

NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service and Dorset Innovation Hub Annual Report 2025/26, including the Dorset Health Innovation Wessex Programme

Contents

A. Overview	1
B. Key highlights 2025/26 - NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service.....	3
C. Dorset Innovation Hub	7
D. Key highlights 2025/26 – Dorset Innovation Hub	8
E. Key priorities for 2026/27.....	9
F. Health Innovation Wessex.....	10

A. Overview

This report highlights the vision for innovation within NHS Dorset, the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service, key programmes and key highlights of work undertaken in 2025/26. The report also provides key highlights from the system strategic partnership of the Dorset Innovation Hub (DIH) and Health Innovation Wessex.

Innovation is at the heart of how we all provide quality services, and anyone can be involved. Our vision is to establish the conditions to facilitate and sustain innovation adoption across NHS Dorset and the Dorset Integrated Care System (ICS) for the benefit of our community. We achieve this through the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service and the DIH strategic partnership. Innovation at NHS Dorset is defined as an embedded culture covering the spectrum of improvement, adaptation and adoption of existing innovations and invention. Our Innovation workstream plan for 2026/27 (to be published over the coming months) outlines how we will achieve this.

It is noted during 2025/26, there were periods of change within the Dorset System, NHS Dorset and nationally, including significant ongoing pressures. Recognising the ongoing pressures, within the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service work, we ensure that activities supported are a prioritised need within the Dorset system and partner organisations, ensuring positive benefits.

NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service. The NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service is overseen by the Deputy Director of Research, Innovation and Partnerships and is led and run by the Head of Research and Innovation and the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation team. The team enables innovation activity within the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and ICS by providing hands on support to adapt, adopt and sustain proven innovation and develop ideas into new services and products that will benefit Dorset. We work collaboratively with system partners e.g. Health Innovation Wessex to support as appropriate the realisation of the innovation plan. The NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service lead and co-ordinate the following key programmes as outlined briefly below:

- **Support for staff.** The NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service work with teams on agreed ICB or ICS innovation priorities to facilitate the project's development and delivery. This facilitative support may include elements such as development of a project plan, stakeholder analysis, horizon scanning, or the set-up of an evaluation framework. Through established governance, we provide resources, tools and deliver the innovation education programme with Health Sciences University (HSU).

Support is tailored to the needs of the individual project and is subject to necessary approvals including the Gateway process.

- **Governance.** Quarterly updates on activity, delivery, communications and impact are provided through the NHS Dorset Innovation Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) and are tabled at the NHS Dorset Clinical Professional Reference Group (CPRG), and the Dorset Innovation Hub Core Team Meeting and Programme Group.
- **Innovation: Workstream Priorities.** Led and co-ordinated by the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service, the innovation workstreams priorities for each financial year are categorised to enable prioritisation and includes two workstreams:
 - **Workstream 1: Innovation opportunities to meet and support system priorities (local and national innovation programme).** Co-ordinated by the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service, the project senior responsible officer is within a Dorset organisation, and the project is supported by the DIH strategic partnership. Key highlights for 2025/26 are detailed further below.
 - **Workstream 2: Development programme.** Led by the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service, the development programme contains overview details of all priority development work, within the financial year. Key priorities are informed by review and assessment using the Innovation Unit maturity wheel and undertaken with DIH partners as appropriate, e.g. Education programme with (HSU). Key highlights for 2025/26 are detailed further below.
- **Adopting Innovation Systems (AIS).** NHS Dorset was one of nine ICBs in England participating in The Health Foundation's AIS initiative. Completing December 2025, the AIS was a 12-month discovery initiative focused on increasing the health and care systems' understanding of the different roles ICBs, with their partner Health Innovation Networks (HINs), play in supporting the adoption and spread of health and care innovations. NHS Dorset's participation has been in partnership with Health Innovation Wessex (HIW). Key highlights from participation in this initiative are detailed further below. A copy of the associated 'Time to be Bold' guide to driving innovation adoption through strategic commissioning is available [here](#).
- **Dorset's Living Lab.** During 2025/26, as part of the DIH system strategic partnership, development of the living lab concept was progressed including consideration of submitting a UKRI Local Innovation Partnership Fund (LIPF). It was decided ultimately that Dorset is not bid ready and the health and wellbeing concept continues to be developed with Health Sciences University as host on behalf of the DIH. This work programme is a key innovation and research priority in 2026/27.
- **Dorset Innovation Hub.** The strategic system partnership with representatives from all Dorset partner organisations is overseen by the Deputy Director of Research, Innovation and Partnerships (NHS Dorset) and co-ordinated by the Head of Research and Innovation (NHS Dorset). Key highlights for 2025/26 are detailed further below.
- **Health Innovation Wessex (HIW).** Provide support and deliver locally prioritised innovation as agreed with NHS Dorset and its providers. The HIW Dorset delivery plan is co-ordinated with the NHS Dorset Innovation and Research programme and Dorset Innovation Hub programmes and does not duplicate regional or national programmes. Further details regarding the Dorset HIW programme are detailed further below.
- **Education programme.** A core component in building a culture and environment supportive of innovation adoption is education. Our education programme is an

