

Yorkshire & Humber Innovation Champion Network

The Yorkshire and Humber Academic Health Science Network (Yorkshire & Humber AHSN) and Medipex have established a network of Innovation Champions throughout the region. The Innovation Champion Network aims to:

- Empower individuals to promote and support innovative activities and develop an innovation culture within their NHS organisations;
- Encourage colleagues to come forward with their new and innovative ideas and inventions; and,
- Promote the spread and adoption of new best practice technologies between NHS organisations

The Network is supported by formal, case study-led training; workshops; a secure interactive web-portal and support from the Medipex and Yorkshire & Humber AHSN teams. The network was launched in early 2014 and has grown to around 60 active Innovation Champions across a range of NHS organisations including Acute, Mental Health, Community and CCGs.

Success to date has been demonstrated through increased numbers of innovation disclosures, a greater awareness of innovation and intellectual property (IP) issues amongst NHS staff and the personal development and recognition of role of the Innovation Champions.

There is no charge to join the Innovation Champion Network for any NHS organisation which is a member of the Yorkshire & Humber AHSN and/or Medipex.



"I want to find innovative solutions to problems and tap into the network to find solutions"

Why does the NHS need Innovation Champions?

Thousands of novel, good ideas are generated by NHS employees every day across the UK which have the potential to improve patient care and/or run services more efficiently. New inventions and services that contain IP have the potential to result in cost savings and/or revenue generation - beneficial at a time when the NHS is facing unprecedented financial and operational pressures. These ideas need to be carefully managed: to reduce independent duplication of effort, and to receive the appropriate guidance the development pathway, which often requires outside help.

As a first port of call, Medipex can provide hands-on assistance with reviewing new ideas and providing IP advice. However, the team need innovative people to present their ideas first! Innovation Champions can:

- Promote the awareness of the importance and benefits of protecting/developing innovative new ideas created by staff;
- Act as a focal point of contact within the NHS Trust for colleagues who have come up with a new idea;
- Work with senior management, Medipex and the Yorkshire & Humber AHSN to develop a strategy to promote a culture of innovation; and
- Where relevant, work alongside the inventors and Medipex towards commercialisation of innovations if this is appropriate.

“It’s a development opportunity for me – I’m interested in tangible things to improve patient benefit and pathways”

Benefits of the Innovation Champion Network for Individuals and Organisations?

There are numerous benefits to having trained Innovation Champions embedded within NHS organisations. The more clinical areas that have an Innovation Champion, the more chances that the next great new medical breakthrough could be uncovered. From a commissioner perspective, having Innovation Champions with an understanding of IP and product development and collaborating within a network enables potential identification of new solutions for care pathways.

Yorkshire & Humber AHSN supports health and social care organisations across Yorkshire and the Humber to trial, evaluate and adopt innovative new products and services, and support these organisations to share their learning and emerging best practice ways of working throughout the region. To achieve this, the Yorkshire & Humber AHSN team work with NHS organisations to explore and understand their priorities and needs and how the use of new technology and/or service redesign could create solutions to these needs – accessing national funding to facilitate the cost of developing these new technologies. Innovation Champions are encouraged to be involved in Yorkshire & Humber AHSN work programmes that are relevant or interesting to them. Having Innovation Champions within the regional network also allows organisations to adopt already tried and tested new best practice and ideas without duplicating the time and cost of developing them themselves.

The Innovation Line



Why become an Innovation Champion?

Innovation Champions are people who have an interest and passion for developing or implementing new ideas to improve services for patient benefit (and indeed anything new and innovative that allows staff to provide more efficient and safer patient care). They are drawn from a variety of disciplines and areas of expertise (for example nurses, executive directors, clinicians, R&D, business development managers).

All have the support of their management to support them in their innovation activities. Requirements for an effective Innovation Champion include:

- An interest in and passion for innovation related to all aspects of improving health care;
- An appreciation of the value of opportunities to network with their peers in other organisations; and
- Strong ability to build relationships with people at all levels, resilience and flexibility

"I want to learn how to be a more innovative organisation and hear what's going on"

Individuals will need to spend some time (approx. 6-10 days/year) on their Innovation Champion role alongside their normal duties, so support of line management is essential. We recommend that organisations opt to have more than one Champion to work together and share the responsibilities.

Medipex and Yorkshire & Humber AHSN provide foundation training in IP and the essentials of effective innovation management to empower Innovation Champions to speak with confidence on IP matters, promote innovation around their organisation and be a recognised point of contact for the initial discussion of innovative ideas and rapid access to further support & expertise. Additionally, becoming an Innovation Champion provides:

- Opportunity for personal development;
- Access to a range of networking events and workshops;
- Access to a secure web portal for opportunities, resources, forums etc.;
- Access to national Champion Networks to share learning and experiences and make new connections;
- Rapid access to Medipex support for IP advice, development of innovation strategies and project management for new ideas; and
- Access to a wealth of learning and opportunities via the AHSN regional and national network.

"I want to make a difference. Develop new innovations as well as bringing in other innovations"

Further information on the Yorkshire & Humber Innovation Champion Network can be obtained from:

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