



The Tyne Bridge, Newcastle

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Conference aims to connect academic knowledge and policymakers

The inaugural Insights North East annual conference will look at how academic knowledge and policymaking can be brought together to better meet the needs of North East communities.

The event, which takes place on Wednesday 24 May, will offer the chance for academics, health managers, and policymakers to come together to understand the knowledge and data within each organisation and begin to develop new ways to bridge the gaps between research and policy.

Established in 2022, Insights North East (INE) is a collaboration between Newcastle University, Northumbria University, the NHS, North of Tyne Combined Authority and Newcastle City Council.

It aims to create better links between academics and policymakers to close the gap between publicly funded research and policy design.

The programme is structured around three policy challenges that align with the expertise in the two universities and the priorities of policymakers in the region – improving **health and wellbeing, a just transition to net zero, and delivering inclusive growth**.

By bringing this knowledge together, INE aims to shape policy design and implementation to ensure that policies around these three key challenges are better suited to the needs of communities across the North East.

Delegates at the event will hear first-hand from regional policymakers about some of the challenges they face, the barriers to ensuring policy helps build inclusive and sustainable for all communities, and the opportunities for using evidence to make sure the North East has a stronger and more distinctive voice in national policy debates.

The conference will also include a keynote speech from Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive, NHS Confederation, who will discuss the opportunities and challenges for local NHS organisations in linking to their place and other local anchor organisations, and the role of evidence in policy making.

Professor Jane Robinson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Place, Newcastle University, said: “INE was established to build better links between academics and policymakers, and this event will provide a great opportunity to further develop the great collaborations that have already begun. Through improved closer working, we can ensure the knowledge and expertise within each partner organisation can be used to benefit the whole North East community.”

Professor Louise Bracken, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Exchange) at Northumbria University, said: “INE is an important collaboration between regional and city partners and Newcastle’s two universities. We are committed to ensuring our research expertise is used to support the local

policy community and make a positive difference for people in the North East. INE fits with Northumbria's focus as a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, and changes lives."

INE sits within the wider Collaborative Newcastle agreement, an innovative partnership between the NHS, local government, higher education, and voluntary and community sector in Newcastle to combine efforts, expertise and resources in new and creative ways with the aim of reducing inequality and providing better opportunities for all.

Henry Kippin, Chief Executive, North of Tyne Combined Authority, said: "Insights North East will bridge the gap by bringing together policymakers, academics, and different stakeholders to really start to work through together what the big policy challenges are for the region. It will go beyond theory and insight to translate into practice so that policymakers can start to make a real difference on the ground."

Andrew Edmunds, Director of Innovation, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, said: "NHS organisations' primary focus is providing the highest quality care to patients and the public. We use every means at our disposal to ensure this is the case, and a key part of this are our partnerships with other local institutions such as local government and academics. We see the Insights North East partnership and the opportunity it has to bridge between academics, the NHS and other stakeholders as playing a critical role in identifying practical measures to help address the significant health and care challenges that our region faces."

The event will give delegates the opportunity to learn more about INE and hear about the progress made so far. In addition, a series of workshops will accelerate work already taking place in key areas including identifying and addressing issues around the real living wage and understanding how innovation investment can be made inclusive.

The INE annual conference takes place on Wednesday 24 May and is open to academics, policymakers and representatives from community organisations. For more information, visit: insightsnortheast.co.uk or email enquiries@insightsnortheast.co.uk

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

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Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences
rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk
07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences
andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk
07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk
07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact
Student Communications Manager
james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk