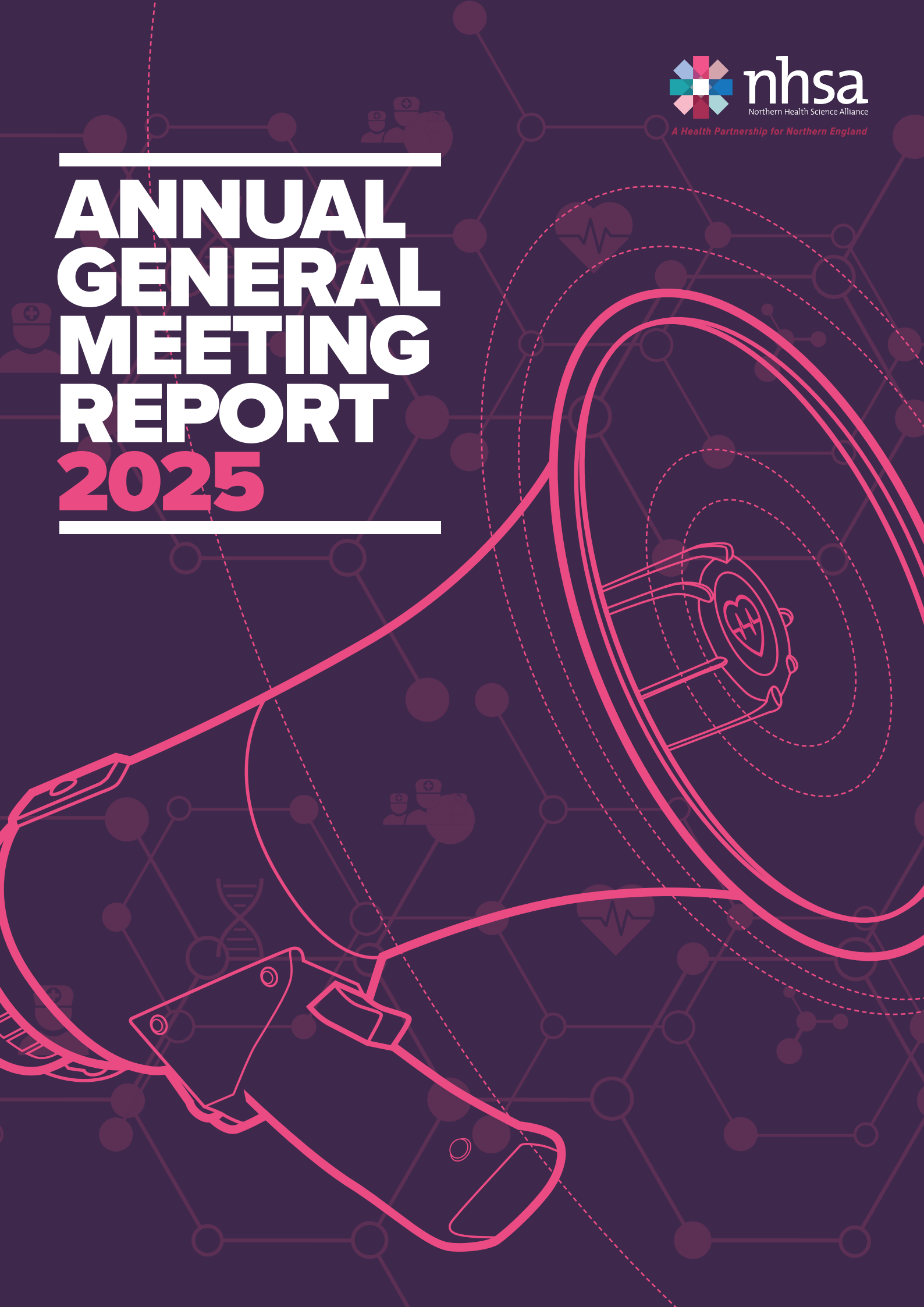

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT

2025



Foreword



Professor Louise Kenny, Chair of the Northern Health Science Alliance

This has truly been a year of change.

The general election in July 2024 saw the arrival of a new government and with change comes opportunity and a chance for us to build on our existing relationships, and make sure that the opportunities and challenges the North faces are reflected in policy.

The last year has also seen changes within the Northern Health Science Alliance (NHSa). I was delighted to accept the role of Board Chair, and I am also excited to be working with our new CEO Hannah Davies. Hannah has been an integral part of the NHSa's success and growth for several years, particularly in the development of Health Equity North. She has the insight and experience required to represent the region on the national and international stage.