established core element of our service and is developed and delivered in partnership with HSU. We aim to support Dorset in building a foundation which increases capabilities, creates networks, and contributes towards a systematic approach to adopting innovation. During 2025/26, the education programme has included Fundamentals of Innovation Adoption training, Community of Practice events, bespoke training on request, and coordination of our online [Innovation Community](#). Key highlights from the 2025/26 education activities are available below.

- **Public engagement - Bringing the voice of people and communities into research and innovation.** The views and experiences of local people and communities are essential. We want to boost the number of people engaged with innovation to make sure innovations are fit for purpose and reflect the community needs. During 2025/26, the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service have collaborated with the Dorset Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) to design and agree a model to support service user involvement in innovation adoption projects. Further details on public engagement are available below.
- **Communications.** Communications plays a central role in the achievement of the goals of the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service. This is supported by an Innovation Communications Strategy which ensures a joined-up and comprehensive approach to communications. A key platform for communications delivery is the [Dorset Innovation Hub](#) public website. Key communications highlights for 2025/26 are detailed further below.

B. Key highlights 2025/26 - NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service

A selection of key highlights for the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service for 2025/26 are provided below.

Innovation: Workstream priorities.

Workstream 1: Innovation opportunities to meet and support system priorities (local and national innovation programme).

Co-ordinated by the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service, the project senior responsible officer is within a Dorset organisation, and the project is supported by the DIH strategic partnership:

- **Local programme.** Local priority projects supported in 2025/26 includes:
 - Fractional Exhaled Nitric Oxide (FeNO) device implementation (Dorset Respiratory Network and Dorset Primary Care Network (PCN))
 - Nutrition in Ageing People (NAP) – lived experience ‘Top Tips’ nutrition campaign (Dorset ICS)
 - NAP – lunch clubs as a placement setting for student dietitians (collaboration with HSU)
 - Falls Prevention (Dorset Council)
 - This is Menopause UK (Arts University Bournemouth (AUB))
 - Strength based approaches to health and care – ‘Making Meaningful Change’ training (BCP Council).
- **National programme. Local implementation of MedTech Funding Mandate (MTFM) projects.** A key part of Dorset’s successful MTFM programme has been the establishment of governance processes within NHS Dorset. The NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service have ensured that the required funding to support initial implementation and local product evaluation is clearly defined and accessible.

During 2025/26 we have seen the established implementation of four of the MTFM products with plans agreed to move from implementation to 'business as usual' at 01 April 2026:

- Rezum (Dorset County Hospital (DCH))
- Rezum (University Hospitals Dorset (UHD))
- XprESS sinus dilation system (DCH)
- Thopaz+ portable chest drain (DCH)

Following device purchase, implementation of Thopaz+ at UHD has commenced (Bournemouth and Poole sites) with evaluation in progress.

Support has continued to be provided during 2025/26 to assist in the prioritisation of HeartFlow at DCH for implementation.

- **National programme. Local implementation of NHS Supply Chain (NHSSC) Value Based Procurement (VBP) products.** During 2025/26, the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service have begun working with NHSSC to support local implementation, where appropriate, of products within the VBP programme. This has included:
 - Trans nasal endoscopy (UHD)
 - Remote cardiac monitoring (DCH)
 - BLISTER risk stratification scoring for cardiac devices (DCH)

Innovation: Workstream priorities.

Workstream 2: Development programme.

