

New training academy aims to transform NHS imaging workforce

A new training academy just launched at Edge Hill University aims to transform the NHS imaging workforce.

The [North West Imaging Academy](#) (NWIA), a multi-million pound NHS project, is investing in state of the art facilities and education to develop a world-class imaging workforce.

This will ultimately improve patient access to high quality imaging tests such as x-rays and ultrasounds, drive earlier diagnosis and reduce health inequalities across the North West.

Patient advocate Laura Mahon, who was diagnosed with a brain tumour while she was pregnant, shared her harrowing story at the launch and officially opened the NWIA's Radiology Academy with her husband and fellow charity campaigner Daniel.

The 30-year-old from St Helens said: "It was an honour to officially open the new academy. My daughter Sienna and I are both doing well now but I know that without scanning and imaging my tumour wouldn't have been found."

A series of MRI scans led to Laura's diagnosis. She gave birth to her daughter Sienna at 30 weeks and has been undergoing radiotherapy and chemotherapy over the last year. Laura's health is improving but she will continue to have regular MRI scans to monitor the now stable tumour.

"It is vital to have places like this so that healthcare workers can get the best education possible. It's amazing to know that the people who are trained here will go on to care for people like me in the future."



Laura and Daniel Mahon.

The NWIA will train sonographers, radiographers, imaging support workers, doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and consultant radiologists of the future like Mohammed Uddin, a Year 1 specialist trainee in radiology.

He described the imaging academy as a “fantastic addition to our training scheme”. The 29-year-old said: “We can now use state of the art facilities to practice procedures in a safe and secure environment, away from the pressures of a busy NHS hospital.

“This allows us to hone our practical skills, giving us confidence to perform diagnostic procedures on real patients in addition to learning clinical radiology from expert consultants.”



Dr Peter Jamieson, clinical lecturer (left) and Dr Mohammed Uddin, ST1 Radiology

The academy was commissioned by Health Education England (HEE) following extensive consultation which highlighted a need to reduce health inequalities, improve access to same-day imaging tests, earlier diagnosis and greater convenience to patients.

Christopher Cutts, Regional Director for HEE in the North West, said: “This is a game changer, a whole new approach to transform how the imaging workforce is trained, increasing the number of staff and supporting them to stay in their professions.

“The academy is an incredible army of people who share one ambition – to provide better care for our patients.”

The NWIA is a collaboration between a wide range of key partners including The North West School of Radiology, NHS trusts and universities coordinated through the Training Hub at Edge Hill’s Medical School. The University won the contract to

oversee the roll-out of the new academy and hosted the launch at the Ormskirk campus.

Julie-Michelle Bridson, Director of the [Training Hub](#) at Edge Hill, said: “The establishment of the Academy provides a unique opportunity to enhance the imaging workforce in the North West. The offer is truly multi-professional and will deliver high quality education and training for many professions, the aim being to improve diagnostic services to patients.”

Dr Sue Kearney, Director of NWIA’s Radiology Academy, added: “The interconnection of different centres via videolink allows teaching to be delivered by experienced tutors from any individual remote site. I believe this will ensure teaching which will improve the educational experience for all imaging professionals.”

Hubs and satellite sites will be based within partner organisations including East Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust in Blackburn, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, Alder Hey Children’s Hospital in Liverpool and The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, Manchester, as well as Cumbria, Salford and Liverpool Universities.

The first course delivered for the academy took place on Tuesday 29 November 2022 when Dr Chad Ali, a consultant musculoskeletal radiologist taught reporting radiographers from across the region. Find out more about upcoming courses [here](#).

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