia over the following weeks. A negative test enables more 'high risk' women to stay at home rather than be admitted to hospital in the final weeks of their pregnancy.

Mental health

SIM: In collaboration with NHS partners and Lancashire Constabulary we have recruited our first participants into this national innovation programme, aimed at supporting those who have the highest need of urgent or unplanned mental health services. There are five sites across Lancashire which will come on line through the year.

ADHD: This project is aimed at providing rapid diagnostic support for children who are referred for assessment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Using a computer-based assessment we can shorten the time it takes for children to receive a diagnosis and therefore begin the treatment they require.

Eating Disorders: Swift access to therapy is crucial in providing the best chance of recovery to patients presenting with eating disorders. By facilitating the adoption of an early intervention model for services we aim to provide rapid access to treatment, at an early stage.

S12: This national product and an app that identifies qualified clinicians able to complete a Mental Health Act Section 12 assessment in a timely manner. This results in people who are having a mental health crisis being able to access the best treatment in the right setting more quickly. We are supporting rollout across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

See *Workforce* for mental health innovations coaching programme; and psychology workforce supply project.

Medicines

Our local medicines safety/optimisation work through TCAM and PINCER continue and we will explore opportunities to incorporate medicines optimisation into our broader scope of activity such as care homes, primary care or frailty.

PINCER: Our results have already demonstrated prescribing safety benefits in primary care for those GP surgeries that have undertaken this programme. We are now rolling out training on line which should allow even more practices to participate.

TCAM (Transfer of Care Around Medicines): All our acute trusts and more than 600 community pharmacies have now adopted the TCAM discharge information package. We are refining the programme with new admission notification functionality and have started a pilot in a care home setting.

Cladribine: A medicine for the treatment of multiple sclerosis that is less intrusive for patients than other treatments. This is one of the Rapid Uptake Products identified by the Accelerated Access Collaborative which we are introducing in our region.

PCSK9i – see *CVD and respiratory*

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) and respiratory care

Death and illness from cardiovascular causes remains one of the greatest preventable health challenges. Our new CVD programme will focus initially on the role that cholesterol and other lipids play in the disease process.

We will establish a programme of genetic testing for inherited disorders of lipid metabolism to identify those affected and ensure they receive specialist advice and access to a new range of lipid lowering therapy.

Through a collaboration with primary care we will use the data held in GP clinical systems to target those patients with sub optimal cholesterol levels who may benefit from a change in their therapy or a specialist referral.

We are introducing the following products and programmes:

High Sensitivity Troponin: This is a laboratory test and ED pathway to enable the rapid rule-out of heart attack that can be done more quickly than with previous versions. This pathway change is being rolled out across many A&E departments in the North West Coast.

Heartflow: This CT/AI innovation allows a CT angiography rather than an invasive angiogram to become the diagnostic method for some cardiac conditions.

COPD Discharge Care Bundle: We will support the spread and adoption of the British Thoracic Society COPD discharge bundle in acute trusts.

Atrial fibrillation: We continue to pursue our Detect, Protect and Perfect strategy in our effort to save lives through preventing stroke.

PCSK9: This is a medicine that can be used in some circumstances to manage the level of cholesterol in a person's blood when other treatments are not effective. This is being introduced to trusts across our region, after an initial delay caused by the impact of COVID-19.

Pulmonary rehabilitation pathway redesign: We are developing a new pathway which incorporates tech solutions to help patients with pulmonary rehabilitation.

Adoption and spread of patient safety improvements

The aim of the National Patient Safety Improvement Programme is to improve the safety and outcomes of patients by effectively and quickly sharing, spreading and adopting tested evidence-based practice, products and tools across England.

We are working with colleagues across the AHSN Network to help spread the following national innovation and improvement programmes:

Emergency Laparotomy Care Bundle: This is a six-part care bundle we are helping to spread in acute trusts, to improve patient safety.

