



# **NHS Research & Development North West**

## **Annual Report 2016/17**

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## 1. Executive summary

NHS Research & Development North West is an award winning team, voted '**The most innovative NHS Team**' at the North West Coast Research and Innovation Awards 2017. It bases its work on four themes – capacity, collaboration, connections and communities. Our core team and faculty associates share the values of integrity, co-creation, inclusivity, altruism, optimism and humility.

Our work during 2016/17 has focused on:

- building health research and development capacity
- working collaboratively
- making and supporting connections
- engaging strategically
- communicating our work
- supporting patient and public involvement
- exploring new and creative ideas
- engaging nationally and internationally
- developing our team.

This annual report summarises our recent achievements in these areas. Key activities have included the following:

- **Let's Talk Research 2016** – Following the success of Let's Talk Research 1 and 2 in 2014 and 2015, the 2016 conference was held over two days at the Royal Northern College of Music in September. Entitled 'Edgewalking: Exploring novel approaches to research and development', the event aimed to challenge traditional boundaries and explore how to do things differently – giving healthcare professionals opportunities to hear and discuss research, learn new tools and techniques, and engage with fellow researchers. With four keynote speakers, a choice of 28 workshops (delivered by leading researchers, academics and clinicians), five 'community hotspots', and performances by participants in the Academy of Creative Minds 2016, the delegates – of which there were 155 – were able to experience a wide range of research topics.
- **Releasing Potential programme** – *The NHS Constitution* (Department of Health, 2013) is explicit in its commitment to 'innovation and to the promotion, conduct and use of research to improve the current and future health and care of the population'. To support delivery on this agenda, the Releasing Potential programme supports the development of early-career researchers in NHS trusts in the North West, and of clinical team leads and service managers who are developing cultures of research and innovation (R&I) in clinical teams. Work to extend the reach of this programme during 2016/17 focused on making it more accessible by increasing the use of social media and ICT. In particular, a comprehensive review of the support needs of the early-career researcher (ECR) community led to plans for a portal mapped to the learning outcomes of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.
- **Academy of Creative Minds** – Having launched the Academy of Creative Minds in 2015/16, bringing the arts and sciences together in health research, we continued this work by providing five mentoring workshops, and having the programme outcomes presented at Let's Talk Research 3. This six-month programme draws on the skills of a dynamic, disparate group of artists – from composers to circus performers, and from directors to writers – who share their 'tricks of the trade' with health researchers, to build confidence and expertise in using the creative arts to convey research messages in a more powerful and meaningful way. We are currently evaluating the programme; results will be available in April 2017.
- **The Researcher magazine** – Following our identification of an urgent need to develop and communicate a highly engaging and energising message what it means to be a health researcher and to do health research, we produced three issues of this new digital publication.

Funded by Health Education England (HEE) and also involving the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the magazine is created by health researchers for health researchers.

Other important activities have included coordinating HEE's internship programmes; running three Catalyst events on the topics of health education research, dementia, and collaborating for care; contributing to the North West People in Research Forum, including negotiating funding from Manchester Metropolitan University; continuing to work with the University of Salford on our second series of podcasts, 'The Edgewalkers'; delivering a range of creative workshops; developing communities of practice through Google Plus groups; and identifying new thought leaders for future masterclasses. Finally, we were honoured to win the Most Innovative NHS Team category of the North West Coast Innovation Awards.



## 2. Introduction

A devolved regional NHS function hosted by Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust, NHS Research & Development North West (NHS R&D NW) has high aspirations for research and development in the North West of England. We aim to co-create a strategic approach to research, development and innovation, creating aspirational and innovative environments to enable health and social care communities to grow, thrive and deliver high-quality research.

Based in the heart of Manchester, we bring together an array of organisations and people in the region with an interest or involvement in health and social care research. We provide practical support to build research, development and innovation capacity throughout the full range of NHS organisations.

*'The NHS aspires to the highest standards of excellence and professionalism ... through its commitment to innovation and to the promotion, conduct and use of research to improve the current and future health and care of the population.'*

*The NHS Constitution  
(Department of Health,  
2013)*

Our approach is based on four themes, which together help optimise NHS R&D in terms of people, processes, communication and impact. These themes are: capacity, collaboration, creativity and communities.

### **Our core team**

With experience in R&D, NHS clinical services, the voluntary sector, the private sector and academia, our core team comprises:

- Professor Stuart Eglin, Director
- Gillian Southgate, Assistant Director
- Professor Bill Campbell, Assistant Director
- Amanda Byrne, Communications and Engagement Officer
- Jo-Anne Simpson, Operations Manager and Executive Assistant
- Leanne Gregory, Project Administrator.

### **Our faculty associates**

The skills and expertise of the core team are complemented by those of our faculty of associates, who support our programmes of work, helping design and develop these programmes further. All associates are committed to our team values and approach, formalised through both a memorandum of understanding on the roles/responsibilities of associates and contractual agreements for specific pieces of work, including banding-based payments that meet the appropriate NHS procurement policy.

Our associates come from a wide range of fields, including leadership, organisational development, workshop facilitation, psychology, coaching and mentorship, the creative arts, knowledge and information management, and research. Many of the programmes we develop are co-delivered with our associates, ensuring that we bring a breadth of expertise to all we do.

