

# Press release: Traffic officers' bike challenge is a real spin-off for charity

The South West-based traffic officers had set a target of covering 350 miles in a 24-hour spin bike challenge, equivalent to the distance of motorway and major trunk road they patrol in the region – all in aid of the Huntington's Disease Association.

The team, receiving social media support along the way from the likes of actor and TV presenter Shane Richie and singer Tony Hadley, smashed that target by pedalling their way to a total of 502 miles over 24 hours at the South West Regional Operations Centre at Avonmouth.

The team of nine traffic officers, all based at Highways England's Almondsbury Outstation, were Clarke Hobbs, Andy Watts, Lou Stout, Anthony Reeves, Alan Sludden, Barry Thomas, Jolene Britton, Alistair Steel and Lou Quinton.

Splitting the tasks in shifts, and aided by fellow Highways England staff, they reached their target, and more, between 4pm on Monday 9 October and 4pm on Tuesday 10 October – raising an impressive total of £1,640 in the process.

Pictured at the end of the challenge are, from left, Jeanette Allum, Linda Canby, Clarke Hobbs, Chris Caine, Anthony Reeves, Sean Dowding, Tom Bennett and Lou Stout

Avonmouth-based operations manager Sean Dowding said:

The Huntington's Disease Association is a charity close to our hearts and we really wanted to do something to raise awareness of the disease.

We're delighted to raise the amount we did, and also the support we received from our colleagues in the South West and further afield, and also from the the Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre, who kindly donated two of the bikes.

We tweeted updates over the 24 hours, which created a bit more interest, and it was really nice to get some social media support, particularly the retweets from Shane Richie and Tony Hadley.

Huntington's Disease is a hereditary disorder of the nervous system that over time causes serious cognitive, emotional and psychological changes. It affects, on average, 12 people in every 100,000 in the UK. For more information go to the [Huntington's Disease Association website](#).

## General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# [Press release: Universities and Science Minister calls on universities to do more to commercialise UK research and innovation](#)

- new proposals to develop a Knowledge Exchange Framework to compare how effective universities are at business engagement and knowledge exchange are outlined
- the Minister also announced the first successful projects from the £100m Connecting Capability Fund and the successful regions selected for the third wave of the Science and Innovation Audits

Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson today (12 October 2017) outlined his vision to secure the UK's status as a pioneering nation and called for universities to secure more return from the research conducted by institutions across the UK.

Speaking at the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) annual conference, Jo Johnson reinforced the importance of science and innovation in the Industrial Strategy and urged universities to deepen collaborative relationships with businesses to ensure the UK's innovative strength has real-world and economic impact.

As part of this, new analysis published today by HEFCE of the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey highlights the progress already being made in improving knowledge sharing between UK universities and the commercial sector, which has continued to grow in 2015-16, with income reaching a record £4.2 billion. Despite this progress, the UK still lags behind comparable countries like the United States in terms of intellectual property income per research resource and the number of successful spin-off companies.

Jo Johnson said:

Universities have a vital role to play in their local communities and in the national economy. Given the record levels of public investment in R&D, it is essential that universities engage with businesses and communities to make the most of their knowledge and research.

There are great examples of this across the country but the system needs to find a new gear. University income from business engagement is growing more slowly than the economy as a whole, with British universities producing fewer spin-outs and less licensing income per pound of research resource than US counterparts. As a greater proportion of R&D takes place in universities in the UK than in other countries, it's especially important that we get this right.

To help close this gap, the Science Minister announced plans to ask Research England within the new UK Research and Innovation body to consult the sector on the development of a new, public Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) to benchmark the performance from university-business collaboration and knowledge exchange. This builds upon the work undertaken by the knowledge exchange steering group led by Professor Trevor McMillan, and complements his proposal that the sector should develop clear statements of purpose in order to increase the effectiveness of engagement with business and the wider community.

Alongside the Research Excellence Framework and the Teaching Excellence Framework, the KEF will act as a benchmark for universities to ensure they are making the most of the opportunities available and help ensure that the UK benefits from the research, skills and knowledge in the higher education sector.

**Additional funding for the Rutherford Fund:**

The Government has been clear on its ambition to foster greater international collaboration in science and innovation, recently signing a Science and Technology Agreement with the United States and outlining plans to seek an ambitious science and innovation agreement with the EU. Celebrating the important contribution international scientists and researchers make to UK innovation, the Science Minister pledged an additional £18 million for the Rutherford Fund budget to attract the brightest minds to the UK. The funding is on top of the £100 million the Government has already invested and will enable an additional 200 fellowships to start this year, ensuring the UK remains the go to place for innovation and scientific discovery.

**Connecting Capability Fund:**

Jo Johnson also announced the first four projects to receive funding from the £100 million Connecting Capability Fund. Focused on university collaborations to boost the commercialisation of research, the first round will see groups of universities from England share £20 million to address areas such as age-related diseases, access to finance for spinouts, and support for SMEs as

they scale-up.

#### Science and Innovation Audits Wave 3:

Emphasising the value of greater collaboration to further innovation, Jo Johnson confirmed the next 12 regions that will undertake a Science and Innovation Audit (SIA) to map their local research, innovation, and infrastructure strengths. Now in its third wave, the SIA process has already brought together businesses, universities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and the Devolved Administration equivalents to identify the opportunities for inward investment and regional growth, and will explore strengths in a number of sectors and disciplines across the UK including the marine economy in the Highlands and Islands and applied digital technologies in the North East of England.

