

MEMBER SHOWCASE

Case study



Bridging the innovation gap

West of England Academic Health Science Network

The challenge

Most start-up businesses fail within two years. Often, this is due to poor business planning, misunderstanding the market, or failing to clearly identify and express the value proposition to investors or customers.

Add to that the complexity of the NHS as a market-place and the high-hurdles that need to be cleared for regulatory approval, and the NHS becomes a particularly difficult market to succeed in.

At the same time, the NHS will not meet its financial or capacity challenges by relying on innovation from within. Many other sectors such as shopping, travel, insurance and journalism have benefited from adapting new technologies and new ways of working, Innovation is inevitable in the healthcare sector.

The Healthcare Innovation Programme (HIP) aims to bridge this gap by ensuring healthcare innovators start on the right track, understand their market place and can therefore successfully bring their innovations to market faster for the benefit of patients

What was done

- Working in collaboration with the leading university business incubator SETsquared, four academic health science networks (Wessex, West of England, Kent Surrey Sussex, and South West) devised an in-depth training programme focused on coaching, mentoring and providing business development support specifically to healthcare innovators.
- An intensive four-day personal development course, the Healthcare Innovation Programme (HIP), targets people with innovative business propositions with genuine potential for health and care.
- While covering core skills in entrepreneurship, HIP also provides delegates the opportunity to make a compelling pitch to an experienced panel and to network with like-minded innovators, and the chance to get continuing support from their local AHSN to further develop their proposition.
- To date, the AHSNs have run programmes in 2015, 2016 and 2017.



The results

Four AHSNs in Southern England are now working in partnership with SETSquared to deliver the Healthcare Innovation Programme (HIP) locally.

The programme is a great example of how the NHS can work together to take advantage of centres of excellence such as SETSquared.

So far, HIP has provided business support to 122 healthcare entrepreneurs, helping them move their propositions forward, launch new products, secure investments and widen business networks.

New products and services

HIP graduates have been supported in the development of a number of new healthcare products and services. These include:

- **getUBetter pain self-management app:** Carey McClellan from getUBetter is a graduate from the Healthcare Innovation Programme and is now marketing self-management apps for lower back pain. The start-up's solution is designed to support patients, clinicians and healthcare providers. Individual sales of the apps are strong. They are rolling out the apps to a large GP practice in Bristol and are close to securing their first NHS contract in London.
- **Intelligent Sounds:** Jenny Dance, a language school owner from Bristol, has been successful in progressing her Intelligent Sounds speech therapy app thanks to HIP. The app can be used to support people with a range of conditions that can impact the clarity of speech, such as post-stroke dysarthria, speech difficulties

resulting from Parkinson's disease, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis or traumatic brain injury.

- **EasyVideo:** EasyVideo enables users to scan any item around the home with a smart device and it plays a video of how to use it. For example, scan the kettle with an iPad and it plays a 'how to make a cup of coffee' video. Will Britton, founder and chief executive of EasyVideo, has 300 paying customers and is launching a county-wide trial in the coming year.
- **MyMHealth:** MyMHealth attended one of the first HIP courses in Wessex in 2015. The company has already made significant steps towards success with MyCOPD. Since attending the course, MyMHealth has gone on to launch several new products, including MyAsthma and MyDiabetes. They have joined the National Innovation Accelerator and are poised to benefit from the Innovation and Technology Tariff, which will see their MyCOPD product nationally funded by NHS England.

“HIP really gave our fledgling business the kick-start it needed to turn it into a successful, scalable operation. Had the West of England AHSN not offered this training programme, I would have found it impossible to build a convincing business case for my speech therapy app for potential health commissioners.”

Jenny Dance, language school owner and developer of the Intelligent Sounds app (HIP graduate, 2015, West of England)

For more information

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