

AGM REPORT 2023



REFLECTIONS FROM OUR CHAIR - COLLABORATION, EVEN IN ADVERSITY



**Professor
David Burn
Chair of the
Northern Health
Science Alliance**

Looking back at the achievements of the Northern Health Science Alliance (NHSA) over the last 12 months is particularly poignant for me as it marks the end of my tenure as NHSA Chair. It's been a privilege to hold the position and to be part of the NHSA's remarkable journey.

I am delighted to welcome Professor Graham Lord, Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health at The University of Manchester, as the new Chair who will officially take the helm at the start of June. I look forward to watching the company and its activity continue to grow under his guidance.

As you are all aware, since our last AGM, some challenges have come our way both in terms of changes in our membership and also a restructure within the team. But as evidenced in this report, these challenges haven't slowed the momentum and drive to deliver on the NHSA's vision. Within the last few months, we have welcomed two new members to the Alliance – Teesside University and Alder Hey Children's Hospital FT. They each bring unique strengths to the NHSA and we are thrilled to have them stand with us.

A pivotal moment for the NHSA last year was the launch of Health Equity North (HEN) – a virtual institute focused on place-based solutions to public health problems and inequalities. The institute provides a collaborative space for world-leading academics from the NHSA's members to work together on research to address the health inequalities faced across the region and beyond. Since its launch, HEN has already published a number of impactful reports which have, rightfully, grabbed the attention of national media and policymakers alike. It is a fabulous example of what the NHSA can achieve and how true collaboration across excellence and at scale can work wonders.

The NHSA's public affairs offer has also gained traction and our influence within the political sphere has been heightened significantly in the last year. This is reflected in the NHSA's role as secretariat for the Child of the North All-Party Parliamentary Group, which was launched at the start of 2023.

In addition, our international work has taken us across the globe and has brought in £1.1m R&D investment into the North of England. This is a wonderful outcome and testament to the vision and relationship building that have underpinned the partnerships.

We have grown our networks of experts covering a wide range of areas of strength such as advanced therapies, data and AI, healthy ageing, mental health, and diagnostics and MedTech. These stand us in good stead to mobilise for opportunities to come.

This report aims to give a snapshot of some of this incredible work. We hope that it serves as a reminder of what we can achieve when we come together; to collaborate, to celebrate the North's research excellence, and to make our case with one voice.

OUR PEOPLE

THE BOARD



Professor David Burn
Chair of the Northern Health Science Alliance



Director, Professor Louise Kenny
Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at the University of Liverpool



Director, Professor Phil Wood
Chief Executive at The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust



Non-executive director, Professor Sir John Tooke



Non-executive director, Dr Kath Mackay
Chief Scientific Officer, Bruntwood SciTech



Non-executive director, Dr Jonathan Sheffield OBE

THE TEAM



Dr Séamus O'Neill
Chief Executive



Hannah Davies
Deputy Chief Executive for NHSA and Executive Director of Health Equity North



Dr Mandy Dixon
Executive Lead for Corporate Engagement and Cluster Development



Dr Ben Martyn
Executive Lead for Investment and International Partnerships



Helen Cole
Executive Lead for Health Technologies and Evaluation



Ruth Boston
Head of Communications



Alexis Darby
Head of Public Affairs



Sean Collins
Senior Designer



Vanessa Nolan
Office Manager



Mhairi Murdoch
Project Manager



Sarah Hill
Project Manager



Charlotte Thompson
Senior Communications Officer



Magan Johansen
Executive Assistant

A YEAR IN HIGHLIGHTS

September 2022 - September 2023

Child of the North All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG): Inaugural Meeting Evidence Session – October 2022

We launched the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Child of the North in October 2022 to build on the impact of the 2021 Child of the North report. NHSA provide the Secretariat for the cross-party group co-chaired by Emma Lewell-Buck MP and Mary Robinson MP. The first meeting and evidence session in Parliament, marked the start of an impactful parliamentary and academic partnership working towards building a fairer future for children across the North of England.

