nhsa
Northern Health Science Alliance

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT 2026

Foreword

Professor Louise Kenny CBE, Chair of the Northern Health Science Alliance

Every day, we see exciting new developments in life sciences and health research emerging from across the North of England. From cutting-edge innovation to world-leading research partnerships, the region is continuously demonstrating its ability to shape a healthier, fairer future.

These breakthroughs offer enormous promise. More personalised treatments, smarter prevention, and stronger health systems are no longer distant ambitions - they are being developed right here, in the North, by world class researchers, clinicians and innovators working together. What has become increasingly clear is that when the North collaborates, it delivers at scale.

That collaboration has been the defining strength of both our region and organisation over the past year. Across our alliance, we have brought together universities, NHS organisations, industry partners and civic leaders to develop ambitious joint funding bids, influence national policy and showcase the depth of expertise that exists across the region. This collective approach is not only strengthening individual organisations, but positioning the North as a serious national and international force in health and life sciences.

At the Northern Health Science Alliance, our role is to connect that expertise and amplify its impact. We act as a convenor and advocate - bringing partners together, supporting collaboration, and ensuring that the North's achievements and priorities are heard at the highest levels. Over the past 12 months, that has meant backing innovative joint proposals, supporting cross-regional research collaborations, and creating the space for new partnerships to form.

We are proud to have welcomed Northumbria University and Edge Hill University into the alliance this last year, further strengthening our collective capability. Their addition reflects the growing momentum behind working together across institutional and geographical boundaries, and we look forward to building on this shared expertise in the years ahead.

Alongside this, our team has continued to produce a strong evidence-base on the issues that matter most to northern communities. Nine reports have been published by our members, covering topics from ageing and nutrition to place, prosperity and prevention. Taken together, they demonstrate both the scale of the challenge and the depth of insight that exists across the North to address it.

We have also strengthened our profile as a confident, collective voice for the region. Through engagement with MPs, policymakers, advocacy groups and the media - including panels and roundtables at the Labour Party Conference and a strong northern presence at HLTH Europe - we have ensured that northern perspectives are shaping national conversations.

This momentum continues into 2026 with our partnership with the Academy of Medical Sciences and the launch of the North of England Hub. Designed to spark collaboration, build connections and support joint projects and funding bids, the Hub reflects what we know works best: bringing people together to achieve more than any one organisation could alone.

The North is home to extraordinary talent, ambition and innovation. By continuing to collaborate, invest and speak with a united voice, we can build on the successes already achieved - strengthening health research, improving lives, and shaping a future that reflects the full potential of the North working together.

Welcoming new faces at the NHSA

The North continues to face a number of social and health challenges, but it is also a place of community and opportunity. The NHSA and its members have worked tirelessly over the last year to champion health and life sciences research in the region.

New CEO officially appointed:

Hannah Davies

The NHSA formally announced Hannah Davies as its CEO in September 2025 after an extensive interview process. Hannah stepped up to the role on an interim basis in June 2024, and has represented the organisation across the sector at events around the country. Hannah has been with the NHSA since 2016, and is also Executive Director of our Health Equity North institute.

"The NHSA remains an important voice for change and investment in health and life sciences in the North. We will continue to speak up for the needs of the region, fighting for measures that improve health outcomes for everyone."

Our board adds strategic leadership insight

In October 2025, we also welcomed an experienced voice to our Board of Directors.

James Sumner

James is the Chief Executive of the NHS University Hospitals of Liverpool Group. He has worked in a variety of roles within the NHS over the last two decades, including primary and secondary care, system improvement and integrated care.

"After more than two decades working within the NHS across the North of England, I have watched the Northern Health Science Alliance develop into a powerful force for regional collaboration and innovation, and I have seen first-hand the positive impact that research-active hospitals have on patient outcomes. Its impact on health, research and policy has been transformative. I am delighted to join the Board and to contribute to shaping the NHSA's continued progress and positive influence across the communities we serve."

Welcoming our new members

We are delighted to announce two new members, who have joined our expert collective of NHS trusts and universities across the region:

Northumbria University joined the NHSA in October 2025. The University will play a key role in the NHSA's 15 pan-northern programmes and expert networks, which are driving progress in areas such as nutrition, child health, mental health, data and AI, and diagnostics and medtech. Its researchers work with communities to bring economic and health improvements to the most marginalised in society.

"At Northumbria, our research is driven by a commitment to making a real and lasting impact on people's lives, particularly for the most marginalised communities. This partnership provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen collaborations, share expertise, and accelerate innovation in areas such as health inequalities, healthy ageing, and the transformation of health and social care services."

