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SIGHT: Supporting Innovation and Growth in Healthcare Technologies



Foreword by the University of Portsmouth Vice-Chancellor, Professor Graham Galbraith CBE

The SIGHT programme is focused on the business development of small and medium enterprises in the health tech sector and is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Our main partners in this programme are Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust (PHU) and the Wessex Clinical Research Network.

SIGHT provides support from both clinicians and academics to help these businesses grow. Importantly it enables SMEs access to clinicians at PHU and through a series of workshops and meetings advises these companies on their business growth. SIGHT has engaged with over 400 SMEs, many of them based in the south eastern part of England and many within a 20-mile radius of Portsmouth.

This brochure gives examples of how the SMEs have engaged with SIGHT and its growing HealthTech network, detailing how they have developed with help from this programme. SIGHT has been very successful and is strategically important for the University as it further enhances our partnership with PHU and helps fulfil our responsibility as a Civic University.

Whilst the ERDF programme is coming to an end the University is continuing to support this activity with a SIGHT 2 programme that will continue to support and enhance SME development and innovation as well as aiding in the establishment of new partnerships between SMEs, academics and clinicians.

Professor Graham Galbraith, Vice-Chancellor



Programme stats and summary info - SIGHT in numbers

2,000+

hours of support given to SMEs

£12 million

worth of joint funding bids submitted

60+

events held in-person and online

1000+

event attendees

420+

SMEs engaged with

225

SME members fully signed up to the programme

25

SMEs supported with SIGHT grant applications worth c.£200k

500+

newsletter contacts

650+

LinkedIn connections

125+

clinicians, research nurses, trial support staff and academics engaged

What is SIGHT?

SIGHT is a business support programme developed by the University of Portsmouth with Portsmouth Hospitals University Trust to provide help and guidance to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in the healthcare technology sector.

The programme aims to enhance the competitiveness of businesses in the healthcare sector in the South East region by working collaboratively with industry partners, patient groups, clinicians and academics to provide quicker access to groundbreaking healthcare technologies.

The £1.7m programme is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and draws on clinical and academic expertise from the University and from our delivery partners, Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust and the Clinical Research Network Wessex.

The programme also helps companies to become more aware of the challenges they will face bringing products to market in this sector – and helps them find ways to successfully overcome them.



Comments from the SIGHT Programme Directors

Professor Gordon Blunn

SIGHT Principal Investigator and Director of the Health and Wellbeing Research Theme at the University of Portsmouth



The SIGHT programme has engaged with over 400 SMEs providing support in the form of workshops, meetings with clinicians and academics and with small grant aid. As the lead academic of the SIGHT programme and as someone who has developed a number of MedTech innovations which are in clinical practice, I am extremely impressed by our SIGHT member SMEs.

The SIGHT programme has engaged with SMEs irrespective of size or the stage of development of their technologies. Without exception their dedication to helping patients and people with medical issues through their innovative ideas is outstanding and a theme that runs throughout their evolution.

The breadth of the MedTech innovations in the SIGHT programme is wide and we have engaged with companies involved in orthotics, through to those developing technology to support the mental wellbeing of individuals. This indicates the flexibility of staff at the University of Portsmouth and at Portsmouth Hospital University NHS Trust engaged with the SIGHT programme, which is to be commended.

Although the European Regional Development funding which supports the SIGHT programme is ending, the University and its partner organisations are continuing to support the development of a MedTech cluster, the Southern Innovation and Growth of Health Technologies programme, as a successor to SIGHT. It is our hope that we will be able to recruit more innovative MedTech companies and support the SMEs that have been members of the original SIGHT through this continuing programme.

Professor Anoop J Chauhan MBE

SIGHT Principal Investigator and Director of Research and Innovation at Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust



The SIGHT programme has helped us engage with over 300 small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) to bring new technologies to PHU, ultimately impacting patient welfare.