Together with the help of our talented and resourceful NHSa team, we are both committed to exploring new opportunities with vigour and energy over the coming months and years.

Whilst we are always looking to the future, this report gives us an opportunity to reflect on all that's been achieved. Under the leadership of former leaders CEO Dr Séamus O'Neill and Board Chair Professor David Burn, the NHSa strengthened its reputation as an influential voice for health research. We explored partnerships in the UK, Europe and beyond, and raised important regional issues in both parliament and the media. This work continues today under our new leadership.

The NHSa now represents 19 leading research-intensive universities and NHS Trusts across the North, with three new members arriving over the last year. We recently carried out an analysis of the value we provide for members, which revealed that the NHSa has supported our members to secure a total of £247.46m in research grant funding over the last five years. With increasing pressure on university and NHS budgets, it is vital that we continue to highlight how important this research is to health and well-being - and to our shared future.

Over the last 18 months, we have also produced a number of reports that shed light on the inequalities faced by communities across the North. In our Woman of the North report, we highlighted that women in the region are paid less, live shorter lives and are more likely to live in poverty than women in other parts of the country. We also spoke out over the immense pressure faced by children's services in the region.

Each of these issues requires urgent attention - from policymakers, health leaders and funders. We have worked closely with MPs over the years and are also grateful for our relationships with our northern Metro Mayors. At this year's Convention of the North, they helped us to launch our proposal for a game-changing collaboration hub known as the Institute for Preventative Health Research, which aims to drive research into outcomes that will make the most difference to patients and the economy.

As a member of the NHSa board for nearly five years, I have seen the impact that a focused and collaborative organisation can create for members, the region - and most importantly - the people who call the North their home. We are looking forward to continuing this work and ensuring that the health and life sciences activity in this region has the opportunity to thrive.

New faces of the NHSA

Since our last AGM Report in September 2023, the NHSA has continued to grow and adapt to meet the opportunities of health and life sciences in the region. This report provides an overview of some of our highlights from the last 18 months.

Meet our new leadership team:

In June 2024, we announced two senior appointments.



BOARD CHAIR: Professor Louise Kenny

Louise is Executive Pro-Vice Chancellor at the University of Liverpool. She is a prolific figure in health and life sciences research, with a distinguished career in maternal and fetal health research. She has been a board member for more than four years.

"The NHSA has been doing incredible work to drive innovation in health science and improve health outcomes across the North of England for over a decade. I'm delighted to have been elected as the new Chair."



CEO: Hannah Davies

Hannah has been with the NHSA for eight years, and has played a key role in establishing the organisation and its health inequalities work. She is also the executive director of our Health Equity North institute.

"I am passionate about the North of England and making sure that the health and life sciences excellence we have across our regions is recognised and fairly invested in."

We thank outgoing Board Chair Professor David Burn and outgoing CEO Dr Séamus O'Neill for their exceptional work.

Renowned health research leaders join our board:

In October 2024, we welcomed two new board members, who will help the NHSA build its reputation as a health and life sciences cluster.



BOARD DIRECTOR: Professor Mark Kearney

Mark is Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Leeds. His work focuses on diabetes-related heart disease and new treatments for patients with heart failure.

"Having worked in the North for many years, I understand the unparalleled strengths we have across the health and life sciences sector, and I feel passionately that this excellence deserves to be recognised and invested in."



NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Dr Louise Wood CBE

Louise is formerly Deputy CEO of the National Institute for Health and Care Research and the former Director of Science, Research and Evidence at the Department of Health and Social Care.

"As a Boltonian, I'm keen to support collaboration of the NHSA's member organisations to harness the power of research and innovation to improve health, address inequalities and generate prosperity in the North."

Introducing our new members:

The NHSA has also welcomed new members joining over the last 18 months.

Teesside University joined the NHSA in January 2024.

The University is a centre of excellence in the global biosciences and healthcare sector. It opened the £22.3m National Horizons Centre in 2019 to drive life sciences advances in the Tees Valley and beyond.



"Finding new ways to improve the health outcomes of individuals and communities forms a key pillar of our research strategy. Joining the Northern Health Science Alliance will help us deliver on this ambition through impactful research collaborations with partners in academia and the health sector."

**Professor Stephen Cummings,
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and
Knowledge Exchange)**

**Alder Hey
Children's NHS
Foundation Trust**

also became a part of the NHSA in April 2024. It has an international reputation for world-class care and specialist clinical training. Its Innovation Hub is the largest hospital-led innovation centre in the UK.