#### Our faculty associates

- |                         |                      |                  |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| • Deborah Antcliff      | • Claire Harris      | • Nick Ponsillo  |
| • Vajradumita Armstrong | • Helen Hurst        | • Sue Roberts    |
| • Sarah Carr            | • Jana Kennedy       | • Doug Shaw      |
| • Melanie Chapman       | • Kate Marlow        | • Janet Suckley  |
| • Amina Cunningham      | • Marie Marshall     | • Richard Taylor |
| • Alex Douglas          | • Taravandana Lupson | • Alison Wheeler |
| • Su Fowler-Johnson     | • Jane Martindale    | • Lyn Williams   |
| • Sarah Garrett         | • Will Medd          | • Kevin Wyke     |
| • Owen Gaynor           | • More Than Minutes  | • Rob Young      |
| • Claire Haigh          | • Gill Phazey        | • Karen Zaman    |

#### Team values

- Integrity: *Honest and sincere with a strong moral principle*  
 Co-creation: *Focusing on stakeholder experience and interactive relationships*  
 Inclusivity: *Embracing the wider health research community using a multitude of physical and digital channels*  
 Altruism: *Working for the greater good of the health research community, and ultimately patients and the public*  
 Humility: *A modest team recognising the skills and abilities of others*  
 Optimism: *Hopeful and confident for the future of health research in the region.*

### Our approach

We contribute an established and evaluated track record, focusing specifically on:

- delivering R&D capacity throughout the full range of NHS organisations
- making and supporting connections across the boundaries of organisations and existing networks
- working collaboratively to facilitate the generation of ideas and research questions across multiple networks
- building communities, including through patient and public involvement (PPI) in R&D
- using digital tools to support our management, development and networking activities, so enhancing communication.

### What we do

We work to the regional agendas of our key stakeholders, which include NIHR; HEE working across the North; the Greater Manchester Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) and Innovation Agency (North West Coast AHSN); and Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRCs).

We also have an independent, entrepreneurial field of development that works with new and existing partners in health research. We engage strategically with the NHS, higher-education institutions (HEIs), local business, third sector, and health and social care organisations across the North West to ensure that research, development and implementation remain central to the agendas of new and emergent NHS organisations and related networks.

We host and support the North West People in Research Forum (NWPIR), and champion PPI in research across the region and nationally. A particular interest lies in exploring new and creative

ideas, as well as skills for learning and communicating R&D, and in sharing these with the health research community.

Our work is varied and includes workshops, Catalyst events, meetings and forums, engaging professionals from all backgrounds – ranging from ECRs needing support with developing their careers to CEOs developing regional health research strategies.

### **This report**

This report describes our work during 2016/17 to enable connections, develop collaboration, deliver capacity and build communities. Further information about our work is available on our website at <http://www.research.northwest.nhs.uk/>

## **3. Building health research capability and capacity**

We work to build R&D capacity throughout the full range of NHS organisations in the North West, including those that have so far not fully recognised their potential contribution to the R&D agenda. During 2016/17, our objectives have been to:

- support NHS-based ECRs in professional and personal development
- continue the programme to develop cultures of R&I within healthcare teams
- plan and deliver the regional R&D conference
- extend the reach of the Releasing Potential programme to make it more accessible by increasing the use of social media and ICT
- co-ordinate the HEE internship programme in the Northern region.

### **Supporting ECRs**

There is a growing community of NHS-based ECRs undertaking research at master's, doctoral and post-doctoral levels. Through a comprehensive programme of work, the Releasing Potential programme aims to support the development of this community.

In November 2016, Dr Will Medd led a coaching masterclass entitled 'Write here, right now'. This one-day event offered a combination of 'retreat' to create space to write and live coaching 'experiments' to explore different approaches to the experience of writing. While working on current pieces of writing (papers, proposals etc.), participants explored what would happen if they unlocked the possibility of enjoying writing – looking at confidence, fears, values, goals and habits while experimenting with different writing 'moods'. Participants came away with:

- dedicated writing time on their topics
- greater awareness of what gets in their way of their writing and how to overcome that
- learning from others about their writing experiences and strategies
- a commitment to new writing habits.

We also employed an intern from Manchester Business School, Nuttapan Meethong, to undertake a comprehensive review of the needs of the ECR community to determine the best way to support its needs. This involved examining the websites – and interviewing ECRs and representatives, including continuing professional development (CPD) leads – of NHS organisations, professional groups and universities in the North West.



The review scoped the existing organisational support for ECRs, which included bodies to support their getting started in research, signposting to other services, internships, mentoring, providing massive open online courses (MOOCs) and networking. These sources of support were then mapped to the learning outcomes of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.

We also advertised for participants in a pilot cultural exchange for ECRs and industrial organisations, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), enabling ECRs to spend a day in the R&D department of an SME relevant to their area of practice.

### **Continuing the programme to develop cultures of R&I within healthcare teams**

For over three years, NHS R&D NW has been leading a programme of work with service managers focused on cultures of R&I within clinical teams/services. The rationale for this work is that significant investment is being made in developing NHS-based researchers, yet the realisation of this investment at a personal and organisational level will not be achieved unless the individuals are working in a team culture that values and nurtures R&I, and that utilises their skills and expertise.

While managers are often highlighted as potential barriers to R&I within clinical practice, little work has been undertaken to determine their learning and development needs with regard to this aspect of clinical leadership, and how they can be supported better in delivering on this agenda. The project is funded by HEE.

Delivered in spring 2016, this year's programme comprised four interlinked one-day workshops structured around the Healthcare Leadership Model. Through face-to-face input in the four workshops and via the online learning community created within the programme, the 16 delegates explored the current and emerging local, regional and national R&I cultures, and their roles in shaping these. They began to develop their skills in facilitating and leading cultures of R&I within their respective services, and to construct their own self-sustaining online community of practice.