In the three years of successful programme delivery, the SIGHT project has brought patients, academics, clinicians and SMEs to help address NHS challenges through specific innovations. SMEs have received high-quality feedback from these interactions, and the collaborative environment created by the project has helped strengthen the foundation for SMEs to thrive and set foundations to create more local jobs. We have also provided SMEs with easier access to the NHS, where they will, in the long run, help transform clinical pathways. The involvement of NHS staff has also been broad and has included patients, clinicians, nurses, allied health professionals, research staff and administrative services from diverse clinical backgrounds. The feedback from SMEs about the SIGHT project delivery has been excellent, as illustrated by case studies in the brochure.

Our challenge now will be to harness these technologies for future patient benefit. This opportunity will require us to find the high-quality research evidence that enables SIGHT companies to be adopted and disseminated across the NHS. We look forward to working with the SMEs, along with our University colleagues and patients, to improve the health and well-being of our community through technology.

I congratulate the entire SIGHT team for delivering an outstanding project, valued by all those involved, not least by our innovators.

Local support and expertise: What Portsmouth has to offer

Research and innovation happens every day at the University of Portsmouth, and we have the expertise and experience to make a difference to your business.

Our research covers an exceptionally diverse range of areas – including Biological Sciences, Cosmology and Astrophysics, Digital and Creative Technologies, Economics, Health Informatics, Psychology, and Sport, Health and Exercise Science.

Our lab and testing facilities are key to our teaching, research and collaborative work with our industry and business partners, and our ongoing investment in new labs and testing facilities gives our students an excellent experience. They benefit from hands-on experience with industry-standard equipment and techniques. Through investment, we're helping our researchers find new solutions to pressing issues facing society and the planet.

Innovation Connect at the University of Portsmouth offers a range of workspaces and business support to help small businesses develop and grow. Our partnership with Barclays Eagle Labs and links with the University opens up a wide range of workshops, programmes, and events. We also run regular networking events to give you the opportunity to meet like-minded individuals as part of our engaged business community.

If you are a business that works in the healthcare sector get in touch to find out how SIGHT (sight@port.ac.uk) and Innovation Connect (innovationconnect@port.ac.uk) can help you.



The Portsmouth Technology Trials Unit (PTTU)

The Portsmouth Technologies Trials Unit (PTTU) specialises in running research studies and clinical trials in new healthcare technologies, working with commercial partners, including SMEs, in a range of clinical areas including cancer, sepsis, oncology and respiratory.

Based in Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust (PHU), a large acute hospital with research, innovation, and clinical expertise embedded in its culture, the PTTU is a collaboration between PHU and the University of Portsmouth, and builds on the two organisations' strengths of clinical and academic excellence.

The PTTU offers the infrastructure to support research teams, clinical investigators and SMEs to deliver high quality research studies and clinical trials. The skilled and experienced staff team can help with developing funding applications, study design and planning. The PTTU also provides the link to clinical specialists including Research

Nurses, Allied Health professionals such as Physiotherapists and facilitated Patient and Public Involvement which is an essential component for grant funding applications.

Once funding has been secured the PTTU can offer study set-up and management support, as well as quality oversight and statistical analysis as needed. All patient data and monitoring is supported through specialised software and databases, and data security is a top priority.

To see information on our latest projects and collaborations please visit portsmouthtechnologiesunit.org.uk



Meet the team



Dr Phil Jewell

Director of Healthtech and SIGHT Programme CEO



Helen Hill

SIGHT Project Manager



Claire Anstey

SIGHT Programme Administrator



Professor Gordon Blunn

Principal Investigator of SIGHT Programme



Professor Anoop Chauhan

Principal Investigator of SIGHT programme



Yvette Hibberd

University Research Facilitator



Dr David Lubega

Collaborations Manager



Rose-Marie Mackay

Research Development Officer, Health and Wellbeing



Louise Pulley

Accounting Technician (Innovation)



Olga Llewellyn

Department Manager in Research and Innovation Services



Sharon Court

Patient and Public Involvement Facilitator



Lucy Sayer

Strategic Partnership Facilitator



Simon Toh

Senior UGI and General Consultant Surgeon



Robert Woolas

Consultant Clinical Advisor and Consultant Gynaecologist

Our Events and Activities

The SIGHT Programme has hosted over 60 virtual and in-person events over the three years of the programme in order to support our SME members, with over 1,000 attendees.

We have organised targeted workshops, clinics and conferences to provide our member companies with the needed knowledge, skills and connections in the HealthTech industry sector.