Led by the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service, the development programme contains overview details of all priority development work, within the financial year. Key priorities are informed by review and assessment using the Innovation Unit maturity wheel and undertaken with DIH partners as appropriate, e.g. Education programme with Health Sciences University (HSU). Key highlights include:

- **Common language.** A resource development activity which is detailed below in DIH – Key highlights.
- **DIH elevator pitch.** A communications development activity which is detailed below in DIH – Key highlights.
- **Developing the impact.** A rolling programme, started in 2022, where partner organisations are developing an innovation culture, capabilities and raising awareness of innovation activities in their organisation. For further details, see DIH – Key highlights below.
- **Community of practice (CoP) programme.** Topics for CoP sessions are informed through maturity wheel assessment and discussion within the core team. For further details, see Education Programme below.

Accelerating Innovation System (AIS). NHS Dorset was one of nine ICBs in England participating in The Health Foundation's AIS initiative. Completing December 2025, the AIS was a 12-month discovery initiative focused on increasing the health and care systems' understanding of the different roles ICBs, with their partner Health Innovation Networks (HINs), play in supporting the adoption and spread of health and care innovations. NHS Dorset's participation has been in partnership with Health Innovation Wessex (HIW). Participation has included involvement in four peer learning sessions, led by the Innovation Unit as delivery partners, which provided an opportunity for all participating ICBs and HINs to meet to build connections, discuss implications and opportunities of relevant national developments e.g. model ICB blueprint publication, learn from others on innovation adoption approaches and through case study examples. Within the third peer learning session, this included sharing case study examples from Dorset on an overview of the DIH (NHS Dorset presentation) and the Women's Health work programme (HIW presentation).

The final peer learning event in October 2025 provided an opportunity to listen to initial key findings from the AIS work as well as a chance to discuss, inform and shape these further. The Innovation Unit held a public webinar on 11 December, sharing insights and learning on how ICBs can embed innovation adoption through strategic commissioning. Further Innovation Unit outputs from the AIS include the [‘Time to be Bold’ guide](#) to driving innovation adoption through strategic commissioning and the [ICB-HIN maturity matrix](#).

An area of focus for the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service in 2026/27 will be actions to support local implementation of the recommendations and learning from the ‘Time to be Bold’ guide.

Education Programme

The key points provide brief highlights related to the education programme activity in 2025/26. Further information and details on our education programme is available via the Dorset Innovation Hub [website](#) and [Education Programme annual report](#).

- **Fundamentals of Innovation Adoption.** This 1-day in person interactive training explores the challenges of innovation adoption and provides development opportunities in skills and knowledge to be better equipped to successfully adopt innovation into practice. During 2025/26, training has been held three times (April 2025, July 2025 and January 2026), rotating between West and East Dorset to enable accessibility. Training is open to all colleagues and attendance from organisations includes NHS Dorset, Dorset Council, Dorset Police, Dorset HealthCare, BCP Council, the Voluntary and Community Sector, and UHD. Learning is supported with an online follow-up session after the training to enable attendees to explore questions further once they have had time to reflect on learning from the 1-day training.
- **Community of Practice events.** During 2025/26, five events have been held:
 - ‘Demonstrating Impact – Measuring’ (April 2025) which focused on how we can reliably and accurately measure change to be able to demonstrate impact.
 - ‘Prioritising the Priorities’ (July 2025) which focused on robust decision making in an environment of competing priorities.
 - ‘Beyond Numbers’ (October 2025) which focused on the use of qualitative methods to show impact.
 - ‘Data Storytelling’ (January 2026) which focused on creating meaningful narratives and visuals from data.
 - ‘Influencing: shaping outcomes through communication and relationships’ (March 2026) which focused on how to use the skills of influencing to drive and deliver change.
- **Ad-hoc requests.** During 2025/26 examples include:
 - A session on ‘Innovation – Considering Complexities’ delivered to MSs students within Bournemouth University’s Department of Rehabilitation & Sport Sciences.
 - A half-day bespoke session entitled ‘Making Meaningful Change’ developed and delivered for BCP Council.
 - A session on ‘Creating Impactful Posters’ delivered to support Primary Care colleagues with the preparation of project posters for a CCLIP CVD Prevent event.
- **Education Programme Development.** Development work across the year has focused on the running of the Community of Practice sessions and refining the Fundamentals training. Further work has been conducted on the ‘Innovation for Improvement in Health and Social Care’ credited unit for practitioner development; in particular, exploring and

working on a hybrid delivery model to improve accessibility and respond to workforce needs.

