

# INNOVATE



Innovation Hub Newsletter

EDITION 16: MAY 2026

## Welcome to the May 2026 edition of the Innovation Hub newsletter.

As you may be aware, in the Dorset Innovation Hub (DIH), we collaboratively work together to strengthen our system and improvement approaches with a clear focus on improving the lives of those living in Dorset. In thinking as a system, in 'joining the dots', and collaboratively working together on priorities, we can achieve so much more. I was recently reminded of this when we compiled the innovation annual report for 2025/26 (page 2) and recently seeing the commitment and collective energy across the DIH core team and programme group activities and meetings. The willingness of partners to collaborate openly and share learning is what enables us to accelerate innovation adoption for the benefit of service users, staff and communities.

As you would expect, our May edition of the INNOVATE newsletter is packed with activities and updates from across the DIH partners. This includes our recent attendance at the Wessex Health Partners Big Conversation event where we ran a parallel session on Strategic Commissioning in Practice: A facilitated workshop on evidence, innovation and research. At what is considered the start of our conversation, we brought together leaders, commissioners, researchers and colleagues from across the system to share perspectives on commissioning, research, innovation using evidence and population health (page 7).

Further activities and updates in this issue include: FeNO service framework model including changes in practice (page 6), a dance initiative supporting older people with back pain (page 3), Community of Practice event: Influencing – shaping outcomes through communication and relationships (page 5), and the new NICE National HealthTech Access Programme (page 8).

Happy reading and do get in touch with any innovative projects or work you'd like to share.

**Sarah Chessell**

**Head of Research and Innovation, NHS Dorset  
Lead - Dorset Innovation Hub, Dorset ICS**

✉ [Sarah.Chessell@nhsdorset.nhs.uk](mailto:Sarah.Chessell@nhsdorset.nhs.uk)

**“The world is changed by your example, not by your opinion.”**  
*Paulo Coelho*



### In This Issue

- Innovation Annual Report 2025/26
- 'Influencing' CoP event
- Blog ~ A University Perspective on Dissemination and Impact
- NICE National HealthTech Access Programme (NHAP)
- FeNO Service Framework Model
- Dance initiative supporting older people to manage back pain
- Clinical Audit Awareness Week 2026
- Education opportunities

# Innovation Annual Report 2025/26: NHS Dorset & Dorset Innovation Hub (DIH)

The recently published [NHS Dorset and Dorset Innovation Hub \(DIH\) Innovation Annual Report 2025/26](#) highlights a year focused on delivering practical innovation support as well as progress in building an embedded, system wise culture of innovation across the Dorset ICS.

During 2025/26, the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service provided direct, hands-on support to a wide range of system partners. Activity centred on helping teams progress innovation from early concept through to adoption, with a strong emphasis on aligning support to clearly defined system priorities. This has included support for the pan-Dorset Nutrition in Ageing People programme, working with primary care colleagues to improve use of FeNO (fractional exhaled nitric oxide) devices, implementation of Thopaz+ devices at University Hospitals Dorset under the MedTech Funding Mandate policy, and working with the NHS Supply Chain Value Based Procurement (VBP) team to support Dorset colleagues access opportunities within the VBP programme.

Other key areas of focus for the NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service during 2025/26 have included active participation, together with Health Innovation Wessex, in the Health Foundation's Accelerating Innovation Systems initiative, using learning to inform how ICBs can realise their critical role in driving innovation adoption. Alongside this, there has been progress and development within the innovation education programme, supporting colleagues to build confidence, capability and a shared understanding of innovation as part of everyday service improvement. This has been complemented during the year by a strong programme of communication activity, including promotion stands at events, newsletters, website, showcasing case studies, videos, blogs and social media.



The DIH continued to act as a strategic system partnership and provide a convening space for collaboration across health, local authority, academia, police, industry and community partners to maximise the impact of innovation adoption. During the year, DIH partners have supported cross-organisational priority projects, and worked to 'develop the impact' within their own organisations as well as build a system-wide culture supportive of innovation adoption. This has included resource development such as a 'How To' guide for common language, revision of the DIH key distinguishers, enabling new connections and networks to be forge, as well as case study developments to celebrate and share impact and learning.

Overall, the 2025/26 report reflects a year characterised by steady, behind-the-scenes delivery: facilitating priority projects, supporting teams, delivering benefits, enabling collaboration and strengthening system capability. The experience and learning gained through this work providing a strong platform to move forwards our 2026/27 work programmes.



