



Essex Partnership University
NHS Foundation Trust

EPUT

INNOVATION STRATEGY 2023-2026

EMBRACING CURIOSITY



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Foreword from EPUT's Medical Director

To achieve our vision of being the leading health and wellbeing service in the provision of mental health and community care, it is essential that EPUT becomes adept at accessing and translating new knowledge and evidence into practice in a timely manner.

As executive lead for research and innovation, I am fully committed to building EPUT into an organisation in which all colleagues can be curious and aspirational in their work. For EPUT's staff, creating a strong culture of innovation will mean everyone will be supported to identify ways to improve the way we do things, in delivery of care and in clinical support services. In this way we can all raise our ambitions for the standards of care EPUT will deliver to local people, which will require us all to move away from a mindset of risk avoidance and towards risk optimisation.

Innovation should be something that everyone can get involved in, from across all professional disciplines, with psychological safety. I want to encourage our teams to try new things and celebrate all attempts, even those that do not bring about the desired results the first time. Rather, we should all challenge ourselves to think like world-leading innovators and embrace "successful failure" as part of our Culture of Learning.

In this strategy, EPUT commits to working in partnership with those that receive our care, as well as their carers, families and supporters, to identify innovation opportunities and solutions, leveraging the strengths of our local partners so we can all play to our strengths.



Dr Milind Karale - Executive Medical Director



What is innovation and why is it important?

Innovations are the source of all human development and improvement of quality of life. At the same time, they challenge existing standards, solutions and societal patterns. In health care in particular, innovations enable us to treat previously incurable diseases or to make better use of scarce resources.

Flessa S, Huebner C. Innovations in Health Care - A Conceptual Framework. International Journal of Environmental Research & Public Health, September 2021.

Innovation in healthcare should follow a three-part sequence:

Optimising our physical infrastructure and digitally connected devices as part of the Internet of Things.



Quality improvement and innovation in working practice.



Digital and technological innovation.



EPUT's vision for innovation

Where do we want to be by 2026?

With a deliberate focus on reinforcing the foundations of innovation, EPUT should aim to have the following in place within three years:

- Evidence of a strong culture of innovation including embracing the concept of a “successful failure”
- Appropriate systems and processes in place for learning, continuous improvement and innovation, balanced with space for organic idea generation and development
- Evidence of impact to share from some prioritised innovations.

Challenges to address

The volume of innovation currently coming from community and mental health practitioners remains far lower than other parts of the NHS. EPUT is building from a solid base, but engagement has revealed some areas to be strengthened:

1 EPUT's current innovation model straddles a number of different functions and we could work in a more joined way to make innovation easier.

2 Innovation as a discipline is not generally resourced and has an unrecognised opportunity cost. The administration and management of innovation processes at EPUT are minimally resourced which is currently limiting success.

3 Different professions not fully aligned in their endeavours.

4 Internal decision-making processes could be streamlined and clarified to make it easier for EPUT to innovate.

This strategy and its delivery plan are deliberately designed to address these challenges to enable all staff to innovate with ease.

Supporting delivery of EPUT's strategic objectives

Supporting all our teams to innovate and try new things will directly support the achievement of EPUT's strategic objectives.



The Innovation Strategy makes particular reference to the:

- Quality of Care Strategy and the role of the Clinical Senate in developing EPUT into an evidenced organisation
- Data Strategy and the role of the proposed data platform in supporting evaluation and impact of innovation
- Workforce, People & Culture Strategy and the role of innovation in recruitment and retention of talent
- Social Impact Strategy and EPUT's focus on driving and enabling innovation for the good of local communities through commercial partnerships with organisations that have aligned environmental and social governance missions.

Delivery plan

EPUT commits to a three-year action plan that will address the challenges identified.

Embed a culture of innovation

- Conduct cultural baseline review - consider support from Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board Innovation team.
- Roll out Commercial Innovation framework.
- Develop SMART impact dashboard based on International Development Innovation Alliance's (IDIA) framework.
- Plan annual EPUT innovation conference.
- Develop innovation microsite on intranet and social media plan.

Grow capacity and capability

- Develop business case in Y2 of strategy for small central innovation support function.
- Support EPUT staff to apply for MSE Innovation fellowships in line with personal development plans.
- Embed innovation in relevant job descriptions / clinical job plans.
- Develop mentorship offer for EPUT innovators.

Grow capacity and capability

- Board to agree and communicate risk appetite.
- Co-design innovation framework to ensure all initiatives supported are aligned to Trust's strategic plan and priority areas for improvement.
- Engage with Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board Innovation team to take advantage of horizon scanning activities.

Develop lasting partnerships

- Re-establish Research and Innovation Steering Group with diverse internal and external membership.
- Identify academic and commercial partnerships to strengthen or develop locally and nationally.
- Leverage impact of Digital Health Innovation Hub and partnership with Anglia Ruskin University with evidence of innovations progressed through this route, starting with a reset prioritisation framework for investment.
- Clarify and publicise EPUT's offer as NHS partner.

Amplify lived experience partners and families' voices

- Work with Patient Experience team to identify options for increasing patient and family partnership in innovation activities e.g: Service User Reference Group.
- Ensure strong lived experience partnership opportunities through re-established Research and Innovation Steering Group.
- With lived experience partners, use Integrated Performance Report to identify priority improvement areas and align resource to address through innovation.
- Develop and publicise clear route into EPUT for VCSE partners with lived experience to engage with EPUT for support or partnership.

Working in partnership with our local health and care systems

EPUT's Innovation Strategy has been developed to leverage the strengths of our local Integrated Care Systems' (ICS) work in this space.

- As a partner in the Mid & South Essex ICS, EPUT's Innovation Strategy links closely to the ICB's innovation work rather than duplicating their work or being a competitor.
- Suffolk and North East Essex ICS's Innovation team leads on horizon scanning in mental healthcare which would be of benefit to EPUT.
- Hertfordshire & West Essex ICS is planning to launch a virtual Research and Innovation Hub in partnership with University of Hertfordshire with a two year-proof of concept.

Measuring impact

Implementation planning will focus on the development of a SMART impact dashboard. This will be based on the IDIA's High-Level Architecture for Measuring the Impact of Innovation due to its focus on equity and need.

Early input measures could include:



Quantified time and finances invested in innovation



Number of innovation projects per care group



Conversion rate of ideas in care units to smart plan



Value of Intellectual Property held.

An annual research and innovation report will be presented to the Trust Board to update and provide assurance on delivery of the new strategies.

