

***NHS Research & Development North  
West***

***Annual Report  
2019/2020***



If curiosity is the wick in the candle of learning, then NHS R&D North West are the match.

## WELCOME

It is possible to create an entire smorgasbord with modest ingredients, but it takes a great deal of craft, graft and a dash of ingenuity. Fortunately, these qualities are hardwired into the DNA of NHS Research & Development North West. It is why they won the NWC Award for 'Most Innovative NHS Team'. Who else would ask a creative writer to assemble their Annual Report?

I have worked with the team for many years now and have always been impressed by the broad range of inspired and innovative ideas that they nurture from concept to completion. This year, yet again, NHS R&D NW have punched way above their height, creating a plethora of empowering initiatives to support the 'health and social care research workforce' enabling them to save, heal and improve the quality of patients' lives.

## 5 STAFF, 5 C's



*NHS R&D North West core team*

With a core team of 5 staff and an extensive faculty of associates, NHS R&D North West uphold their values through their "five C's approach". These are:

CAPACITY  
COLLABORATION  
COMMUNITY  
CREATIVITY  
CONNECTIONS



## **CAPACITY**

Releasing the potential of the health and social care researcher is the core goal at NHS R&D North West, the impact being improved patient outcomes and quality of care with increased efficiency and resource utilisation. By better equipping our health and care workforce with the requisite skills, participants are able to work within a culture actively engaged with research and innovation and in doing so, better serve our community.

NHS R&D North West support researchers at every stage of their journey, offering each a kaleidoscope of options to further their career. From advice to advocacy, influence to impact, NHS R&D North West empower researchers by taking a fresh look at existing challenges and taking practical, often innovative steps to solve them. They embolden researchers with a broad palate of patient-centred learning to boost capacity and care.

## **COLLABORATION**

Collaboration is so fluent at NHS R&D North West but it belies the hard work that creates it. Catalyst events don't just happen, they are forged. A stage is built, brick by brick, so that magic can happen upon it. Born of Complexity Theory (where chaos breeds brilliance) the team assemble a truly diverse range of leaders whose firework intellects clash, morph and tango. This is where innovation is born and if we are to find new low-cost, high-impact strategies to inspire and support NHS staff, nurturing collaboration is essential.

## **COMMUNITY**

Dr Stuart Eglin established NHS R&D North West in 2013 to develop career pathways for Early Career Researchers. In the past 7 years, Stuart's remarkably resilient and versatile team have gone on to support health and social care professionals across the spectrum, in a truly diverse range of ground-breaking initiatives. They have not created an island community but many islands with robust bridges between. From nurses to surgeons, physios to paramedics, all have shared best practice and embraced innovation in research.

## **CREATIVITY**

What can we learn from the arts? This simple question spawns many answers but at its core the fact that the arts are a very efficient delivery system, that healthcare researchers can learn from. An hour spent learning the presentation skills of a comedian, can 'bring to life' years of research and make it bloom at conference. The writing of a PhD is emboldened if you know the craft of storytelling. NHS R&D North West have an innate ability to harvest best practice from a wide range of creative viewpoints, from philosophy to film, and fuse those templates into NHS practice, to enhance and improve patient care and experience.



## CONNECTIONS

The NHS can be a challenging landscape for an Early Career Researcher to navigate. One and a half million busy people, with serpentine career paths and a hierarchy that exists for a reason. NHS R&D North West aspires to be a clear voice in the cacophony, the helping hand, the reassuring whisper. In bold new initiatives, like the Wonder Women podcasts, ECR's can see that even the busiest leaders are mentors who care, who take time to look back and nurture new talent. In NHS R&D North West, the common ground for every tutor *and* participant is a fervent wish to learn new skills and templates of behaviour to benefit our patients. We are all connected by that.