Professor Joanne Atkinson, Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing

Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

Edge Hill University was introduced as a new member this year, with a formal joining event due to take place in May. The university is committed to delivering multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary healthcare research to inform evidence based practice, and to have positive impact on the health and wellbeing of people locally, nationally and internationally.

Edge Hill University

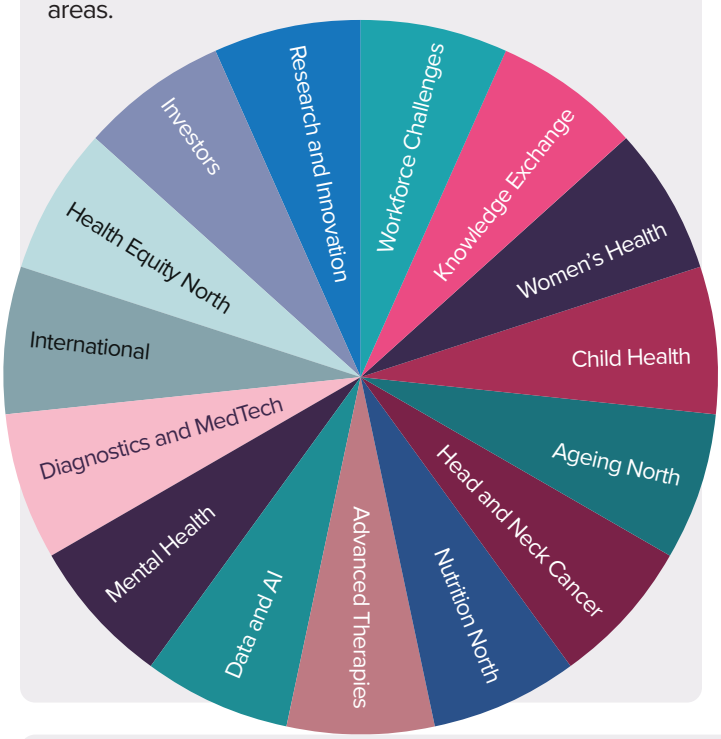
Our impact in the North

There are many different factors which influence the health and wellbeing of our region. We draw on the expertise of many different organisations in the North of England, collaborating across disciplines to better understand problems and embrace opportunities.

Over the last year, we have continued to advocate for citizens and researchers across the region. of NHS trusts and universities across the region:

Our networks

The NHSA features a broad range of expert networks, providing informed research and trusted insight in key areas.



Value to our members

The NHSA's aim is to speak up for the interests of stakeholders across the region. By building strong and cooperative clusters in the North, in partnership with companies and governments, we can deliver a strong foundation for better health and greater opportunity.

Over the financial year (2025-26), we have helped our members to secure a total of

£23.5m

in research grant funding, from bid submissions to a value of around

£45.3m

when leveraging the benefits of NHSA membership.

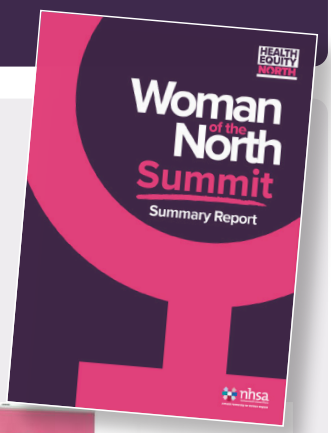
Woman of the North Summit

Our Woman of the North Summit in May 2025 was attended by almost 200 people across the North.

The Durham event was held in partnership with Health Equity North, the NHSA and Leigh Day Solicitors, and followed the launch of our Woman of the North report in 2024. The Woman of the North report highlighted a range of inequalities facing women in the North of England compared to those elsewhere in the country, including poorer health, lower pay, and higher rates of mental illness.

This event also marked the launch of the Woman of the North Charter, which has since been backed by three northern Mayors Kim McGuiness. Tracy Brabin and David Skaith. Signatories pledged to work towards a fairer, healthier place for women living in the North of England, and to help create more opportunities for work, welfare, education and health.

The summit was featured in The Big Issue and The Sunday Sun, and Newcastle University's Professor Clare Bambra was interviewed about the report's findings on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour programme.



New partnership to break down health research barriers

The Academy of Medical Sciences announced in January 2026 that it was launching a new partnership with the NHSA to address longstanding barriers affecting health research.

The new North of England hub will expand the Academy's Cross-Sector Programme, which is designed to encourage collaboration between researchers, clinicians, policymakers and patients. The partnership will deliver cross-sector networking events across the North West, North East, and Yorkshire and the Humber. Events will focus on areas that will drive the most impact, from preventative health research, commercialisation of academic research in cell and gene therapies and enabling technologies, and women's health research.

