

YORKSHIRE INNOVATION FUND CASE STUDY:

Little Heroes Cancer Trust



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The Idea...

Inspired by his personal experience of caring for a child with cancer, Colin Nesbitt set up Little Heroes Cancer Trust with a single clear mission: **to improve the lives of children with cancer and their families.**

Aged just two years old, Colin's grandson Reece was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. The devastating experience that followed was to provide inspiration which would go on to support thousands of families coping with similar diagnoses.

Based in Bradford, the cancer trust took shape in 2008 although it was the following year before work began in earnest. Behind the charity, a commercial enterprise – Unite & Ignite – raises funds for Little Heroes Cancer Trust and other charities through organised events in the hospitality industry and the corporate sector. Through activities including firewalking, Unite & Ignite enables Little Heroes Cancer Trust to develop **specialist devices which make living with cancer more bearable.**

Today Little Heroes Cancer Trust provides support for hundreds of young cancer patients and their families across the UK.

The Need for Innovation...

Cancer patients are often fitted with a central line catheter – a surgical tube inserted in the heart through the chest which administers drugs and from where blood can be taken. When fitted to a child, the line can be easily snagged and is sometimes ripped off the body. Colin wanted to develop a device which would keep central lines clean and out of harm's way thus improving the well bearing of the wearer.

When Little Heroes Cancer Trust approached the Yorkshire Innovation Fund in late 2014, the Wiggle Bag was little more than a concept. The idea was for a small, flat pouch made from soft material with antibacterial properties.

After exploring several opportunities with textile companies, the Trust was referred to the Department of Fashion & Textiles at the University of Huddersfield by the Manufacturing Advisory Service.

The Role of the Yorkshire Innovation Fund...

A successful application for a Research and Development Project award (RDP) funded **development of the Wiggle Bag concept into a commercial reality.** Despite having never worked with a university before, Colin immediately realised the potential of the commercial-academic partnership.

"When we saw what the Yorkshire Innovation Fund could do, the lightbulb went on", says Colin.



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COLIN NESBITT



Researchers from the University of Huddersfield investigated the design and development of a device to contain the lines which would provide greater comfort and safety for the child whilst also meeting the needs of the medical sector.

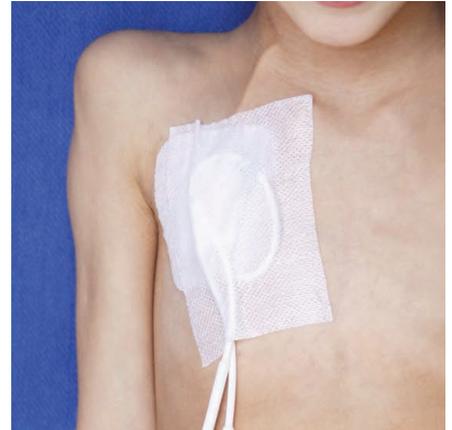
The Impact...

Over a nine month period of collaboration between Little Heroes Cancer Trust and the University of Huddersfield, the Wiggle Bag evolved from concept to prototype. As a consequence, the Trust has applied for patents in readiness for taking Wiggle Bags to market. The charity has also benefitted from exposure to a new audience of academics and clinical experts.

“Before our collaboration with the Yorkshire Innovation Fund, we were simply not in a position to rub shoulders with clinical experts and key opinion leaders”, says Colin. “The Yorkshire Innovation Fund helped us to fast-track Wiggle Bags from an idea to a device which can benefit children with cancer across the globe.”

The Future...

With the first prototype due to be trailed this summer in six test hospitals across the UK, Little Heroes Cancer Trust is **poised for a full product launch** to the UK medical sector in the autumn of 2015.



Wiggle Bags

About The Yorkshire Innovation Fund...

The Yorkshire Innovation Fund brings together ten of the region's higher education institutions to help small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Yorkshire and Humber region to grow.

Part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the fund helps small businesses to develop ideas for new products, services or processes by funding collaborative projects with the region's universities, drawing on their expertise, specialist equipment or facilities to develop ideas which result in business growth.