"The NHSA has already demonstrated its enormous value in bringing together an outstanding, multiprofessional consortium of the North's premier academic health organisations to address the most pressing needs of our population."

**Professor John Chester,
Director of Research and Innovation**

Mersey Care NHS

Foundation Trust is one of the largest mental health and community

providers in the country, offering the full range of specialist inpatient and community services including physical and mental health, learning disability, addiction and brain injuries. It also received funding of £10.5m and launched the first ever Mental Health Research for Innovation Centre with the University of Liverpool in 2023.

"Bringing together world class clinical, NHS, academic and industry experts across the North of England offers exciting possibilities for more effective prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental health conditions. We are already seeing the value of these connections to support our goal of enhancing treatments and ensuring a better quality of life for patients – both now and in the future."

**Alison Walshe,
Assistant Chief Executive**



**Mersey Care
NHS Foundation Trust**

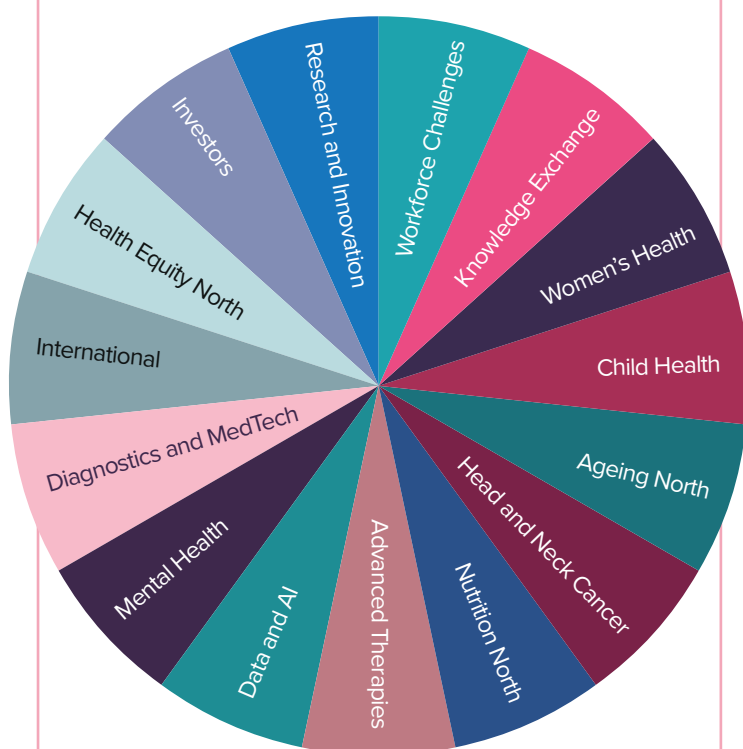
Working together for a stronger North

We are passionate about the potential of the North, and are active in discussions about how to address and transform the issues it faces.

We continue to work closely with our members to support large-scale opportunities in health research, innovation, and life sciences across the North, driving investment that benefits the UK economy. Over the last 18 months, our work in this area has developed at pace thanks to the continued support and shared passion amongst our members.

Our networks

The NHTA's regional expert networks are growing. Over the last 18 months we have launched three new focus areas, reflecting the expertise and priorities within our membership.



New NHTA networks

Our new Child Health programme intends to build on the work of the Child of the North reports and facilitate collaboration between academia, clinicians, and industry to drive improvements in child health.

The NHTA Knowledge Exchange Development Group, brings together knowledge exchange leads across our 10 universities to focus on supporting the Knowledge Exchange Framework.

The NHS Workforce Challenges Panel focuses on growing and retaining clinical academics, and developing workforce research across the North.

Highlights

Value to our members

We produced our five-year impact and return on investment reports which look at the wider outcomes and impact of what the NHTA has achieved for our members. These offer a snapshot of the value of the work we deliver to advance health research, foster innovation, and address health inequalities across the region.

The NHTA has supported our member consortia to secure a total of

£247.46m

research grant funding over the past five years - we predict that this could return an estimated value of

£309.33m

by 2030.

As of February 2025, we were supporting seven bid submissions in progress, with a research grant funding total value in excess of £30.7m. These involve NHTA members convened and supported through our Head and Neck Cancer, Nutrition North, Ageing North and Advanced Therapies networks.

Since our inception, our work has been cited in more than 7,900 media stories, reaching audiences of millions and generating upwards of £10m in PR value. We have worked with over 50 MPs, instigated three Westminster Hall debates, held over 20 party conference events, and have submitted oral and written evidence to six select committees.