## Blog ~ A University Perspective of Dissemination and Impact

A new blog on the [DIH website](#) explores the often-used but sometimes misunderstood concepts of dissemination and impact, viewed through a university. Written by Rachel Clarke, Business Engagement Manager at Bournemouth University, the blog unpacks what dissemination and impact really mean, how they differ, and why both matter when turning research and innovation into meaningful change.

The blog reflects on how sharing knowledge is only the first step; real impact is demonstrated when research leads to improved services, better outcomes and tangible benefits for people, communities and systems. It also highlights how collaboration beyond academia is essential to achieving this change in health and social care.

Read the full blog on the [DIH website](#) to explore how dissemination can lead to real-world impact.

## Our Dorset Digital Strategy 2026 - 2031

Our Dorset Integrated Care System (ICS) has recently unveiled a bold new Digital Strategy setting out how health and social care across the county will evolve over the next five years.

Key areas of focus within the strategy include:

- Integrated digital records and reduced reliance on paper
- Strong, collaborative digital governance
- Better digital access for citizens through tools like the NHS App
- Improved data sharing to support proactive, evidence-based care
- Modern, secure infrastructure and enhanced cybersecurity.

Read the full Dorset Digital Strategy document [here](#).



## Clinical Audit Awareness Week 2026

National Clinical Audit Awareness Week 2026 - #CAAW26 – will take place from 22 to 26 June, celebrating the role of clinical audit in improving patient care and healthcare outcomes.

This national campaign will feature themed days and education events including:

- Turning strategy into reality
- Patient involvement and care equity
- Shaping the future together: innovation and transformation
- Data-informed improvement

The full programme is available on the [HQIP website](#) including booking information.



## HSU launches Dance Programme to Help Older People Manage Back Pain

Health Sciences University (HSU) has launched a pioneering community dance programme in Dorset, enabling older adults living with chronic lower back pain to move more, fear less and reconnect socially.

The HSU-led project is in partnership with Pavilion Dance South West takes a fresh approach: participants joining gentle, group-based, music-led session designed with Pavilion Dance South West practitioner.

Go to the [HSU website](#) to learn more.



# Exploring Extended Reality to Transform Health and Care Experiences for People Living with Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain



Image Source: [XR Network+ website](#)

A new collaborative project between the Creative Technology Research Group at Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) and the Health Sciences University (HSU) is helping to explore how extended reality (XR) technologies can be used to transform the way we design, communicate and experience health and care services.

Chronic musculoskeletal (MSK) pain affects millions of people worldwide and is increasingly understood as a perceptual experience shaped not only by physical factors, but also by expectations, beliefs, prior experiences and the treatment environment. Building on contemporary theories of perception and pain, the project leverages XR to influence how pain is interpreted and experienced during therapy.

The team will prototype a mixed reality system that allows patients to map their pain onto a digital body avatar, viewed through virtual or augmented reality. Pain may be represented using visual metaphors such as glowing areas or moving forms, selected and personalised by the patient. During manual therapy, these visuals are designed to change in real time – for example, softening, fading or transforming – reinforcing expectations of relief and strengthening the mind-body connection.

Multiple XR approaches will be developed and tested using AUB's creative technology facilities. HSU will lead on the clinical integration, safety protocols and ethical governance, embedding the prototype within real-world therapeutic settings through its university clinics and Centre for Pain and Active Inference Research.

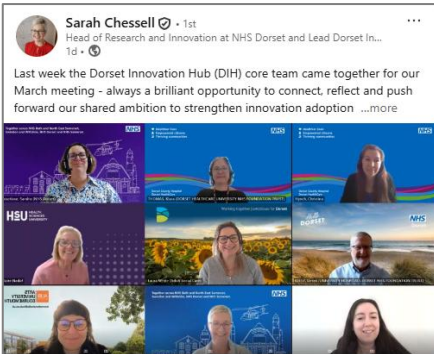
As a proof of concept, the project aims to demonstrate how XR embodiment can improve patient engagement, help reframe pain experiences and enhance therapeutic impact. Key outputs include a deployable prototype and user engagement data, providing foundations for future feasibility studies, self-management tools, and applications in rehabilitation, training and serious games.

This project is one of eight university-led collaborations funded from the XR Network+ XR Labs Fund to develop extended reality prototypes using facilities at UK universities.

More information on this project is available on the [XR Network+ website](#).