#### **Innovation Leadership Development Programme – participating organisations 2016/17**

- Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
- Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CMFT)
- Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust
- The National Artificial Eye Service
- The Christie NHS Foundation Trust
- University of Central Lancashire

To promote the development of the community of practice and enable delegates to engage with the programme between workshops, a dedicated Google Plus group was set up. All delegates were trained to use this. Course evaluation revealed that for some, this was a challenge initially but was welcomed on completion of the course. We have since received numerous requests to expand this programme around emergent themes – there is a particular interest in the importance of resilience in R&I culture building. Details of the course and feedback can be viewed on the Google Plus page at <https://plus.google.com/communities/117617155361727244994>

Other work on developing a culture of research within organisations – again funded by HEE – comprised the co-creation of a pilot programme with CMFT. We have been working with CMFT's Head of Nursing, Jane Grimshaw, and the new Florence Nightingale Foundation Chair in Clinical Nursing Practice at the University of Manchester, Professor Michelle Briggs. This blended learning approach – with a mixture of workshops, webinars, e-learning and telephone coaching – will support R&D managers and research champions in their role across the organisation.



## Planning and delivering the regional R&D conference

Following the success of Let's Talk Research 1 and 2 in 2014 and 2015, the 2016 conference was held over two days in September at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Entitled 'Edgewalking: Exploring novel approaches to R&D', the event aimed to challenge the traditional boundaries in research and development and explore how to do things differently – giving healthcare professionals opportunities to hear and discuss research, learn new tools and techniques, and engage with fellow researchers.

We attracted four keynote speakers:

- Professor Caroline Watkins, Professor of Stroke and Older People's Care, Director of R&I for the College of Health and Wellbeing, and Director of Lancashire Clinical Trials Unit, University of Central Lancashire
- Penny Clough, MBE
- Professor Sally Spencer, Director of Clinical Research, Postgraduate Medical Institute, Edge Hill University
- Professor Ged Byrne, Dean and Director of Education and Quality, HEE working across the North.

Delegates – of which there were 155 – could choose to attend four of 28 workshops delivered by leading researchers, academics and clinicians and covering a wide range of research topics (see box for examples). Also on offer were five 'community hotspots': themed spaces where delegates were invited to engage in a range of activities, discussions and conversations based on community, coaching, technology, creativity and communication. The conference included performances by participants in the Academy of Creative Minds 2016, which you can see via the YouTube link given below.

<b>Let's Talk Research 2016: Examples of workshops</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Challenging traditional approaches to care practice for people with dementia</li><li>• Digital dynamos: Making the most of mobile &amp; social media</li><li>• Get animated! An opportunity to explore stop-motion animation</li><li>• 'Going the edgewalking mile': A PPI workshop</li><li>• Hackathons and pizzas</li><li>• How to obtain and share juicy patient-centred insight for impact</li><li>• Online communities, tweet chats and journal clubs: What's in it for you?</li><li>• Research in the NHS: How can we all help?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Risky business? Involving people with 'lived experience' of suicide in a suicide-prevention research study</li><li>• Training and career development from NIHR</li><li>• Turning your research 'findings' into a research message</li><li>• Understanding young people's experiences of accessing mental health support with the Tiered System and proposed Thrive Model of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)</li><li>• Whose health is it anyway?</li><li>• Film presentations</li><li>• Oral presentations</li><li>• Poster tour</li></ul>
<b>For more information</b> Web: <a href="http://www.research.northwest.nhs.uk/work/lets-talk-research/">http://www.research.northwest.nhs.uk/work/lets-talk-research/</a> YouTube: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRWMUdkr_07GMvOT1_ol-KPXgr79AxBY">https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRWMUdkr_07GMvOT1_ol-KPXgr79AxBY</a>	

Planning was also started for Let's Talk Research 4, scheduled to take place on 14 September 2017.

## Extending the reach of Releasing Potential

*The NHS Constitution* (Department of Health, 2013, p. 3) is explicit in its 'commitment to innovation and to the promotion, conduct and use of research to improve the current and future health and care of the population'.

Delivering on this commitment is linked directly to improved patient outcomes and quality of care, greater efficiency and resource utilisation. It is predicated on a workforce equipped with the requisite skills working within a culture actively engaged with R&I.

To support delivery on this agenda, the Releasing Potential programme comprises two work streams:

- supporting the development and career progression of ECRs located within NHS trusts in the North West
- supporting the development of skills and expertise in clinical team leads and service managers with regard to developing cultures of R&I in clinical teams.

Work to extend the reach of the Releasing Potential programme during 2016/17 focused on making it more accessible by increasing the use of social media and ICT. In particular, a review of the needs of the ECR community by Manchester Business School intern Nuttapan Meethong identified the need for an interactive portal based on the learning outcomes of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. This will allow niche groups (e.g. physiotherapists in the North West) to access information on the support available, signposting ECRs to learning and development opportunities in their area.

We also continued to develop a series of multimedia resources to support ECRs that can be downloaded from our website, and are continuing to use social media – including Google Plus groups – to develop communities of practice.

## Coordinating the HEE internship programme

This highly prestigious internship programme is seen as the first step for healthcare professionals interested in developing a clinical academic career. The fully funded internships provide the opportunity for healthcare professionals to spend 30 days in a research environment learning more about what is involved in health research, and a further eight days taking part in an educational programme. Running for six months, the programme includes three residentials.

The internships are open to registered health professionals working in the NHS in England and aim to:

- increase understanding of what it means to be involved in clinical academic research
- develop research skills and expertise
- enhance ability to become a research champion within a clinical setting
- inform decisions about progressing further in a clinical academic career.