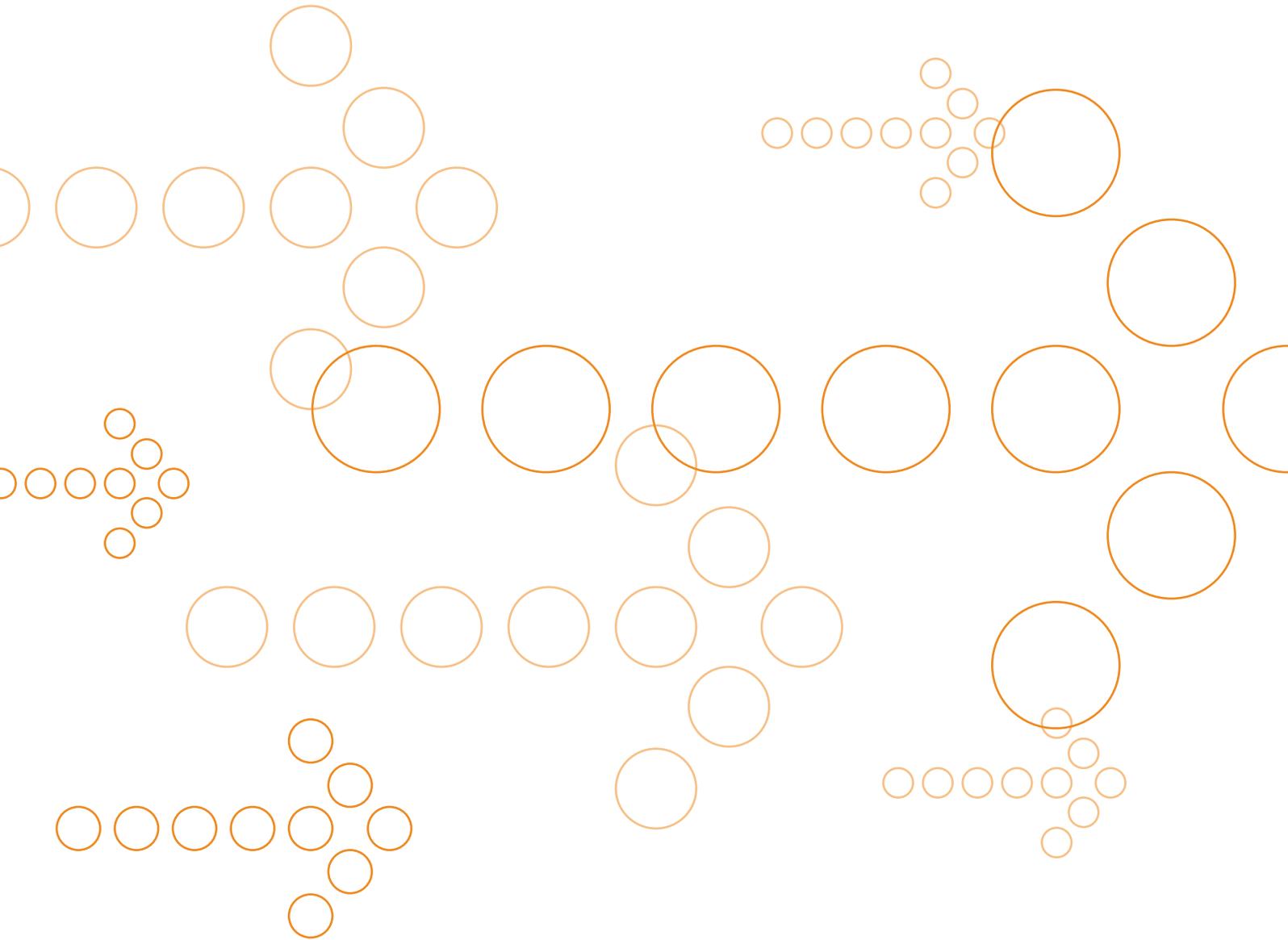
The project has attracted £3.06million of investment from the ERDF as part of Europe's support for local economic development through the Yorkshire and Humber ERDF Programme 2007-13. Partner universities contributed a further £1.87m, bringing the total investment to £4.93m. The project team are based at the University of Bradford.

The delivery partners are: The University of Bradford, The University of Huddersfield, The University of Hull, The University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds College of Music, Leeds Trinity University, Sheffield Hallam University, The University of York, York St John University. The University of Sheffield is a strategic partner.

Yorkshire Innovation Fund

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Yorkshire Innovation Fund

Funding access to University
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