Delegation travels to Amsterdam for HLTH Europe

We travelled to Amsterdam in June 2025 to attend HLTH Europe, Europe's largest healthtech innovation event. The NHSA team was joined by alliance members and a delegation from Liverpool Health Partners.

The conference attracts decision-makers from pharmaceutical companies, providers, start-ups, investors and healthcare companies, collaborating on the future of healthcare. The NHSA hosted a panel event focusing on collaborating with NHS Trusts for trials, evaluations and procurement, which attracted an audience of over 100 people.

HEN co-directors discuss health inequalities at INRICH 2025

HEN academic co-directors Professor David Taylor-Robinson and Professor Clare Bambra spoke at the 16th INRICH event at the University of Liverpool in June 2025.

The event focused on "Child health inequalities in a time of political changes", and featured presentations from various child experts across the sector. It was sponsored by HEN and the NIHR School for Public Health, and attracted more than 100 delegates.

£50 million consortium aims to address cardiovascular disease inequalities

A collaborative group convened by the NHSA has been awarded a place on the NIHR's Cardiovascular Disease Inequalities Challenge Consortium.

The TransPennine collaborative, convened by the NHSA, includes the University of Leeds, University of Liverpool and Newcastle University. It will play an important role in the consortium, which is bringing together universities across the UK in a £50 million programme designed in partnership with the British Heart Foundation.

CVD contributes to a quarter of all deaths in the UK (26%), which is as many as 170,000 deaths a year. Higher risk groups include ethnic minorities and people living in deprived communities. The consortium will explore innovative solutions that improve detection and monitoring.

NHSA hosts MRC on regional visit to the North

We hosted the Medical Research Council (MRC) in their regional visit to the North of England in November 2025. The two-day event attracted 70 representatives from universities, NHS Trusts and research organisations.

Delegates discussed a range of topics, including the future of clinical researchers, severe mental illness, medical engineering biology and the role of AI in biomedical research. The event provided a critical forum for the North's research leaders to directly shape the MRC's national agenda, providing frontline feedback on emerging priorities and ensuring regional strengths were recognised.

Working for better health in the North

Over the last year, we have collaborated on a range of research that highlights inequalities and challenges in the North. This work brings issues that matter to key decision makers in Parliament and the media.

Our reports

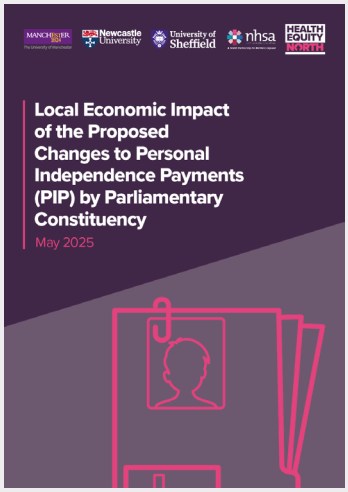
Impact of changes to PIP benefits highlighted

We responded to the Government's plans to make changes to Personal Independence Payments (PIP) by highlighting how it would affect the most and least deprived communities in England.

PIP is a non-means tested benefit that assists with the cost of living with a long-term disability or chronic health issue. The Government proposed several changes to PIP in 2025, including excluding younger age groups and restricting eligibility for the Daily Living component. Its own impact analysis suggested that 250,000 people would have been pushed into poverty by the changes, including 50,000 children.

We analysed a range of data to explore the impact, and found:

- The average loss per working age adult in England would be £176 per year.
- The worst hit constituencies would lose over £20 million each a year.
- The most deprived 10% of constituencies would lose £265 on average per working age adult, nearly three times the least deprived 10% of constituencies.
- The largest per-person losses by constituency would be £409 in Easington, £403 in Liverpool Walton and £398 in Knowsley.
- The smallest per-person losses would be £62 in Bristol Central, £66 in Oxford and West Abingdon and £67 in Wimbledon.



Making it happen:
Our research into the effect of these changes was cited by MPs in Parliament, highlighting the impact it would have on their communities. While the Government's proposed reforms to benefits were passed in some form in July 2025, it announced it would not change PIP rules until after the findings of its review into assessments were fully considered.

The report was featured on ITV Political Editor Robert Peston's TV programme, as well as in The Financial Times, The i Paper, The Independent, The Daily Mail and on BBC Parliament.