A total of 24 people (our second cohort) completed the 2015/16 programme in June 2016 and presented posters at the Let's Talk Research conference 2016. A third cohort of 27 began the 2016/17 programme in September 2016 and will present posters at Let's Talk Research 4 in September 2017.

## 4. Working collaboratively

We work collaboratively to facilitate the generation of innovative ideas and research questions across multiple networks. During 2016/17, our objective has been to build the Catalyst programme in order to further develop relationships between individuals and health/academic institutions in the North West.

The Catalyst programme was established in recognition of the vast clinical and academic expertise in health research in the North West, and the lack of effective networking among those with that expertise. The aims of the programme are to:

- identify research questions of importance to policymakers, commissioners, service providers, clinicians, patients and the public
- create new, exciting and innovative collaborations to develop research funding
- improve links between the NHS and universities to facilitate research and support changes in practice
- contribute to the economy of the North of England by attracting additional R&D funding
- give colleagues in the North of England an idea of strengths and potential gaps in research in the region.

Catalyst events are run both as stand-alone, topic-specific events and as part of our other programmes of work; they use Open Space methodology. In 2016/17, we delivered three Catalyst events.

First, in May 2016, we ran a Catalyst event entitled: 'How do we ensure dementia research improves lives?' As a collaboration with Alzheimer's Society, this was designed to bring together prominent people from diverse backgrounds across the country who have an interest in dementia research and its subsequent implementation. The event aimed to encourage participants to begin collaborative work across their organisations, with a view to developing innovative bids for grant schemes including Care and Public Health Programme Grants offered by Alzheimer's Society and other NIHR/EU funding. The report is available at <http://www.research.northwest.nhs.uk/work/catalystprogramme/catalyst-event-how-do-we-ensure-dementia-research-improves-lives/>

Second, following the launch of the Health Education Research network in 2015/16, a Catalyst event was held in June 2016 on health education research. Funded by HEE, this looked specifically at the impact of health education research on the patient, the educator and the health workforce. This interactive event was recorded using both film and animation: see <https://plus.google.com/communities/112648440199339645010/stream/77c16a8c-6966-49ae-8584-c8824ef8ee52>. In addition, a smaller interactive workshop (for 20 people) was held in May 2016, using hackathon facilitation, to encourage the growth of this network: see <https://plus.google.com/communities/112648440199339645010>. Our community of practice in health education research is supported by a Google Plus group.

### What is Open Space?

Open Space is a method designed to enable people with mutual interests to meet and progress ideas in a short period of time. Participants have control over what is discussed and can choose to include themselves in various forums generated on the day. At the conclusion of the various forums, decisions are made about outcomes and further steps to progress them. Participants are expected to contribute further via the networks developed on the day, using various online community tools (e.g. Google Plus groups). For animations on:

- Open Space, go to [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vEBcr\\_YkHU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vEBcr_YkHU)
- the Catalyst process, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwpQMtTSi5c>

### What is hackathon facilitation?

Hackathons were originally developed in the mid to late 2000s by the ICT community as a way of quickly identifying new ideas to develop usable software. They have been adapted for use in the R&D field to create new ideas for research. They can last anywhere from several hours to several days. (NHS R&D ones last a day.)

Typically, hackathons typically start with one or more presentations about the event and the specific subject. Participants then suggest ideas and form teams, based on individual interests and skills. At this stage, the main work of the hackathon begins. At the end, each group presents its ideas. Sometimes, there is a competitive element, with contributions judged and rewarded with prizes.

Often, hackathon organisers and participants post videos of the presentations; blog about results with screenshots and details; share links and progress on social media; and enable people to share, learn from and build on the ideas generated and initial work completed. We use Google Plus for this.

Third, following exploration of joint working with academic partners on the Catalyst programme, we partnered with the Postgraduate Medical Institute at Edge Hill University to hold an event in September 2016 on collaborating for care. This was designed to develop excellent research in health by bringing together academics from Edge Hill University and external partners who have a shared interest in improving health and social care. The event encouraged participants to become involved in cross-disciplinary research, collaboration and knowledge exchange, with a view to developing innovative bids for internal Edge Hill University funding through the Research Institute Thematic Awards. You can read the report at <http://www.research.northwest.nhs.uk/work/catalyst-programme/catalyst-event-collaborating-for-care/>

## 5. Making and supporting connections

We work to make and support connections across the boundaries of organisations and existing networks. During 2016/17, our objective has been to expand engagement with individuals and organisations nationally and internationally.

Work is ongoing to pursue international relationships with countries working in similar areas of interest, including maintaining relationships with European colleagues, for example in Finland, Portugal and Spain.

We also developed plans to pilot an NHS and business cultural exchange, given that collaborative working between the NHS and the commercial sector is central to current R&I agendas. To achieve such working, there is a pressing need for both sectors to develop a greater understanding of each other's priorities, values and models of working. *Innovation, Health and Wealth* (the Department of Health's strategy for improving care and creating greater wealth through innovation, published in 2011) highlighted the need to create more opportunities for the sectors to come together to learn from each other and facilitate greater collaboration.

In 2016/17, we held a number of discussions with Medilink (a membership-based professional organisation with a remit to stimulate growth and innovation in the medical and health technology sector) and a range of individual SMEs. The focus of these meetings was to explore the potential to pilot an NHS and business cultural exchange programme. Applications to take part in this pilot programme went out to NHS staff in January 2017, and the exchange visits began in February 2017.

