



Ten Top Tips for Implementing the Allied Health Professions Research and Innovation Strategy for England in the North East and North Cumbria

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Introduction

In 2022 NHS England and Health Education England launched AHP Research and Innovation Strategy for England (hee.nhs.uk).

AHP Research and Innovation Subgroup of the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) AHP Faculty compiled a Ten Top Tips list for implementing this strategy. Each “tip” is illustrated by vignette, providing regional Chief AHPs with examples of local implementation.

The document was circulated to all Chief AHPs in the region in December 2022 through the AHP Council.

Benefits of a research-active organisation:

- Health and social care performance is improved when an organisation and the individuals within it are willing to ask questions and delivering high-quality evidence.
- The use of new, effective treatments improves outcomes for patients and their carers.

Implementation

Aim:

“Top Tips”, supported by examples of best practice and success stories from NENC will enable Chief AHPs to support AHPs to develop research and innovation capacity and capability, and strengthen overall research and innovation culture in their organisation. This will help regional AHPs to learn and support each other to deliver the strategy across the region.

Action:

Chief AHPs to ensure that a nominated representative attends monthly NENC AHP Research and Innovation Sub-group meetings on MS Teams.

1. Ensure joint health and social care/higher education institution (HEI) roles are developed and are made sustainable and attractive for AHPs. This may involve actively pursuing honorary contracts and secondments with HEIs.

2. Think about how organisations can embed research into staff job plans across all grades of AHP – Agenda for Change bands three to nine.

3. Use the AHP Preceptorship schemes to encourage the further development of research and/or quality improvement skills that newly qualified AHPs acquire at university.

4. Establish a network of mentors within your organisation, and across the NENC for AHPs thinking of getting started in research and innovation.

5. Encourage managers to support and release AHP staff to engage in funded research activity.

6. Consider inclusive language to describe “research”, as this often deters people from developing evidence for practice.

7. Highlight the organisations in the NENC who can support AHPs with research including the Council for AHP Research (CAHPR); the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Research Champions Scheme; and the AHP Research and Innovation Subgroup of the NENC AHP Faculty.

8. Pursue NIHR and internal funding for AHP Research Champions in all settings to help drive the AHP Research and Innovation Strategy. Nurses already have financial backing for this e.g. the 70 at 70 schemes, but consider parity for AHPs.

9. Use student AHP placements as an opportunity to undertake meaningful research, drawing on local expertise in clinical practice and academia.

10. Highlight and celebrate research success within AHP. People don’t always see themselves as “active researchers” or understand the potential career until they see success stories.

Vignette: Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) and Teesside University (TU) secured funding for a 2-year Clinical Academic AHP secondment from the NIHR Clinical Research Network for NENC. A dietitian was seconded into this post from January 2020 with a focus on developing regional new grant applications, research delivery and research leadership. In September 2021, funding was secured from TEWV and TU to make this a permanent post due to the success of the secondment. The post has resulted in several successful NIHR grant applications studying public health issues in mental health.

Vignette: At Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, an event called “Mentor Connect” was held in September 2022. Professor Ruth Endacott, NIHR Director of Nursing & Midwifery presented at the event. Mentor Connect was created with the intention of matching mentees and mentors on the Nursing, Midwifery and AHP (NMAHP) research pathway.

Mentorship is vital for novice researchers navigating their research journey. The Trust has a Mentorship Directory, which showcases current Trust NMAHP mentors and their area of expertise.

Trust will continue to grow their NMAHP research mentors and to run Mentor Connect regularly.

References

Health Education England. (2022). Allied Health Professions' Research and Innovation Strategy for England. Available at: [Allied Health Professions' Research and Innovation Strategy for England | Health Education England \(hee.nhs.uk\)](http://Allied Health Professions' Research and Innovation Strategy for England | Health Education England (hee.nhs.uk))

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