Public engagement - Bringing the voice of people and communities into innovation

In 2025/26, the Dorset Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) joined the Dorset Innovation Hub (DIH) as a formal partner. This partnership strengthens the Hub's engagement with the voluntary and community sector and ensures that its perspectives are appropriately reflected across DIH activities.

Following the conclusion of funding from The Health Foundation's *Adopting Innovation* programme, focus in 2025/26 has been on identifying sustainable approaches for embedding meaningful public and community involvement in innovation projects and service development. In collaboration with the Dorset VCSA, a new framework has been developed and agreed. This framework enables tailored involvement of people and communities based on the specific requirements and context of each innovation initiative.

The essential role of public and community input in shaping innovation and informing service change is recognised. At the DIH annual development day in November 2025, partner organisations unanimously identified public engagement as a priority for service development in 2026/27. Leveraging strengths of system working, through this work we will aim to enhance capabilities, facilitate shared learning, and increase the availability and visibility of opportunities for public engagement and co-production.

Communications

Communications play a central role in the achievement of the goals of the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service. This is supported by an Innovation Communications Strategy which ensures a joined-up and comprehensive approach to communications. The objectives of communications activities including raising awareness of innovation, enable engagement with partner organisations, support community involvement, create a learning system for innovation, and create a feedback/response loop to be able to continually improve our approach. A few key highlights for 2025/26 are listed below:

- **Website.** Our public website contains a wealth of information from details of the Dorset Innovation Hub strategic partnership to case studies as well as news, events, training and resources. [Innovation – Our Dorset ICS Innovation](#)
- **Case Studies.** Working with and supporting partners to generate case studies which share learning and celebrate innovation and wider improvement work [Projects and Case Studies – Innovation](#). Case studies published during 2025/26 include:
 - 'Approaches to Change – training project' from BCP Council.
 - 'Diabetes Refocusise Project' from UHD.
 - 'Hypertension Optimisation (Dorset PHM approach)' from NHS Dorset.
 - 'Serving Understanding: A Collaborative Learning Lunch' from BU PIER and the Lantern Trust.
- **Social Media #DorsetInnovationHub.** Utilising the power of LinkedIn to raise awareness, spread messaging, as well as advertise events and training. Topics of recent posts include: [promoting training](#), the Health Foundation's [Accelerating Innovation Systems](#) initiative, [case study publication](#), [newsletter publications](#), and [celebrating partnerships](#).
- **Videos.** A designated YouTube channel hosts a series of short videos designed to provide accessible information to support learning and understanding on key topics. [Dorset Innovation Hub - YouTube](#). Recent additions include a recording of the January 2026 Community of Practice event.
- **Newsletters.** Quarterly newsletters are published as an alternative accessible way of sharing key pieces of information. These newsletters are published on the website and

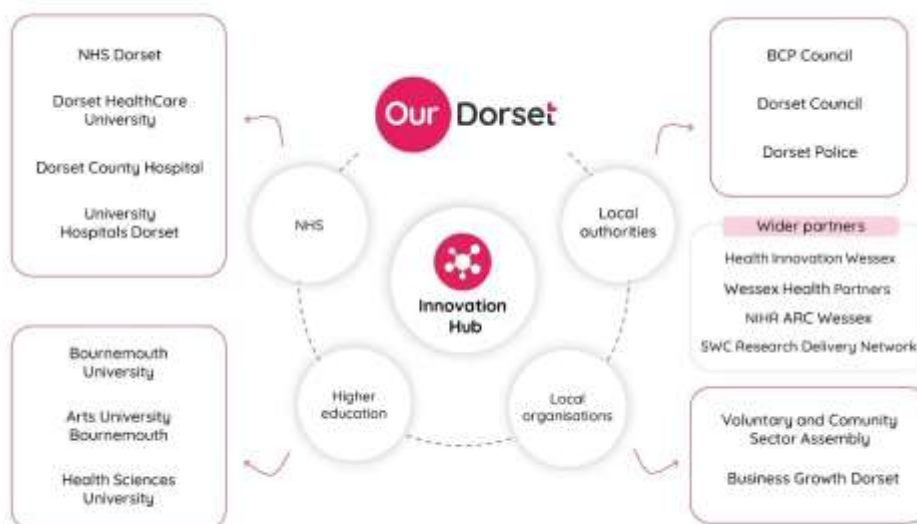
are disseminated and promoted via partner organisations and social media. [Newsletters – Innovation](#)