## 6. Engaging strategically

We work to engage strategically across the North West in order to ensure that research, development and implementation remain central to the agendas of new and emergent NHS organisations and related networks. During 2016/17, our objective has been to develop and maintain strategic professional relationships with regional leaders in health research.

During the year, we held regular meetings and update sessions with the Dean and Director of Education and Quality for HEE working across the North, the chief executives of both local AHSNs, and the directors of the two North West CLAHRCs. We also continued to build close relationships with the HEIs in the region, for example delivering a Catalyst event on collaborating for care with Edge Hill University, planning another on autism, and meeting with professors at the university to look at further ways to work together. We also developed our links with Manchester Metropolitan University (which agreed to contribute funding to the NWPIR Forum), and with the University of Chester.

Two members of our core team hold honorary positions at HEIs in the region: Dr Stuart Eglin is an honorary visiting professor at the University of Liverpool in the Institute of Psychology, Health and Society; and Professor Bill Campbell serves as an emeritus professor at the Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Finally, we were honoured to win the Most Innovative NHS Team category of the North West Coast Innovation Awards. These awards celebrate success and reward achievements for the excellent work being undertaken across the region in relation to clinical R&I within healthcare. At the event's core is the desire to demonstrate how clinical R&I efforts have had an impact on patient care across the North West Coast and to showcase ideas. The awards are a collaboration between the Innovation Agency, NIHR Clinical Research Network North West Coast, and CLAHRC North West Coast. They are aimed at a variety of stakeholders who work with the three organisations, including NHS partner organisations, local authorities, industry partners, academic partners, and business partners working in health innovation.

The Innovation Agency also provided sponsorship for Let's Talk Research 3 in September 2016.

## 7. Communicating our work

We work to ensure that the achievements of NHS R&D NW are communicated to all health and social care individuals and organisations in the region. During 2016/17, our objectives have been to:

- produce and disseminate our annual report and operational plan
- keep and update a comprehensive database of all NHS R&D NW stakeholders and supporters
- communicate R&D news regularly
- contribute to other relevant organisational publications in health research, and link into trust and university newsletters.

### Producing key documents

We developed and agreed our annual report and operational plan, commissioned writers for the annual report, and printed and disseminated our reports.

## Keeping a database of stakeholders and supporters

The Operations and Marketing team members work closely together to maintain and develop a comprehensive database of all our business contacts – both stakeholders and supporters. In 2016/7, through increased investment in email marketing, the NHS database increased in size to a rich, loyal database of over 3,000 contacts who receive regular news and support. We also began work to be able to segment this, in order to provide more targeted communications.

## Communicating R&D news regularly

We communicated regular R&D news using our Twitter (<https://twitter.com/@NHSNWRD>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/NHSRandDNW>) accounts – as well as keeping the R&D website up-to-date and posting all up-and-coming events there. We also coordinated Twitter chats for the NHS R&D communities.

We released at least one email per week to the entire database of over 3,000 addresses. We ensured that the content of the email was relevant to our audience, and provided links to our website or partner sites for further information. Our email contact retention was high.

## Contributing to other publications

We submitted articles and team updates to newsletters and publications produced by HEE, NHS trusts and other partners.

## 8. Supporting PPI

We work to support the NWPIR Forum, and to champion PPI and public engagement (PE) in research across the region.

During 2016/17, our objectives have been to:

- continue to host the NWPIR Forum
- contribute to the management and development of the forum
- support funding and strategy development.

During 2016/17, we continued to host the NWPIR Forum, providing office space and staff, as well as line management and professional support for forum facilitator and support staff. We ensured that forum members were included where appropriate in our work to ensure the sharing of good practice.

We successfully negotiated £10,000 funding for the forum from Manchester Metropolitan University, through Professor Allison Chambers (Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean of Health there), in September 2016. With our support and that of facilitator Carolyn Gamble – whom we appointed to the post in 2016/17 – the Executive Committee is continuing to look for a sustainable funding model.

### Aims of the North West People in Research Forum

- To support researchers to involve and engage patients and the public
- To support patients and members of the public who are, or wish to become, involved in health and social care research
- To share learning about PPI and PE in research
- To form a link between researchers and patients/the public
- To raise awareness about – and opportunities to get involved in – health and social care research in the region



## 9. Exploring new and creative ideas

We are a regional leader in the exploration of new and creative ideas for learning and communicating research, development and implementation, delivering an annual programme of work. During 2016/17, our objectives have been to:

- develop a comprehensive programme of work to embrace a range of creative ideas that can be used by researchers and other health professionals to communicate research and key health messages
- work in partnership with the University of Salford to develop, film and broadcast a second series of podcasts with leaders in health research
- deliver a series of creative workshops
- develop and deliver an online editorial for ECRs: *The Researcher* magazine.

### Developing a programme of creative ideas to communicate research

Having delivered a two-day residential to launch the Academy of Creative Minds at the University of Lancaster at the end of the previous year, in 2016/17 we provided five mentoring workshops, and had the programme outcomes presented at Let's Talk Research 3.

One of the 'community hotspots' at the conference allowed people to talk to artists and performers involved in the Academy of Creative Minds.

The programme brings the arts and sciences together in health research. It draws on the skills of a dynamic, disparate group of artists – from composers to circus performers, and from directors to writers – who share their 'tricks of the trade' with health researchers, to build confidence and expertise in using the creative arts to convey research messages in a more powerful and meaningful way. Attracting 32 participants to its first intake (lasting six months), the Academy of Creative Minds aims to:

- challenge researchers to consider the ways in which they disseminate their research findings
- empower researchers to be much more courageous and creative in both thinking and outputs
- inspire participants to bring together the arts and science in health research
- increase confidence to transform communication skills.

