



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

Introduction from our Chair



This year the Northern Health Science Alliance entered a new era as we began our multimillion-pound Research England-funded project. Securing this investment, in collaboration with MedCity, involved a tremendous amount of work from the NHSA team and member institutions, so to see the partnership come to life and begin to deliver against the goal of improving the visibility of UK life sciences expertise is extremely rewarding.

Undoubtedly, the last 12 months have presented some challenges too. COVID-19 has changed not only the health and life sciences sectors that we operate within, but society as a whole. However, what has been clear throughout the pandemic is the importance of health research and innovation in the fight against the virus and the challenges that come with it.

It's at times of crisis that excellence shines through, and the health ecosystem across the North of England has proven itself to be innovative, adaptable, and incredibly resilient.

As an alliance bringing together research-intensive NHS Trusts, universities, and the Academic Health Science Networks across the region, we have strength in numbers. We have world-leading health research and innovation assets, eminent health experts, we collaborate, and we have a shared vision of improving health and wealth.

During the last 12 months we have continued to act as the voice of the North's health ecosystem as we call for greater investment in its health and life sciences sectors. And we are being heard – policymakers are listening to us and recognising the potential of our collective assets and excellence. We have collated some key achievements from over the year which highlight how our work has made an impact.

I hope you find this report useful. I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed and supported the work of the NHSA over the year, and I look forward to another successful year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Burn', written in a cursive style.

Professor David Burn
Chair of the Northern Health Science Alliance

TESTIMONIALS

"We enjoy exceptional collaboration with the healthy ageing theme within the NHTA and have benefitted from the networking they have enabled, for example, in links with Age-Well in Canada and also across the Northern Ecosystem on Ageing and Multimorbidity (NEAM), linked to the N8 group of universities. Nicola Wilson and team have worked with us to initiate vital links to businesses, county council and NHS partners that have been essential and instrumental in getting some large research bids off the ground and to submission."

**Professor Carol Holland,
Professor in Ageing,
Lancaster University**

"It has been a great opportunity and pleasure to work with the NHTA team, who have facilitated the development of a Northern network of experts in Advanced Therapies in our first year of collaboration. I look forward to working with the NHTA to pursue funding for the resources and infrastructure needed to level up the North and enable patient access to proven cell and gene therapies."

Professor Mimoun Azzouz, Chair of Translational Neuroscience, Director of Research & Innovation, SITraN, University of Sheffield

"The NHTA have raised the profile of northern research and have been instrumental in gaining additional funding into tackling health inequalities."

Professor Clare Bambra, Professor of Public Health, Population Health Sciences Institute, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Newcastle University

"Our relationship with the NHTA is one of the most important that we have forged in the healthcare sector. The alignment, not just in areas of medical interest and innovation but also in mentality, modus operandi and passion for impact, makes this a well-matched partnership between our organisations. It is one that is truly symbiotic, amplified in the UK by the NHTA's network and desire to create change as we strive to improve economics and health."

**Dr Samuel Cronin,
Healthcare Innovation
Manager, UK Israel Tech
Hub at the British
Embassy Israel**

"We were delighted to be awarded HDR North in May 2020 in the early stages of the pandemic. HDR North will use the world-leading expertise in universities, NHS institutions and the AHSNs across the North to develop solutions to improve the care of elderly people living with frailty, an area of unmet need. The NHTA was instrumental in bringing together all the relevant parties in the development of the bid, and will continue to play an important role in delivering the aims and objectives of HDR North, ensuring that we have a sustainable and thriving organisation, which uses readily available datasets from our population to develop insights that improve health and reduce inequalities."

Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed, Director of HDR UK North, David Weatherall Chair of Medicine and NHS Chair of Pharmacogenetics at the University of Liverpool, and Director of the MRC Centre for Drug Safety Science and Wolfson Centre for Personalised Medicine

"Research plays a vital part of the future health of the people who live in our diverse communities. Our close partnership with the NHTA ensures that we continue to offer a range of high impact, high value research opportunities to benefit our patients, their families and communities both locally and regionally."

Dr Nav Ahluwalia, Director of Research at Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust

"Working with the NHTA on an application to the ISCF Healthy Ageing Challenge; Social Behavioural & Design Research Programme illuminated the value that the organisation has to both academics and commercial interests alike. Not only did they ably assist with the management of a number of moving parts, but they also uncovered hitherto untapped synergies that ultimately made the application stronger, more cohesive and impactful. The friendly and collegial approach by which the NHTA supported the bid was entirely appreciated."

