Response to NHS Chief Executive’s Open Call for Evidence and Ideas

Respondent ID: 110

Organisation name: Southend Borough Council

Type of response: Document
In response to the NHS Chief Executive Innovation Review Southend on Sea Borough Council would like to express the following points.

Role of the NHS

The NHS is a significant employer, not only in Southend but across the country. It should therefore be seeking to maximise the skills, experience and potential of its staff and the related opportunities to drive the NHS forward to improve service delivery, generate income and to invest and develop employees.

An employer which invests in, supports and encourages staff in this way will attract future employees of equal or higher calibre and raise aspirations among those making decisions about education and employment. In Southend for example it would create opportunities for higher skilled, higher paid jobs encouraging young residents to pursue further and higher education and preventing skills leak on completion of their training.

Increasing innovation in a sector where such significant and wide spread potential exists will not only have an impact on the knowledge economy but would increase GVA for the area and the UK. It could also create the opportunity for spin out enterprises which could result in job as well as income creation thereby supporting the UK’s economy at this crucial time as it emerges from recession.

Role of Local Authorities

Local Authorities have a role in innovation in the NHS, particularly upper tier authorities responsible for adult social care. Joint working in this area offers opportunities for the NHS to hear about the challenges identified by service providers in social care delivery and to innovate to address them. As a consequence of this, or other innovation, new technology, techniques or service delivery can be trialled with local authority customers. Similarly commissioning of new technology or services to address needs identified by Local Authorities to enable improved and more cost effective service delivery could result in guaranteed markets for NHS innovators.
Potential in Southend

NHS innovation is of particular importance in Southend currently. The Local Authority is working with Southend University Hospital to attract the Anglia Ruskin University led med-tech campus to Southend. Southend has a long history in innovation, as does SUHFT and can see some very clear opportunities and great benefits to joining up the Local Authority, Foundation Trust and higher education provider to be a spring board for NHS and med-tech innovation.

Southend has a long and successful history in the medical technologies industry. Olympus Keymed, formed in 1970 with just 4 employees now employs nearly 1000 staff at their Southend headquarters. As a consequence of their presence in Southend other similar companies have also entered the market and successfully established themselves as market leaders, such as Medical Innovations found in Shoeburyness who produce Mediwrap among other products. Should the campus go ahead in Southend it would offer similar opportunities for capitalising on the existing reputation that Southend has together with facilitated knowledge sharing, creativity, end to end process delivery.

Southend is a centre of enterprise and innovation:

- Global businesses such as Keymed and Ipeco developed from Southend entrepreneurs who started out in their garden shed.
- International brand Hi-Tech chose Southend as a place to grow the company.
- As a university teaching hospital, the local acute Trust (SUHFT) continually brings new treatments to patients in the region. The Trust was the first in the county to introduce home haemo-dialysis for its renal patients; became the first Trust in Essex to install the latest generation of computerised tomography (CT) scanning equipment for coronary diagnosis and has received a number of healthcare awards for work including the creation of innovative new heart function tests.
- SUHFT created its own innovation department in 2008 to develop ideas generated by staff. As a consequence of this an Enterprise company was established and spun out, Enterprise Medical Ltd (EML). EML has secured over £2m of private sector funding to deliver its first commercial innovation project and has signed its first £3.5m contract for scope reprocessing. It is now in negotiations to provide this service to over 100 private hospitals in the UK.

Southend Borough Council has an excellent track record in partnership working – both with the third sector through the Local Strategic Partnership and the private sector through individual relationships and the wider Southend Business Partnership. We see a role for this Local Authority in encouraging and supporting innovation in the NHS and would be keen to be involved in future discussions and exploring this role further.