Escape Pain: This exercise-based programme for patients with osteoarthritis has been converted to a digital format so that we can continue to offer support remotely. In the recovery period following COVID-19 it is especially important that we continue to offer support to patients who may be waiting for specialist treatment or surgery.

We will also develop a pipeline of further evidenced-based interventions for future adoption and spread.

Accelerated Access Collaborative, Rapid uptake products

AHSNs are working with the Accelerated Access Collaborative to help with the rapid adoption of products and pathway changes where there is a NICE approval in place.

We will continue to support the deployment of existing products such as Space OAR, a material used in the treatment of prostate cancer to reduce side effects from radiation therapy; and Urolift, a medical device that allows a prostate operation to be carried out as a day case rather than an inpatient stay.

In addition we are advisors in the selection process to identify treatments, tests and devices which will form the next raft of rapid uptake products for spread and adoption in the future.

Care homes

We are supporting the development of a national care homes programme which will incorporate the adoption of innovation and will help to build capability and capacity in the workforce. We recognise, especially following COVID-19, the importance of this sector to much of our work and we will embark upon projects involving deterioration, adoption of digital tools and medicines optimisation during the year.

SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL SYSTEMS

We have teams embedded within each of our two local systems. We offer a combination of spread and adoption activities and system facilitation based on local agreement of priorities. These have been adapted to react to COVID-19 and the changing governance arrangements in each system.

System management

We co-ordinate an Innovation Exchange Network of leaders across the North West Coast, to promote innovations relevant to their challenges and to provide a vehicle to share their own innovations with the wider system.

We also support the following subnetworks:

- Quality Improvement Collaborative in Lancashire and South Cumbria
- Research and Innovation Collaborative in Lancashire and South Cumbria
- Place and Programme Collaboration In Cheshire and Merseyside

SEED is an alliance of universities and healthcare bodies across Lancashire and South Cumbria. The Innovation Agency is facilitating the development of this alliance which in itself is a key part of the system's strategic plan. The purpose is to identify population health needs and align research investment with the most significant needs.

EPIC is a social movement of change across Lancashire and South Cumbria which seeks to encourage all members of the system to embrace change; to share great ideas and to adopt with pride.

An early response to COVID-19 resulted in the Innovation Agency operating a PPE and innovation hub in partnership with Alder Hey Children's NHS FT and the procurement hubs in each system. This has evolved into a recovery/restart hub, with a developing repository of resources that can be used to support system needs for patients recovering from COVID-19. This ranges from identifying a supportive product, through to programme management of a workforce innovation and improvement collaborative.

COVID-19 has required everyone to react at pace and to operate in different ways than previously. A significant exercise gathering learning from the changes is underway across all parts of the system with support from the Innovation Agency.

Workforce

We are constructing a programme of projects which aim to:

- Directly improve the supply of workforce into the system
- Support a team or service with workforce redesign, quality improvement or innovation adoption
- Support the development of a resilient and positive workforce culture with skills to take a transformational approach to workforce design.

Over the past year we have been working with our Local Workforce Advisory Boards (LWABs) to identify local needs and explore innovative solutions to workforce shortages. An outcome of this has been the creation of new supply routes for graduate psychologists into psychological therapy roles, which will be launched in early 2021.

As part of our system support we identify products which can help meet their needs and in terms of workforce we are promoting solutions which include S12, Docabode, Zebra and Lantum.

We are helping to develop a strategy with Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership for mental health in the workplace, to reduce sickness absence across all employers in Lancashire and South Cumbria.