"By breaking the figures down by region, the report makes it clear that northern communities will feel the effects of these changes more keenly than other areas of the country. This will not only have an effect on the amount those affected can spend in the local economy, but also increase the strain on their mental and physical health"
Dr Natalie Bennett, Postdoctoral Research Associate from the Faculty of Health at the University of Sheffield

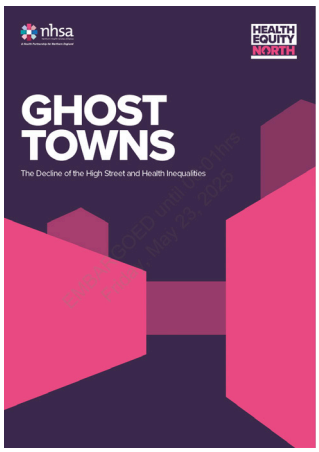
Restoring England's High Street "Ghost Towns"

Our Health Equity North report has shown that the quality of the High Street continues to deteriorate across the country - with vital amenities such as banks, libraries and pharmacies being replaced by vape shops, bookmakers and takeaway outlets.

The authors warn this trend has accelerated over the last decade due to austerity, the pandemic and the rising cost of living, and risks making the English High Street a more isolating, unsafe and unhealthy place.

The report found:

- The number of vape shops increased by nearly 1200% between 2014 and 2024.
- There are more than three times more vape shops in deprived areas compared to the least deprived ones, and 25 times more pawnbrokers.
- Takeaway shops are up by 24% across the whole of England, and by 30% in the most deprived areas, while the number of banks and building societies is down by 40%.
- There are 12.8 unhealthy takeaway outlets per 10,000 people in the North, compared to 8.9 in the South.
- Pharmacies are down 20% in England's most deprived areas, compared to 13% in the least deprived.
- There was a 38% drop in public toilets in the most deprived areas.
- Supermarkets have also decreased by 22% in deprived areas - compared to a national average decrease of 10%.



We recommended:

- Empowering local authorities to further regulate "unhealthy" amenities such as takeaways, off-licenses, vape shops and bookmakers - especially in deprived areas, coastal areas and areas such as the North
- Establishing and maintaining more "third spaces" where people can gather, such as pubs, community centres and libraries
- Investing in turning High Streets into more people-friendly spaces, with seating areas, public toilets and safe pedestrianised spaces.
- Involving local communities in decision-making.

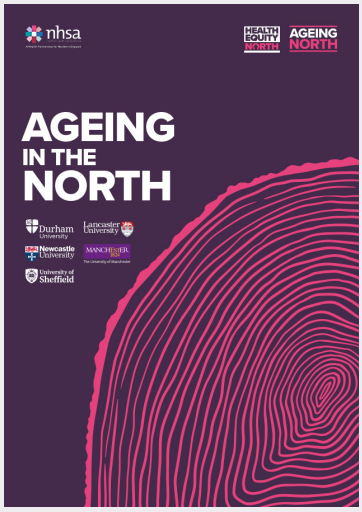
Making it happen:
In the wake of the Ghost Towns report, Prime Minister Kier Starmer announced the launch of the Pride of Place programme in September 2025. The programme gives local authorities more power to block gambling and vape shops on the High Street and save derelict high street units.

The report received extensive coverage in media such as Radio 4's Today programme, Sky News' Today's News segment, The Sun, The Guardian and Parliament News. Professor Bambra contributed an op-ed to The Daily Express, while report author Eman Zied wrote an op-ed for The Mirror.

"We know the Government is keen to build a greater sense of community in our towns and cities. Which is why we're inviting them to commit to helping create more vibrant and social High Streets. You should be able to walk down a High Street, and feel the uniqueness, culture and identity of that community. Through innovative design, better public transport, and measures that promote people over cars, we can re-think these spaces so they become 'go-to's' rather than 'ghost towns'."
Professor Clare Bambra, Academic Co-Director at Health Equity North and Professor of Public Health at Newcastle University

"Alarming" inequalities faced by older people in the North

Older people in the North are more likely to be poorer, less healthy, physically inactive, lonely and in poor housing - resulting in millions of pounds of avoidable NHS costs.



The Ageing In the North report – published by the NHSA's Ageing North network, including a multi-disciplinary team from Durham University, Lancaster University, The University of Manchester, Newcastle University, the University of Sheffield and Health Equity North – noted that the inequalities are largely driven by economic and social factors and are "totally reversible". Targeted investment could recover as much as £10.9 billion in lost productivity costs and £315 million in NHS costs from falls.