## BRIDGING SCHEME

*The most enjoyable part of a three-course meal is often the pause between courses. It offers the diner time to reflect, appreciate the past and look forward to the next great culinary adventure. This bridge between courses is as much a part of the meal as the meal itself, a vital, yet underestimated part of the equation. It is right to give these moments the respect that they deserve for without reflection, we cannot plan. (Rob Young, Creative Writer)*

In terms of healthcare research, the pause before any major career choice is a pivotal moment. None more so than the deep breath before embarking on a PhD or Post-Doctoral Fellowship. The nerves, trepidation and surfeit of choices can be baffling to the most experienced practitioner, but where can we go for help? NHS R&D North West have stepped into this void to guide and support the next generation of high-quality clinical researchers.



*Pre-doctoral awardees on the 2019 Bridging Scheme*



The HEE/NIHR ICA bridging scheme is a 12-month post-doctoral programme with an individual award of up to £34,000 and up to £10,000 for the 6/12-month pre-doctoral programme (dependent on date of submission for a fellowship). The pre-Doctoral programme began in September 2019 and the Post-Doctoral two months later. Each offered a dedicated period in which participants could develop their research proposal to form the bases of an application for a HEE/NIHR ICA Doctoral or Post-Doctoral fellowship or alternative.

The Bridging Scheme is a wonderful opportunity for participants to assess their current level of 'researcher' skills and competence, allowing them to plan for the future. The course offers access to academic and clinical environments that encourage creativity in thinking, design and delivery.

The opportunity to widen each participants research network links at regional national and potentially international level is also addressed through the Scheme. Participants develop the skills and knowledge required to become a research investigator and consequently, a leader of the future.

The award itself contributes towards salary backfill costs, training modules, travel expenses and access to high quality academic mentorship, giving this bespoke course a very personal, positive and practical nature. Awardees are released for up to 50% of their contracted hours to focus on the development of their research career and work towards a successful NIHR fellowship application.

For further information about the Bridging Scheme contact [joanne.simpson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:joanne.simpson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk).





## LEADING CULTURES OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Why is there a need for this programme?

Because NHS organisations that are more research active have better patient outcomes.

*"The conventional definition of management is getting work done through people, but real management is developing people through work" Agha Hasan Abedi.*

NHS R&D NW has identified limitations in knowledge regarding research and innovation policy agendas, within middle management. There is a lack of personal confidence in providing leadership in this area. The reason this is important is because 'middle management influence' is crucial to a whole-systems talent-management strategy. Managing, nurturing and keeping staff engaged is key to an organisation's ability to provide high-quality care.

*"Leaders must reclaim the very thing our culture has so casually given away: Time to think together and learn from our experiences" Margaret Wheatley*



NHS R&D NW has been working with middle managers from a broad range of clinical backgrounds. We support them in leading a culture of research and innovation. We do this by building their leadership capacity and helping them develop the skills and confidence to create an effective culture within their workplace. To compliment this mission, we have developed a new leadership course. This HEE funded initiative was first augmented in the North West then the North East and from January 2020, the Yorkshire and Humber region.



The course is inspired by the 'best practice' learned from two of our previous initiatives: a "leading clinical teams" programme (funded by HEE, 2013-16) and 'The Academy of Creative Minds', an immersive programme for health researchers and professionals to work with creative artists. Participants learned how to communicate their work more effectively and help increase its impact. As a result, they demonstrated increased knowledge, confidence and understanding of the research landscape and culture and how to lead more effectively. We can show that both programmes lead to significant increase in confidence, creativity and self-belief, skills essential to good leadership.



*NHS colleagues on the 2 day residential at The Last Drop Hotel, Bolton*

The new course is led by leadership professionals, R&D professionals, creative writers, performance coaches, magicians and somatic experts. This unique team work with middle managers in a blended learning approach that helps them to:-

- Develop knowledge & understanding of national, regional and organisational R&I agendas
- Explore and increase individual understanding of how organisational cultures are formed and shaped by leaders
- Explore and develop skills and expertise to improve confidence and creativity to facilitate and lead cultures of R&I
- Have the opportunity to develop and benefit from a community of practice within their health economy
- Know how to lead an effective team based on the work of Professor Michael West



- Explore how digital technology can enable communication and support healthy communities and culture within their working environment
- Be open to new ideas and ready to embrace health innovations.