We are currently evaluating the programme; results will be available in April.

#### The artists

- Amina Cunningham – musician
- Alexander Douglas – conductor and educator
- Owen Gaynor – circus performer and director
- Jana Kennedy – comedian and performer
- Kate Marlow – theatre director, coach and writer
- Richard Taylor – composer
- Rob Young – writer

#### The academics

- Professor Angela Todd – academic researcher
- Jane Martindale – Research Practitioner

For detailed biographies, and videos of the artists at work, see <http://www.research.northwest.nhs.uk/work/academy-of-creative-minds/academy-of-creative-minds-artist-biographies/>



### Comments from participants in the Academy of Creative Minds

- *'ACM is watering and feeding a seed which sprouted at the residential and is now flourishing! Ideas are popping up and growing like a green bushy plant ... My confidence and enjoyment of presenting within the group continues to steadily grow ... I am increasingly making connections between the creative and performing arts and my role within the NHS ... and the need to engage and involve my client group, their families and carers. It is a joy to feel so enabled to combine my creative and clinical skills and I feel the outcome can only be something rather special!'*
- *'It was amazing to see how ideas which started out as not much more than a few notes ... could be fleshed out into a ten-minute show incorporating songs, music and dancing with everyone working really well together. If someone had told me this was what I would be doing before the course I might have made preparations for a cross-country ... but as it turned out I really enjoyed it.'*
- *'It's definitely useful (and enjoyable) to move out of my comfort zone (i.e. words, words, words, especially writing them down) and try something a bit different. Also I tend to work alone a lot and sometimes find collaboration tricky but this feels good ... The group atmosphere is excellent – non-competitive, friendly, supportive.'*
- *'What perhaps surprised me was how unconfident I felt going into the course ... and sense that I have gained more confidence through taking part in the ongoing process with a group of likeminded people. After attending a session I generally feel refreshed and more motivated.'*
- *'I'm enjoying working with people who are creative and fun ... trying to figure out how we can use our energy and creativity to translate our academic work into plain English ... I'm loving learning different tools and skills I can use in my own work.'*
- *'I am beginning to see that I am becoming more imaginative as a person and that barriers that I would have built are lower than before, if even erected in the first place. It is edge walking and I am a bit wobbly but I haven't fallen down because I have been supported.'*
- *'How creative and imaginative people can become when the environment is right and they have given themselves permission to be free from their self-imposed boundaries ... What fantastic ideas my peers are coming up with.'*

### Working with the University of Salford

Working with the University of Salford, we continued to develop, film, broadcast and evaluate our second series of podcasts. Entitled 'The Edgewalkers', this featured people who have challenged current thinking and processes in the world of R&D with the aim of making a difference. The speakers discussed concepts such as communities of practice, organisational behaviour, 'islands of sanity', and the secrets of our future's change agents.

#### The Edgewalkers: podcast series 2

- Deborah Arnot – Director, NHS North West Leadership Academy
- Dr Helen Bevan – Chief Transformation Officer, NHS England
- Simon Denegri – National Director for Patients and the Public, NIHR; and Chair, INVOLVE
- David Fillingham – Chief Executive, Advancing Quality Alliance
- Professor Peter Kinderman – President Elect, British Psychological Society
- Professor Michael West – Head of Thought Leadership, The King's Fund
- Margaret Wheatley – writer and consultant

You can watch the podcasts at

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRWMUdkr\\_04JXJTysSH6KN-9YVvKe\\_Lc](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRWMUdkr_04JXJTysSH6KN-9YVvKe_Lc)

### Delivering creative workshops

At NHS R&D NW, we recognise the importance of communicating effectively and reaching as wide an audience as possible to ensure that key R&D messages are being heard. Using and making short films is one way of capturing work, and of disseminating it easily and quickly through the internet. However, the cost of paying someone to make a short film can be prohibitive, especially for public-sector organisations, academics and researchers. Therefore, we invited film-maker Tom Barrance, Director of Learnaboutfilm (who has worked in film education for many years), to deliver two one-day workshops – in February and June 2016 – on making short films and podcasts using

iPhones and iPads. The workshops were designed for people with no film-making experience, starting with a simple brief and taking them through the complete film-making process.

In addition, four creative workshops gave researchers, academics, NHS professionals, and supporting marketing and communications staff the opportunity to improve the communication of key messages using stop-motion animation. The technique can help to convey report findings, information requests, operational requirements, and facts and figures – making communications more impactful and engaging.

We also delivered a workshop on photography. Run by Ginny Koppenhol, this used interactive and creative activities to teach participants how to create stunning images using their smartphone or tablet cameras, consider appropriate and interesting visual metaphors to represent your messages, edit, and put together compelling photo stories.

In addition, two Digital Dynamo workshops – provided by faculty associate Kevin Wyke in April and May 2016 – helped participants use Twitter effectively as a social media platform, build a professional online network, engage online in research communities, have a sound digital presence, and get their research message heard.

### **Developing and delivering *The Researcher* magazine**

To achieve the aspirational goal of embedding research within practice and increasing the numbers of healthcare professionals actively engaged in research, we had identified an urgent need to develop and communicate a highly engaging and energising message about what it means to be a health researcher and to do health research.

Working with HEE and NIHR, we therefore launched a new national NHS project to develop a digital online publication designed exclusively for healthcare professionals starting out on their research journey. Funded by HEE for the first three issues, *The Researcher* is a magazine created by health researchers for health researchers.

