

Oxford AHSN case study

Date: Q3 2018/19

Programme/Theme: Strategic and Industry Partnerships

Title: AHSN-led collaboration brings multi-million pound investment to Buckinghamshire and supports SMEs to meet health and social care needs

Overview summary

The Oxford Academic Health Science Network has created a partnership between the NHS, local government, academia and industry to establish a support programme for SMEs which is investing more than £4m in Buckinghamshire. The aim is to leverage health and social care expertise and assets to build on the existing culture of innovation and collaboration in the county and support the development of digital and medtech innovations to improve patient care. Key elements are the Bucks HSC Ventures initiative, launched in September 2018 and initially working with seven SMEs, and the Bucks Life Sciences Innovation Centre due to open in 2019. The collaboration brings together the Oxford AHSN, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Buckinghamshire County Council and Buckinghamshire New University, along with industry partners Johnson & Johnson/Janssen and GE Healthcare. Funding has come through the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Challenge identified and actions taken

In 2015 the Oxford AHSN carried out an asset mapping exercise in Buckinghamshire, a county situated between Oxford and London. It is home to several large global life sciences companies (eg GE Healthcare, Johnson & Johnson/Janssen) but very few life sciences SMEs. Attracting more SMEs into Bucks was identified as a major goal, to be achieved by supporting and encouraging healthcare entrepreneurs to generate innovations and create new businesses, along with help for companies to grow and generate new jobs. Providing an opportunity for life sciences SMEs to co-locate within an innovation centre environment was seen as a key requirement.

The challenge was to establish a unique public sector partnership to bid for capital and revenue funding. The Oxford AHSN-led collaboration brought together Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Buckinghamshire County Council and Buckinghamshire New University. Ongoing strategic partnerships were also developed with Johnson & Johnson/Janssen and GE Healthcare.

Funding totalling £4.1m (including match funding) has been secured through the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

SMEs are now offered a six-month programme through Bucks HSC Ventures which includes Lean start-up workshops, expert masterclasses and prototyping facilities, as well as crucial access to health and social care providers, clinicians and commissioners to support the development of new products to ensure they meet the needs of patients and service users. The first seven SMEs to be supported were selected from 22 applicants. They are:

- **PEPS** – system software, analytics tool to support emergency departments and individuals to improve patient safety, patient quality and staff productivity
- **CareHound** – mobile app, management tool linking older people, families, carers and service providers
- **Spang Group** – surgical product, biodegradable surgical retractors
- **Trust on Tap** – web-based portal, connecting carers and families in arranging care
- **Home Check** – digital application, multi-point home assessment to support meeting needs now and in later life
- **Airbliss+** - hardware product, a lighter, more breathable mask for people with respiratory issues
- **Ufonia** – web platform, autonomous speech-based health monitoring.

A further seven will join a second cohort in 2019.

The Oxford AHSN has committed £30,000 match funding expertise annually throughout the three-year ERDF-funded project. This includes guidance on the spread and adoption of clinical innovation, real world testing and patient safety issues.

The Oxford AHSN is facilitating ‘Lean Strategyzer’ workshops for each SME, and advises on all aspects of the innovation pathway from concept to commercialisation, utilising its successful Digital Health Roadmap (<https://www.healthandwealthoxford.org/digital-health-roadmap/>) where appropriate.

The Oxford AHSN is also supporting successful SMEs to access grant funding, and to develop real-world evidence and health economics impact case studies.



Impact

This three-year project went live in April 2018 so is still in its infancy. The deliverables for the ERDF-funded Bucks HSC Ventures programme are:

- 110 SMEs receiving support
- 18 new enterprises supported
- 20 new FTE jobs created and filled
- 15 enterprises cooperating with research institutions

- 5 enterprises supported to introduce new-to-market products
- 5 enterprises supported to introduce products new to the firm

Supporting quotes

“First and foremost, the programme has given us access to people we have otherwise had difficulties accessing and points of view we needed to hear. The positivity and excitement of the team is really encouraging for us and we’re looking forward to the coming months working together. Overall, we feel Buckinghamshire is really on to something.”

Jon Murrell, Consentricare

“The Oxford AHSN has played a crucial role in creating an innovation centre and support programme for medtech and digital SMEs in an area where this has been lacking. Oxford AHSN’s networks and skills in partnership working, real world evidence generation and adopting innovations in the NHS will further strengthen the culture of innovation in Buckinghamshire and the wider region.”

Nadine Frisk, Head of Bucks HSC Ventures

Future plans

A second cohort of seven SMEs will be supported by the Bucks HSC Ventures programme in 2019. The Oxford AHSN will work towards raising the profile of this programme and the space available to SMEs in the Buckinghamshire Life Sciences Innovation Centre due to open across two sites (High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville) in 2019. It will maximise opportunities to link this important initiative into related activities within and beyond the Oxford AHSN region. Plans are in place to ensure initiatives are sustainable once ERDF funding comes to an end.

Links will be developed with other emerging regional digital accelerators including The Hill at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

NHS England priorities addressed

- Care and Quality
- Funding and Efficiency
- Health and Well Being
- Driving Economic Growth

Start and end dates

2016-ongoing

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