Professor Amanda Ellison, Executive Director, Wolfson Research Institute for Health and Wellbeing, Durham University

"The NHTA has been a leader in international collaboration searching for and developing innovations for older adults and their caregivers. We would like to thank NHTA for their thought leadership in sharing best practices in the UK to export to Canada and globally. NHTA have generously shared their expertise through ie. grand rounds presentations and providing expert speakers for our annual What's Next Canada global conference on aging and brain health. NHTA has also been instrumental in spearheading an alliance partnership between Canada and the UK to help research in this sector turn to commercially viable entities that will make big impact to our respective aging populations. Special thanks to Professor Nicola Wilson and Dr Séamus O'Neill for their generous support and time in collaborating with CABHI."

Mel Barsky, Director, Business Development, Centre For Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI)

NEW FACES



Professor
Sir John Tooke
Non-Executive Director



Dr Kath Mackay
Non-Executive Director



Dr Jonathan Sheffield OBE
Non-Executive Director



Professor Louise Kenny
Executive Director



Helen Cole
Industry Partnerships
Manager



Sean Collins
Senior Designer



Ruth Lawson
Communications Manager



Mhairi Murdoch
Events and Visits Officer



Dr Sunil Nedungayil
Associate Medical Director
(Healthy Ageing)



Vanessa Nolan
Administrative Officer

OUR PURPOSE

OUR MISSION

To unlock the combined potential of the North's health and life sciences assets in research and innovation for the benefit of the people and the economy.

OUR VISION

A healthy and prosperous North, powered by collaboration at scale and by excellence in research and innovation across healthcare, academia, industry engagement and citizen involvement.

OUR STRATEGY

We will achieve this by:

- Mobilising and connecting the North's health and life sciences cluster with a particular focus on utilisation and deployment of NHS and University assets.
- Providing a front door to, and advocacy for, Northern life sciences.
- Showcasing the North's excellence and opportunities on an international stage.
- Developing collaboration and investment opportunities for our members and our industry partners.
- Targeting health and research inequality in the North relative to the rest of the UK.








OUR FOCUS

Adding value for member organisations through:

- Cluster development
- Enhanced national and international profile
- Delivery of Industrial Strategy
- Effective advocacy

Working across interlinked thematic areas:

- Diagnostics and Therapeutics
- Healthy Ageing
- Health Inequalities
- Data and Digital
- Mental Health

	 Diagnostics and Therapeutics	 Healthy Ageing	 Health Inequalities	 Data and Digital	 Mental Health
Cluster development	●	●	●	●	●
National and international profile	●	●	●	●	●
Industrial strategy	●	●	●	●	●
Advocacy	●	●	●	●	●

DELIVERING FOR OUR MEMBERS

At last year's AGM, we set goals for the NHTA's forthcoming year. We committed to delivering value to our members, and on our successful Research England funding, through **cluster development**, improving national and **international** visibility of the assets and capabilities within the health and life science sector, delivering against the Life Sciences **Industrial Strategy**, and **advocating** for our members and the North of England. We identified five interlinked thematic areas of acknowledged excellence to align our activity around: **diagnostics and therapeutics; healthy ageing; health inequalities; data and digital; and mental health.**

Over the last year we have been delivering against these promises. We are building networks and partnerships, we are strengthening international links and awareness of the North, and our collective voice is being heard in the corridors of power. We said we would deliver and we are, as you can see below in our year in highlights.

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

- We are bringing together leading northern experts in the development, evaluation and delivery of advanced therapy medicinal products to advocate for the sector within the region, and to work together to explore pan-northern opportunities.

- The NHTA's health inequalities group brought together the NIHR ARC Health Inequalities leads for a successful bid which will be led out of Newcastle and Durham universities. It has collaborated with the ARCs on a series of reports into COVID and a forthcoming Health for Wealth COVID update report.



- We are developing a diagnostics and MedTech network across the North to collaborate on any opportunities for investment and international business development.

- We regularly bring together the four northern Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) directors and managers and are working closely with the centres to connect them into the wider NHTA network.

- We recently held our first health data network meeting which brought together

senior digital leads from across the North, and we plan to grow this network over the coming year.

- We have brought organisations from the NHS and academia together to explore northern collaboration around the evaluation of mental health innovation and working with industry.

- We convened a group of data experts across a broad coalition of northern partners to develop the Better Care North Partnership bid for HDR UK funding, which was successful and has led to the creation of HDR North.

ADVOCACY

- Earlier this year we delivered a letter signed by NHTA council members to Downing Street which called on the Prime Minister to draw on the North's world-leading expertise in health to level up the inequality in North-South health research funding.