- **Blogs.** A series of short informal pieces on a focused topic relating to innovation adoption. Blogs are published on the website and are disseminated via social media and the newsletter [Blogs – Innovation](#). Blogs published during 2025/26 include:
 - Celebrating Collaboration: Working as a System to Tackle Health Inequalities (Community Action Network)
 - Reflections on Dorset Police as a DIH Partner (Dorset Police)
 - Workforce Integrity and System Efficiency (WISE) Project (SAFE (Security and Fraud Experts))
 - Exploring the Dorset VCSA Four Key Pillars in Action (Dorset VCSA)
 - Dorset Innovation Hub: Reflections on 2025 (NHS Dorset)

C. Dorset Innovation Hub

NHS Dorset ICB is proud to host the Dorset Innovation Hub (DIH) which is a strategic system partnership that draws together partner organisations to provide expertise to spread and adopt prioritised innovation across Dorset. The DIH is co-ordinated through the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service. Further information on the DIH, its work and activities are available at: [Innovation – Our Dorset ICS Innovation](#)

DIH strategic partnership. The DIH (hosted by NHS Dorset and co-ordinated by the Lead for the DIH) is likened to a mini-Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and is made up of 12 partner organisations: primary, community, secondary and social care, local authority, academia, innovation, research, economy, industry (see figure 1 below). Within the DIH there is an overarching programme group and core team, each of which contains a representative from each of the partner organisations. For further information on DIH partners is available at: [Partners – Innovation](#)



[Caption: Dorset Innovation Hub strategic partnership]

The Dorset Innovation Hub is overseen by a Programme Group, chaired by the Deputy Director of Research, Innovation and Partnerships (NHS Dorset) and co-ordinated by the Head of Research and Innovation (NHS Dorset) with representatives from all partner organisations who oversee and receive updates on:

- **Innovation: Workstream Priorities.** There are two workstreams, covering local and national priorities.
- **'Developing the Impact'**. As a rolling programme implemented four years ago, 'developing the impact' has rapidly become central to the DIH approach to embedding innovation within Dorset.
- **Receive and note presentations, reports and resources**, e.g. Innovation workstream priorities, Lead update report, Quarterly Performance reports inc. risks, issues and mitigating factors, learning from benefits realisation analysis report, communication strategy.

It is recognised that in 2025/26 there were significant ongoing pressures and evolving changes within the Dorset system and nationally, including financial, organisational, publication of the 10 Year Health Plan, closure of NHS England, and national reorganisation of ICBs. Therefore, with the DIH work, we ensure that activities supported prioritised need and 'pull' within the system and organisations and ensuring positive benefits.

D. Key highlights 2025/26 – Dorset Innovation Hub

A selection of key highlights for the DIH for 2025/26 include:

- **'Developing the Impact'**. As a rolling programme implemented three years ago, 'developing the impact' has rapidly become central to the DIH approach to embedding innovation within Dorset. Developing the impact is where partner organisations are developing an innovation culture, capabilities and raising awareness of innovation activities in their organisation. Together we are 'developing the impact' and building networks across the Dorset system that meets the needs of individual organisations and improves the lives of people in Dorset. DIH core partner organisations provide updates at the DIH programme group that highlight the innovation activities in their organisation and collaborative working. The updates include:
 - Priority innovation or research projects working on and potential to collaborate
 - Showcasing innovation, intranet site, posters or case studies promoting innovation benefits and impact
 - Resources, processes, training opportunities and information regarding innovation on staff and student (where applicable) intranet sites
 - Opportunity to discuss organisation approaches, share lessons learnt and explore areas for collaboration and development.

The slides are available as a resource for partners and to see more about the work of the DIH partner organisations, their posters, originally developed for the DIH Summit (June 2024) and updated November 2025, are available at: [All-DIH-partner-posters-updated-Nov-2025.pdf](#)

- **DIH Development Day.** Annual DIH development day was held in November 2025, hosted by BCP Council, with attendance from programme group and core team members from DIH partner organisations. Activity during the day focused on priority business planning for 2026/27, annual DIH maturity assessment, and agreement of priority areas for DIH service development for 2026/27.
- **Case Study: Innovation in Dorset – Dorset Innovation Hub – strategic system partnership.** This [case study](#) was developed as an output from NHS Dorset's participation in the AIS initiative (see above). The case study highlighting the key points of challenge and opportunity the development of the DIH sought to address, progress and impact to date, together with key lessons and insights. The case study is for inclusion as a formal case study within the central AIS outputs.