## Social media snips



## Community of Practice Event: Influencing – shaping outcomes through communication and relationships

On 24 March 2026, we ran our latest community of practice (CoP) event which was focused on the topic of influencing.

The session covered:

- What “influencing” really means
- Different influencing styles and strategies
- Practice tools and techniques you can apply straight away

We also drew on psychology-based theories and discussed how these can be translated into everyday strategies – focusing in particular on:

- Trust
- Understanding the perspectives of others
- Power of personal stories
- Clear communication
- Involving others

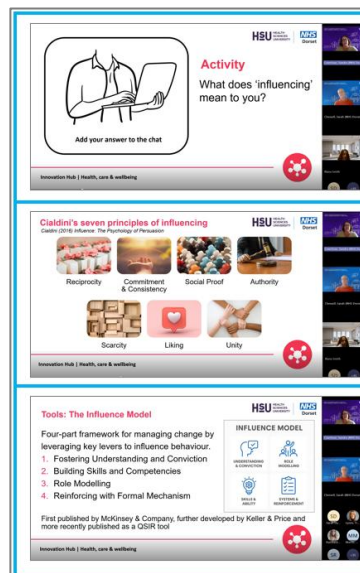


The key role of emotional intelligence was also highlighted, with emotional intelligence being one of the strongest predictors of leadership effectiveness, communication quality, and the ability to influence.

One of the key takeaway message that came through was: *Every interaction is a touchpoint for influence – both now and in the future. Small intentional actions can build significant impact over time.*

A thank you to Rick Perry (Dorset Council) for his support in shaping the content, and to everyone who joined the session for your fantastic engagement and participation.

Finally, if you were unable to attend, but would like to catch-up on the session, a recording of the event is available via the [DIH YouTube channel](#).



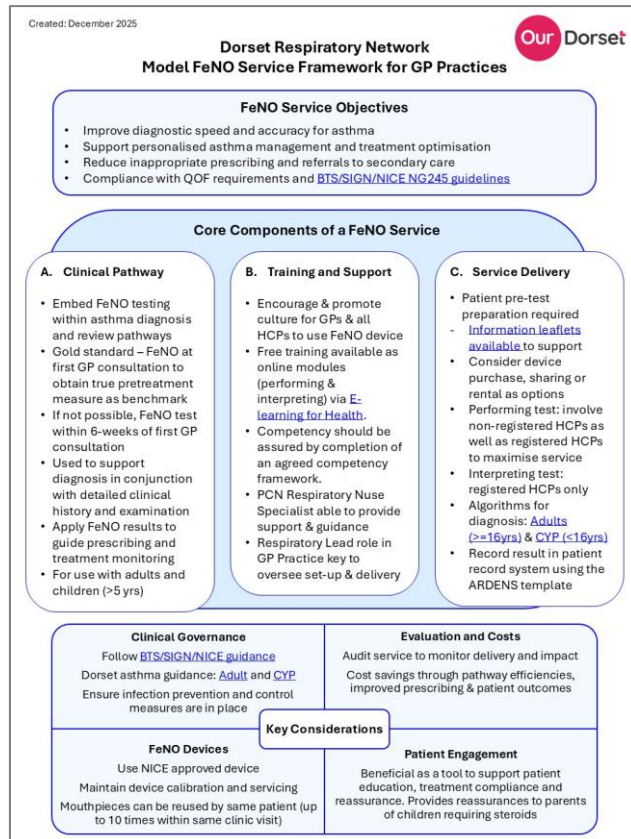
# Dorset Respiratory Network: Model FeNO Service Framework for GP Practices

FeNO (fractional exhaled nitric oxide) devices are a novel medical technology used to aid the diagnosis and management of asthma. In [Edition 14 of the INNOVATE newsletter](#) we reported on a scoping review of FeNO practices, experiences and opinions undertaken in three of Dorset's Primary Care Networks.

The learning from this scoping review informed a set of actions, agreed by Dorset Respiratory Network members, to support further FeNO implementation. One of these actions was to develop a model FeNO service framework to support GP practices not currently using FeNO.

This FeNO service framework document has now been finalised and covers; key components of a FeNO service, clinical governance, information on costs and benefits, basic diagnostic algorithms, and links to useful resources e.g. guidelines (local and national) online training platforms and patient leaflets.

A copy of this framework is available [online](#) via the Dorset formulary pages for asthma.



## Dorset VCSA Fortifies Board with Strategic Appointment, Enhancing Expertise and Community Impact

The Dorset VCSA have announced the appointment of four new members to its Governance Board, effective January 2026.

