



Yorkshire
& Humber
AHSN

Transforming Lives
Through Innovation



Propel@YH
2021-22 Digital Health Accelerator
programme Impact Report

Propel@YH

2021-22 Digital Health Accelerator Programme

Impact Report

Stimulating innovation and economic growth is a central element of the Yorkshire & Humber Academic Health Science Network's (AHSN) role in the region. To assist inward investment projects and the industry which supports the health sector, we commissioned Propel@YH, a six-month digital health accelerator programme targeted at SMEs with digital health innovations for the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Propel@YH provided its 2021 cohort of SMEs with access to a structured course of support and advice aimed at helping them navigate the NHS, whilst enabling accelerated company growth and increased market presence.

The programme was delivered in partnership with Leeds City Council, Nexus at the University of Leeds,

Barclays Eagle Labs and Hill Dickinson solicitors along with delivery from Thrive By Design and other subject matter experts.

The programme was open to SMEs that could demonstrate innovative digital solutions and either had an existing presence in the Yorkshire and Humber region, or were willing to establish one. The 2021 programme also asked for solutions that would help the health and care systems in the wake of COVID-19.

In October 2021, 10 SMEs were chosen to take part in the six-month programme of masterclasses and digital innovator surgeries that focused on getting to know the NHS, human-centred design, clinical safety and regulation and building an evidence base.



[Watch the highlights of our Propel@YH launch event in November 2021](#)

Programme Impact



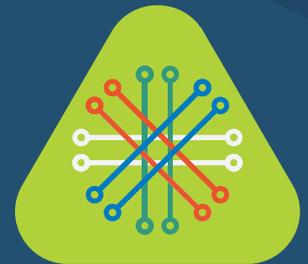
Over 55 hours of high-quality support delivered virtually to 10 companies over six months. **An increase of 14% compared to last year**



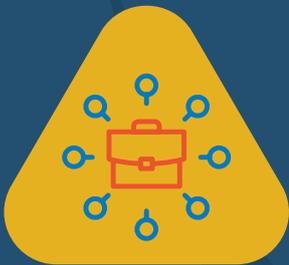
Facilitated 21 hours of quality collaborations with either national or local NHS stakeholders and systems



Eight months Nexus co-working space provided for each of the 10 companies



20 collaborations facilitated with national & local NHS stakeholders



Increased a supplier's growth into another two Clinical Commissioning Groups



Generated three NHS trials across two suppliers



£57K invested in the Leeds ecosystem



Actively engaged with four NHS Trusts & one ICS



£18K Innovate UK grant funding generated for a supplier



£20K grant funding generated for the programme



Programme recognised in three regional news outlets



Funding and engagement

The programme was funded by the Yorkshire & Humber AHSN along with financial contributions from its partners:

- Leeds City Council (Through the Innovation@Leeds grant)
- Nexus at the University of Leeds
- Barclays Eagle Labs
- Hill Dickinson Solicitors

The programme generated significant commercial engagement between the companies and programme partners, either through the consumption of their services or, in the case of Leeds City Council, support in meeting their economic growth aims for the region. This funding also supported the dedicated Yorkshire & Humber AHSN Digital Navigator role along with a broad range of collaborators who benefitted directly from the investment.

Programme Activities

Key themes that the SMEs learnt during the programme are set out below.



The NHS

NHS Landscape
Local programmes & initiatives
Stakeholder engagement



Legal

Company structure, formation & employment
Data Protection & Patient Confidentiality
Intellectual Property rights
Medical Device requirements



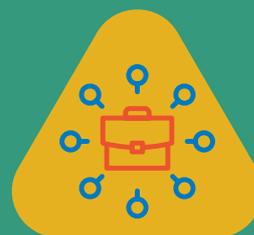
Finance & Funding

Financing Options
Investor networks
Funding partners
Pitching for funding
Mentoring & support



Networking

Local Health Tech Ecosystem
Co-location & Business Support
Start-up Network
NHS Innovation Hubs
Mentoring Support
Collaboration Partners



Growth & Spread

Governance & Assurance
Clinical Safety
Innovation Pathway
Grant Funding & Funding Flows
Accessibility & Sustainability
Evaluation & Evidence
From Pilot to adoption

Programme details

In October 2021, all 10 companies presented at the Propel@YH launch event where they had the opportunity to present their innovations to a curated audience alongside the programme partners.