The report found:
- There are an estimated 904,200 economically inactive 50-64 year olds in the North, contributing to a potential reduction in GDP of £10.9 billion per year.
- People from the South are more likely to retire, while those in the North are more likely to leave the job market due to poor health.
- The cost to the NHS of falls and hip fractures in the North is £55.7 million and £258.8 million per year respectively.
- 1.47 million northern homes are considered non-decent, with over a third housing over-60s residents. This is costing the NHS approximately £588 million in treatment per year.
- Between 2012 to 2022, the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber have seen the rates of poverty among people aged 65 and over rise by 10%.
- People aged 65 or over are 5% more likely to be deprived in the North (68%) than in the South (63%).
- There is a two-year life expectancy gap between the North and the rest of England, with premature death rates 20% higher for those in the North.

We recommended measures including:
- Adopting a cross-government approach to prevent unequal ageing.
- Developing a national housing strategy for older people that invests in age-friendly, accessible homes.
- Strengthening place-based collaboration between local government, combined authorities, housing developers, the NHS and older adults.
- Significantly increasing investment in adult social care in the North.
- Developing an NHS-led, UK-wide strategy to address physical activity as a key driver of later-life health inequalities.

Making it happen:
Our report was launched at an event in Parliament in June 2025, where members of Ageing North talked to MPs about the stark findings and their recommendations. Chair of the Greater Manchester Older People's Network Elaine Unegbu shared her experiences of ageing in the North at the event.

The report received a front page spread in The Yorkshire Post, and was also covered in The Mirror and on BBC Look North, BBC North West and BBC Parliament.

"Where you live shouldn't affect your experience of ageing. This report brings into sharp focus the reality of how unequal ageing is across England. If we want to create a society that supports everyone to live and age better, we need to tackle the wider societal issues that result in some people in some communities dying earlier and living longer in poor health. This needs a life course approach, from childhood to adulthood, that enables people to remain active, stay healthy and contribute to society for as long as possible."
Anna Dixon, MP for Shipley

Examining the link between health and regional productivity

Improving physical and mental health through health programmes and policy changes could deliver transformative economic benefits.

Returning to a theme covered in our 2018 report, our Health for Wealth 2025: Building a Healthier North to boost UK Productivity research revealed that regional inequalities in health, wages and economic activity have deepened. However, if the health of the North was matched to the rest of the country, it could generate an additional £18.4 billion a year to the economy.

The report - which was authored by Health Equity North academics from Newcastle University, the University of Manchester, Lancaster University and Teesside University, revealed that:

- People in the North were twice as likely to lose their job following ill-health.
- Northern workers with no educational qualifications were nine times less likely to remain employed compared to those with at least an A-Level.
- £6.6 billion could be added to the economy if North East mental health was improved.
- Workers in the North experiencing ill-health suffer monthly pay losses that are nearly triple the national average.
- The regional economic divide between North and South has deepened since 2018, with gaps in total economic inactivity growing by 8% and wage gaps growing by 5%.

We recommended that:

- The Government should make health a central component of the UK's productivity and growth strategy.
- Targeted investment should be made in mental health services, preventative programmes and public health funding across the North.
- Benefits and employment support should be reformed to promote health and economic participation.
- Regionally-driven strategies should feature embedded health targets to tackle inequalities.

Making it happen:
Following the report's publication, the NHSA sent a letter to the Chancellor calling for the Government to address the North-South health divide as an urgent priority. The letter was signed by 22 health experts from the region, including university and NHS Trust leaders.

A parliamentary launch event was also hosted in Westminster by Debbie Abrahams, MP for Oldham East and Saddleworth and Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee, In March 2026. At the event, authors of the report met with MPs to discuss the findings and how policymakers can support the work.

"Health and economic performance are deeply intertwined: when communities are healthier, they are more productive, more resilient, and better able to contribute to long-term prosperity. Health policy is economic policy – and investing in the health of people in the North is one of the most effective ways to unlock the country's full economic potential."
Dr Julija Simpson, lead report author and Research Associate at Newcastle University

"When disability rates are nearly 50% higher and people are twice as likely to lose their jobs after ill-health, the consequences are felt not only by individuals and families but across the whole economy. Today's event shows that closing the health gap between regions must be a national priority."
Debbie Abrahams MP and Chair of the Work and Pensions Committee

Impact of poor diets in the North East revealed

People in the North have some of the poorest diets in England, raising their risk of preventable conditions such as obesity and hypertension.

Our Food, Health and Nutrition in the North of England: Inequalities and Opportunities report pointed to a number of influencing factors, including higher food insecurity, lack of access to healthy foods and the high numbers of fast food outlets in the North.