The BioJapan delegation - October 2022

We joined the three-day UK Life Sciences Symposium delegation in Tokyo, which was co-hosted by MedCity and the Life Science Innovation Network Japan. The delegation was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the assets and excellence in R&D and innovation from across our member organisations in the North of England, and further our international partnerships.

UK Advanced Therapies Network event - November 2022

Exciting new research projects open to collaboration and investment across the North of England and Scotland were showcased at the NHSA's UK Advanced Therapies Network Roadshow. Co-hosted by the Northern Advanced Therapies and Scotland Advanced Therapies Networks and the NHSA, the satellite event was held at the European Society of Gene and Cell Therapy annual congress in Edinburgh.

Meet and Match Cell and Gene Therapy event - December 2022

The NHSA organised a knowledge exchange event between Baden-Württemberg and the UK. The online Meet & Match provided insights into trends and technologies in innovative cell and gene therapies.

Child Poverty and the Cost of Living Crisis report launch - January 2023

We advocated for families living in poverty in our regions by launching a report that warned that children living in the North of England are among the most vulnerable to rising living costs. The report from the Child of the North All-Party Parliamentary Group found that children in the North are some of the least protected from the current cost of living crisis – and included recommendations on what leaders can do to mitigate these inequalities.

#NorthInnovationWomen campaign – March 2023

The NHSA, together with N8 Research Partnership, once again celebrated the remarkable women contributing to innovation in the North of England. The #NorthInnovationWomen campaign returned for a sixth year, allowing colleagues in our sector to nominate the women in innovation who deserve recognition for their work. More than 200 women were named in the list, which was published on International Women's Day on March 8.

Northern Innovation Accelerator for Mental Health (NIAMH) launch - March 2023

An innovative initiative was brought to patients in South Yorkshire accessing mental health support. The clinically led, academically supported partnership was launched to accelerate solutions to mental



health challenges that NHS Trusts face. NIAMH brings together mental health expertise from within the NHS and academia, working in collaboration with two international innovators to develop and evaluate their mental health solutions within the NHS.

UK Life Sciences Investment Summit – March 2023

The NHSA and MedCity led a project funded by Research England to supercharge cross-cluster innovation and investment activity. The project connected investors and innovators across regional borders through the investor-focused event held in London. The event facilitated knowledge exchange and connectivity, highlighting the strengths of each region and addressing common challenges and opportunities.

International Tech R&D Pilot with Israel - April 2023

Following a stringent shortlisting process, we announced the 15 companies that moved to stage 2 of our exciting International Health Tech R&D Pilot Programme. The companies have worked with NHSA members to develop their project plans to bring world leading R&D to the UK, with hands-on support from the NHSA, the UK Israel Tech Hub and HealthIL. The companies were able to develop their ideas and deliver maximum impact for their business and UK patients. Following the shortlisting, the NHSA hosted a delegation of the shortlisted companies.



Health Equity North launch - April 2023

Health Equity North, a virtual institute focused on place-based solutions to public health problems and health inequalities across the North of England, was launched alongside a hard-hitting report that found a worrying pattern of lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and worse health and wellbeing in the North of England. NHSA members are able to access the benefits of Health Equity North through their membership and have since worked closely with us to develop research, reports and campaigns to address inequalities in the North.

UK-China Life Science and Healthcare Development Forum - April 2023

The NHSA and MedCity joined forces with TusPark UK to organise and deliver a UK-China Life Science and Healthcare Development Forum in a hybrid format with an in-person audience in Beijing. This was one of the



County Durham and Tees Valley: Health, Wealth and (Unequal) Opportunities to Thrive report launch – July 2023

The stark extent of inequalities in one of the poorest regions of the country was laid bare in a report published in partnership with Health Equity North and County Durham Community Foundation. The report showed how people in County Durham and Tees Valley experience extreme levels of deprivation with much higher child poverty rates, much lower life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, worse health across a wide range of conditions and much higher unemployment rates than the national average. The report also made recommendations to leaders and policymakers on how, and why, this needs to change.