Our events have addressed a wide range of topics, including: business planning and writing a pitch deck; sales and marketing masterclasses; access to finance and IP; top tips from industry experts; Patient and Public Involvement in research; the development of new health technologies; mastering clinical and technologies trials; and many more.

One of our most well-attended events was the Rehabilitation Research Conference held at the University of Portsmouth in May 2022. The conference introduced clinical partners and rehabilitation businesses with academic colleagues at the University of Portsmouth whose research is focused around rehabilitation, and provided the attendees with the opportunity to build connections with potential collaborators and like-minded individuals. In the post-event survey our attendees responded that the conference was interesting and informative, the speakers were highly relevant to their interests, and the event provided them with great networking opportunities.



Clinical engagement with SMEs

Professor Simon Toh

Senior UGI & General Consultant Surgeon at Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust (PHU)

Leading Centre for Robotic Surgery

The success of the SIGHT Programme is in part due to the perfect environment of having so many innovative clinicians in PHU keen to engage with SMEs to test and develop their products to improve patient care. In my field of surgery, we have deliberately nurtured a pro-innovation team. So for example, we are now the leading multi speciality robotic surgical centre in the UK, pioneering new procedures and mentoring other hospitals. I believe this culture allows SMEs to engage with clinicians who are open to exploring new technologies that could benefit their patients, this is not the case in many other NHS hospitals.

Personally, being part of the SIGHT board has not only given me the impetus to develop my own clinical entrepreneurship, but to support collaborative work with SMEs and the University. By way of example, I have personally been involved in the development of a number of new technologies through the SIGHT

programme, including work with Tullamed Ltd on the SafeGrasp MD Project focused on the development of 3D printed plastics for safer & sustainable alternatives to metal surgical instruments; Concentric Health Ltd, who are implementing online informed consent in Portsmouth as part of a drive to achieve the paperless NHS; and Earswitch Ltd, an exciting company we are working with to help patients with motor neurone disease, as well as exploring new applications in continuous vital sign observations and in diabetes.

All of these collaborations were made possible through the SIGHT programme. And the future? I think the legacy of SIGHT is that we have the infrastructure, the will and expertise to build a successful medtech cluster here in the South. We will bring industry, academia and clinical innovators together to not just improve patient care, but create jobs and prosperity in Hampshire and beyond.



Academic engagement with SMEs

Professor Adrian Hopgood

Director of Future and Emerging Technologies Research Theme, University of Portsmouth

Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Personalised Health and Wellbeing

AI is a booming sector, where funding more than doubled in 2021 and healthcare accounted for about 20% of the total (CB Insights). The SIGHT Programme has a wide range of company members engaged in the development of digital technologies and seeks to support them to deliver these technologies to market through engagement with subject experts such as Prof Adrian Hopgood, Professor of Intelligent Systems, working in the application of AI in a wide range of domains, but especially in health and wellbeing.

Prof. Hopgood emphasises the importance of two complementary approaches to AI: knowledge-based AI that captures human expertise, and machine learning driven by data. Machine learning is ideal for finding patterns in datasets, typically for classification, diagnosis, triage, and prediction of outcomes. On the other hand, knowledge-based AI provides context, sense-checking, and explanation. He has applied this broad perspective in several SIGHT initiatives

where AI is being developed to provide a personalised approach to health and wellbeing.

Nurokor Ltd. applies bioelectronic technology for the relief of chronic pain. Small electrical currents interact with the body's nervous system, but a standard fixed waveform is only effective for some patients. Through the SIGHT programme, the University of Portsmouth is collaborating with Nurokor in the use of AI that can tailor the waveform parameters to meet the therapeutic needs of each individual patient.

In contrast, SIGHT member company GG Care's technology helps dementia sufferers to lead independent lives. Amazon Alexa is deployed to support everyday activities through interactive voice reminders, e.g., for medication, expected visitors, eating, exercise, and making social connections. GG Care will work with the University of Portsmouth to link low-cost sensors and wearables to AI that learns each user's pattern of daily life and provides personalised reminders to ensure their health, wellbeing, and independence.



