

NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO JANUARY 2024: ISSUE 5



The Norfolk Initiative for Coastal and Rural Health Equalities (NICHE) as an Anchor Institute is delivered across the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System at UEA.

Our four objectives of work are:
1) Improving health inequalities across rural and coastal communities; 2) Workforce development and transformation; 3) System collaboration and transformation through effect partnership working; 4) Wellbeing and sustainability.

To find out more, visit our website:
<https://www.uea.ac.uk/groups-and-centres/projects/niche>

Or email us at:
NICHEAnchor@uea.ac.uk

WELCOME

NICHE has turned a significant corner as we enter 2024, with a full complement of team members (page 4) and pushing forward with achieving workstream activity as our focus moves to delivery and embedded sustainability of our funded programmes of work.

As you will see from our first Annual Report, we have achieved many inroads far and wide with our place-based partners across Norfolk and Waveney and beyond. Plans are already in motion for another busy year ahead. We want to build upon our work to date by engaging more with our local communities and to hear what and how services can be shaped for our coastal, rural and isolated communities by drawing on our growing evidence base from the programmes we are funding and the partnerships that are developing. We are also working across our partner HEIs, in the East of England, to build a firm evidence base to support long-term sustainability in our collective activities. During 2024 we will be embarking on our evaluation process as the impact of our work emerges.

As the days start to lengthen, we hope these newsletters and our blogs continue to feed your interest and enthusiasm to partner with us as we progress into 2024.



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

NICHE has released a 2023 Annual Report.

[Read the report in full](#)

Together, we have achieved much this year, as our annual report demonstrates, yet there is far more we can do together to strengthen and sustain work to advance our knowledge, workforce and system level transformation across health and social care.

Your role in NICHE is important to us, as we value and appreciate your unique contribution, insights and areas of expertise, that really does strengthen the collaborative approach NICHE promotes.

Please do get in touch to indicate how you wish to engage with us during 2024.



SHARED LEARNING EVENT

Thursday 18th April 2024

Throughout 2023 online Shared Learning Events have been run to enable a sharing of all learning arising from the NICHE Workstreams, Embedded Projects and Programmes. Attendance at these have been varied and wide-ranging, including a number of stakeholders from across the Norfolk and Waveney ICS. These Learning Events have enabled presenters to share their work and insights with opportunity for questions and discussion.

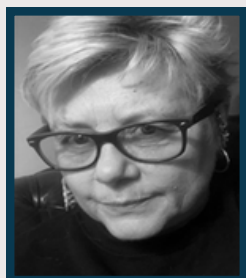
For 2024 these quarterly online learning events will move to two in-person half day workshops. The first event will take place on **Thursday 18th April 2024, 9am-1pm** at the Sports Park, UEA, Norwich.

The Shared Learning Events provide an opportunity to share our learning with each other related to the NICHE funded embedded programmes and projects you are leading.

[>> Book your place via UEA Store <<](#)



Meet the NICHE Team



Professor Sally Hardy

Director of NICHE

Professor of Mental Health and Practice Innovation

Sally is the Director of NICHE Anchor Institute and the Principal Investigator working to address coastal and rural health inequalities through innovative improvement programmes of work.

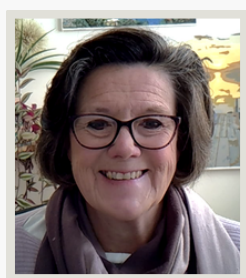


Professor Jonathan Webster

Co-Director of NICHE

Professor of Practice Development

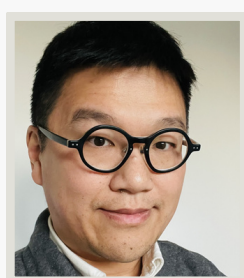
Jonathan is the Co-Director of NICHE Anchor Institute and the Workforce Optimisation Lead focusing on the development of person-centred cultures of practice.



Jo Odell

Senior Research Fellow

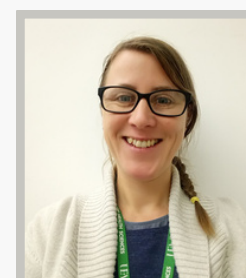
Jo is the Senior Research Fellow for Practice Development and will be working on the THEO workstream, facilitating practice development interventions.



Johnny Yuen

Senior Research Associate

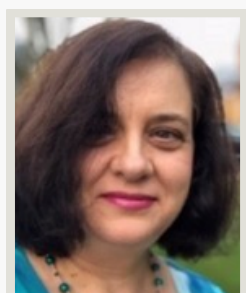
Johnny is the Senior Research Associate for the Evaluation, undertaking literature reviews on practice transformation and development.



Lorna Sankey

Research Associate

Lorna is the Research Associate working on various projects for the Retention workstream.



Liane Ward

Programme Manager

Liane is responsible for overseeing project delivery, interim reporting and final project dissemination, and liaising with NICHE partners and fellows.



Idris Phillips-Fry

Project Administrator

Idris is the team's administrator responsible for co-ordinating diaries, organising meetings and liaising with NICHE partners and fellows.



Paula Pearce

Communications and Events

Paula maintains the NICHE website, publishes the newsletters and organises conferences and events.

A KINTSUGI PROJECT

Early Career Prescribing Programme

by *Lindsay Morgan, Director of Postgraduate Professional Programmes,
School of Pharmacy & Chemistry, UEA*

In 2026, all pharmacists graduating from UK universities will be registered prescribers. This is the biggest change in the pharmacist workforce in decades and presents a breadth of opportunity to optimise medication use across healthcare providers. While a welcome professional development, this scale of change generates a legacy workforce of non-prescribing pharmacists in all sectors with an uncertain future, and agreement on what an early career pharmacist could safely prescribe at the point of qualification is yet to be reached.