Mobilising UK Data and AI for All with a National Grid of Civic Learning Systems

The NHTA, working closely with the University of Liverpool's Professor Iain Buchan alongside multiple partners, submitted a response to the UK Parliament's Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee's inquiry into "Innovation, growth and the regions", which aimed to assess the role of the UK's innovation ecosystem in achieving the Government's mission to kickstart economic growth across the country. Our submission, which has been published on the NHTA website, considers the interdependence of health and wealth and shows how a network of devolved regions, each with a critical mass of efficient data uses, with public trust, could form a national grid of innovation that advances the UK's global economic interests while reducing regional inequalities.

Institute for Preventative Health Research

In February, we launched a proposal for a pioneering virtual hub which would tackle preventable ill health across the North.

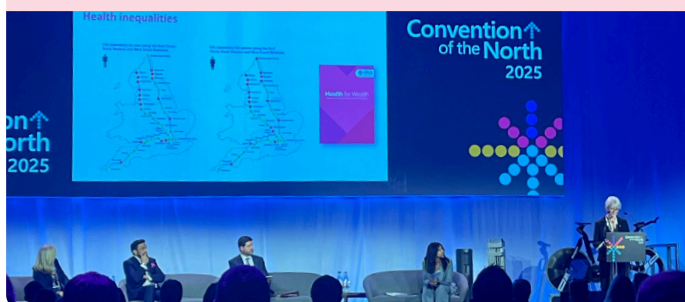
The Institute for Preventative Health Research would boost collaborations in key areas of research, led by North of England experts. The proposal was launched at the Convention of the North in Preston in February 2025, as one of five “game changer” policy propositions with backing from all of the northern Metro Mayors through the Convention steering group.

Our Chair, Professor Louise Kenny, presented the proposal to a panel including Mayor of West Yorkshire Tracy Brabin, Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution Jim McMahon MP, and Chair of the Lancashire Business Board Mo Isap, along with around 200 delegates. The panel responded positively, supporting the urgent need for better health prevention in the North of England.

We are proposing a five year pilot phase for the institute.

“The proposed Institute for Preventative Health Research will be a game changer; helping to drive research and innovation that directly improves patient outcomes and the economy in regions where intervention is needed the most, here in the North. Critically, it will help deliver the Government’s ambitions on both health and growth.”

Oliver Coppard, Mayor of South Yorkshire



International HealthTech pilot brings innovative products to the UK

Six companies received funding from the Israeli Innovation Authority (IIA) to run their first UK clinical trials or research and development projects that provide solutions to healthcare challenges. The total funding awarded was £1.1m and included three multi-site trials.

The project – the first of its kind in the UK – saw seven of our NHS Trust members’ working together to assess and support the promising companies, supported by the four Northern Academic Health Science Networks. Each company was placed with at least one NHS Trust to trial their healthcare solution on patients in the North.



More key achievements:

The NHTA's Health Equity North (HEN) virtual institute published four reports in the last 18 months. HEN also held its first summit at Lancaster University in July 2024, bringing together member representatives to share ideas and discuss our future direction. We also welcomed our first NHS member representative - Dr Michelle Stamp, from South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Public Health South Tees.

We held a series of roundtables at Labour Party Conference in September 2024, including events on how to harness health innovation, building an effective child poverty strategy, and how to address the challenges and inequity faced by women in the North. Speakers at these events included Safeguarding Minister Jess Phillips; Mayor of West Yorkshire Tracy Brabin; Kim McGuinness, Mayor of the North East; and Oliver Coppard, Mayor of South Yorkshire.

The NHTA has supported successful grant funding submissions from consortia of our members to value in excess of £40m during the timeframe of this report (Oct 23 to Feb 25). Many of these projects receive ongoing delivery support, with NHTA representation on oversight boards, and widespread dissemination of their outputs via our networks and Comms and Public Affairs function.

We co-hosted the UKRI Medical Research Council's community visit event for the North of England in Leeds in June 2024. During this two-day event, we were able to lead discussions about health inequalities, health research investment in the North, and the region's potential as a collaborative health and life sciences supercluster.

Our team attended the HLTH Europe Conference in Amsterdam in June 2024 to connect with life science clusters and partners across the world. We held a panel event on accessing the NHS, research and the NHTA innovation partner programme, which featured speakers from our member organisations. Following on from the successful event, Dr Vinoth Sankar from University Hospitals Liverpool Group has been selected as one of 20 global innovation ambassadors for HLTH 2025.

