

North East firms' role in £5.6m ageing programme helping people live longer and happier lives

A £5.6m health programme designed to encourage businesses across Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland to support people to lead longer, happier lives is set to launch.

The Newcastle-based National Innovation Centre for Ageing (NICA) is working alongside the North of Tyne Combined Authority and innovation partner CPI to bring firms to The Catalyst to hear how they can benefit from the scheme.

It will focus on the 'Internet of Caring Things' (IoCT) – a network of connected objects and systems that will help care for people – and will encourage innovative firms to develop solutions to people's health and wellbeing needs.

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Organisers hope the programme will help create new jobs and skills in the region following its launch to businesses on Wednesday at The Catalyst where they will hear from experts at NICA, CPI and VOICE – which is part of the NICA and is made up of a large network of citizens across the UK and internationally.

Attendees will also hear Newcastle Building Society about “the importance of innovation for social impact: why it matters to banks” and Shieldfield's Big River Bakery on “innovation in ageing is for any business: from bread to IoT”.

Prof Nic Palmarini, director of NICA, said: “The demands of our society are changing, and we must continue to innovate

with the networks around us to drive social and economic change.

“We want to work with local businesses to build a world-class innovation ecosystem, providing economic and social opportunities and innovations, with a central focus on citizens and community that will mark this region as an international leader for IoCT innovation.

“We believe that our ability as a society to meet the needs and ambitions of our older residents more effectively – and critically that our solutions will be able to be transferrable nationally and internationally – will result in positive economic development and continued wellbeing of the ageing population.”

Rebecca Robinson, centre manager at The Catalyst, said: “We’re delighted to be hosting the launch event for this innovative programme. The Catalyst was built to encourage collaborative innovation to solve both societal and industry challenges, and the Internet of Caring Things programme is doing just that.”

The announcement follows NICA’s recent hosting of [The World Bank report](#) into how UK cities leaders can design buildings and services around older people to make environments “age-ready”.

Its authors set out a vision for cities and towns – particularly those with younger populations – as they prepare for an ageing population, especially in light of Covid and the vulnerability faced by older people.

Further details on the event are available [here](#).

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