#### NOTES:

The twelve consortia that will be part of the 3rd wave of the Science and Innovation Audits are:

1. Cyber Resilience Alliance (led by Worcestershire LEP with support from The Marches, Gloucestershire and Swindon and Wiltshire LEPs)
2. Maximising the Marine Economy of the Highlands & Islands (Led by Highlands and Islands Enterprise)
3. North West Nuclear Arc Consortium (led by Bangor University with support from Welsh Government and North West England LEPs)
4. North West Coastal Arc Eco-Innovation Partnership (led by Lancaster University with support from North West England LEPs and the Welsh Government)
5. Northern Powerhouse Chemicals & Processing Science (led by Tees Valley Combined Authority with support from North East, Humberside, and Liverpool City Region LEPs)
6. Northern Powerhouse in Health Research (led by Northern Health Science Alliance and includes LEPs, universities and teaching hospitals from across the Northern Powerhouse)
7. The South Wales Crucible (led by Swansea University)
8. Upstream Space (led by UKSA/Scottish Enterprise comprising Scotland; Leicester; Belfast and a corridor between Cambridge and Portsmouth)
9. Precision Medicine Innovation in Scotland (led by the University of Glasgow)
10. Applied Digital Technologies (led by North East LEP)
11. Sustainable Airports (led by Brunel University, looking at Heathrow)
12. The Knowledge Quarter, London

The first four funding projects within the Connecting Capability Fund are:

1. East of England – Essex University, University of East Anglia and University of Kent will collaborate on a project which aims to address the region's productivity challenges by supporting company development and entrepreneurial skills growth
2. North of England – Higher Education Institutions in Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield will collaborate on a project which aims to establish an

- investment fund to improve access to finance for university spinouts
3. South of England – this will be an extension of an existing collaboration between the universities of Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Southampton and Surrey (the SETSquared Partnership) which aims to better support SMEs as they scale-up
  4. The universities of Oxford, Birmingham and Dundee, and the Francis Crick Institute are collaborating on a project which aims to support the development of new therapeutics to tackle age-related diseases

#### Knowledge Exchange Framework:

Following the Innovation & Science Strategy 2014, HEFCE sought to increase the effectiveness of university knowledge exchange by establishing a knowledge exchange (KE) framework and steering group. The Vice-Chancellor of Keele University, Trevor McMillan, was asked to champion this within the sector. A number of tools and good practice guides for KE (such as “Good practice in tech transfer”) have already been developed and have been used by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) when developing their KE strategies.

Extensive data is already collected about universities’ KE performance via the Higher Education Statistics Agency’s (HESA) annual Higher Education Business Community Interaction Survey, and Research England will consult the sector as to how this data can be used to develop a balanced scorecard. Other recommendations from the McMillan Group are being taken forward, including the sector developing a set of common principles for effective KE, and the leadership of HEIs committing to adopting these principles.

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## [News story: Jeremy Hunt announces salary supplement for trainee GPs](#)

The Health Secretary has today (12 October 2017) announced a package of measures to strengthen general practice.

From 2018, surgeries in hard-to-recruit-to areas will benefit from a new government-backed scheme – the Targeted Enhanced Recruitment Scheme – which will offer a one-off payment of £20,000 to attract trainees to work in areas of the country where training places have been unfilled for a number of years.

The Department of Health has also asked Health Education England (HEE) to make sure many of the 1,500 additional medical training places that will be funded from next year are located in priority areas, including rural and coastal communities.

Speaking at the Royal College of General Practitioners Conference in Liverpool, Jeremy Hunt focused on recruitment and retention across general

practice, with other measures including:

- new flexible working arrangements, including the opportunity to take on mentoring and leadership roles, for GPs considering retirement
- a new international recruitment office set up by NHS England to help local areas to recruit GPs from overseas, with plans to expand fast-track routes into general practice for doctors trained outside the European Economic Area in countries such as Australia
- a consultation on the regulation of physician associates to provide further clarity on the scope of the role, and exploring how support staff can bolster healthcare teams across the country

Jeremy Hunt said:

Last month, the Care Quality Commission gave a glowing verdict on the state of general practice in England, but this should not distract us from the fact that the profession is under considerable pressure at the moment.

By introducing targeted support for vulnerable areas and tackling head on critical issues such as higher indemnity fees and the recruitment and retention of more doctors, we can strengthen and secure general practice for the future.

Our talented GP workforce is one of the reasons why we have the best healthcare system in the world, and our commitment of an additional £2.4 billion a year for primary care by 2021 will ensure this continues.

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## **[News story: GP indemnity: development of state-backed scheme for England](#)**

Department of Health will work with GP representatives on how a scheme could work.

The government is planning to develop a state-backed indemnity scheme for GPs, to protect them from the costs of clinical negligence claims, subject to further work on relevant issues.

Our ambition is to provide a more stable and affordable system for GPs. The scheme could provide financially sustainable cover for claims arising from the delivery of NHS services.

We have been working with the 4 medical defence organisations that currently provide indemnity cover to GPs and with GPs on how a state-backed scheme could work. Any new scheme should:

- meet the needs of current and future GPs
- be in the interest of patients
- represent value for money for taxpayers

We will discuss urgently with GP representatives how best to engage with the sector. The scheme will need careful negotiation and will take at least 12 to 18 months to establish. GPs should continue to make sure they have appropriate indemnity cover, in line with General Medical Council (GMC) requirements, to enable them to practise.

See the [indemnity in general practice factsheet](#) for more information.

Read the [written ministerial statement](#).

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## [News story: The Ofqual handbook is now live](#)

Ofqual publishes preview version of new online handbook.

Today, Thursday 12 October, Ofqual has published a preview version of the Ofqual handbook, a new online resource that brings together all our general rules and guidance.

The handbook can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook>, as well as from the Ofqual homepage and our awarding organisation portal.

To help users navigate their way around the content we hosted a webinar. A recording of the webinar is now available.

[A recording of the webinar is also available](#)

We will be [gathering feedback](#) on this new format for the rest of the year, before taking decisions on roll-out early in 2018.