- **Common Language.** To support and enable effective partnership working across organisations which can be quite different in context, purpose and structure, a [‘How To’ guide for common language](#) has been developed. This is supported by an agreed common language position statement. The guide outlining good practice principles, as well as signposting to various tools, resources, and glossaries to support.
- **DIH Elevator Pitch.** To support Visions and Values development, during 2025/26 the DIH core team have developed a DIH elevator pitch to support DIH promotion, increase visibility, and to facilitate connections. Focus is currently on dissemination which will include videos featuring members of the DIH core team and programme group.
- **DIH Key Distinguishers.** The DIH key distinguishers represent core standards of practice that members of the DIH work to. These were originally developed in December 2021 (approved March 2022) and during 2025/26 were reviewed and updated in line with the evolution of the DIH since its inception and to incorporate learning gained in this period. The updated [DIH key distinguishers](#) are made available via the [DIH website](#).
- **Strategic Partnership.** During 2025/26, we welcomed Dorset VCSA and Business Growth Dorset as new partner organisations. Both organisations have rapidly played an active part in the DIH, sharing and participating in sessions and widening innovation links.
- **Enabling Connections.** As part of networking, facilitation, project work and development days several connections have been made across organisations in Dorset e.g. collaborations with students from AUB, Bournemouth University and local sixth form colleges as part of the NAP work programme, and development of connections with Dorset Primary Care through the FeNO project and educational activities.
- **Assessment of Capabilities.** As a yearly assessment, the DIH review of capabilities using the Innovation Unit maturity wheel mapping progress in creating authorising environments, supporting adoption projects, building capabilities and nurturing enabling cultures. Individuals assess both their own level of capability and their organisations. This informs the NHS Dorset development programme. Innovation Unit maturity wheel available at: [Adopting Innovation Wheel - Innovation Unit](#)

In addition, we were delighted to have the opportunity to be part of:

- **NHS Dorset public Annual General Meeting (AGM).** Research and Innovation stand which included information on local and national innovation programme, innovation events, and the NIHR ‘Be Part of Research’ campaign.
- **Hampshire & IOW ICP Research Assembly.** Research and Innovation in Dorset stand which included information on Dorset’s local and national innovation programme, education programme, DIH approach, and developing the impact posters from DIH partner organisations.
- **CCLIP CVD Prevent Activation event.** Innovation stand which provided opportunity to build networks with primary care colleagues and promote education offers, events, the DIH approach, and opportunities for collaboration.

E. Key priorities for 2026/27

The NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service innovation priorities for 2026/27 include:

- Work with ICB cluster colleagues in line with the organisational change process to frame and establish the research and innovation functionality in the ICB in line with the ‘Time to be Bold’ outputs.

- NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service – undertake further awareness sessions for ICB staff regarding the Gateway process for research and innovation, registering projects, approvals and resources.
- Develop and deliver the 'Introduction to research, innovation and strategic commissioning and PHM approaches' training and community of practice in partnership with Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (H&IoW) ICB and Health Sciences University. Subsequently tailor training and community of practice with research and innovation cluster colleagues to deliver within the clustered ICB.
- Lead and coordinate the DIH strategic partnership, ensuring priority innovations workstreams are delivered, e.g. education programme, prioritised innovation projects and prioritised development programme, e.g. co-production, horizon scanning.
- Review and develop research and innovation strategy.
- Living Lab for Dorset – further strategic development and partnership including pan Dorset business growth and wider partners.
- Resource development including investment and business processes.

F. Health Innovation Wessex

The relationship and joint working with Health Innovation Wessex has further strengthened and aligned during 2025-26 with collaboration on the Accelerating Innovation Systems Programme with the Health Foundation, undertaking a relationship maturity matrix review together and the delivery of the co-developed local delivery plan.

Health Innovation Wessex is a key system capability for Dorset, funded through NHS England, the Office for Life Sciences and other commissioned activities. Health Innovation Wessex is part of the national Health Innovation Network, the innovation arm of the NHS. The network was established in 2012 to transform lives through innovation by supporting health and social care teams to find, test and implement new solutions at scale to the NHS's greatest challenges, improving population health and driving economic growth.