Addressing Education and Health Inequity: Perspectives from the North of England report launch – September 2023

A report prepared for the Child of the North APPG revealed how northern schools are losing out on hundreds of pounds of funding per pupil compared to those in London. The report showed that over the last 10 years, ongoing inequalities in funding have meant schools in the North of England have received less money from the National Funding Formula on average than their southern counterparts. The report gained significant support at a political level and ensured the important issue was brought to the forefront.

concluding international events in our Research England Development funded project “Delivering Increased Wealth and Improving Health; a Unified Place-Based Approach” (2020-23). The event informed the attending Chinese companies of the soft-landing capabilities and support networks of MedCity and the NHS.

Joint impact report with MedCity published – June 2023

The impressive successes of our partnership project with MedCity were shared in a joint impact report, which focussed on delivering increased wealth and improving health in a unified place-based approach. Reflecting on a successful three-year Research England-funded project, the report highlighted the joint activity and achievements over the period, including developing international programmes to build the UK’s profile in key emerging markets.

UK/Canada AgeTech Innovation Exchange – June 2023

The NHS led an innovative AgeTech exchange programme, funded by UKRI’s Healthy Ageing Challenge. Healthy ageing solutions were brought to the forefront of UK healthcare as 13 innovative companies from across the UK and Canada were selected to participate in an in-person international exchange visit to showcase the solutions and demonstrate how healthcare operates in the two countries. A virtual innovation support programme was also provided to 50 companies. This exciting exchange was also showcased at the NHS Expo in partnership with UKRI Healthy Ageing and the Department for Business and Trade.

Memorandum of Understanding signed with Canadian partners – June 2023

Following a successful international exchange with our Canadian partners, an agreement was signed between organisations in Canada and the UK which pledges to work in partnership to improve the health and wellbeing of older people. The memorandum of understanding was signed in recognition of their joint commitment to accelerate healthy ageing technology for the benefit of older people in both countries. This has the power to bring incredible potential to UK patients, particularly those living in the North of England.


£1.1m
R&D investment into the North

HealthTech pilot project with Israel – September 2023

Following the shortlisting of 15 innovative companies in April, six were selected to develop their health technology products as part of the International Health Tech R&D Pilot Programme. The joint programme aims to bring new solutions to UK patients, using cutting edge healthcare solutions to improve opportunities and outcomes for people in the North of England. The companies will be working directly with NHS Trusts in the North to trial their innovative products with patients who would benefit the most from them.



ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

Our team have represented the organisation and our members throughout the year, speaking at various high-profile events, conferences, panels and roundtables.

- The NHTA team spoke on a panel about levelling-up at the Conservative Party Conference in **October 2022** detailing why levelling-up needs to remain a priority.
- We took part in an innovative satellite event about commercialisation of academic research in cell and gene therapies at the ESGCT/BSGCT Collaborative Congress in Edinburgh, **October 2022**.
- NHTA representatives met Taoiseach Micheál Martin following a knowledge-sharing roundtable with Enterprise Ireland in **November 2022**, bringing together strong representation of the excellent work we are undertaking across industry, academia and the NHS.
- The NHTA formed part of a panel discussing global healthy ageing insights at UKRI's Healthy Ageing conference in London in **November 2022**.
- In **November 2022** the NHTA represented the UK at HealthIL Week conference in Tel Aviv, aiming to foster technological transformation in healthcare systems.
- The NHTA was represented on a panel at the P4SY Showcase - a programme for South Yorkshire, which supports the soft landing and scaling of health and MedTech companies - in Leeds in **December 2022**.
- Our Public Affairs team attended a roundtable event organised by North West Cancer Research at the Liverpool Medical Institute, which centred on health inequalities across the region and how localised community-led services and prevention campaigns can tackle poor health in **December 2022**.
- The NHTA was invited to take part in a panel event at the Westminster Health Forum in **December 2022** on the role of the independent sector in the future of healthcare delivery, and opportunities for collaboration between the NHS and independent sectors.
- In **January 2023** we attended the Convention of the North in Manchester, representing the organisation and its relevancy in industry in the North.
- In **April 2023**, we joined partners from across the North East and North Cumbria to mark the launch of the Health and Life Sciences Pledge which aims to encourage, enable and empower more innovation, by bringing together key stakeholders to better communicate, collaborate and celebrate.
- In **May 2023**, the NHTA spoke at the North East Trade and Investment Forum, advocating for investment within the region.
- The NHTA had a speaking slot at the Levelling Up Conference in **May 2023**, addressing regional and national decision makers and advocating for investment in the North.