- We met with No 10 Advisor Will Warr to discuss the way in which investment in the North's expertise in health innovation can help to level up the region for the benefit of the whole of the UK.

- We published a report highlighting the impact of the ground-breaking data-driven Connected Health Cities (CHC) programme in the North of England.

- We held an online CHC roundtable with leaders in the NHS, public health, academics, and policymakers to discuss how the CHC health data sharing project across the North of England could help inform the national response to COVID-19.

- We facilitated contributions from NHTA members to the Health Devolution

Commission report 'Building Back Health and Prosperity' which recommends comprehensive health devolution across England.

- We hosted fringe events at the Conservative and Labour party conferences which featured Health Secretary Matt Hancock as a speaker at the Conservative event, and Anneliese Dodds, now Shadow Chancellor, at our Labour event.

- We have raised the profile of the NHTA and our members at events throughout the year including The New Statesman Northern Powerhouse Conference, Big Tent Digital, IPPR State of the North launch, and the Great North Convention.

- We have been asked to help shape the programme for the upcoming IGNITE medical innovation summit to ensure northern contributions are represented.

- We continue to engage key health and innovation leaders in online conversations - including our annual



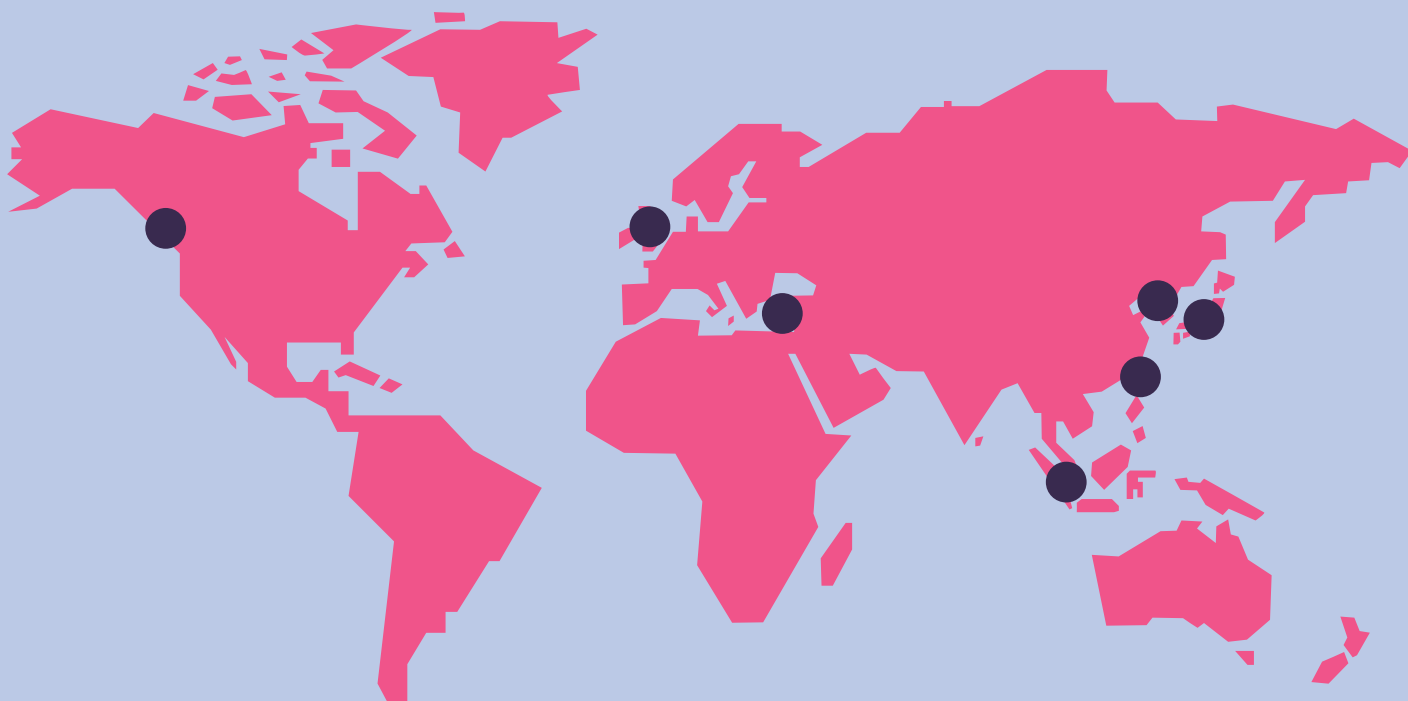
#NorthInnovationWomen social media campaign.