Over the course of six months, 16 structured group sessions were delivered virtually, including:

- How the NHS works - an introduction to the health system including procurement in England.
- Understanding and managing complexity - using tools such as NASS-CAT.
- Clinical safety by design - how to design in clinical safety throughout the digital development process.
- Building the evidence base - why evidence and evaluation is important and how to go about building a framework.
- Inclusive digital design - how to implement an inclusive human-centred design approach to developing digital products and services.
- Round-up - panel rounding up of the masterclasses - expert digital health innovators sharing stories of success and practical insights.
- Environmental Sustainability workshop with Yorkshire & Humber AHSN.
- Workfinder support day with Barclays Eagle Labs.
- Barclays High Grow and Entrepreneurs - Beyond Banking session.
- Nexus, University of Leeds' introductory workshop and onboarding.
- Data protection, patient confidentiality and medical devices with Hill Dickinson.
- Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership workshop.
- Legal basics and intellectual property rights with Hill Dickinson.
- Corporate structure, company formation and employment law with Hill Dickinson.
- Understanding healthtech commercialisation and scaling a successful business with Pfizer account managers.

In addition to the structured classes, collaborations were facilitated throughout the duration of the programme. Interactive group sessions also took place to work on individual requirements along with networking and signposting activities.

Programme Performance



Our Propel@YH cohort rated our programme content



The programme has supported:



Organisational growth for **one** company



New customers for **three** companies



Increased NHS contact for **seven** companies



Increased supplier contacts for **three** companies



Growth and Spread for all **ten** SMEs



Four SMEs to invest further into the Leeds Region



Nine companies to have a better understanding of the NHS



Eight suppliers to invest further in the Yorkshire and Humber region



The Companies

Of the 25 applications received, 15 shortlisted companies were reviewed by an assessment panel and 10 were selected for the Propel@YH programme. To ensure the innovations selected met local health needs, the companies were assessed by a panel of representatives from West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership along with patients, the programme partners, industry experts and investors.

The 10 SMEs were:

- ▼ Chatterbug
- ▼ Genome
- ▼ Hummingbirds Medical
- ▼ Heyr
- ▼ PhysioBuddie
- ▼ Promatica Digital
- ▼ Syrona Health
- ▼ Vitacam
- ▼ YourMeds
- ▼ Rewire Stroke



SME Case Studies

Hummingbirds Medical – Book Your GP

Rakeeb Chowdhury is a GP based in Leeds and is the Founder of Hummingbirds Medical – Its product ‘BookYourGP’, is a tool for GPs that enables them to organise complex care for their patients.

How was Book your GP created and what is the main challenge that the product is trying to solve?

The idea of Book Your GP came from an increase in the number of litigation cases in primary care. It was apparent that the method of recalling patients was inefficient and potentially prone to missing key patient recalls.

The main challenge that our product is trying to solve is to automate and intelligently recall patients based on thousands of data points in the patient’s record. Instead of relying on the practice staff to analyse this data and recall the patient, we want to reduce the admin burden and the risk of missing vital information that could contribute to the recalling of the patient.

What have you learnt on the Propel@YH programme?

Propel@YH has helped me and our organisation plan for the future, by understanding how to fund and finance our organisation, as well as understanding what is required from a governance and clinical safety perspective.

How has the Propel@YH programme helped you?

The Propel@YH programme has helped me and our organisation by providing invaluable information and guidance through the masterclasses. We benefitted from the wide-ranging delivery organisations that provided this content, including Thrive by Design, Hill Dickinson and Barclays Eagle Labs. We are now better linked into the regional health tech ecosystem thanks to Propel@YH.

We have also expanded our use of the product into the NHS, by brokering introductions to Clinical Commissioning Groups who were not aware of our product but are now using it.



www.hummingbirdsmedical.com

“The Propel@YH programme helped me to see what the realistic next steps was for us, define a clear roadmap for the future and plan how we keep growing our business”

*Rakeeb Chowdhury,
Founder,
Hummingbirds
Medical*



PhysioBuddie

Matthew Booth is the Co-founder of PhysioBuddie and he qualified as a physiotherapist in 2012. PhysioBuddie is an innovative online therapy service that provides its users with remote step-by-step progressive rehabilitation.

What is the main challenge that the product is trying to solve?

Through the experience I gained, I created PhysioBuddie - a digital platform with the aim of providing a positive impact covering physiotherapy within the NHS and around the world.