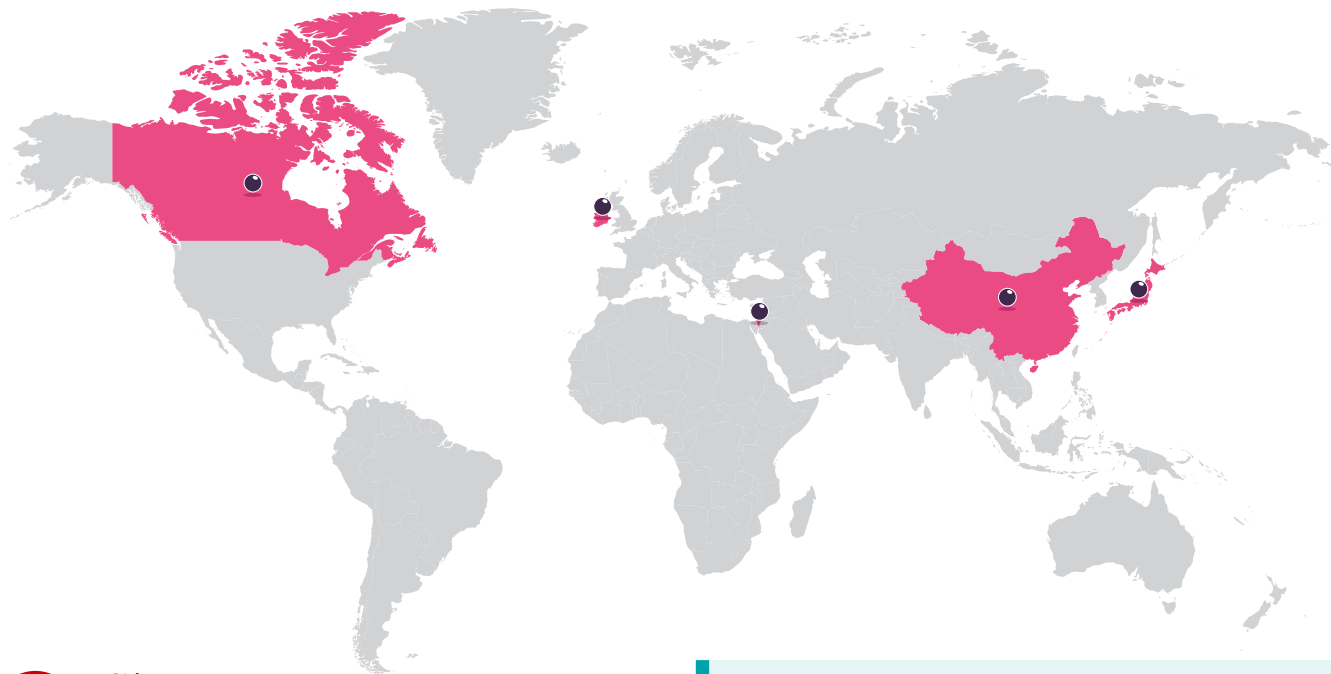


- Our Chief Executive spoke at the Westminster Social Policy Forum on regional research and innovation clusters in **June 2023**, highlighting the importance of genuine partnership working to provide cohesion across the system.
- The NHTA, along with the partners in the UK-Canada AgeTech Innovation Exchange, took part in a panel on 'Improving wellbeing of older people' at the NHS Confederation Expo in **June 2023**, detailing how the partnership is working to make a difference to older people's healthcare and the Exchange's successes so far.
- Also in **June**, NHTA representatives spoke on two health panels at the Northern Research Group conference to discuss the link between poor health and productivity and how child poverty is a leading driver of low school attainment.
- In **June 2023** our Chief Executive and Health Equity North directors spoke on a Health for Wealth panel at the Big Tent Ideas festival in York, around our Health for Wealth work.
- We represented the NHTA and its members at the H2O Summit in Geneva in **June 2023**, bringing the northern England perspective to the discussion of the challenges in providing health for all and the links between health and other global challenges.
- The NHTA was recruited as an expert MedTech and Diagnostics panel member for Lean Life Science, in their Innovate UK (IUK)-funded Oncology Accelerator (ODP2) in **June 2023**.
- In **July 2023**, representatives from our Executive Team spoke at Health Service Journal Health Inequalities Conference.
- The NHTA were represented at the Life Science Baltics Conference in **September 2023**, creating a potential for strong cooperation with researchers across traditional boundaries and expanding our learning and understanding of Baltic talent.



INTERNATIONAL SUCCESSES

Continuing our mission to bring the North of England onto the international stage, we have celebrated successes across the globe this year.