These appointments strengthen leadership and deepen collective impact across Dorset's voluntary and community sector.

The new board members are Donna Blanche (CEO of Leonardo Carer Support), Becky Aldridge (CEO of Dorset Health Forum), Emma Lee (Director of Operations at International Care Network), and Poppy Connell (Help & Care).

The full news release is available via the [Dorset VCSA website](#).



## Innovation Education Programme Annual Report: Sept 2024 to Aug 2025

Our education programme is a core component of the Dorset Innovation Hub's (DIH) mission to embed a positive innovation culture that supports improved outcomes, quality, value for money, and staff retention. It focuses on developing the workforce's ability to adopt innovation systematically across health, social care, academia, and industry.

The [Innovation Education Programme Annual Report](#), highlights the key activities and impact of the education programme within the academic year September 2024 to August 2025 and includes, governance and prioritised development of the education programme, reporting against agreed key performance indicators (KPI), communications, key learning and evaluation, and ad hoc training provided.

Actions for the academic year 2025/26 include extending the Community of Practice programme and development of an impact evaluation of the education programme.



# Wessex Health Partners Big Conversation 2026 – turning insight into action for rural and coastal communities

On 15 April 2026, more than 200 delegates from across the region came together for Wessex Health Partner’s (WHP) Big Conversation 2026 event, focused on improving health and reducing inequalities in rural and coastal communities. The event brought together partners from across health, research, local government and the voluntary sector to explore how innovation and research can drive better access, outcomes and opportunities for people living and working in areas of greatest need.

The keynote address from Professor Sir Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer for England, set the national context for rural and coastal health. He highlighted how a lack of granular data can mask pockets of deprivation and emphasised the need for strong local partnerships. He also positioned rural and coastal communities as powerful testbeds for innovation, from community-based care and digital inclusion to workforce and prevention-led approaches.

Throughout the day, plenary discussions, panels and breakout sessions focused on moving from insight to impact. Themes included neighbourhood health, community-led research, NIHR priorities and the practical levers needed to support adoption and delivery. Exhibition stands and networking opportunities showcased the breadth of activity already underway across Wessex.



## WHP Big Conversation Parallel Session Strategic Commissioning in Practice: a facilitated workshop on evidence, innovation and research



NHS Dorset Centralised Research and Innovation Service, in collaboration with NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB colleagues, were delighted to run a parallel session at the WHP Big Conversation event focused on strategic commissioning in practice.

The session brought together leaders, commissioners, researchers and colleagues from across the system to share perspectives on commissioning, research, innovation, using evidence and population health approaches. The session was just the start of the conversation and will directly inform a case study and development of training: ‘Strategic Commissioning for better population health: evidence, innovation and impact’.

Thank you Michelle Holmes (HSU) and Karen Stratford (NHS Dorset) for helping to facilitate the session, and to everyone who contributed their insight and experience – it’s through these shared conversations that we can turn ideas into meaningful impact to improve the outcomes and experience of our population.



# Faster, Fairer Access to HealthTech under new National Programme

[NICE has recently announced](#) a new National HealthTech Access Programme (NHAP) that aims to deliver faster, fairer access to high-impact health technologies across the NHS in England and Wales. This represents an important step change in how proven HealthTech is assessed, reimbursed and adopted at scale.

The programme expands NICE's established Technology Appraisals approach - previously used for medicines - to selected medical devices, diagnostics and digital technologies. This means that a small number of clinically and cost-effective HealthTech innovations will be routinely reimbursed and made available consistently across the NHS, helping to reduce variation and end the 'postcode lottery' that can limit access to innovation.

The first technologies to enter the programme include capsule sponge tests for early detection of oesophageal cancer, and AI tools to support diagnosis of prostate and breast cancer. These innovations have the potential to improve earlier diagnosis, release clinical capacity and reduce pressure on the workforce.

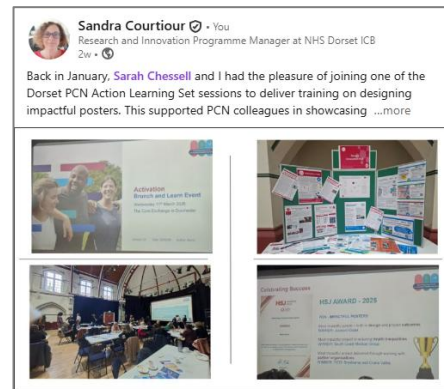
For innovators, adopters and partners working with the Dorset system, the NHAP offers greater clarity on national routes to adoption and a clearer link between evidence generation, NICE guidance and system-wide implementation. It also reinforces the importance of demonstrating real-world impact, value and readiness for scale.