A range of quality improvement, coaching or team/service redesign projects are underway which include:

- Coaching Academy support to redesign across workforce groups
- Pulmonary rehabilitation pathway
- Primary care/Primary Care Network project involving quality improvement, innovation and workforce
- Doing Things Differently: In Cheshire and Merseyside, a project with 36 teams across nine places and four topics involving quality improvement, mental health, innovation and workforce
- The potential development of a national Allied Health Professionals community of practice involving quality improvement, innovation and workforce
- We have proposed that we support local NHSX rollout programmes in the adoption of digital solutions in remote settings with culture and behavioural development programmes
- Supporting LWABs and People Directorate locally with specific requests for support (topics to be agreed)

Our projects that support the development of a resilient and positive workforce culture with the skills to take a transformational approach to workforce design include:

- NW Boroughs Healthcare NHS FT ward development programme
- Innovations for mental health in the workplace programme delivered by our Coaching Academy in Lancashire and South Cumbria, plus support for Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership to develop a mental health in the workplace strategy as part of the local industrial strategy
- Innovation Scouts community of practice
- Q programme community of practice
- A culture improvement cohort, based on learning from COVID-19
- NHS Confederation Reset culture work stream on behalf of AHSN Network
- Establish and operate a community of practice across AHSNs relating to culture and workforce support projects
- HEE Star improvement methodology and training programme

Digital transformation

The impact of COVID-19 has seen the rapid introduction of digital technologies and redesign of care pathways, adopting a 'digital first' approach, maximising the opportunities to empower citizens to take more control of their own health and wellbeing and avoiding the need for unnecessary use of hospitals and primary care.

Working closely with our two health and care systems we will support work to ensure that digital innovations that have proved effective are sustained, while promoting their adoption and spread across the region. We will do this by:

- Facilitating and supporting the spread of remote monitoring projects within our two systems, as part of the NHSx Remote Monitoring Programme
- Supporting the digital change aspects of the North West Outpatient Transformation Programme, a key part of the NHS@Home Programme
- Facilitating an increased focus on social care, including care homes and domiciliary care, establishing new links with the North West Adult Social Care Technology Forum
- Supporting business change through our well established coaching and improvement programmes
- Continuing to identify and review new technology offers, including from national and local SMEs, through active facilitation of the HealthTec Cluster and our new innovation pipeline approach
- Continuing to play an active role in digital leadership groups established nationally, regionally and within our two systems.

An Innovation Pipeline approach

In collaboration with other AHSNs we are introducing an Innovation Pipeline approach from September 2020, adapted from Health Innovation Manchester. This will facilitate a more systematic way of how we identify; develop; and deploy innovations across the North West Coast.

It involves a more collaborative approach with partners including the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) North West Coast; Liverpool Health Partners and Lancashire and South Cumbria SEED health alliance.

Adopting a portfolio management approach, we will rapidly identify those innovations that could make a difference in our health and care systems, addressing local identified needs and allowing for more effective evaluation and potential deployment.

It will allow us to identify resource gaps and take a more prioritised approach to how we use our resources and work more collaboratively with partners.

Through the AHSN Network, using common reporting tools, we will be able to identify innovations created elsewhere in the country and support their local review and potential adoption in a more timely way.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Supporting economic growth is a priority for the Innovation Agency and all AHSNs. This includes inward investment and we lead and support funding bids in partnership with local health, care, commercial, voluntary and academic organisations and we direct partners to collaborations and sources of funding which support their needs.

Innovation Exchange

The Office for Life Sciences (OLS) commissioned the delivery of Innovation Exchanges through AHSNs, as part of the Government's response to deliver the recommendations of the Accelerated Access Review.

The core functions of the Innovation Exchanges are:

- Identifying need and communicating demand, helping innovators to understand the healthcare demands and the evidence requirements, and to prepare systems for promising products
- Signposting innovators working with the Innovation Agency to additional support, market access, matching innovations to healthcare, adapting solutions to meet local needs, finding early adopter regions
- Identifying innovators working with local health and care partners and offering Innovation Agency support, bringing them to wider market attention as appropriate
- Evaluation in practice – brokering partnerships between commissioners and providers to undertake real world testing to create evidence to support adoption and spread
- Spread and adoption of innovations that deliver healthcare benefits – locally, regionally and nationally

The strong connections with our two system partnerships enables us to offer targeted and bespoke packages of support to the healthcare system, increasing the likelihood of successful adoption of innovation.