- Our visibility in national, regional and trade media continues to be boosted with more than 200 pieces of coverage secured over the last 12 months. This includes multiple Yorkshire Post front pages and coverage on MSN, Liverpool Echo, Manchester Evening News, The Chronicle, The Journal, Lancashire Post, Sheffield Star, regional BBC radio, Digital Health News and many more.

- There were 93,140,481 potential opportunities to see, hear or read about the NHTA in the media this year (based on average readership figures of print, broadcast and online coverage).

- Our social media reach and engagement also continues to grow. Over the last year, our tweets have been seen more than one million times and we've gained more than 600 new followers. On LinkedIn, we had more 40k post views and we increased our followers by around 260.

INTERNATIONAL



- We led a delegation of UK ageing experts to Toronto for a major international ageing and brain health event and collaboration activity with colleagues from across our Canadian network of healthy ageing expertise.

- We continue to strengthen our links in Israel, with two main initiatives in place – working to develop commercial engagement opportunities by running our own digital partnering session, and by developing our relationship with the Israeli Innovation Authority.

- We have further strengthened innovation and research collaboration links between Asia and the North following our visit to Japan and South Korea in October last year.

- We are working with the British High Commission in Singapore to develop collaborations, particularly around clinical testing of COVID-19 diagnostic tests with the Leeds NIHR Medtech and In Vitro Diagnostic Co-operative (MIC).

- We supported the delivery of a joint seminar with Taiwan's Ministry of Economic

Affairs (Biotechnology & Pharmaceutical Industries Promotion Office) to showcase northern life sciences and identify areas of collaboration.

- We represented the NHSA and its members at the online BioUS conference as part of the Department for International Trade's (DIT) virtual UK delegation.

- We took part in the International HealthTech Working Party, hosted by ABHI and DIT and joined their 'signposting' working group to ensure that the North is visible and accurately represented in future programmes.

INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

- Our multimillion-pound Research England-funded collaboration with MedCity began in March and has signalled an exciting new era for the NHSA as we work in partnership to improve the visibility of UK life sciences expertise on the international stage and support the implementation of the Industrial Strategy.

- We have supported and coordinated bid writing and consortia building within the ISCF Healthy Ageing and also EPSRC NetworksPlus frameworks. These propositions have involved collaboration and engagement between academia, industry and NHS.

- We have established connections with the ISCF Directorates for the ISCF Challenges directly relevant to our work, including: Healthy Ageing, From Data to Early Diagnosis and Precision Medicine, Accelerating Detection of Disease and Leading-edge Healthcare.

- We continue to work closely with other leading northern organisations, including the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, N8 and NP11.



WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON

Final word from Dr Séamus O'Neill



The health and life sciences landscape has changed significantly since I took up the position of Chief Executive at the Northern Health Science Alliance a year ago. But whilst new unprecedented challenges have arisen, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the long-standing health challenges we face in the North remain the same.

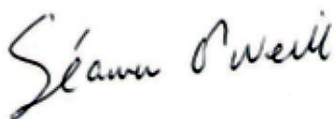
We're committed to tackling these challenges on behalf of our member institutions and, as you can see from what we've achieved together over the last 12 months, we have made progress and have much to be proud of. However, we know there is a long road ahead and more still to be done.

As you will be aware, we've worked closely with our members over the year on the Office for Life Sciences bid which sets out opportunities for investment in the health and life sciences sector in the North of England, to ensure our region is front and centre in the Government's plans to help rebalance the economy post-COVID and post-Brexit.

This is a vital piece of work which encompasses the core areas of activity for us; advocating for the system; joining up the North; supporting members to deliver against the Life Sciences Industrial Strategy; and promoting international visibility of the excellence in the North.

In the lead up to the Comprehensive Spending Review, our focus will be on further strengthening the positioning of NHS member organisations as key components of the health and life sciences innovation landscape with a view to securing greater investment in the North.

As a region, the North of England has so much to offer – we have world-class health and research facilities, exceptional talent, innovative health and life science companies and, importantly, we have a passion and desire to build on these strengths collectively to realise the full potential of the region. We can and we will make our excellence known on a national and international stage, we will bring investment into the region's health economy and, together, we will improve the health and economic prosperity of the North and the UK.



Dr Séamus O'Neill
Chief Executive, Northern Health Science Alliance

KEY MILESTONES ON THE HORIZON

- R&D Roadmap survey
- BEIS Select Committee Super Inquiry
- Comprehensive Spending Review
- Party conferences
- Life Sciences Industrial Strategy refresh
- Publication of comprehensive R&D plan

OUR MEMBERS