We organised events with new members Teesside University and Alder Hey Children's Hospital Trust to mark their joining the NHTA. We have an event planned with our newest member, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, in the coming months.

We hosted the inbound Canada-UK delegation on enabling technologies and innovations for biomanufacturing of biologics and advanced therapeutics, showcasing our Advanced Therapies network, with members, at Teesside University's National Horizons Centre.

Through our Advanced Therapies network, we convened four of our members to submit a £5m Connecting Capability Fund - Research England Development (CCF-RED) bid to deliver 'Connected Health North for Advanced Therapies Commercialisation'. Whilst we weren't awarded the funding, we succeeded in being one of 15 out of a total of 46 Expressions of Interest to be invited to full submission. We are now considering alternative funding opportunities for parts of the proposal.

We were a knowledge partner at the HealthTech Investor Summit in Bruges in December 2024. The conference featured three days of networking and discussions between life science clusters across Europe.

In September 2024, we delivered our first NICE MedTech Early Assessment (META) project for a North East-based SME.

We were among the speakers at the NIHR's Great North Research Conference in Manchester in November 2023, discussing how to build a Northern Supercluster to support the Medical Technology Industry.

Speaking up for a stronger North

The NhsA continues to be a voice for the region, ensuring that the issues that matter reach key decision makers. Over the last year, we collaborated on several reports which set the agenda both in Parliament and the media.

Our reports

Research funding gap exposed by NhsA analysis

The North received less than a quarter of the clinical research funding given out to projects in London, Oxford and Cambridge in 2022, according to our analysis of data published by the UK Clinical Research Collaboration.

We found that in 2022, the North received

£405m

in research funding, compared to

£1.69bn

to London, Oxford and Cambridge.

Since the last figures were published in 2018, the North has received

£81m

more funding, while the South has gained

£200m

There are buildings in London and Cambridge that have received more infrastructure investment than the entire North.

We recommended that:

- Combined authorities should be empowered to drive innovation with private sector and charity funders.
- Northern leaders should engage major health charities such as Cancer Research UK and the Wellcome Trust to ensure research takes place in the region.
- New health and life science institutions should be created outside of the South, drawing on regional expertise.

Making it happen

We held a breakfast roundtable at last year's Convention of the North with Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, and Oliver Coppard, Mayor of South Yorkshire, where we discussed the findings of the analysis. The seed of the Institute for Preventative Health Research was planted during these discussions, and we developed the idea over the following months in close collaboration with our members and representatives from the northern mayoral combined authorities.

Supporting the Woman of the North

Last year, our Health Equity North virtual institute published the Woman of the North report, revealing the challenges faced by women in the North of England.



Women in the North:

- Are expected to live in good health for up to **FOUR** years less than the national average, and **SIX** less than girls born in the South East.
- Are paid **£569 a week** on average for full-time work, compared to **£625 nationwide** and **£757 in London**.
- Contribute **£10bn** in unpaid care each year, **£2bn more than the national average**.
- Are **more likely to suffer from mental health conditions**, such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.
- Suffer the **highest rates of domestic violence** in the country (19 per 1,000 in the North East, compared to 11 per 1,000 nationwide).

We recommended:

- A national health inequalities strategy.
- Updating benefits in line with inflation, and removing policies that punish families.
- Targeted support through Careers Hubs for 11 to 18-year-olds.
- A sustainable childcare model allowing women to access more education and work opportunities.
- Women's Health Hubs across the region.



Breakfast roundtable with Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

Making it happen

Our Woman of the North report was launched in Parliament in September 2024, with support from Emma Lewell-Buck, MP for South Shields and included a keynote speech from Professor Dame Lesley Regan, Women's Health Ambassador for England. It was also discussed at a roundtable at the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool with Jess Phillips MP, Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls, and northern Metro Mayors Tracy Brabin and Kim McGuinness, as well as being heavily reported across regional and national media.

In November 2024, City of Durham MP Mary Kelly Foy led a debate into its findings in Parliament. In March 2025, the report won a Bionow award for Social Impact.

"This report offers us clear, evidence-based recommendations for changing how we tackle inequalities and in particular how we view, measure and deliver quality healthcare for women everywhere. We must not ignore this call to action."

Professor Dame Lesley Regan, Women's Health Ambassador for England



Striking inequalities in Long Covid rates revealed

People in the North are among the worst affected by Long Covid, sparking calls for more research into the condition.