It revealed that:

- The average household in England spends 16% more on food per week than a household in the North East.
- The average weekly household food expenditure in the North East is £56.30, the lowest in the country. The average household spend in England is £65.50.
- Weekly spend on fruit and vegetables in Northern regions is up to £3.27 less than the England average.
- The North West has the highest percentage of households experiencing food insecurity (13%) in England.
- The North has 103.6 fast food outlets per 100,000 people, compared to an average of 81.9 in England. This is 26% higher than the national average.
- The three northern regions have the highest levels of adult obesity in the country: 32.2% in the North East, 29.3% in the North West, and 28.9% in Yorkshire and the Humber
- The three northern regions have the highest mortality rates in the country for preventable cancer, preventable cardiovascular disease, and preventable liver disease.

We recommended:

- The expansion of a skilled workforce focused on regional nutrition.
- Ensuring families have adequate, secure income to meet basic needs, by removing the two-child benefit cap, expanding early years services investment, and making sure children receive support regardless of family size.

Making it happen:
The Nutrition North report received extensive media coverage, including the Big Issue, The Daily Mail, The Mail on Sunday and on BBC Look North. TV chef and Hairy Biker, Si King, provided a foreword for the report. The Department for Health and Social Care also requested the report findings form part of their Food and Weight Management Select Committee. A submission was made in Autumn 2025. The Government also announced the removal of the two-child benefit cap, a move welcome by Health Equity North who had long since campaigned for its removal.

"As someone who's proudly called the North East home my whole life, I've seen up close the struggles our communities face – especially when it comes to food and nutrition. Food should nourish us, bring us together, and help us thrive, but too many in the North are missing out on the basics: fibre, calcium, fresh veg, and healthy fats. These aren't luxuries – they're essentials. We need action now – local solutions, skilled nutritionists, and secure incomes – so that every family in the North has the chance to eat well and live well."
Si King, Hairy Biker and television presenter

We also published further reports, including:

- **Childcare should not be a luxury:** Exploring experiences of formal and informal childcare in North East England
- **Hungry for change:** Tackling obesity and food insecurity in the North of England
- Estimating the savings and financial benefits to the UK Government of return-to-work for people in receipt of Universal Credit
- **Hard to swallow:** The truth about head and neck cancer inequalities

Parliamentary mentions

Our work has been cited frequently by MPs, both inside and outside Parliament. Notable mentions from the last 12 months include:

June 2025:

Andy McDonald MP for Middlesbrough and Thornaby East cited estimates from Health Equity North showing that changes to PIP would result in around £22 million a year being taken out of the local economy. He noted that 11,000 people in his Middlesbrough and Thornaby East constituency receive PIP and 23,000 receive Universal Credit. He asked for further answers on the impact of the changes on people being helped into work or pushed into poverty.

July 2025:

City of Durham MP Mary Kelly Foy referenced the Ageing in the North report as part of the debate on proposed PIP changes. She shared the report's findings that a key reason people in the North tend to leave the workforce is due to ill health. She said changes to PIP would have a "huge" impact on individuals, communities and the economy in the North East.

November 2025:

Shipley MP Anna Dixon shared figures from the NHSA stating that the societal cost of non-decent housing conditions was £7.77 billion, with a cost to the NHS of an estimated £588 million a year.

December 2025:

Our Health for Wealth report was referenced by Work and Pensions Committee Chair Debbie Abrahams MP. She shared the report's conclusions that reducing inequalities between the North and South and improving health in the North could prompt a productivity increase worth around £18 billion a year.

February 2026:

Debbie Abrahams MP also referred to the report two months later. The Oldham East and Saddleworth MP noted that HEN research carried out for the Work and Pensions Committee showed that – if just 5% of people in receipt of Universal Credit were able to return to work – it would provide a return on investment of £20 billion over the life of the Parliament. That would equate to between £5.21 and £6.63 for every £1 of employment support invested.

March 2026:

Debbie Abrahams MP cited Health Equity North's various research reports to the 'Delivering the Child Poverty Strategy' DWP Select Committee, around how our evidence shows the need for a meaningful embedded strategy that makes a tangible difference to the country's most vulnerable families.

Government consultations and select committees

We have submitted evidence to a range of select committees and government consultations, aimed at raising issues and bringing the North to the forefront of policy.

These include:

- **The Economic Affairs Select Committee,** where we communicated findings from our Ageing in the North report (April 2025)
- **The Department for Health and Social Care's Men's Health Strategy for England**, which is exploring how to improve health and wellbeing for men and boys (July 2025)
- The **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Osteoporosis** (August 2025)
- The **Health and Social Care Select Committee's inquiry into obesity** (August 2025)
- **The Child Poverty Taskforce,** which looks at child poverty trends and the success of previous policies (September 2025)
- **Autumn Budget submissions** for both Health Equity North and the NHSA [October 2025]
- The **Education Select Committee's inquiry** into early years support for children and families (October 2025)
- The **Women's Health Inquiry** for the Department of Health and Social Care [October 2025]
- The inquiry into the **Department of Health and Social Care's 10 Year Workforce Plan** [November 2025]
- The **Public Accounts Committee's inquiry** into supporting people with frailty outside of hospitals (January 2026)
- The **Child Poverty Strategy** overseen by the Education Committee and the Work and Pensions Committee (March 2026)

Our impact

Our work has been cited in more than

1,950

media stories/broadcasts between April 2025 and March 2026. This has generated more than

£1.072m

million in PR value.