SME feedback

"Working with SIGHT has accelerated our networking opportunities and given us access to more collaborative partners. Our MiNT launch strategy has been supported by SIGHT expertise and this has undoubtedly been of benefit to our business"

Hobbs Rehabilitation/MiNT

"SIGHT was a jewel in the sand - a single and transparent process"

Ian Graney, Managing Director of NTL Biologica

"I particularly rated the fresh thinking and approach offered through the SIGHT membership without the pressure that people or contacts were trying to make money out of me for that advice and support - so therefore, felt it was more succinct, relevant and unbiased."

Nicky Bateman, Founder of Qudo Baby

"Thanks to the SIGHT programme, we have built lasting relationships with the The Portsmouth Technologies Trials Unit at Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust and academic links with Portsmouth University both in computing and sports and health sciences. Being a Hampshire-based startup it is great for us to have access to such expertise on our doorstep."

**Laurence Pearce, Xim Ltd,
creators of Lifelight**

"The SIGHT grant was crucial in resourcing our go-to-market strategy, enabling us to access expert help and support which would normally be unavailable to us as an early stage startup. Thanks to this, we have been able to develop and communicate our value proposition and brand to the market, which has led to a significant uptick in engagement from clinics in the UK and abroad"

**Dr Joshua Steer, Managing
Director Rarii Devices**

"This has been a good and worthwhile experience. Our expectations were fully achieved, and we are in on-going contact to achieve outcomes that could significantly exceed our initial intentions."

Dr Graham Giles MBE, Founder of SPERA Digital Health

Case study: Glyconics Ltd

Infrared light spectroscopy in predicting lung flare-ups

Formed in 2013, Glyconics has developed a number of products which use infrared light spectroscopy to produce distinguished cell fingerprints in healthy and non-healthy samples. These products consist of a single piece of hardware with an inbuilt predictive algorithm, which allows for the diagnostic testing facility to be used at the patient Point of Care (POC).

The first sector for application of the Glyconics' solution is in respiratory disease, specifically COPD, which is how the company became involved with the SIGHT Programme and the University of Portsmouth.

Challenges and successes

COVID and the UK lockdown impacted Glyconics quite heavily as many patients, who would normally be enrolled in their clinical studies, had to 'shield' and were unable to participate.

Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust and SIGHT have been able to assist them to keep on track by supplying frozen samples. This enabled the research to continue.

SIGHT also gave Glyconics access to the Wessex AHSN as well as Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust clinicians. The SIGHT Programme has not only allowed Glyconics to get recognition for what they are doing, but also gain access and credibility with clinicians in order to have clinical conversations and refine the product offering.

Glyconics felt that partners such as the University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust and the SIGHT Programme allowed them to gain knowledge in areas where their strengths did not previously lie i.e. regulatory expertise. In turn, by sharing their journey, others in a similar situation or with comparable goals can learn and benefit from

the information and experiences of Glyconics. They have found that the level of one-to-one engagement provided through the SIGHT Programme is outstanding and they have never experienced anything like it elsewhere.

SIGHT helps provide knowledge to progress the project. Company's CEO, Kam Pooni, believes that many great innovations are probably being lost because people do not know how to navigate the development and commercialisation process. SIGHT helps to bridge that gap and provides suitable access and resources to help innovators gain ground and traction with their solutions.



Case study: Hobbs Rehabilitation Ltd

About the company

Hobbs Rehabilitation, the largest independent provider of neurological rehabilitation in the UK, has over 100 clinicians offering interdisciplinary therapy, education, clinical research and product development services.

The MiNT Academy- Masterclass in Neurotechnology, an innovative educational platform, encourages interdisciplinary clinicians to embed neurotechnology into their clinical practice and enables product developers to collaborate at the design stage to produce clinically relevant products. Membership is free-visit www.themintacademy.co.uk to join.