Research published by Health Equity North suggests that:

- **A fifth of patients** in some areas of the North of England **have Long Covid**.
- The North West has the highest number of people reporting Long Covid symptoms in England (**5.5%**) followed by the North East and Yorkshire (**5.1%**).
- The rate in deprived areas in England (**6.3%**) are almost double that of the least deprived (**3.3%**).
- The **10 GP practices with the highest rates in England** were all in the **North**.

We recommended that:

- The Government should develop programmes for employers to support employees with Long Covid.
- A consultation with patients should be launched to better understand the condition.
- Research funders should prioritise biomedical research to establish accurate diagnostic tests and develop treatments.



A fairer future for children in care

In a report prepared for the Child of the North All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), we highlighted the pressure being placed on children's services in northern regions.

The report found:

- The rate of children in care in the **North is 93 per 10,000**, compared to **62 in the rest of England**.
- The North has **28%** of the national child population, but **34%** of children in care.
- The North now has **1,176 children's homes** - over **40% of the homes in England**.
- In Blackpool **one in every 52** children is in care and in Hartlepool it's **one in 63** – compared to England, which is **one in 140**.
- There were over **83,000** children in care across England in 2023, with more than **10,000** children entering care between 2015 and 2020.

We recommended:

- A renewed commitment to ending child poverty, investing in expanding child benefit and free school meals, while abolishing harmful policies.
- Investing in local welfare assistance schemes.
- Updating funding formulae to direct resources according to need.
- Additional investment in the North to prevent new children entering care.
- Listening to children and families when designing services.

Making it happen

Our report was the lead story on BBC Radio 4's World at One, and was discussed live with Wes Streeting MP, and James Daly MP. We also secured widespread national and regional coverage, including interviews on Sky News.

We continue to advocate for change to relieve the pressure on children's services across the North, and provide better outcomes for children and families.

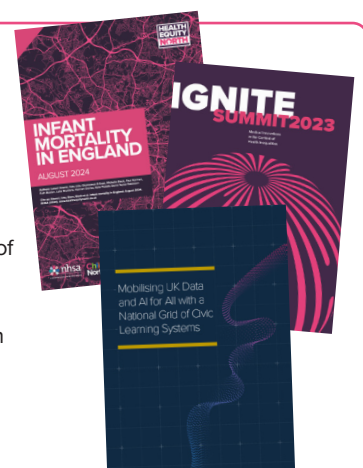
"Excellent social work happens every single day, yet this report highlights how valuable opportunities to improve social care for both children, families and those who work with them are being ignored. Our children deserve better."

Emma Lewell-Buck, MP for South Shields and Co-Chair of the Child of the North APPG



Other reports and research studies we have published and supported include:

- Mobilising UK Data and AI for All with a National Grid of Civic Learning Systems.
- Infant Mortality in England.
- Deaths of Despair research paper.
- IGNITE medical innovation summit 2023 report.



Increasing awareness and impact

Parliamentary mentions

As a strong advocate for the North, our reports and recommendations are frequently discussed by MPs inside and outside Parliament.

February 2024:

During the debate on the Finance Bill, Debbie Abrahams MP cited the Northern Health Science Alliance's 2018 report 'Health for Wealth'. She called for the government to undertake a health assessment of their measures.

March 2024:

Chi Onwurah MP informed the Minister for Employment of recent Health Equity North research that showed higher levels of economic inactivity in the North East were due to disability or ill health.



November 2024:

Mary Kelly Foy MP organised a Westminster Hall debate on the Woman of the North report published by Health Equity North. The Public Health Minister responded that the Government "stand ready to support the women of the North... by addressing the entrenched inequalities that hold too many women back".



December 2024:

The Rt Rev. the Lord Bishop of Newcastle Helen-Ann Macleod Hartley cited the Woman of the North report's findings that domestic violence rates were disproportionately higher in the North East of England than the rest of the country.

We have also submitted evidence to a number of select committee inquiries, including:

- Levelling Up, Housing and Communities House of Commons
- Select Committee Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment.
- Preterm Birth, House of Lords Select Committee Inquiry.
- Education House of Commons Select Committee Inquiry into Children in Care in England.
- Science, Innovation and Technology House of Commons.
- Select Committee Inquiry into Innovation, Growth and the Regions.