The project is highly collaborative, with a team of ECRs developing the content and forming the editing team, supported by one of our faculty associates, writer Rob Young. Drawing on a bank of stories, news and content, *The Researcher* focuses on communicating – in an engaging, energising and innovative way – the backstories from research and researchers, so illustrating the reality of what it is like to set off on a research career.

A project team of 15 ECR enthusiasts – with stories to tell and a passion to engage with others – contributed to, edited and managed the three issues over the year, each of which had its own theme.

#### **What is stop motion?**

Stop motion is an animation technique that physically manipulates an object so that it appears to move on its own. The object is moved in small increments between individually photographed frames, creating the illusion of movement when the series of frames is played as a continuous sequence.

#### ***The Researcher*: publication dates and themes**

- Issue 1 (May 2016) – **Staying balanced**
- Issue 2 (September 2016) – **Breaking boundaries**
- Issue 3 (January 2017) – **Maintaining momentum**

### Comments on *The Researcher* magazine

*'My interest in the magazine comes both from what I will get out of the work and from hopefully generating something that can help a whole community of ECRs to embark on a journey and to find their way through the uncertain periods of the early stages of a research career.'*

Dr David Keane (editorial team member) – Clinical Scientist, St James's University Hospital, Leeds

*'Following the positive reception of the first issue, I am delighted that we've been able to produce another high-quality publication to help support our researchers and hopefully encourage those not already involved in research to become more curious about how they can improve patient care and the part research can play in doing so. I enjoyed reading all your feedback, but this tweet summed it up: "Informative, insightful, interesting – everything a newsletter should be and most importantly has a heart #whywedoresearch".'*

Nicki Latham, Executive Director of Performance and Development at HEE (funding body)

### NHS improvement leads film series

As part of the *Developing People – Improving Care* national framework to guide action on building improvement skills, developing leadership development and managing talent for people in NHS-funded roles, NHS R&D NW was funded by NHS England, NHS Improvement and the Health Foundation to develop a series of short films of service improvement leaders across England to help maintain the energy and direction underpinning the framework.

The idea behind the films was to gain stories of practical wisdom from the experiences of early improvement leaders in the NHS; these will enable those implementing the *Developing People – Improving Care* framework to successfully establish sustainable change and improvement.

NHS R&D NW worked in collaboration with film-maker John Billing and associate Sarah Garrett, who interviewed all the leaders. In total, eight short films were made of improvement leaders:

- Helen Bevan – Chief Transformation Officer, NHS England
- Jo Bibby – Director of Strategy, The Health Foundation
- David Fillingham – Chief Executive, Advancing Quality Alliance
- Peter Homa – Chief Executive, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust
- Sir John Oldham – National Clinical Lead for Quality & Productivity, Department of Health (England)
- Angela Pedder – Lead Chief Executive, Success Regime and the Wider Devon Sustainability and Transformation Plan
- Professor Sir Mike Richards – Chief Inspector of Hospitals, Care Quality Commission
- Peter Wilcock – Retired Leader, NHS Improvement.

The films will be available for viewing in April 2017.

## 10. Engaging nationally and internationally

We work to engage with national and international experts to support the development of new ideas. During 2016/17, our objectives have been to:

- explore the theory and practice of the development of communities of practice
- identify new thought leaders to work with through masterclasses.

## Developing communities of practice

It is important to us to continually push the boundaries of how health and social care professionals think about research and support the delivery of research outputs and the communities that support them.

Building on the series of masterclasses by three experts in social leadership and communities of practice held the previous year, we continued to engage with Julian Stodd, Margaret Wheatley and Etienne Wenger. In order to use our learning from these events to inform how we grow, develop and support our communities of health researchers across the region, we held four half-day sessions – facilitated by Vajramudita Armstrong – using resources from Etienne Wenger’s workshop. In these, we explored the development of networks and communities of practice.

## Identifying new thought leaders

We work to identify – through team workshops – new thought leaders with whom we could subsequently develop masterclasses to roll out within the North West. In 2016/17, we experienced workshops with:

- Doug Shaw – on using techniques and approaches in art and drawing to look at our own practice, the communities that we work with, and the world of research (December 2016)
- Stuart Nolan – on how to research, create and innovate like a magician, using Lego. Participants learned how magic is being used in physical therapy, science research, and technology innovation (January 2017).

# 11. Developing our team

As well as developing our own team and funding, our objective for 2016/17 has been to enhance NHS R&D social and digital media to communicate more effectively with stakeholders.

## Developing our team and funding

In 2016/17, we participated in the Aston Team Journey, facilitated by faculty associate Taravandana Lupson, who also works as a freelance consultant with Aston Organisation Development. This team assessment and development tool improves performance by giving teams a structured, evidence-based experience they can both value and enjoy. A clear, ten-stage layout enables teams to work through the practical and interactive materials at their own pace.

We also held regular (six-weekly) Rehearsal Days, dedicated NHS R&D NW team days in which we informally discussed new ideas and developed ourselves both individually and as a team. On some occasions, we invited industry gurus to share their insights and expertise. After each team day, our ideas and discussions were shared throughout the team via Google Plus.

Other work included:

- ongoing development of our faculty, with new associates appointed during 2016/17
- collaboration with the three Local Education Training Boards across the North
- use of the Business Model Canvas, a strategic-management template in the form of a visual chart with elements describing our value proposition, infrastructure, service users and finances
- participation by the Director and the two Assistant Directors in the Social Age Safari (a two-day collaborative conference for senior leaders, curious learners, strategists and policymakers), run by Sea Salt Learning in Bristol

- invitation from North West Employers to attend an Organisational Raid day, engaging and networking with non-NHS organisations in the social sector – e.g. prison, police, social services, councils and chambers of commerce – to share good practice and so improve performance.