As the DIH continues to focus on innovation adoption, capability-building and collaboration, this national programme provides a supportive backdrop - helping ensure that effective HealthTech can move more quickly from evaluation into everyday practice for the benefit of patients, communities and services.

Have a look at the [NICE website](#) for more information on how NICE is strengthening its role in getting the best healthtech, including digital tools, diagnostics and medical devices, to patients.



## Social media snips



**Dr Claire Nadaf** • 1st  
Head of Engagement and Partnerships, Lead for Centre for Workforce an...  
2d • 10

Are you looking to strengthen your skills in writing successful bids and securing funding for innovation and change projects? ...more

**HSU HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY** **NHS Dorset**

### Dorset Innovation Hub Community of Practice

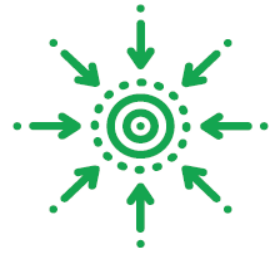
## Getting Bid Ready

Wednesday 20 May 2026  
13:00 to 14:00  
Online event – booking:  
<https://forms.office.com/e/k2i5avLBvX>

Follow the link in the QR code to register for the event via the Dorset Innovation Hub. Should you wish to contact further external enquiries following the event, you can do so by emailing [doih@innovationhub@nhs.uk](mailto:doih@innovationhub@nhs.uk)



# Innovation Hub Education Programme



## Fundamentals of Innovation Adoption

Remaining 2026 Fundamentals training dates available for booking:

- Wednesday 01 July 2026 at County Hall, Dorchester
- Wednesday 21 October 2026 at Health Sciences University, Bournemouth

Each event runs from 10:00 to 16:00 and further information on this free training is available via the [DIH website](#). Places can be booked by completing a copy of our [booking form](#).

## Community of Practice events

Our next Community of Practice event is centred on the theme 'Visualising Innovation: creating impactful posters'.

This 1hr online event is on 09 July 2026 at 13:00 and will focus on how to effectively create posters to successfully share key messages and highlight impact and learning. The event is free and open to all to attend.

Further information and booking details available via the [DIH website](#).

Recordings of previous Community of Practice events are available via [DIH YouTube channel](#).

**Dorset Innovation Hub  
Community of Practice**

**Visualising Innovation:  
creating impactful  
posters**

**HSU** HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY **NHS** Dorset

**How can we best use posters to effectively share key messages and highlight the impact of innovation?**

Join the latest community of practice event to find out more about:

- Developing posters to showcase your work
- Avoiding key mistakes
- Consider what makes a good poster
- Creating a compelling poster that highlights the impact of innovation
- Opportunities for discussions and questions

**Thursday 09 July 2026  
13:00 to 14:00**

**Online event – booking:**  
<https://forms.office.com/e/UVhLdWXMT7>

Follow the link/scan the QR code to register for the event via the Dorset Innovation Hub. Should you wish to opt out of further communications following the event, you can do so by emailing [dorsetinnovationhub@nhsdorset.nhs.uk](mailto:dorsetinnovationhub@nhsdorset.nhs.uk)

## Innovation for Improvement in Health and Social Care (Level 7)

The 'Innovation for Improvement in Health and Social Care' course is designed for people working in health and social care settings in a role which supports innovation and improvement. This level 7 course will be delivered by NHS Dorset and Health Sciences University. Further information on this course will be available soon.

## Other Training Opportunities

**Qi Lite and QSIR:** Quality Improvement training is available to all staff across the Dorset ICS and is offered in a tiered approach. [See website for further details.](#)

**PM Lite:** Introductory course to project management which is aimed at individuals who are new to project management or those looking to refresh their knowledge. [See website for further details.](#)

The Innovation Hub team provides advice and hands-on support to adapt, adopt and sustain proven innovation and develop ideas into new services & products that will benefit the Dorset ICS.

If you would have a project that you would like to discuss, or if there is anything in this newsletter that you would like further information on, please do contact us.



[dorsetinnovationhub@nhsdorset.nhs.uk](mailto:dorsetinnovationhub@nhsdorset.nhs.uk)



[ourdorset.org.uk/innovation](http://ourdorset.org.uk/innovation)