

1) Preliminaries

- Confirm organisation's research governance status in advance (NHS/Non-NHS)
- 'Study Information Sheet' sent prior to interview – any participant questions?
- Obtain permission to digitally record interview
- Sign consent forms (2 copies – one for researcher, one for participant. Participant copy can be scanned and sent via email as PDF afterwards).

Collect information on respondent characteristics

- Job role(s) [including Board positions]
- Time in role
- Main employer [if applicable]

NOTE: [Questions IN BOLD only to be asked of first 3-4 respondents in each AHSN to establish AHSN characteristics and innovation tracers. Researcher to use judgement to select appropriately from listed prompts given prior knowledge of AHSN. Interviews to last 1 hour.]

1. History of the AHSN and antecedent networks (10 mins)

- To begin, please can you tell me about the history of this AHSN [AHSN characteristics prompts]:***
 - When did the AHSN receive its license?***
 - Who drafted the original bid?***
 - What were they main ideas behind the bid?***
 - Who is currently employed within the core AHSN team? Who is on the Board?***
- Is this AHSN registered as a limited company? [Company Limited by Guarantee]***

[If so] Does this have advantages for the AHSN in your view?

- iii. *How much funding does this AHSN receive? [Check tier funding status]*
- iv. *Were other local networks or collaborations (e.g. CLAHRCs, HEICs) influential to the establishment of this AHSN?*

2. Formal and informal AHSN strategy, objectives and priorities (10 mins)

- i. *What is the mission of this AHSN?*
- ii. *What are the strategic priorities of this AHSN for the next 12 months?*
 - a. *[Prompt]: What work is being done to identify, spread and test innovations across the region? (please give examples)*
- iii. *Have the AHSN's priorities shifted over time [since licensing]?*
- iv. *Are you using any models, techniques or theories to help this AHSN diffuse health innovations?*

[PROMPTS: Implementation Science / Whole Systems Theory / Research Translation literature / Rogers' theory of diffusion of innovations / entrepreneurial literature]

- a. *[If yes] How did you come across these?*
- b. *[If yes] How do they help you achieve local objectives? [Ask for concrete examples]*
- v. *Are there any other objectives that you personally want to see this AHSN achieve?*

3. Interactions and events: regional, national and international knowledge sharing and exchange (15 mins)

- i. *How would you describe your AHSN's approach to collaborating with partners regionally?*

- ii. *Which individuals or partner institutions are you working most closely with a) inside the AHSN [probe members], b) outside the AHSN?*
- iii. *Are you collaborating – or seeking to collaborate – with any partners internationally?*
- iv. *Does your AHSN interface with other regional networks, such as CLAHRCs? If so, how?*
- v. *How would you describe the current health innovation system in this economy?*
- vi. *Prompts:*
 - a. *Which businesses are strong economic performers and relevant to this AHSN? [Prompt biotech/pharmaceutical]*
 - b. *Are there particular academic research institutions leading in health care innovations regionally?*
 - c. *Are there business clusters important for this AHSN?*
 - d. *Are there current collaborations between universities, business and the public sector important for this AHSN?*
 - e. *Are there any new forms of capital investment or funding to support the spread of health care innovations across the region?*
- vii. *How do you think this AHSN compares to other AHSNs in terms of its regional innovation economy?*
 - a. *Prompt: how does this AHSN compare to other in terms of resources / funding / demographics*
- viii. *Who do you see as your main competitors?*
- ix. *Who do you see as your most important collaborators?*

4. Innovation tracers and initiatives (case studies) (10 mins)

We would like to explore, concretely, how AHSNs are working to achieve health improvement, wealth creation and diffusion of innovations by tracing initiatives

within your region (one health-focused, one wealth-focused, or themes which the senior team are prioritising for action).

- i. If we were to track two innovation initiatives or programmes in this AHSN, which would you recommend and why?**
- ii. Which AHSN partners are working most closely around this initiative?**
- iii. Are performance measures or metrics being used to monitor progress?**
- iv. What events might we be able to observe (with local management permission) to learn more about these initiatives / programmes?**

Ask for contact person with AHSN who could be a gatekeeper / link person for tracer. Can we observe events? Can documents be shared?

5. Knowledge influences and leadership (10 mins)

- i. Why did you decide to become involved in AHSNs? What interested you about them? [Probe personal motivations]*
- ii. Have you prior experience of leading or establishing health care networks?*
- iii. What do you consider the main challenges of leading AHSNs?*

Prompt:

a) What has been your greatest leadership challenge to date? [ask for concrete example]

- iv. What is new about leading AHSNs?*

Prompts:

- a) Are there new ways of making things happen and achieving objectives?
- b) In your experience to date, what leadership styles have worked and which have not?
- c) Is this the right leadership form?
- v. *Do you think AHSN leadership requires a particular skill-set or competencies?*
- vi. *In your view, is there sufficient education, training and support to help AHSNs fulfil their objects? What else could be done?*
- vii. *Who do you consider to be your most important personal contacts for progressing the AHSN's objectives? Why?*
- viii. *You selected up to five people in the SNA survey as important to you. Is there anything else you would like to tell about why these particular individual(s) are key for driving the circulation of innovative knowledge in the region? [Prompt: formal and informal leaders].*
- ix. What are your networking strategies? [Prompt: With whom and what?]

6. Size, place and looking to the future (5 mins)

- i. *What do you consider the main opportunities associated with AHSNs?*
- ii. *Do you think AHSNs are the appropriate size for meeting the challenges of health improvement and wealth creation?*
- iii. *Have you observed any working practices within AHSNs less familiar to the NHS or public sector?*
- iv. *If you could make any policy recommendations to support the development of AHSNs what would they be?*
- v. *Do you have any comments / issues you consider important for us to be aware in this region during this study?*

CLOSE AND THANKS