ERDF programmes

We deliver European-funded programmes which support small and medium size local businesses (SMEs) with health innovations, connecting relevant companies where they can add value.

These 'Health Matters' programmes provide bespoke support to SMEs across the region to establish collaborations, secure funding and contracts and gain key insights to help inform their business plans. With our university partners we also provide real world validation for the most promising, market ready innovations.

International programmes

The EIT Health Bridgehead programme provides European start-ups and scale-ups with individual support to grow their validated businesses beyond their home markets. The programme matches promising SMEs to suitable clusters, accelerators and incubators (so-called CATalysers or CATs) from the EIT Health European Network.

The Innovation Agency has been part of the Bridgehead Europe programme since 2018 and this year we also became a CAT for Bridgehead Global, supporting SMEs to access the US market in partnership with the Association of British Healthcare Industries (ABHI).

Strategic role with LEPs and clusters

The health and life sciences sector makes a vital contribution to economic growth. In partnership with our Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and our ERDF programme partners we will focus on providing greater support to SMEs, enabling the adoption of innovative technologies to secure sales growth and inward investment.

We will work alongside our LEP partners, influencing and informing emerging COVID-19 recovery strategies at both board and sector level, to ensure health and life sciences remain a key priority for support and investment during difficult economic times. We continue to support a growth manager role within Liverpool City Region LEP.

In 2018 we partnered with the Science and Technology Facilities Council to establish a HealthTec Cluster and our support for the Cluster manager role continues this year. The Cluster aims to bring together hubs of expertise from across industry, academia, public sector, investor networks and entrepreneurs to stimulate innovation and tackle global challenges.

This connective environment across the region enables the sharing of knowledge, skills and facilities, boosting economic growth and driving productivity.

Digital Health North

The Digital North Accelerator programme is a joint project delivered by the four northern Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) – Yorkshire & Humber, Health Innovation Manchester, Innovation Agency North West Coast and North East and North Cumbria. The programme aims to help digital SMEs increase spread and adoption of their innovations across the North of England by delivering a range of supporting activities.

Following a successful pilot in 2019, all four AHSNs are committed to continuing the programme and a new cohort of SMEs will be selected for support across the North in 2020.

Liverpool Health Ventures

In 2019, we were successful in securing a feasibility grant from Liverpool City Region to develop a business plan in partnership with all Liverpool City Region trusts, to establish an accelerator with expertise, funding and resources for trust entrepreneurs to commercialise their innovations.

The proposal to establish Liverpool Health Ventures has now been completed and forms part of the city region's Recovery Plan. We hope to secure funding to establish the accelerator during 2021.

KEY COLLABORATIONS

We work with the AHSN Network in key national collaborations which support innovators within the NHS and in businesses. These include the NHS Innovation Accelerator; SBRI Healthcare Fund; and Clinical Entrepreneurs.

Across the North of England we work with our three fellow northern AHSNs and we represent our four organisations on the Board of the Northern Health Science Alliance.

In the North West Coast we work closely with the NHS NW office, system leaders, the NIHR ARC North West Coast, NIHR CRN North West Coast, Liverpool Health Partners, the Local Enterprise Partnerships in Lancashire; Cheshire and Warrington; and Liverpool City Region, all our trusts, CCGs and universities.

Learning from COVID-19 locally and nationally

We are working within the North West Coast with our partners to learn lessons from the impact of COVID-19, so that positive changes can be sustained and organisations supported to adopt new ways of working, long term.

As well as local learning exercises, we are part of a national AHSN Network campaign with NHS Confederation and the Health Foundation, 'NHS Reset', with a specific focus on best practice and innovation.

Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) for the Innovation Agency involves the co-ordination of two PPI Senates, covering Cheshire and Merseyside and Lancashire and South Cumbria; a Patient Safety Involvement and Engagement Ambassador group; and input to programmes of work regionally and nationally.