The “Leading Cultures of Research & Innovation” programme offers a novel and innovative opportunity to enhance leadership development.

To sing the joys of healthcare research it is essential that our work faces forward, outward and wide. Communication is key and participants receive firecracker masterclasses from NHS R&D NW Faculty Associates such as Taravandana and Jana Kennedy, enhancing the written, oral and visual presentations in a truly innovative style.

For further information about Leading Cultures of Innovation and Change contact [gillian.southgate@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:gillian.southgate@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk).







Vici Jackson

<https://youtu.be/Laq8UXTLA0U>

Dr Jane Martindale

<https://youtu.be/po-almI3nIY>

Professor Sally Spencer

<https://youtu.be/NTXpOMNIiRY>

Dr Marie Marshall

<https://youtu.be/TZrsBKZUBg8>


For further information about Wonder Women contact  
[Leanne.gregory@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:Leanne.gregory@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk).

## PHILOSOPHER IN RESIDENCE PROGRAMME

*"The highest activity a human being can attain is learning for understanding, because to understand is to be free."*

*Baruch Spinoza, 17th Century Dutch Philosopher*

An innovative collaboration between the NHS and University of Liverpool.



1 healthcare system  
+ 3 philosophers  
+ 12 months  
= sparks, creativity and innovation



The Philosophy Department of the University of Liverpool took up a 12-month residency with NHS Research & Development North West, commencing on 1st November 2018. The three protagonists were Dr Panayiota Vassilopoulou, Dr Rachael Wiseman, and Professor Michael Hauskeller,



*Thinking Matters team from the University of Liverpool & NHS R&D North West*

# THINKING MATTERS

The aim of the residency was to bring philosophical reasoning to some of the key agendas in health and social care by creating opportunities for questioning, critical discussion and rational argument.



Throughout the year there was a series of events from small workshops to larger conference style days where healthcare professionals, health and care researchers, NHS managers and policymakers could connect with the philosophers. Together, they explored a diverse range of issues through rational investigations of the truths and principles underpinning the NHS culture and the way it works both at an individual level and at a corporate level.

Following on from the launch event, the debate spread across the North West.

***“Is there ever a right time to die?”***

18 January 2019, Friends Meeting House, Liverpool.

This event explored how philosophical input can influence our thinking and behaviour in the NHS and in particular on the end of life agenda. It brought together people from a broad landscape across the North West of England who have an interest, either professionally or personally, in death and dying.

The aim of the event was to consider death and dying from a different perspective and enable people to take their thinking in new directions.

The central narrative revolved around a fascinating series of provocations, such as, “What is Death?” “How do we own our own Death?” and “What is a good Death?” An animation, created on the day, illustrates the flurry of responses.

<https://youtu.be/LLSuKVpM6XQ>

You can read a full report of the day’s events here

<https://research.northwest.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Catalyst-Report-Is-there-ever-a-right-time-to-die.pdf>

***“Making sense of Pain”***

An opportunity to discuss critical and meaningful issues pertaining to pain.

*“There is no birth of consciousness without pain”, Carl Jung.*

A catalyst-style event, 26th June 2019, Federation House, Manchester City Centre.

*The International Association for the Study of Pain* describes pain as “an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage”; clearly this description does not adequately address the complexity of pain, including the distinction between acute and chronic







## HEALTHCARE LIBRARIES UNIT – CATALYST EVENT AND HACKATHON

There are thousands of recipes within the NHS but who knows where to find them? The answer being, the Healthcare Libraries Unit, a low-key labyrinthine powerhouse, fuelled by passion and the fluent knowledge of its staff. Whether you're cooking up a cure or combining two cultures, this NHS powerhouse is a fine ally to have.