There are 15 regional health innovation networks (HINs), each working across a distinct geography and fully embedded within their local health and research ecosystem. HINs connect NHS and academic organisations, local authorities, charities and industry and provide a range of practical support to facilitate change across health and social care economies, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for patients. All NHS bodies in Wessex (Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight) and the universities of Bournemouth, Portsmouth, Winchester, Solent and Southampton are members of Health Innovation Wessex.

During 2025-26, Health Innovation Wessex (HIW) has delivered a number of key outcomes for the Dorset system, including:

Cardiovascular disease – working collaboratively with the other HINs covering the South West region, HIW has led a number of events attended by Dorset colleagues. This includes an event on heart failure in June 2025, with 112 attendees and data demonstrating the increase in knowledge and confidence as a result of the event which will enhance patient care in Dorset.

Patient Safety – during 2025-26 the new Medicine Safety Improvement Programme (MedSIP) was launched, focusing on reducing harm from psychotropic medications used for behaviour in people with a learning disability. Health Innovation Wessex has also supported pre-term optimisation, with data showing a sustained improvement with place of birth data at 85%, intravenous antibiotics at 80% and magnesium sulphate at 75%. A Wessex-wide optimisation study day was held on the 23 September with over 100 multidisciplinary

attendees, rating the event overall as being 4.55 out of 5 (5 being excellent). Delegates fed back they found the “*interactive day informative with high quality speakers and a range of presentations*” and an excellent opportunity for networking.

The NHSE patient safety team hosted a national webinar on Monday 15 December for the Patient Safety Collaborative to share the Patient Safety Incident Investigation (PSII) thematic review. 225 delegates attended from a variety of acute, mental health, community and ambulance trusts, and independent providers, hospices, ICBs and national bodies (Health Services Safety Investigations Body, NHS Resolution, NHS Improvement, NHS England). The HIW team presented the why, how and sharing of the PSII thematic review and were joined by Wessex system colleagues who described how the review is leading to further improvement work across the ICS including Patient Safety Incident Response Framework development, informing the neighbourhood transformation programme and creating a system-wide improvement collaborative for transfers of care.

Accelerating Innovation Systems Programme – this was undertaken collaboratively during 2025-26 with NHS Dorset and HIW presenting the local Dorset work, partnership and achievements in July 2025 to the other sites and informing the final publication Time to be Bold from the Health Foundation with local case studies and examples of ways of working for innovation adoption. The full report can be accessed by [following this link](#).

Evaluations – the HIW Insight team has successfully completed a number of evaluations to benefit Dorset with adding insight and value to the work being undertaken, including the BP@Home pathway evaluation, an independent evaluation of a train the trainer programme to prevent and improve pelvic floor dysfunction across Dorset, an evaluation of Mental Health Practitioner Roles and an evaluation of the Women’s Health programme.

Innovation scans - Five innovation scans have been scoped and delivered for Dorset including wearables, oral health, obesity, self management for strength and balance and planned surgery for those with complex needs. Each innovation scan was tailored to the problem / need in Dorset and has led to a number of innovations being adopted.

Children and young people healthy weight – during 2025-26 the South West Health Weight forum has continued to be facilitated and led by Health Innovation Wessex bringing together expertise, knowledge and innovation sharing.

Frailty and falls (now referred to as Ageing well) - The Ageing Well project over 2025-26 has included undertaking innovation scans, supporting innovation adoption, knowledge mobilisation and bid support and how this has been shared across the South West with the work being done by HIW and our approach being signalled as the blueprint for the South West region.

Oral health – Health Innovation Wessex has supported the Dorset Oral Health Board with a key innovation scan around the three workstreams of focus; access, prevention and workforce and has proposed key projects to take forwards.

Digital and AI – HIW convened and facilitated an RPA/AI forum in Dorset for the past year, bringing together colleagues with expertise and information for knowledge mobilisation and best practice sharing. HIW has worked with system colleagues and other health innovation networks to develop an Ambient Voice Technology (AVT) comparison table. This has been accessed over 100 times since publishing and has also been added to the AVT professional network (created in partnership by the Health Foundation and THIS institute).

