

L-r Design Engineer Saqib Ali and Dr Sterghios Moschos from PulmoBiomed

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North East universities working together to support ambitious businesses and academic entrepreneurs to start-up, innovate and grow

The **Innovating Together - Universities in the North East (In-TUNE)** partnership has been launched by Northumbria, Durham, Newcastle and Sunderland Universities, alongside technology innovation catalyst CPI, to deliver two business support programmes which aim to strengthen the North East economy.

The North East's universities have received £4.75m from Durham County Council and North of Tyne Combined Authority through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to work together to help strengthen business in the North East, driving forward the Levelling Up agenda and growing the region's economy.

UKSPF is part of the UK government's Levelling Up programme providing £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. Led by Durham University, In-TUNE is targeting one of the key objectives of the Fund, aiming to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging.

Jenny Taylor, Director of Economic Development, Northumbria University, said: "We are delighted that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is investing in the regional In-TUNE programme. This investment will enable Northumbria University to further strengthen our innovation support to ambitious local companies and to continue to offer targeted support to our entrepreneurial academic workforce, expanding on our excellent success to date in this area. In-TUNE builds on significant historical delivery across the regional partner universities and further embeds our collaborative approach to driving economic growth in the region, by helping businesses to create innovative products and services and supporting the creation of new high-quality jobs here in the North East."

Richard Baker, Director of Economic Development and Commercialisation at Durham University, said: "In-TUNE is an important strategic partnership which brings together and grows Northern Accelerator to support academic entrepreneurs, and Arrow to support regional businesses start-up, innovate and grow.

"Our universities are one of the North East's great strengths. Each university is distinctive and makes significant individual contributions locally and regionally. By working together on these key initiatives, we will make a real impact on the strength of the business base in the region. We are also ambitious to do more, and we are looking forward building on these successful programmes through In-TUNE to achieve more together."

Over the last five years Newcastle University's flagship business support programme, Arrow, has helped regional SMEs innovate by connecting them with expertise from Newcastle University, strengthening the local economy

along the way.

In-TUNE is driving the expansion of Arrow across the region, and organisations in County Durham and North of Tyne Combined Authority areas can now access innovation support from all four North East universities to develop new products and processes.

An independent review forecasts that within the next three years the initial phase of Arrow will have helped regional SMEs to create 143 new jobs, develop 53 new products or services, increase private investment by £2.6m and increase turnover by £16.9m.

Professor Jane Robinson, Newcastle University's Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Place, said: "We are delighted that this funding will allow us to extend and expand our successful flagship Arrow programme to help businesses innovate. Businesses will now be able to access a wider pool of researchers, expertise and facilities from across four of the North East's universities. Innovation is key to a successful economy and over the last five years we've seen that Arrow helps to increase innovation activity in local businesses, creating exciting new products and services, along with high quality jobs."

In-TUNE is also supporting Northern Accelerator, an innovative programme led by Durham University in collaboration with Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland, Teesside and York Universities to commercialise research and create real-world impact.

Northern Accelerator has transformed the commercialisation of research in the North East, making a significant contribution to the region's economy. To date 47 spinout businesses have been created through the programme's robust support model, with many now based in innovation clusters at Newcastle's Helix and County Durham's North East Technology Park (NETPark).

An external evaluation forecasts that Northern Accelerator will have added an additional £140m to the value of the North East economy by 2030, measured in GVA. That contribution to the region's economy is well underway, with spinouts from the partner universities raising over £100m investment in the last five years and currently employing over 650 people.

Dr Tim Hammond, programme lead for Northern Accelerator, said: “Since 2016 Northern Accelerator has evolved into a six-university partnership, continuing to grow and expand the support to allow academic spinouts the best chance of success. De-risking investment opportunities and creating strong management teams to lead businesses that employ people in high-value jobs here in the North East.

“This new funding from UKSPF is a huge boost to the partnership, allowing us to further develop the flagship elements of our programme that have embedded our best-practice support across our partner universities, ensuring the pipeline of high-tech businesses continues to accelerate, and strengthening the North East’s innovation ecosystem.”

Sarah Slaven, Managing Director of Business Durham, said: "The dynamic collaboration between our local universities and businesses is essential to our region's economic growth. Together, we can provide pioneering businesses with not only additional support but also vital infrastructure, such as the cutting-edge workspace at the North East Technology Park (NETPark). Our strong relationships, particularly with Durham University, have helped us to develop an innovative ecosystem that is creating high-value jobs for the future."

Councillor Nick Kemp, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Innovation and Growth at North of Tyne Combined Authority and Leader of Newcastle City Council, said: “Innovation is key to unlocking the great potential in Newcastle and the wider region. Our universities, innovation assets such as the CPI and the In-TUNE project have a key role to play – ensuring we stand out globally as the UK’s test-bed location, a ‘Living Lab’ for rapid innovation, demonstration and commercialisation of products and services which will address inequalities and lead to a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive economy.

“I welcome the significant investment being made by NTCA to open up the world class assets and expertise within our universities for the benefit of regional businesses and the creation of high-value jobs. There has never been a more important time to invest in innovation in our region. “

Northern Accelerator case study: PulmoBioMed

Northern Accelerator has supported Northumbria University spinout PulmoBioMed Ltd. Led by Northumbria’s Professor Sterghios Moschos,

Founder and Chief Scientific Officer of PulmoBioMed, and with InnovateUK ICURe support, the team has developed PBM-HALE™, the most reliable device for retrieving uncontaminated samples of the deep lung, entirely non-invasively. This device could revolutionise the early diagnosis and speed of treatment for patients suffering from a range of conditions, including asthma, lung cancer, paediatric wheeze, and lung infections. PulmoBioMed is in the final stages of closing its first investment round with terms agreed with a UK lead investor.

Arrow case study: Nanoverly

Nanoverly is a cutting-edge biotech company developing nanorobots that will be used to diagnose deadly diseases at an early stage. Nanoverly's technology has the potential to dramatically reduce the cost and turnaround time of a liquid biopsy, making it more accessible to patients and healthcare providers. The Arrow project allowed Nanoverly to test their prototype in a lab with clinically relevant cell lines. The team gained insight into the type of data they needed to validate their technology.

The results from this project helped Nanoverly secure Innovate UK grant funding which allowed the company to set up operations in the Biosphere at Newcastle Helix. The company has now raised in £1.85million investment, employs a team of nine and hosts two PhD students from Newcastle University to develop their diagnostic test.

Northern Accelerator case study: Magnitude Biosciences

Based at County Durham's NETPark, Magnitude Biosciences is bringing the power of *C. elegans* technology to industry to accelerate drug discovery, help find new supplements and make products less toxic. *C. elegans* were the first multicellular organisms to have their complete genome sequenced and have been a powerful model in academic biology for years. Magnitude now aims to bring that power to sectors such as biotech, health products and manufacturing, and pharmaceuticals.

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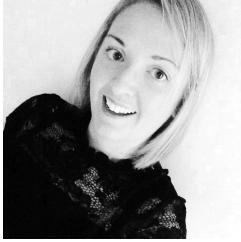


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