In our Inaugural Librarian Catalyst event:

NHS R&D NW collaborated with Health Libraries North on a Catalyst event to open up a conversation, to ensure the future of Health Libraries. The idea being, by enabling the healthcare library community to come together at a catalyst event, they were able to propagate the seeds of evidence-based library and knowledge services.

You can read a full report of the day's events here

<https://research.northwest.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Libraries-Catalyst-report.pdf>.

You can view an animation from the day here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzDbhOXQY-s&feature=youtu.be>



*Live Twitter feed at the Catalyst event*



## FUTURE CONFERENCE EVENTS

We are now looking forward to our next conference in July 2021. Titled THE TIME IS NOW, it celebrates the exemplary work of early career NHS researchers that is laying the foundations for the methods and practices of the future and asks us to consider what we want research and innovation in the NHS to look like in 2050 and beyond.

The conference venue, The Monastery, Gorton, is a part of the long history of monastic medicine and the Franciscan focus on giving care to the poor.



*The Monastery, Gorton*

The Gothic architecture and modern renovations reminds us that the present is built on deep foundations and invites us to take a long view of the future of research and innovation in healthcare.





*Original alter restored during 2005-2007*

"I work all day, do research, sketch my ideas, prepare for performances", Lady Gaga.

For further information about conference events contact [joanne.simpson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:joanne.simpson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk).



## DEVELOPING THE ACADEMIC

*"One of the most important things that I have learned in my 57 years is that life is all about choices. On every journey you take, you face choices. At every fork in the road, you make a choice. And it is those decisions that shape our lives".*  
Mike Dewine.

Over the past 12 months, R&D have been working on a major initiative to develop a proof of concept gateway facility. Our aim is to provide a bespoke, up to date and interactive hub to for the personal and professional development of researchers. It will be the 'place to go' for those interested in health and social care research.

Time and again, we have heard the concerns of early career researchers (ECRs) who struggle to navigate the labyrinth of the NHS. It is hardly surprising. We work in a landscape so vast and complex, finding your way can seem daunting.

To combat this, we are developing an NHS-focussed gateway and an app called RDF Planner. It will introduce healthcare researchers to a new gateway that will guide, educate and inform. It will signpost ECRs to relevant learning opportunities within Trusts, universities and other organisations. It will help them map and evidence their capabilities and competencies against a well-established framework. A free resource that is yours, that is free take with you, for life.

The resource is being developed around the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) model and Planner. These are currently used extensively across the university sector, to facilitate development.

It is not only researchers who will benefit from your endeavour but their managers too. We will train both. The resource will also supply HEE, the Trusts and the universities with vital intelligence regarding the level and nature of emergent demand for professional development.

For the small team at R&D North West, this trailblazing gateway marks a new peak in scale and ambition. It is not a torch to light up the labyrinth, it is a torch factory, so that each person is empowered to find their way.

For Further information about the Developing the Academic programme contact [bill.campbell@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:bill.campbell@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk).



## A PATHWAY TO OPPORTUNITY

*"The best way to predict the future is to create it"*

Abraham Lincoln

The NIHR CRN NWC, NHS R&D NW, ECR Development Pathway Programme is a big title and a major undertaking for a busy health and social care professional...

2 days (per week)

12 months (duration)

3 year (plan)

...but the benefits speak for themselves. Building on our past success, the course aspires to:

- **Understand the drivers, policy context and value of research in the NHS and across the NWC Region.**
- **Ensure the development of knowledge, intellectual abilities and methodologies to do and lead research.**
- **Understand how to engage and influence others to ensure the wider impact of research.**
- **Comprehend the factors/dimensions that create and enable leadership in research.**
- **Develop personal qualities and approaches to be an effective researcher.**
- **Gain knowledge of the standards, requirements and professionalism to do research.**
- **Identify and fulfil personal development needs/learning outcomes.**
- **Create a personal network that will progress and promote the research leadership journey.**
- **Engage with current Principal and Chief Investigators in the NWC region and understand their role and its impact.**
- **Develop reflective practice skills.**
- **Fulfil aspirational goals and create an initial 3-year career plan to achieve leadership potential.**

The core of the course is delivered over ten days. It embraces a blended learning approach with homework, assignments, mentoring and practical placements that will ensure that all relevant content is covered during the 12-month period.





The programme is led by NHS R&D North West, whose faculty of associates includes leadership coaches, organisational development experts, facilitators and a range of visiting speakers who will cover specialist topics.

*“What an inspiration fun provoking residential” participant Serena Jones, Learning Disability Acute Liaison nurse, Liverpool.*

*“An engaging and brilliant programme developing research and leadership skills” Lauren Ashton Cox, Specialist in Early Intervention in Psychosis.*

For Further information about the Pathway programme contact [gillian.southgate@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:gillian.southgate@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk).

## **NWC CRN SCHOLARS PROGRAMMES**

NHS R&D NW is a key partner and facilitator in the Clinical Research Network North West Coast (CRN NWC) scholars programme which is aimed at research-interested individuals who may or may not have NIHR clinical research experience already and encompasses the whole cross section of clinical staffing roles.

It is a dynamic, interactive 2-year developmental programme that equips tomorrow's clinical research leaders with the skills, knowledge and experience needed to become Principal and Chief Investigators of the future. Successful candidates receive funding (half funded by the CRN award and the other half 'match' funded by the applicant's employer) to cover one full day per week as dedicated time for research.

NHS R&D NW focuses on the creation of an innovative and supportive community of practice that wraps itself around the scholars on their journey. We bring people together in a series of games and fun sessions that creates a bond at the beginning of the two-year programme that develops over the length of the course and creates professional and social friendships for life.

For further information about the Scholars Programme contact [gillian.southgate@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:gillian.southgate@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk).



## SERIES OF 1-DAY WORKSHOPS

*"I'm not afraid of storms, for I'm learning how to sail my ship" Louisa May Alcott.*

R&D have always provided a plethora of one-day workshops to equip health and social care professionals with an expansive range of bolt-on skills. The efficiency of these short, sharp, snappy courses strikes a chord with today's busy professional. They are always very popular, and this year included:

Writing for Publication  
Networking  
Coaching or Mentoring  
Researcher community building  
PPIE  
Mock interviews for Fellowships



*Getting creative at one of our many workshops*

These HEE funded workshops included a number of separate workshops for pre and post-doc provision. Each workshop developed elements of intervention to support potential applicants for both the Pre-doctoral Clinical Academic Fellowship (PCAF) and Senior Clinical Lectureship (SCL) programmes offered by NIHR Integrated Clinical Academic (ICA) Pathway (for example extending the current bridging scheme for Clinical Lectureship (CL) to Senior Clinical Lectureship (SCL)). In addition, support was given to those who are looking to get started in research.

For further information about our workshops contact [Leanne.gregory@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:Leanne.gregory@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk).



## COVID 19

As an organisation focused on supporting and developing the NHS workforce to be creative and to work innovatively, the past 6 months have been challenging for us as we have watched our friends, colleagues and partners strive to deliver quality care in a world that has shifted on its axis. The Pandemic has made us redefine how we best support our health and care communities in the new world still coping with the impact of the COVID pandemic.

The team at NHS R&D NW has had to adapt and evolve its programme of work especially the face to face work we do with NMAHPs and ECRs and find different ways of coming together in the workspace. Whilst some of our programmes have had to be put on hold for the foreseeable future, it has been possible for us to continue working online in a digital space using new and exciting platforms to continue to support our networks and communities.

Our commitment as we go forward through 2020/21 is to continue to be present for our existing and new friends, colleagues and partners. We are committed to finding new ways to create strong and effective research-based communities who bring out the best in us and each other through working collaboratively together.