Government consultations

- In November 2024, the NHTA submitted information as part of the government's Industrial Strategy consultation - Invest 2035 – which emphasised the challenges faced by innovation in the UK, particularly regarding R&D funding for the North, and underscored the importance of sustained industry-academia collaboration to drive progress. We highlighted that unlocking the economic potential of UK cities and regions is crucial to fostering national growth. The final strategy is expected to be finalised later this year.
- We submitted a response to the Change NHS 10-year plan consultation, in December 2024, citing evidence from various NHTA reports. We stated that we want to see more than delivery of frontline NHS services and operational matters addressed in the 10-Year Health Plan.

Media mentions

We work with local, national and international media to ensure that the North remains on the agenda.

A few media highlights:

- Our **Child of the North APPG Children in Care in the North of England** report was the lead story on **BBC Radio 4's World at One** programme, and was **discussed live by MPs Wes Streeting and James Daly**.
- Our **Woman of the North** report findings were debated on **ITV's This Morning** programme, featuring **Baroness Sayeeda Warsi**.
- The **Children in Care** report was the topic of a **Sky News** package, featuring interviews and case studies, and was showcased throughout the day on TV news bulletins and online. In addition, a HEN director took part in a live interview on **Kay Burley's Sky News Breakfast** programme.
- **Channel 5 News** chose our **Navigating the Long Haul: Understanding Long Covid in Northern England** report as their lead story, and included case studies and a HEN director interview.
- The **BBC** ran an exclusive on our **Deaths of Despair** research paper, resulting in blanket coverage across **BBC radio and TV programmes**. The lead **BBC News** online story was viewed over a million times within a couple of hours of going live.
- Our **Clinical Research Funding analysis** secured coverage across prominent regional outlets, including the **Yorkshire Post, Newcastle Chronicle** and **Manchester Evening News**. Additionally, we were interviewed on **BBC Radio Sheffield**, following our letter to then-**Prime Minister Rishi Sunak** - signed by 23 northern leaders - outlining the need to redress the imbalance in funding.

Our impact

Our work has been cited in more than

3,500 media stories/broadcasts between October 2023 and February 2025.

This has generated more than

£2m in terms of PR value.



Northern women in innovation celebrated

The NHSA marked International Women's Day on March 8 2025 by publishing a list of over 400 women who are pushing the boundaries of innovation.



The **#NorthInnovationWomen** campaign is now in its eighth year. The campaign encourages social media users to recommend women who they wish to see recognised. This year's campaign saw a record-breaking number of recommendations.

Events

It has been another busy year for the NHSA. In addition to the events already mentioned earlier in this report, our team has spoken and appeared at a range of events, conferences, panels and roundtable discussions, across the UK and abroad.



Jess Phillips MP talks at our roundtable event at Labour Party Conference

- We organised roundtables at both the Conservative and Labour Party Conferences in October 2023 to discuss how to build a UK Life Sciences supercluster in the North of England, which could bring as much as £16.52bn a year into the UK economy.
- Health Equity North academics gave evidence on child health inequalities at the UK Covid-19 enquiry in October 2023, presenting a report exploring the extent of these inequalities prior to the pandemic, as well as the likely implications.
- We presented Health Equity North's seven missions for tackling health inequalities at the Association of Directors of Public Health Yorkshire and Humber Network's Sector-Led Improvement Conference on Poverty in October 2023.
- We spoke at a Tony Blair Institute event at the Labour Party Conference in October 2023, addressing the potential of UK life sciences to drive growth and improve the nation's health.
- In March 2024, we discussed our work at Health Equity North with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Victoria Atkins. The meeting took place at a roundtable in London.