Senate members review products, documents, patient information leaflets and websites and they provide feedback on innovations developed by local businesses being supported by the Innovation Agency's Commercial Team.

The PPI Lead will continue to act as an advocate in regional and national groups such as the CIPA Governance Board, Cheshire Digital Group and Clatterbridge Cancer Centre Patient Participation Group.

A cohort of volunteer AF (Atrial Fibrillation) Ambassadors will support our cardiovascular and respiratory programmes of work while continuing to carry out community-based pulse testing, to detect an irregular heart rhythm, a possible sign of risk of stroke.

Our PPI team will engage with charities and support groups relevant to our programmes of work, such as mental health, maternity and neonatal and respiratory; and liaise with Healthwatch organisations, local faith groups and community leaders.

Diversity pledges

Along with other AHSNs, we have committed to a set of pledges to do more to promote and deliver equality and diversity in our leadership, our workforce and the way that we carry out our work.

The importance of these pledges has been heightened during COVID-19 and our work in the coming year will include actions to support these pledges:

- **Implementing a recognised process to self-assess and improve equality performance in each of our organisations**
- **Empowering and supporting staff to be positive role models for equality and diversity**
- **Understanding the impact of our work on all members of our communities and ensuring our work reflects the equality and diversity within these communities.**

Events, communications and engagement

Communications and engagement are core functions of the Innovation Agency, to enable collaborations and support the spread of great ideas and innovations.

The pandemic has brought an end to all our face to face events and most meetings are also online. Our team was already proficient in using Zoom, as it has been the platform for all-staff weekly meetings across our three offices in Daresbury, Liverpool and Preston.

Now, staff have improved their skills in using both Zoom and MS Teams to conduct meetings internally and externally; and to join or facilitate events.

Our flagship quarterly Ecosystem event has evolved to become a webinar in which best practice and innovations are presented, focussed on meeting a particular challenge.

We organise two annual awards events; NHS in the North Excellence in Supply, recognising best practice in procurement partnerships; and the North West Coast Research and Innovation Awards, organised jointly with NIHR ARC North West Coast and NIHR CRN North West Coast. The first event is being held online in October; the second is currently under review.

We will continue to deliver workshops and other events to support our programmes and our system collaborations, using online platforms.

Video and podcast interviews will be recorded online; publications will be digital only for the foreseeable future; and our website, social media and newsletters continue to be the mainstay of our communications.

GOVERNANCE

The Innovation Agency is hosted by Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, having moved from Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust in April 2020. Our host trust provides payroll, HR, finance and IT services.

Our leadership

Our senior leadership team includes a Chair, Vice Chair and Non-Executive Director. Their combined experience covers health, academia, applied health research, bio-medical research, med-tech health industry, pharma, communications and marketing and roles at the Association of British Health Industries (ABHI) and the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries (ABPI).

Our Executive Team comprises a Chief Executive; Deputy Chief Executive/Medical Director; Director of Transformation; Director of Digital and Operations; Director of Enterprise and Growth; and Director of Communications and Engagement.

Their combined experience covers NHS trust leadership at chief executive and director level, CCG chair and director, local government senior leadership, med-tech industry leadership and senior roles in multi-national healthcare companies, SME chief executive and director roles, senior consultancy and policy advisor experience and system-level communications and engagement.

These roles are underpinned by teams with a wide range of experience in the NHS, health-related industry, new models of care, public health, local government, academia and patient safety.

Our Board and assurance process

The Innovation Agency Partnership Board meets five times each year, has 45 members with representatives from NHS trusts, commissioners, Local Enterprise Partnerships, universities, trade bodies, voluntary sector, NIHR infrastructure and local research organisations.

A Finance, Performance and Strategy Committee, comprising Non-Executives, Executive Directors and a senior accountant from our host trust meets before the Board meeting to consider detailed finance and performance information. The Chief Executive of the Innovation Agency attends the host Trust Board on an annual basis to present the annual report and business plan of the Innovation Agency.

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