The main challenge the product is trying to solve is to replace the piece of paper and provide access to gold standard physiotherapy online. The benefits of achieving this are documented in abundance throughout research and can be seen worldwide most predominately in military and sports medicine.

Rehabilitation is provided in a controlled and progressive way and ensures a full recovery, even in the most physically demanding jobs and workplaces. Physios have daily access to their patients to deliver step-by-step care.

Unfortunately sometimes the timeframes and access to physios limits how much advice and care they can deliver to Musculoskeletal (MSK) patients, however PhysioBuddie has developed a digital method of providing nationwide access to gold standard physiotherapy.

How does the product work?

PhysioBuddie is an innovative platform that provides unrivalled care to its users whilst reducing the demand and strains on NHS departments. It has been developed by physiotherapists with a passion for helping both their patients and their colleagues. Included within the platform is an automated triage pathway - progressive rehabilitation delivered by several digital mediums and remote monitoring that provides patients and clinicians simple visual representations of Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs).

The web-based app provides its users with step-by-step progressive rehabilitation via video tutorials and informatic slide decks which are accompanied by expert help and dedicated injury/illness information sections.

Who is the main target audience for the platform?

PhysioBuddie has two key user groups - the first is the physiotherapist working in either MSK, neurological and cardiopulmonary services and the second is the actual patients in these services.



PhysioBuddie (continued)

Is the platform live? If not, where in the development stage is the project at?

The platform is live in a handful of Trusts, and we are gathering feedback on its use, features and benefits it brings them. We have a pipeline of ongoing improvements we want to bring to the platform with suggestions received on an ongoing basis. Through the Propel@YH programme we have expanded its awareness throughout our region and are in advanced discussions with a further two trial projects.

How did you find the Propel@YH application process?

The application process was very easy to complete, we had already written a lot of the content through tenders that we had worked on. We had enough time to shape the application to our standard and kept up to date with the deadline through updates on the Propel@YH Twitter feed.

What have you found the most insightful or useful part of the programme?

Generally, the Propel@YH programme content has been great. The masterclasses brought experts in their field to provide high quality content. We really valued the Hill Dickinson sessions covering legal requirements for an SME. It was great to gain a better understanding of Yorkshire's health tech ecosystem that was facilitated by the excellent Nexus venue at the University of Leeds.

What advice would you give to yourself if you were to apply again?

This is a fantastic programme of support and worth the effort and time for us.



www.physiobuddie.com

“The Propel@YH programme has been excellent for Physiobuddie. It has given us the exposure we need and monitor its success using a health economic review. We have had great support from the Yorkshire & Humber AHSN to grow and develop. The AHSN have always been on hand to answer any questions and support us with our implementation into the NHS”

*Matthew Booth, Co-founder,
PhysioBuddie.*



Promatica Digital

Maisie Swannell is the Commercial Executive at Promatica Digital - a Leeds based company. Its product, Social Rx, is a complete digital management system for social prescribing.

Promatica Digital was founded by pharmacist and technologist Mo Rahman, who had a passion for developing technology to address challenges facing the NHS. Working as a pharmacist within the NHS, Mo was keen to solve practical problems that he and his colleagues faced.

This resulted in the creation of a suite of technology products including Temp Tracker - a system used across multiple secondary care NHS foundation Trusts for monitoring the flow of medicines, prescriptions and home delivery.

The platform ensures CQC compliant monitoring of vaccine fridges and associated areas; and our flagship product Social Rx, which is our digital social prescribing platform. We are based in Leeds with offices in the city centre.

What is the main challenge that the product is trying to solve?

Roughly 20% of GP appointments are for non-clinical issues. Social prescribing allows GPs and other healthcare professionals to refer patients to link workers, who work with the person to find out what matters to them. They then make referrals into non-clinical, local services such as debt advice support,

social activities or counselling groups. By connecting people with local community services and activities, the ambition is to improve the health and wellbeing of large numbers of people. In addition, the NHS Long Term Plan (2019) recently identified social prescribing as a means by which to address health inequalities in a community, by supporting people who struggle to make their own connections. Social prescribing also runs in line with the NHS Long Term Plan goal of boosting 'out of hospital' care and making care more personalised.