China

In April 2023, the NHTA and MedCity joined forces with TusPark UK to organise and deliver the UK-China Life Science and Healthcare Development Forum in a hybrid format (with an in-person audience in Beijing). This was one of the concluding international events in our Research England Development (RED)-funded project “Delivering Increased Wealth and Improving Health; a Unified Place-Based Approach” (2020-23).



Israel

The NHTA and Israeli Innovation Authority, supported by the UK Israel Tech Hub based in the British Embassy Tel Aviv, partnered to bring cutting edge healthcare solutions to improve opportunities and outcomes for people in the North of England.



Ireland

We brought together representatives from across the health and life sciences in the North of England to discuss the strengthening of ties with Ireland. Chief Executive Dr Séamus O'Neill and NHTA representatives met Taoiseach Micheál Martin following a knowledge-sharing roundtable with Enterprise Ireland.



Canada

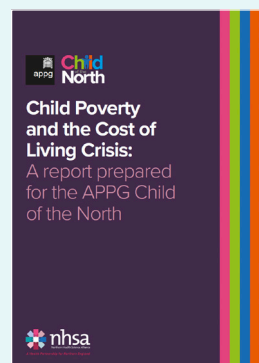
A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between organisations in Canada and the UK which pledges to work in partnership to improve the health and wellbeing of older people, following the successful summer UK/Canada AgeTech Innovation Exchange.



Japan

The NHTA joined the MedCity UK delegation to BioJapan held in October 2022. During the conference we raised the profile of the alliance and shared our vision for life sciences in the North of England with prospective Japanese partners, European, and UK organisations within our own delegation.

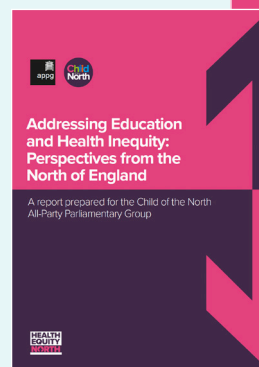
OUR REPORTS



Child Poverty and the Cost of Living Crisis: A report prepared for the APPG Child of the North



Health Equity North 2023 – a snapshot of key health issues facing the North of England