The healthcare challenge Hobbs is seeking to address

Evidence shows that treatment intensity and dosage are key to optimise neuroplasticity. Clinicians are unable to provide sufficient intensity through conventional practice and neurotechnology can enhance this. However, the clinical uptake of technology remains low due to lack of training, inaccessibility, irrelevant devices and insufficient evidence. The MiNT Academy identifies and overcomes the challenges which limit the implementation of technology into clinical practice via:

- Consultancy Packages for industry, promoting technology co-creation and user-centred design

- Education for therapists
- Partnership for research trials

Collaboration with SIGHT, Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust and the University of Portsmouth

- SIGHT webinars enhanced the knowledge of the MiNT Development Team
- Newsletters and events increased MiNT publicity during our launch phase
- Networking at SIGHT events connected MiNT to other SIGHT member companies, who we are now collaborating separately with
- Hobbs Rehab also partners with University of Portsmouth on projects such as AiBLE and has a Biomechanics Team collaboration; SIGHT is now coordinating a larger clinical-academic partnership

SIGHT's support & impact

SIGHT has enabled our clinical workforce to broaden their scope of practice, increasing business and research skills, uniquely positioning MiNT as a clinically led platform. MiNT membership continues to grow, with new research projects and funding opportunities promoting business development. SIGHT has also signposted MiNT to business management support, enabling expert advice in areas including IP, accountancy and grant funding.



Next steps & Future Plans

- Expansion at our Intensive Neurotherapy Centre, Bristol, will provide dedicated space for MiNT activity, increasing capacity.
- Delivery of further clinical educational content
- Participation in global events and conferences
- A MiNT UK Conference in November 2022
- A 35-bed specialist centre in Winchester combining clinical excellence, technology and design, with research and intensive rehabilitation programmes, as well as post graduate training; the first of its kind in the UK.



Case study: NTL Biologica Ltd



For NTL Biologica, a company supported by the ERDF-funded SIGHT programme, a precarious position has turned into an opportunity to grow and contribute to a great cause.

From stem cell to COVID

NTL Biologica – a small enterprise producing bone marrow growing kits – found itself in a precarious position when all of their orders were cancelled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the core business suspended, the company director Ian Graney made a decision to use the company's expertise and state-of-the-art equipment to contribute to the fight against the virus, and open a new line of business – antibody testing 'on the go'.

Novel approach

The company's antibody testing takes place on a bus, this means that instead of asking people to travel to a location or go to a drive-through testing centre, NTL can bring the testing facility to the community, minimising the risks associated with travel. The antibody test requires 20 millilitres of blood to be drawn for the result to be known as soon as 15 minutes later.

Helping companies assess risk

Ian and his company carry out the testing for communities, but also for companies who want to know how many of their employees have had COVID-19 and who may have developed antibodies, the employers are in a better position to assess the risk to their staff and adjust their policies and procedures, for example moving employees to or from customer-facing roles and deciding for or against travel. The anonymised data is also used to inform the wider state of the pandemic by tracking the development of immunity in large groups.

Support from SIGHT and the University of Portsmouth

The bus used for testing is part-funded by the SIGHT programme grant. Ian has been very involved in this ERDF-funded programme,

run jointly by the University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth Hospitals University Trust and the Wessex CRN, engaging with other company members and supporting other SMEs operating in the healthcare technology sector.

Despite the challenging environment for healthcare companies, Ian thinks that businesses like NTL have the opportunity to not only survive but also make a meaningful contribution to the fight against COVID-19: 'Take a deep breath, don't panic. There's a lot to be done and there are a lot of businesses who are easily geared to becoming part of the solution in the fight against Coronavirus in a small or a larger extent'

The company is hoping to soon start a clinical trial with the Portsmouth Technologies Trial Unit, in collaboration with the University of Portsmouth, working on an exciting new project in stem cell application in orthopaedics. Ian is keen on strengthening the company's ties with the institution: 'We are very grateful for the support of SIGHT and we are proud to be working with the University of Portsmouth'.



Case study: Watercress Research Ltd

About the company

Watercress Research Ltd is an SME spun out from the University of Exeter in August 2019. The company was co-founded by Dr Kyle Stewart and Professor Paul Winyard, who are an NHS GP and Professor of Experimental Medicine respectively.

The project started in 2015 while Kyle was working at Torbay Hospital and was looking after a child who was septic from infected nappy rash. Interested in the pathophysiology, he researched underpinning biochemistry and read that nappy rash from urine is an alkaline burn causing an irritant dermatitis. This occurs due to the action of the bacterial urease enzyme which catalyses the hydrolysis of urea in urine to ammonia.