This NICHE-supported project seeks to explore mitigation of both of these issues for Norfolk and Waveney specifically, and inform the East of England workforce development strategy more broadly. In parallel to its acclaimed Newly Qualified Pharmacists (NQP) training pathway, the University of East Anglia is running a pilot programme called NQP-IP, where Independent Prescribing (IP) competency is taught and tested in a small cohort of hospital pharmacists, alongside their basic clinical training.

The purpose of this is to:

- Minimise the number of non-prescribing pharmacists entering the Norfolk and Waveney workforce prior to 2026
- Create a broadly competent hospital prescriber, with prescribing utility in all early career rotations
- Define an early career prescribing scope that will serve as a foundation for advanced practice development
- Explore and optimise supervisory arrangements (Educational Supervisors and Designated Prescribing Practitioners)
- Report on clinical activity post qualification to determine whether training has achieved the intended outcomes

The pilot runs in 5 acute NHS Trusts in the East of England, including the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. In addition to their core clinical training, these early career pharmacists are also learning to assess and prescribe for patients in the following clinical disciplines:

- Infectious diseases and antimicrobials
- Care of older people
- Care of surgical patients

The Kintsugi award makes it possible to dedicate academic time to evaluate the cohort in real time and respond to findings quickly, as well as add to the research capability within the UEA School of Pharmacy for future projects.



More information about the NQP-IP programme can be found here:

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/course/short-course/newly-qualified-pharmacist-training-pathway-with-independent-prescribing/2024-25/jun>

A REFLECTIVE PIECE

by Bonnie Teague, Head of Research, NSFT & NICHE Fellow

Understanding Norfolk's rural health inequalities from the perspectives of children and their families

Rural health is a paradox. Living in rural areas comes with many health benefits, such as lower levels of air pollution and respiratory and immune diseases, but there are numerous health inequalities which negatively affect people living in rural areas too. These include higher levels of obesity, more accident and emergency visits, and higher levels of substance misuse and mental health problems. Often these health problems start in childhood, with rural children having significantly higher rates of weight concerns, self-harm, depression, and anxiety. For children living and helping in agricultural environments in particular, the risks of accidental death or serious injury, pesticide or chemical exposure, and hearing loss also increases dramatically.



The reasons behind these inequalities are complex. Some of the challenges of rural living for families include higher food costs, poor public transportation links, isolation from family and friends and poor local employment opportunities. There are also structural factors relating to healthcare services, with only 19% of families living in rural areas live within a 20-minute walk of their GP, compared to 94% of those living in urban areas. As seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, delivery of digital health services is particularly challenging in rural areas with poor mobile and broadband coverage. Finally, prior studies and our early engagement works shows that rural families tend to be more self-reliant with health worries and are concerned about the lack of anonymity that comes with accessing care in rural communities. Rural children also told us that they feel healthcare professionals don't understand what life is like for them when living rurally, leading to inappropriate or unachievable lifestyle advice.

This means that the relationship between rural children, their families and health services is important to understand so that we can better meet rural children's health needs and reduce health inequalities. However there has been little research conducted with children and their families about their healthcare experiences in rural Norfolk, and few studies in the UK rural context overall.

This has led to the NICHE Embedded Research Fellowship, CORACLE. CORACLE will shortly be talking to families who have a child aged 5-11 to discuss their experiences of rural and coastal healthcare services in Norfolk. This information will then be used to co-design a 'health passport' or communication tool with rural children and families get the most out of their healthcare interactions. The NICHE Embedded Fellowship is an ideal opportunity to work in this under-researched area directly with our communities in Norfolk. The support provided by the NICHE Team has been invaluable to reflect and learn about different approaches that the project could use, meet people across many areas of expertise both within and outside of health, and build a new rural and coastal health research community.

If you are interested in being part of CORACLE, please contact Bonnie:
ruralhealth.research@nsft.nhs.uk



Read our latest blogs:

Creative Arts Culture and Heritage

by Laura Drysdale

Leading and Speaking Up

by Alison Thomas

Feeding it Forward: Co-supervision as a Health Conversation

by Paul Johnson

Write a blog for the NICHE website!

We are keen to hear from you about your interests and experience and welcome receiving an informative blog to feature on the news page of our website. We aim to publish a new blog each month on topical aspects of our work together. Read our [guidance on writing a blog](#) and email your blog to NICHEAnchor@uea.ac.uk.

The Barbers' Company Clinical Nursing Scholarship 2024

The annual Clinical Scholarship is now open for applications until 15th March 2024.

Applications are welcomed from qualified nurses and midwives to support their ongoing professional development, such as Masters or Doctoral level. Interviews are held in June, following a rigorous shortlisting process, at the Worshipful Company of Barbers Hall, London.

The annual award is hosted by the School of Health Sciences UEA and, we are pleased to announce that, in its second year at UEA, the annual grant has been doubled in recognition of both the great work achieved by previous awardees and the high standard of applications.

[APPLY HERE](#)



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For further information on NICHE projects please visit the NICHE website at:
[**www.uea.ac.uk/groups-and-centres/projects/niche**](http://www.uea.ac.uk/groups-and-centres/projects/niche)

*All photographs have been kindly approved by the participants.
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