#NorthInnovationWomen list for 2026 revealed

A list of over 500 innovative women was published by the NHSA in March as part of its #NorthInnovationWomen campaign. The list – which was released to coincide with International Women's Day on March 8 2026 – celebrated women who are pushing the boundaries of innovation.

This year's campaign featured a series of interviews with some of the women recognised, who were nominated by social media users. The 2026 campaign had a particular focus on women who were giving back to communities and industries, and supporting opportunities and development for other women.

Events

Our team has travelled to events, conferences, panels and discussions in the UK and Europe over the last year to ensure that the North remains on the agenda.

Events we've hosted:

- We hosted two panel events and two roundtable events at the **Labour Party Conference** in Liverpool in September 2025. These included:
  - A private roundtable on Delivering the 10 Year Plan in Health Inequalities, led by Shipley MP Anna Dixon and Oldham and Saddleworth MP Debbie Abrahams.
  - A roundtable discussion on Utilising the Prevention Agenda and Civic-driven Data to Fuel the NHS of the Future, featuring Women's Health Ambassador for England, Professor Dame Lesley Regan.
  - An event on Building a Better Future for Northern Women, with our CEO Hannah Davies, Professor Dame Lesley Regan, and Bolton North East MP Kirith Entwistle.
  - A panel on Addressing Child Health and Social Inequalities with Sam Rushworth, MP for Bishop Auckland, Professors David Taylor-Robinson and Kate Pickett, Academic Co-Directors of Health Equity North, and Graham Whitham, CEO and Founder of Resolve Poverty.
- In October 2025, we hosted the launch of our report estimating the savings and financial benefits to the UK Government of return-to-work for people in receipt of Universal Credit. The event in Parliament explored the findings of the research, which showed that getting just 5% of over-25s who were economically inactive due to sickness and disability back into work could save £11.9 billion over the life of this Parliamentary term.
- In March 2026, we launched the second **Health for Wealth report** in Parliament which reveals the economic cost of health inequalities between the North and the rest of England. The event was attended by five MPs who met with report authors from the University of Manchester and Newcastle University to learn more about the findings and the proposed policy recommendations.
- In April 2026, we hosted the launch of the **Academy of Medical Sciences' North of England Cross-Sector Hub** in Newcastle with the first in a series of events, which centred on commercialising cell and gene therapies. Sector experts from across the North and beyond spoke at the event which attracted an audience of researchers, clinicians, industry partners, and innovation ecosystem stakeholders.

Events we've attended:

- Our CEO took part in **BE News' "Spotlight on Science"** panel in March 2025. During the Question Time-style event on the UK's science sector, she highlighted the disparity in R&I funding between the North and the rest of the country.

- In May 2025, our CEO Hannah Davies attended the **UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF)** hosted in Leeds — a landmark event bringing together public and private sector leaders to shape the future of development across the UK. Hannah joined three of the North's Metro Mayors – Tracy Brabin (West Yorkshire, Oliver Coppard (South Yorkshire) and Andy Burnham (Greater Manchester) — to discuss the North's untapped potential in health innovation and the worrying disparities in clinical research funding, at an event hosted by South Yorkshire Combined Authority.

- Our CEO attended the **UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UK REiiF)** in Leeds in May 2025. She took part in three panel events on topics such as clinical research funding, the impact of changes to PIP payments and the role of innovation in shaping healthy and happy places.

- We spoke at **BioNow's BioAISummit** on the importance of engaging citizens in health data for research and innovation. The event took place in Alderley Park in May 2025.

- In May 2025, our CEO spoke at **The Fabian Society's Health Mission Summit** in London, championing the North's life sciences potential and highlighting the need to create a trusted health system and address infrastructure inequalities.

- We launched the Hungry for Change report at the **Child of the North All-Party Parliamentary Group** in July 2025. The meeting was attended by a range of MPs, university representatives, and organisations such as the Food Foundation.

- We discussed the findings of our Women of the North report on a panel at **The University of Manchester** in July 2025. The event was hosted by Healthier Futures, and celebrated the area's expertise, research and innovation in women's health.