- Also in March, we appeared on a panel to talk about the next steps for NICE in England at the 2024 Westminster Health Forum policy conference.
- We also participated in a Durham University roundtable in March, discussing the future of data and AI.
- Health Equity North's research into health inequality was discussed by a panel at the University of Manchester's 'Why are Health Outcomes Grim Up North?' event in March 2024.
- We took part in a roundtable discussion with Shadow Minister Chi Onwurah in March 2024, hosted by The Fabian Society and Alzheimer's Research UK. The event focussed on harnessing life sciences, and Labour's plans for medical research.
- Our CEO delivered the keynote speech at the Leeds SurgTech 2024 event in March 2024, as well as hosting a fireside chat on unlocking funding opportunities.
- In March 2024, we spoke about the need for investment in health R&D infrastructure in the North at a roundtable with Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Darren Jones, and then-North East Labour mayoral candidate Kim McGuinness.
- We contributed to the Women in Healthcare UK International Women's Day event in March 2024.
- We raised the issue of how health inequalities are affecting the region during a speech at BioNow's BioFocus 2024 event in June 2024.
- We took part in The Michael Marmot Institute of Health Equity UCL's monthly webinar in July 2024, sharing our thoughts about expectations following the General Election.
- Our CEO talked about the Woman in the North report in her keynote speech at the North Yorkshire Women's Health Conference in Harrogate in November 2024.
- The report was also the basis for our CEO's speech at the Trade Unions Congress (TUC) Northern Equality Training Seminar in Newcastle in November.
- The Child of the North All-Party Parliamentary Group met in October 2023 to address the Education and Health Inequity report. The Group reconvened in January 2024 to discuss the Children in Care in the North report, and again in February 2025 to talk about food insecurity and obesity.
- We addressed Lord Darzi's report on the NHS in a Durham University panel in January 2025, entitled 'The NHS In Crisis: What's Next?'
- Also in January, our CEO discussed the disparity in R&I funding between the North and the rest of the country at a BE News 'Spotlight on Science' panel.
- We talked to healthcare professionals about the challenges faced by women in the North, with a HEN Academic Director delivering the keynote speech at the Bradford District & Craven Health Partnership's 'We are Taking Women's Health Seriously' event in February 2025.
- We attended the launch of the new Life Sciences All-Party Parliamentary Group in February 2025, hosted by the UK BioIndustry Association. The event featured industry and third-sector partners and featured speeches from Professor Chris Whitty and APPG Chair, the Rt Hon Kit Malthouse.



Looking to the year ahead



**Hannah Davies, CEO
of the Northern Health
Science Alliance**

We have so much to celebrate from the last 18 months. I am exceptionally proud of the NHSA's work to highlight the health and life sciences excellence in the region, and to make sure our communities are represented.

Since becoming CEO six months ago, I have had many conversations with people about health research and life sciences in the North – from Ministers and MPs to world-renowned academics and clinicians.

There is undeniably a strain on budgets, both in health and university circles. And the North continues to receive less research funding than its counterparts in other parts of the country, as evidenced by our analysis last year.

However, this confirms what many of us already know: when there is fierce competition for funding, it is our responsibility to make a case for support that is compelling and unignorable. We need to continue speaking out for our region and encourage others to see it as we do.

There is exceptional talent and resilience in the North. But as a region, we also contend with a range of inequalities. As our research over the last 18 months has revealed, northern communities face issues such as rising infant mortality and a disproportionate amount of children in care, while women are often paid less and experience poorer health outcomes.

With the support of Members of Parliament - and northern mayors such as Kim McGuinness, Oliver Coppard and Tracy Brabin - we have raised these issues in parliament and the media, and we will continue to make sure that these voices are heard.

In the year ahead, we expect to publish further research on a range of health topics affecting the North. These include the reality of ageing in the North, nutrition in the region, inequality in mental health funding, and the findings of the Child of the North All-Party Parliamentary Group's investigation into food insecurity and obesity.

As well as shedding light on these concerns, we are also focused on offering solutions and recommendations that can deliver the desired impact. In February, we launched our proposal for the Institute for Preventative Health Research, which would ensure that research is directed to areas where intervention is needed most. We believe this proposal has the potential to make a huge difference to the region, and we will be engaging with members and government to further develop our plans and explore funding opportunities.

It promises to be another busy year for our alliance. We will continue to build links with other clusters, to establish the North in both national and global conversations.

Our team is heading to HLTH Europe in Amsterdam in June where we will hold a panel event on how to collaborate with NHS Trusts for trials, evaluations and procurement. We are also co-hosting a two-day Medical Research Council Northern Community Visit in November.

We remain focused on growing our networks, monitoring funding opportunities and convening members to act where appropriate. In addition, we are developing the NHSA Innovation Support Service offer to address unmet needs from our member networks.

Our second Health Equity North summit in May will bring together member representatives to discuss how to shape our strategy for the year ahead. At the Woman of the North Summit in Durham, taking place later this year, we have an opportunity to build on the momentum of last year's report. We will be welcoming mayors Kim McGuinness and Tracy Brabin, as well as keynote speakers and women's health leaders. This gives us the chance to explore some of the key themes in more depth, and discuss ways to improve outcomes for our region's women.

We are exceptionally proud of the NHSA's work to highlight the potential of health and life sciences in the region, and to make sure our communities are represented. This year, we plan to make the case for the North in a clear and confident voice, and to highlight the value of giving our region the support it needs to reach its true potential.

We are the NHSA

Our members

Universities



Trusts





ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT 2025