Women’s health - The programme delivered over 2023-2025 has delivered large-scale educational impact, expanded digital support, enhanced clinical pathways, and improved the

visibility of women's health needs across Dorset. The team across Dorset presented at NHS Confed Expo on 12 June 2025, influenced national policy with the refreshed Women's Health Strategy due for publication in early March 2026, have shared innovations and learning with national teams in NHSE, DHSC and NICE, have published five case studies, three abstracts and an impact report on what has been achieved. Health Innovation Wessex was commissioned in 2025-26 to collate an impact report for the programme a year on, key impacts from this report include:

- **Improved access to women's health services** - two new care pathways enabling more timely and better access to service closer to home, the creation of an online resource website supporting thousands of Dorset women with evidenced based self-help, education and support and the provision of 1,100 funded licences for women to access the Squeezy app.
- **Significant increase in clinician knowledge & confidence** - 16 health care professionals (HCPs) attended pelvic floor training and have cascaded this training forwards, 11 HCPs attended racial discrimination training with 100% reporting good or excellent knowledge post training. Menopause webinars with 218 HCPs attending the first three webinars with data demonstrating 96% of those attending reporting that they think it will reduce secondary care referrals. A further three webinars were then provided due to demand, with a total of 351 hours of training provided to HCPs on menopause with those feeling extremely confident rising from 0% to 39% post training.
- **Measurable influence on referrals & clinical behaviour** - reduced referrals for bleeding during menopause due to national guidelines, more efficient menopause service has expediated query response and an increased reliance on Poole Menopause Clinic, multiple advice and guidance from the same GPs, seen as a trusted specialist support.
- **Strengthened community engagement and support** - over 1600 responses to the digital women's surveys to hear the public voice, 21 groups connected to the work which amplified Dorset women's under-represented voices including women's lived experience stories and 28,868 views to the online health resource and eight podcasts providing support and increasing DWHP awareness.
- **Digital innovation driving reach and awareness** - the creation of an online resource website supporting thousands of Dorset women with evidenced based self-help, education and support, five digital apps uploaded to the Our Dorset ORCHA library, 226 downloads from four menopause apps and 170 registrants adopted Squeezy app licence due to targeted campaign.
- **Better understanding of women's experiences and barriers** - six targeted schools supported human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine campaign, 53 reviews from Dorset women supported changes to the online resource and two digital surveys, lived experience stories and public engagement throughout has shaped this work and surfaced the experiences and barriers experienced by women.
- **System-wide collaboration and national influence** - over ten system partners worked together on this programme, the team have published six case studies regarding the work and impact, there has been over three abstracts written for national publication resulting from this programme, the team presented at NHS Confed Expo in 2025 to celebrate their system-led approach, funding secured from Wessex Health Partners for research into workplace menopause support, the pelvic health training has been spread to Milton Keynes and further spread and scale is planned and NHS Dorset and Health Innovation Wessex have shared the work undertaken in Dorset with national colleagues including NHSE and NICE, which has influenced national policy and plans.
- **Improved workforce capacity for women's health** - 351 hours of training has been provided to HCPs on menopause, 20 link nurses supporting Dorset schools and vaccinations and three further menopause webinars provided 133 hours of training.

- **Data and evaluation** - Real World Evaluation (RWE) report for pelvic health Train the Trainer training has shown improvement in knowledge attainment, retention and application for the benefit of women in Dorset and minoritised group data report which pulled available local and national data to start to give an understanding to the barriers.

Find out how Health Innovation Wessex has improved population health and economic growth in Wessex, and read the latest impact report available on the Health Innovation Wessex website. <http://www.healthinnovationwessex.org.uk>

During 2026-27, Health Innovation Wessex will be the key innovation partner for NHS Dorset and the new wider cluster working collaboratively with the other HINs across this new geography. Each of the HINs across this new cluster will be bringing specialist expertise and knowledge which will support the new ICB. To help support the new way of working and ensure alignment with priorities, Health Innovation Wessex has worked extensively with Dorset and cluster colleagues to co-develop the delivery plan for 2026-27 and alignment with strategic commissioning plans and provider priorities have been key.

The co-developed areas for local focus for 2026-27 which will support Dorset priorities and the three national shifts of hospital to community, sickness to prevention and analogue to digital are:

- 1) Ambient Voice Technology in primary care
- 2) Ageing well
- 3) Enabling workstream – training, advice and support and working with industry to enable innovation to develop and thrive.

All of these projects will be part of the neighbourhood model within Dorset and the wider cluster, where health and care teams from across a neighbourhood can work together to share resources and information and form multidisciplinary teams dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of a local community and tackling health inequalities.