### Developing and maintaining Google Plus groups

We have a total of 12 Google Plus groups, set up to encourage the development of communities around specific projects and to enable better communication between people. The groups are:

- Curious Conversations – a team-only group set up to share with colleagues any interesting conversations or interesting people encountered
- A Journey to Constant Curiosity – set up specifically for the Innovation Exchange Day at North West Employers
- Leadership Development – set up for participants on the ‘Leading Cultures of R&I in Clinical Teams’ course to share information, and for course leaders to post course information
- Let’s Talk Research 2017 – an information-sharing group for the annual conference steering group
- NHS R&D NW 365 photography project – a team-only page for everyone to post a daily photo to improve photography skills
- NHS R&D NW Animation Community – for anyone who has been on the stop-motion courses
- R&D NW – a place for updating the faculty of associates about our work
- Rehearsal Day – a team-only group where we post information from our team days
- Academy of Creative Minds – a community of people leading and taking part in this programme
- Communities of Practice – set up for people taking part in the pilot programme on communities of practice
- Health Education Research – a community of people who do or are interested in health education research, set up as part of a 12-month programme of workshops and events
- *The Researcher* Magazine – for the editorial groups, HEE and us to share information for this magazine.

## 12. Conclusion

2016/17 has been an excellent year for NHS R&D NW. Building on the success of the previous year, we hosted another successful conference, made plans to create an ECR portal, further developed our programme drawing on creative arts, and launched *The Researcher* magazine.

Other important activities included:

- coordinating HEE’s internship programme
- running three Catalyst events on the topics of health education research, dementia, and collaborating for care
- contributing to the NWPIR Forum, including negotiating funding from Manchester Metropolitan University
- continuing to work with the University of Salford on our second series of podcasts, ‘The Edgewalkers’
- delivering a range of creative workshops
- developing communities of practice through identifying new thought leaders for future masterclasses, and through Google Plus groups.

Finally, we were honoured to win the Most Innovative NHS Team category of the North West Coast Innovation Awards.

Thank you to all our supporters, stakeholders, funders, associates, friends, patients and members of the public who have helped make this year go so well. We greatly appreciate your contribution to the work that we do.

## Contacting us

If you would like to work with us and make a difference to health research in the North West, then please get in touch. We can deliver bespoke pieces of work, collaborate to support teams and organisations with the R&D agenda, and support and advise on a range of R&D issues. Full details of all our programmes are available on our website.

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<b>Twitter</b>	<a href="https://twitter.com/@NHSNWRD">https://twitter.com/@NHSNWRD</a>
<b>LinkedIn</b>	<a href="http://uk.linkedin.com/pub/nhs-r-d-north-west/55/324/745">http://uk.linkedin.com/pub/nhs-r-d-north-west/55/324/745</a>
<b>Facebook</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NHSRandDNW">https://www.facebook.com/NHSRandDNW</a>
<b>SlideShare</b>	<a href="https://www.slideshare.net/NHSNWRD">https://www.slideshare.net/NHSNWRD</a>

## Abbreviations

AHSN	Academic Health Science Network
CLAHRC	Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care
CMFT	Central Manchester Foundation Trust
CPD	Continuing professional development
ECR	Early-career researcher
HEE	Health Education England
HEI	Higher-education institution
ICT	Information and communication technology
MOOC	Massive open online course
NIHR	National Institute for Health Research
NHS	National Health Service
NW	North West
NWPIR	North West People in Research Forum
PE	Public engagement
PPI	Patient and public involvement
R&D	Research and development
R&I	Research and innovation
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise



# ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS 2016

## MOST INNOVATIVE NHS TEAM

Winner

North West Coast Research & Innovation Awards

### WEBSITE

20,455 Sessions  
 16,363 Visitors  
 4,385 Returning  
 44,534 Page views  
 78% New visitors  
 research.northwest.nhs.uk

### TWITTER

1,923 Followers  
 605 Tweets  
 253,000 Impressions  
 6,923 Visits  
 605 Mentions  
 348 New followers

### EMAILS

3,015 Contacts  
 92 Emails created  
 128,848 Emails sent  
 32.5% Avg. open rate  
 (industry avg = 15.3%)

### EVENTS

25 Events  
 401 Attendees  
 11 Venues  
 16 Organisations

### YOUTUBE

25,663 Views  
 58 Videos added  
 7 Playlists  
 68 Subscribers

### GOOGLE +

7 communities  
 108 people

### LINKED IN

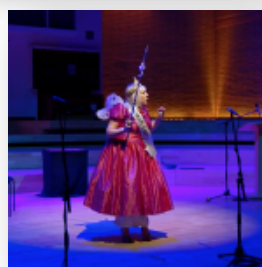
535 connections

### LET'S TALK RESEARCH CONFERENCE

155 delegates  
 28 workshops

### THE RESEARCHER MAGAZINE

3 Issues  
 9,622 Users, 13,189 Views





# NHS R&D North West

## CAPACITY & CAPABILITY

supporting you as you develop your career in health research

Power in your Pocket



Digital Development



The Researcher



Masterclass Series

## COMMUNITIES

establishing strong and sustainable research communities that help you to do what you need to do



Internships



Webinars



## CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

sharing new and novel ways to communicate your research

Power in your Pocket



Creative Workshops



Podcasts

Let's Talk Research

Conference



Communities of Practice

## COLLABORATIONS

helping you connect with other researchers and develop new ideas for research