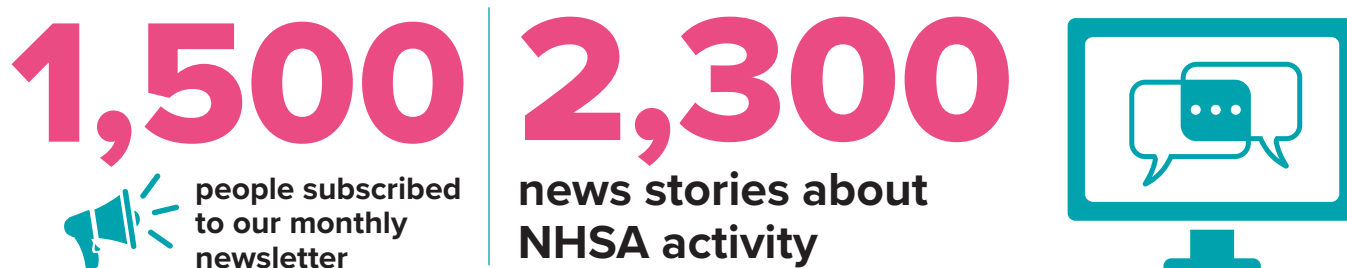
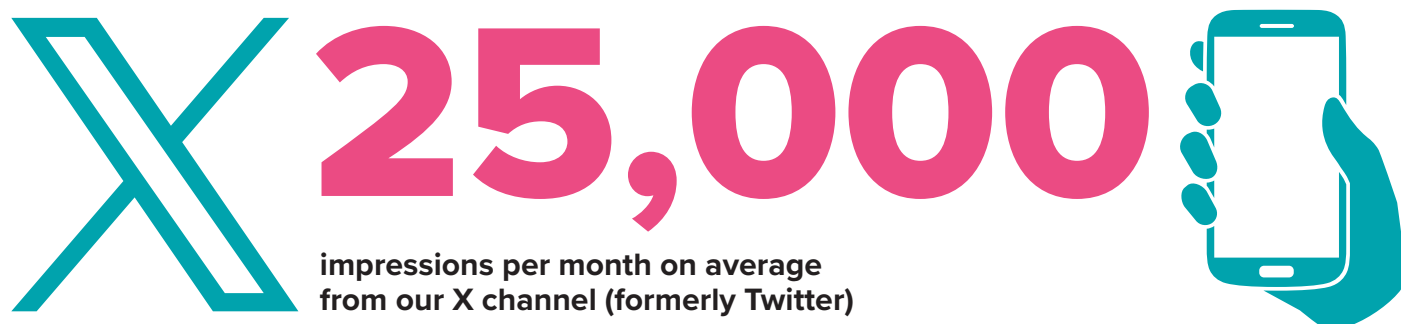
Addressing Education and Health Inequality: Perspectives from the North of England – a report prepared for the Child of the North All-Party Parliamentary Group



Targeting Health Inequalities: realising the potential of targets in reducing health inequalities

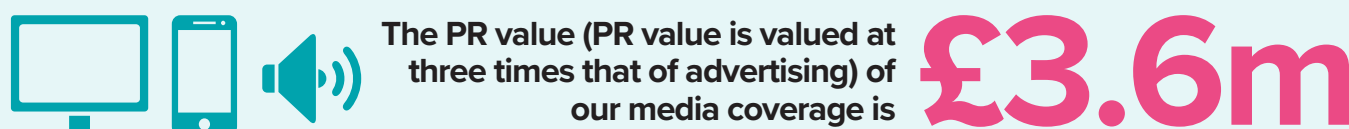
COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Our achievements are heavily supported by our communications and public affairs work. In the last year, we have seen:



GETTING OUR VOICE HEARD

From September 2022 – September 2023:



We successfully secured coverage for our news pieces on:

The BBC Politics Show

BBC Breakfast News

Good Morning Britain

Sky News

ITV News

The Guardian

The Times

The Independent

The Daily Mail

The Daily Express

BBC Radio 2

BBC Radio 4

DRIVING POLITICAL DEBATE

Our public affairs team regularly update political stakeholders across the North and nationally to keep them abreast of our work. We:

Disseminate our reports to Members of Parliament who represent constituencies in the North, Chairs of relevant Select Committees and All-Party Parliamentary Groups, Metro Mayors in the North, Ministers and Shadow Ministers and Think Tanks, highlighting our evidence-based research and data.



Set up meetings to discuss our reports and recommendations with Ministers, Shadow Ministers, Mayors and key regional MPs.

