



Professor Annette Hand

Aug 13, 2024 16:46 BST

£2.5m award funds project to encourage more people into health research careers

A regional consortium has secured £2.5million funding from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to deliver an innovative scheme to encourage more registered healthcare professionals into research careers.

The [NIHR Inspiring Students into Research Scheme](#), also known as INSIGHT, is aimed at all healthcare, social work and public health students, as well as recent graduates, from across the North East and North Cumbria.

The award will fund a three-year project, which will include a range of events, activities and training, and will be delivered by Northumbria University in partnership with the universities of Newcastle, Teesside, Sunderland and Cumbria. The project will also receive support from the training and career development arm of the North East's Academic Health Sciences Centre (AHSC), [Newcastle Health Innovation Partners \(NHIP\) Academy](#).

In addition to funding the project the grant will also support up to 30 Masters in Research (MRes) studentships across the region.

The funding application was led by Professor Annette Hand, who works as Professor of Nursing – Clinical Academic between Northumbria University and Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

She explained: “This award really demonstrates the value of regional partners across higher education, industry and governance working together to create and implement new opportunities that will hugely benefit the healthcare industry not only in this area, but nationally.

“The INSIGHT programme was created to encourage, promote and support progression along research career pathways for the benefit of the healthcare industry and is available to a whole range of healthcare professionals from nurses and paramedics to those in social work.

“The programme will give over 16,000 students across the region the opportunity to consider and develop a career in health research. Research across health and social care can provide breakthrough solutions to real world issues so to receive funding to allow us not only to provide this programme, but also fund some MRes studentships is absolutely incredible.”

Professor Waljit Dhillon, Dean of the NIHR Academy, said: “We know how important early exposure to research is for building capacity within health and social care. The INSIGHT programme will offer over 300 funded research masters places per year and provide engagement activities that have the potential to excite and capture the imagination of students at an early stage in their career.

“I'm delighted that we can invest in our next generation of researchers in the

North East and North Cumbria and show students all of the benefits that research roles and careers have to offer."

Speaking on the funding award, Dr Niina Kolehmainen, NHIP Academy Deputy Director, and a senior allied health researcher at [Newcastle Health Innovation Partners \(NHIP\) Academy](#), which provides support for the next generation of researchers and academic leaders in health and care to access career development opportunities, said: "It is vital for the healthcare, social work and public health professionals of today to have an understanding of research. They are well-placed to make research everyone's business, and shift the system at scale so that nurses, podiatrists, occupational therapists and others offer all patients opportunities to participate in research.

"The INSIGHT scheme is a great vehicle for widening research training and career options for professions beyond medicine and we are seeing a huge interest in the scheme from recent graduates."

Northumbria University is one of the largest centres for healthcare professional education in the North of England, offering a range of [specialist degree and CPD programmes](#) across many areas of nursing, midwifery, operating department practice, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

The University is ranked 8th in the UK for research power across Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy according to the latest Research Excellence Framework.

Northumbria University is dedicated to reducing health and social inequalities, contributing to the regional and national workforce and improving social, economic and health outcomes for the most marginalised in society. Through its new [Centre for Health and Social Equity](#), known as CHASE, the University will bring together researchers who are working to deliver world-leading health and social equity research and creating innovative, evidence-based policies and data-driven solutions to bring impactful change across the region, the UK and globally.

Its aim is to develop and harness Northumbria's research, education and knowledge exchange expertise to help meet the health and social needs of multiple stakeholders and communities in the city, region and beyond.

[Click here](#) for more information about the INSIGHT programme.

Notes to editors

The mission of the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) is to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. We do this by:

- Funding high quality, timely research that benefits the NHS, public health and social care;
- Investing in world-class expertise, facilities and a skilled delivery workforce to translate discoveries into improved treatments and services;
- Partnering with patients, service users, carers and communities, improving the relevance, quality and impact of our research;
- Attracting, training and supporting the best researchers to tackle complex health and social care challenges;
- Collaborating with other public funders, charities and industry to help shape a cohesive and globally competitive research system;
- Funding applied global health research and training to meet the needs of the poorest people in low and middle income countries.

NIHR is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. Its work in low and middle income countries is principally funded through UK international development funding from the UK government.

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

--- Please contact media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

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