New social prescribing teams are often using spreadsheets to manage their caseload and are recognising the need for a digital management system. Social Rx aims to fit that need. The platform is a complete end-to-end social prescribing solution that helps link workers manage cases, record action plans and assessments and make use of an internal directory of services.

Social Rx is also fully interoperable with GP clinical systems, which means GPs can make quick referrals into social prescribing without having to leave their clinical system, along with over 40 reports and dashboards within the product. This allows GPs and commissioners to monitor referrals and performance. →

Promatica Digital (continued)

Who is the main target audience for the platform?

Services that deliver social prescribing, commissioners, councils and GPs.

Is the platform live? If not, where in the development stage is the project at?

Social Rx is live in several Clinical Commissioning Groups and Primary Care Networks, including deployments in Lincolnshire, Middlesbrough Council and throughout the North of England. Social Rx currently covers a patient population footprint of over 1.5 million.

How did you find the Propel@YH application process?

Although I was not involved directly in the application process, I understand it was straightforward with plenty of time for any questions.

What have you found the most insightful or useful part of the programme so far?

I really enjoyed the collaboration with other SMEs who are in a similar position to us. Attending the NHS stakeholder roadshow was a good day as we engaged with senior NHS leaders such as Tim Ferris - Director of Transformation at NHS England and colleagues.

What advice would you give to yourself if you were to apply again?

Go for it



www.socialrx.co.uk

“The masterclasses were especially useful, as they covered many areas in great depth. The legal sessions were very useful and helped drive our organisational next steps of growth”

*Maisie Swannell,
Commercial Executive,
Promatica Digital.*

Heyr

Heyr is an online app to support young adult's mental health.

Lee McPherson, CEO and Co-Founder said: "Since completing the Propel@YH programme we have fully launched our product into the NHS. We are currently in discussions with a Yorkshire trust for an evaluation project. We are looking forward for further collaboration and support from the Yorkshire & Humber AHSN and exploring opportunities in the region."

 www.heyr.app

Vitacam

Vitacam is a unique remote monitoring solution that utilises smartphone cameras and computer vision.

Moyeen Ahmad, CEO said: "From the content of the Propel@YH programme we now have a strategy to enter the UK NHS market. We have successfully piloted our solution in an assisted living facility in Finland and are working on self-management pathways for chronic conditions that affect the elderly in the UK."

 <https://vitacam.health>

Chatterbug

Chatterbug is a children's speech & language provider that is developing digital platforms to make speech therapy more accessible and cost effective.

Asma Khanum, CEO said: "We really enjoyed the collaborative element of the programme and the opportunity to meet other entrepreneurs. We look forward to nurturing the relationships that we have built through it and supporting the NHS through our product and service."

 <https://chatter-bug.com>

YOURmeds

YOURmeds is a smart medication management system that supports people to take the right medication at the right time.

Priti Patel, Head of Sales said: "During the course of the Propel@YH programme, NICE have issued a Medtech Innovation Briefing on our solution and we have developed a new product to support monthly prescriptions. Over the last 15 months we have brought on over 300 pharmacy partners and increased the number of councils we support from 2 to 13."

 www.yourmeds.net

Rewire Rehab

Rewire Rehab is an app that uses machine learning to deliver personalised stroke physiotherapies and is led by Dr Raj Parmar who is a junior doctor at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals Trust.

Dr Parmar said: “We are an early stage start-up and gained a lot of value from the Propel@YH programme. Recently we have managed to secure £18K of Innovate UK funding which we used for user-testing sessions, rebranding and legal work. We are preparing to launch our product into the NHS and are working to secure an evaluation pilot in the Yorkshire region.”



www.rewirestroke.com

Syrona Health

Syrona Health is an app that supports people with health transition during their career by providing virtual health support, hormone and genetic kits.

Chantelle Bell, Co-Founder of Syrona Health said: “We have had great exposure of our product since the Propel@YH programme, including being honoured as a Google for Start-Ups Black-Founders Fund recipient and securing both corporate and NHS contracts. We continue to grow our organisation by employing additional Business Development Managers and continue to engage with the NHS on opportunities.”



<https://syronahealth.com>

Genome

Genome provides an online platform for evaluating quality data held within trusts.

Stacy Hatton, Lead Nurse said: “Since the Propel@YH programme, we continue to engage with local NHS stakeholders and organisations to support them through our clinical lead suite of products. We are in advanced discussions to progress a real-world evaluation project and grow our customer base.”



www.xgenome.co.uk



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