Monitor Parliament, share Parliamentary questions with relevant MPs and produce submissions to select committee inquiries. Recent select committee inquiries we have submitted evidence to include:

- Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Commons Select Committee Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment
- Youth Select Committee Inquiry into Health and Wellbeing
- Education Select Committee Inquiry into Children in Care in England

Hosted a programme of events at both the **Conservative and Labour Party Conferences in 2022**, working with our members to highlight our work across the life sciences and health inequalities policy areas to regional and national politicians.



Continue to run the **Child of the North APPG** working with Members of Parliament and members of the House of Lords.

PARLIAMENTARY MENTIONS

During the last year, our work has been cited numerous times in Parliament.

Rachael Maskell MP, member of the Child of the North APPG, tabled several written questions regarding the Addressing Education and Health Inequity report which were answered by the **Minister of State for Education, Nick Gibb MP**.



Professor Kate Pickett, co-academic director of Health Equity North gave evidence at the Youth Select Committee inquiry regarding how young people are affected by the cost of living crisis using evidence from Health Equity North's research.



Kim Johnson MP, member of the Child of the North APPG, tabled a Westminster Hall debate titled 'Two-child Benefit Cap and Child Poverty' which focused on scrapping the two-child cap on benefits and referenced the work of the Child of the North APPG.



Mary Kelly Foy MP, member of the Child of the North APPG, asked the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, **Mims Davies MP**, about food bank use in County Durham.

Emma Lewell-Buck MP, member of the Child of the North APPG tabled a Westminster Hall debate titled 'Child Poverty in the North' and referenced the Child of the North APPG and our data throughout.



Debbie Abrahams MP quoted data from Health Equity North's Parallel Pandemic Report during a debate on health inequalities.

There have been further notable mentions from the **Bishop of Durham, the Bishop of Gloucester, Lord Pendry, Rachael Maskell MP, and Baroness Wilcox of Newport**.



THE IMPACT OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE SCALE OF OUR AMBITIONS



**Dr Séamus
O'Neill**
Chief
Executive
NHTA

Before we consider what the scale of our ambition should be, it's important to reflect on the journey that has brought us to where we are today.

There is no denying that the NHTA has undergone substantial changes over the last 18 months - around our membership, financial sustainability, board members and team structure.

These changes, while sometimes challenging, have provided the opportunity for the organisation to respond constructively to our environment and to adapt. I truly believe we have come through stronger and more focused.

We now have a core membership of 20 organisations, including three new members, and we're continuing to develop an income stream from externally funded work that's aligned to the NHTA's capabilities and objectives.

We also carried out an in-depth consultation exercise with our members to understand their priorities and pain points. This enabled us to identify areas where pan-northern convening and advocacy could make a real difference.

With this insight and shared vision, we can now define the scale of our ambition and look at how much impact the NHTA can make in years to come. We're excited to take this forward under the leadership of our new Chair, Professor Graham Lord, along with our Board and Council. As David mentioned in his foreword, we are really excited about the new members and what those organisations will bring. It is a strong vote of confidence in the collaborative pan-northern model that is the unique selling point of the NHTA and the envy of other regions. Our message has always been clear - we are stronger when we speak with one voice - and this still seems to resonate.

With an election on the horizon and a possible change of Government, the year ahead will no doubt be interesting. However, it also presents many opportunities for us to make sure our voice is heard.

Our approach of convening and facilitating work in areas that matter to our members and amplifying these strengths through advocacy and public affairs remains the right thing to do, regardless of the political environment.

We need to keep advocating for the North's health and life sciences excellence. There have been some very positive outcomes for the North recently including, but not limited to, the NIHR investment in our BRCs and CRFs as well as the announcement that five NIHR HealthTech Research Centres will be set up in the North.

We need to kick on from here and build on the momentum we have. The NHTA will continue to play its part in that, and we will continue to rely on the insights of the fantastic colleagues that we get to work with every day in our member organisations.

OUR MEMBERS