He read about various plants which had been found to have urease inhibiting properties historically, and teamed up with Paul to start working on a project. Together, and with a generous grant from Torbay Medical Research Fund, Paul and Kyle discovered a novel method of processing watercress to concentrate the urease inhibitors, while also demonstrating promising skin soothing properties and a separate ammonia scavenging function, likely at least in-part through the stabilising action of the inherent isothiocyanates in the watercress extract.

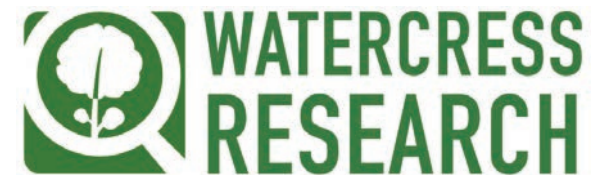


Applications

Watercress Research is in discussion with several skin care companies to explore potential licensing agreements for the use of the extract in skin care products. Separately, the byproducts which are the watercress fibre and watercress protein are being explored for their use in food and drink with the protein demonstrating a superb essential amino acid profile. Other opportunities in agriculture and medicine are also being explored, and by turning a short shelf-life plant into longer shelf life products a whole new geography could be opened up to give people access to this brilliant plant's properties.

Impact of SIGHT funding

The SIGHT programme was pivotal in allowing Watercress Research to fund their patent, licensing agreement with the University of Exeter, distribution agreement with The Watercress Company and other legal expenses. This allowed the rest of Watercress Research's funding to be focussed on research and getting results which have put them in the position they are in today.



Company Testimonial:

Dr Nick Gompertz, Earswitch Ltd

Can you start with telling us the story behind Earswitch and how you came up with the idea?

I developed the concept 30 years ago as a medical student. I saw a patient with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) losing their ability to use a communication keyboard (Light Writer) and therefore losing their ability to communicate. I always knew that I could move a muscle in my ear and wondered if this could be used to improve communication for people with MND. The muscle movement is described sometimes as squeezing (like a “pelvic floor exercise”) in the ear, and is also recognisable when you yawn, as a muffling of sound, or fullness or rumbling noise in your ear.

Four years ago, I was watching a CBBC documentary with my children about a young man named Jonathan Bryan. He was 13 years old and has severe cerebral palsy. He is non-verbal but had written a book titled “Eye Can Write”, by looking at physical letters stuck onto a Perspex board, one letter at a time. I felt that there must be a better way and realised that I had to try and develop The EarSwitch to help.

The next day I had a digital otoscope (miniature ear-camera) delivered from Amazon, to look inside my ear and I could see the eardrum



Dr Nick Gompertz demonstrating the prototype 'Earswitch' device

moved when I squeezed the muscle. Within 6 months I had been able to prove the concept of using the EarSwitch to communicate using an on-screen keyboard, in the same way as the late well-known physicist Professor Stephen Hawking. The EarSwitch is an earphone that detects the voluntary movement of the ear-drum. We have demonstrated this controlling many technologies — including communication keyboards, feeding robots and robotic prosthetic arms.

How did you hear of SIGHT and at what point in your journey did you decide to approach us?

I was on an AHSN East Innovation workshop online. Gabriella Juarez-Martinez, a KTN Manager in Life Sciences, was presenting and subsequently put me in contact with Phil Jewell from the SIGHT programme. The University of Bath had performed initial NIHR i4i Connect

funded prevalence work to see how many other people might also be able to move this middle ear muscle. This validation enabled us to move on to the next stage. We needed to apply for a NIHR i4i Product Development Award to move from a concept to a functioning product. Gabriella recommended SIGHT due to its links with the Portsmouth Technologies Trials Unit (PTTU). The SIGHT team contributed to the i4i PDA application and we were successfully awarded a £1.45m grant over 2 years. We can now test and develop the device with the help of PTTU.

Phil also enabled me to connect to other key people through exhibiting at VentureFest South, (which brings together innovators, investors and entrepreneurs to make connections that lead to new investments, new businesses and new ideas in the high-tech sector). I made some really important Government contacts there as well as meeting some consultants who have helped secure additional funding.



