

# Community leadership to address health problems

The East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust offer general and specialist services to around 500,000 people a year across four sites. The Trust has taken a keen interest in sustainability and engagement winning several awards for its work in the area.

## East and North Herts NHS Trust

## Community and public engagement

### What was the issue being addressed?

The Trust wanted to address its accountability deficit by increasing its public membership and engaging with a more diverse audience representative of the people it served. Particular focus was put on 14-18 year old people as these were underrepresented.

As well as addressing this it is was keen to develop an innovative approach to community leadership to address:

- lack of ill-health prevention and advocacy of health and wellbeing;
- nurturing a future workforce that is local and fit-for-purpose
- social value and accountability for health in local communities.

### What action was taken to overcome the issue?

The Trust developed an innovative approach to community leadership to address health problems – starting a campaign to put hospitals at the heart of local communities to create a more sustainable NHS.

**#theFutureismembership** campaign was designed to inspire and motivate young people to get involved with their local hospital and so make a positive difference to their wider community.

This has included a new Community Hub at the Lister hospital developed to bring together community-facing services including employment, apprenticeships, volunteering, membership, work experience and carer support.

The Trust have worked with young people across public constituencies - primarily through schools - to emphasise the richness and variety of the NHS and offer opportunities for cross-curricula applied learning.



*(The Trust won several prizes at the national Sustainability Awards in 2015)*

### What was the impact?

The campaign has had many benefits including the promotion of health and wellbeing, increased public confidence in the Trust and reputational management. It has also utilised the many and complex relationships with partners, commissioners and provider organisations helping to nurture a future workforce and promoting volunteering and creating social value.

Specific outputs of the campaign include:

- Public health champions developed to make a real difference to their local communities, including public health training for young members in schools.
- Two annual public health champion conferences for feeder primary schools.
- Supporting public health champions to create a business under the Young Enterprise Company scheme to design and sell public health teaching packs to primary schools.

- SPEAK - A national campaign, conceived and designed by a young member to improve communication between health professionals and young patients.
- A nationally recognised good practice brand for youth engagement work to be featured in NHS England's new Participation Academy
- An art installation in the new Emergency Department at the Lister hospital, actively engaging over 600 local school pupils
- A project that tackled social isolation in older people identified by a community partner organisation and taught ICT skills by young members.

### Lessons learned / success factors?

Having unsuccessfully tried to engage with young people previously the Trust decided to use them to develop the engagement process itself – by young people for young people.

#theFutureismembership brand was presented to the Board, adopted and launched by the Trust.

The campaign has forged stronger local communities to bridge the health and wellbeing gap faced by the NHS. Local people have been inspired helping to nurture a future workforce, promote good health and wellbeing and create social value.

An inclusive approach to community-facing service re-design is further strengthening practical support for local people.

One limiting factor was the difficulty to convince schools to participate. It is important to emphasise the benefits to young people in getting involved including learning and personal development.

*"#theFutureismembership is a campaign to inspire young people to get involved with their local NHS and so create a healthier, more sustainable future. We involve young people in a range of practical health and community projects that support their learning and personal development as well as give the NHS and wider public services valuable help and insight."* - **David Brewer, Head of Engagement**

*"The main benefit is that it enables young people to have a voice and make a difference in their local hospital which allows them to make a direct contribution to their community."*  
**Edlyn Boateng-Mensah (16 year old young member)**

### Scaling up

The work is replicable with projects increasingly being adapted and developed by others. The Trust has worked with other organisations across the sector to help increase learning and implementation.

They are working with Health Education East of England to champion apprenticeships, health ambassadors and support implementation of the widening participation strategy.

The Trust are actively contributing to national good practice toolkits to help support learning and development in other organisation inputting into NHS England's participation work through patient leaders and digital badges.

[Read a Q&A with the trust's Head of Engagement – David Brewer](#)

[Watch a short recruitment film for the campaign](#)