- A new Child of the North campaign launched at the **National Opportunity Summit** in September 2025, focusing on widening inequalities in school readiness and the impact on children deemed "not ready" to start school. Our CEO attended the summit, which was hosted at the University of Leeds.

- We appeared on the **PR in the Real World** podcast in July 2025 to discuss how the team puts important issues on the national agenda, and builds support with key policymakers.

- Our CEO took part in **IPPR North's fringe event at the Social Mobility Commission's Manchester symposium** in September 2025. The event was entitled "The kids aren't alright: How to deliver for young people in the North".

- We talked about the importance of maximising impact through membership at the **Tees Valley Research Alliance Conference** in September 2025.
- We spoke at the **Westminster Health Forum** event entitled "Next Steps for the life sciences industry in the UK" in October 2025.

- Also in October, we attended a **Labour Party Conference** fringe panel event, chaired by Dame Chi Onwurah, to discuss our pan-northern evidence submission to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) Select Committee inquiry on Innovation, Growth and the Regions.

- We travelled to **Place North West's Life Sciences Update event in Manchester** in November 2025 to deliver a presentation on the state of science investment. The presentation was discussed by a panel of experts from across the region.

- We visited Lancaster University in December 2025 to attend the **10th Annual Research Showcase.** This year's event was entitled "Ageing Well", and featured presentations on life after a stroke, public health interventions, prevention of falls, and the role of physical activity in coping with bereavement.

- We attended the **South Yorkshire Women's HealthTech Innovation Network (WHIN)** launch event in November 2025. The network supports the development of new HealthTech innovations, and aims to promote collaboration and raise the profile of women's healthcare needs and research in South Yorkshire.

- The **UK CEiRSI consortium** aims to use computational modelling, simulation and AI techniques to meet pressing challenges in healthcare. We attended an event in October 2025, discussing its mission and potential.

- New research on child mental health and wellbeing was presented at the **Child of the North APPG** in November 2025. This will be used to inform the next Child of the North report on the topic this year. A further meeting took place a month later, and an evidence session was held in March 2026.

- The **Great Northern Conference** in Doncaster outlined the need for collaboration across Northern regions and organisations to support healthcare, innovation and wider development in the region. The NHSA attended the event, which took place in December 2025.

Why is the role of the NHSA so vital today?

Hannah Davies, CEO of the Northern Health Science Alliance and Executive Director of Health Equity North

The answer lies not only in the challenges the North faces, but in what we have already shown is possible when we act together.

The North is a remarkable place to live and work - rich in ideas, community cohesion ingenuity and commitment to improving lives. Across our region, researchers, clinicians, industry partners and community leaders are working every day to tackle complex health challenges and build a fairer society. The NHSA exists to bring those efforts together and ensure they have the influence they deserve.

Our members' research continues to shine a light on the realities of health inequality, producing robust evidence that informs debate and drives action. These findings are sometimes stark, but they are powerful because they are rooted in lived experience and rigorous analysis - and because they are used to create change.

What truly makes the difference, however, is the strength of our collective voice. When the North speaks together, it is heard. Over the past year, that voice has helped shape parliamentary debate, influence national policy and raise the profile of northern research excellence. Our Woman of the North report sparked sustained discussion in Parliament and received national awards, while the subsequent Summit brought Mayors together to call for a healthier, fairer future for women across the region. Research by our members has been cited by MPs, contributing to tangible policy decisions and pauses for review.

This impact is not accidental. It is the result of collaboration - between organisations, sectors and places,and a shared determination to turn evidence into action. Through joint bids, shared platforms and coordinated advocacy, we are demonstrating how regional collaboration can deliver national influence.

During the past year, I have had the privilege of working alongside inspiring people from across the North and beyond - from MPs and Mayors to clinicians, innovators and people with lived experience. At every event, meeting and working group, I have seen the same drive: a willingness to collaborate, to challenge the status quo, and to build something better together.

Whether discussing , women's health, healthy ageing or the future of clinical research, these conversations reinforce my optimism about what lies ahead. The talent, commitment and creativity in the North is extraordinary - and when it is connected and supported, it becomes a powerful force for change.

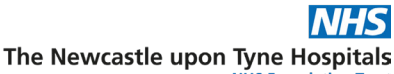
The NHSA's role is to help make that happen: to convene, to champion, and to ensure that the North's health research excellence and ambitions are visible, valued and influential. By continuing to work together, speak with confidence and build on our shared successes, we can strengthen the North's position - not just as a region with challenges to address, but as a region leading the way in health research, innovation and impact.

We are the NHSA

Our members

Universities

NHS Trusts



nhsa
Northern Health Science Alliance

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT 2026