Company Testimonial:

David Grey, GG Care Ltd

GG Care is about harvesting the potential of readily available technology in elderly and dementia care.

How did you first hear about SIGHT and what made you decide to become a Member?

I was introduced to SIGHT via Unlimited, as the two programmes operate in the same field. When I first started GG Care I wanted to join a University programme. I had previously joined an accelerator programme but the crucial missing part of that was the collaboration with academics. The other university programmes didn't have the collaboration opportunities like SIGHT did.

Can you tell us a bit more about who you've been working with either at the hospital or the University, and what difference has that made to your company and your plans for growth and development?

I have worked with so many people from the University and a few from the hospital so far. My main contacts have been Dr David Lubega and Dr Phil Jewell and they have been the main conduit to academics. I've worked with Dr Amy Drahota (Reader in Health and Social Care Evidence Evaluation), Alison Keizer (Teaching Fellow and Dementia Lead for Sussex NHS Trust), Prof Adrian Hopgood (Prof of Machine Learning) and they've

introduced me to a number of other people it's a bit like a ripple effect, that has reached out beyond the University.

It's given us the opportunity to apply for grant funding. We're a health tech startup and we're kind of stymied by lack of data to prove the validity of our product – a virtual dementia care companion. The contacts developed with the University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust and the Clinical Dementia team at the Sussex Community NHS Trust through SIGHT have enabled me to create a plan to gather that data and gain that validity.

What difference has being a SIGHT member made to you and your company – or what might you have missed out on, if you weren't connected with us?

GG Care has applied for a grant for a project but the grant application is the project in itself. It's a different skillset which isn't as innate as people assume and SIGHT have helped us navigate that path of completing the grant application process, assembling the complete team and answering the questions effectively. There's been a lot of benefit for the business because this application can be used as a basis for others. As a non-academic, it was very helpful to get their input



David Grey, 'Grandma and I'

in explaining what we're doing and the vision for the company in a way that assessors will understand.

If I was going to offer some advice to health tech start-ups I'd say: applying for grants is a role in and of itself. Respect the process and be patient. When I first started I thought: submit a grant in two weeks? That's fine, I can do it myself and I have the will to get it done! But now, working with the academics, I understand that you need more time to flesh out the ideas, and they're not just working on your things but they have other things too, so respect the time and the process that it takes.



Some of our members:





Affiliate partners



A hand is holding a tablet computer that displays several medical scans, including cross-sectional brain scans (CT or MRI) and a sagittal view of a spine. The background shows a laptop keyboard and a blurred office environment. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

The vision for HealthTech in our region and Introducing SIGHT 2: Southern Innovation and Growth in Healthcare Technologies



The University of Portsmouth and Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust have a significant track record in developing a wide range of highly innovative health technologies, ranging from the development of the National Early Warning Score (NEWS) tool that combines vital sign observations of patients in hospital to indicate how unwell a patient is, to robotic surgery tools, prosthetic implants and AI-driven software for supporting mental health and wellbeing.

A significant proportion of the University's academic staff are at the forefront of the development of these next generational technologies, often working in partnership with NHS colleagues as well as industry partners.

Our regional partners, including Portsmouth City Council, are engaging with the University in order to achieve Teaching Hospital status. This would cement the reputation of, as well as adding additional capability to, the city of Portsmouth as part of its drive to become a centre of excellence in developing technologies for the improvement of human health.

Our aspiration is to continue to build on the success of the last 3 years for the benefit of local and national partners. SIGHT has nurtured the conditions for proactive, motivated clinicians and academics to work together with MedTech businesses to create ground-breaking, patient-centred interventions which will help improve the quality of people's lives and enable the NHS to offer better care and value for money.

We are excited to take a leading role in driving this strategy for the benefit of our partners, the UK HealthTech industry sector, the NHS and the citizens of Portsmouth. Indeed, the University has made an investment into ensuring that the work undertaken under the EU funded SIGHT programme is extended.

For more information on how your business can get involved in SIGHT 2 please contact the team at sight@port.ac.uk



sight@port.ac.uk



www.sightprogramme.co.uk



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