

## **Dr David Lewis**

### **Aspiring Leaders Fellow – Coventry and Warwickshire 2024-2025**

In the past year I have been incredibly fortunate to have been an Aspiring Leaders Fellow. The experience has been incredibly rewarding and provided valuable opportunities for professional and personal growth alongside contributing to healthcare leadership across the system. Prior to commencing the fellowship I have worked in the region since 2016 predominantly in clinical roles in primary care. I continue to work as a GP partner at Harbury Surgery in South Warwickshire. Whilst these roles exposed me to elements of healthcare leadership and the local healthcare system it was only a small piece of the bigger picture. The fellowship enabled me to explore the system at a much deeper level and to engage with broader leadership within healthcare.

Throughout the fellowship I have been involved in a wide range of projects and CPD. In the initial months this was from a broad 'menu' of work including reviewing the use of virtual reality in healthcare education with Coventry University, shadowing the chief medical officer and attending the pathology forum to name a few. These meetings and opportunities gave a fantastic grounding for the fellowship and enabled me to develop my understanding of how the healthcare system functions and its structure. As the year progressed, I focussed much more on the role of digital health, artificial intelligence as well as personal leadership development and CPD. Below I have detailed some of the other projects I have been involved in throughout the year.

### **Project and Interests**

#### **Extended access refresh and Primary Care Networks**

Over the first few months of the fellowship, I was involved in the EA refresh project and PCN operations meetings. The EA refresh was a useful piece of work in standardising expectations from practices regarding extended access provision and how this related to wider system objectives. I enjoyed seeing this project through to completion and seeing the guidance to PCNs clarified through the project. At times it was challenging working with multiple networks and developing a plan which worked for networks and member practices as well as addressing the wider healthcare system objectives. I learnt a lot about how to lead a change process when engaging with multiple stakeholders.

#### **Clinical reference group**

The clinical reference group is working on providing clinical guidance as part of the LES review. These meetings have been ongoing throughout my fellowship, and I have had varying levels of involvement throughout the year. It has been fascinating to see how the commissioning of

local enhanced services works and understand the complexity of updating a wide range of LSSs across multiple regions.

### **Wolfram Hypertension tool**

Technology firm Wolfram are developing a software tool to assist general practice with various aspects of patient management. I have been involved with the hypertension tool development alongside some ALF alumni. This has potential to be a real-world example of AI use in healthcare and developed my understanding of the role of emerging technologies and AI. It has been challenging working on a new AI project particularly when navigating legislation regarding medical devices and getting the necessary approval. I have learnt about the difficulty with real life application of AI and understand the nature of this work to a much greater extent from my time working with Wolfram.

### **AI Ambassador Learning Network**

NHS Futures have been hosting and developing a new AI ambassador learning network. I have been participating in their webinars which have grown rapidly and included all regions of the country from many different NHS providers and sectors. As the use of AI becomes increasingly at the forefront of NHS future planning these learning networks have real potential to shape the future landscape of the NHS. I feel privileged to have seen this rapid growth and the development of these discussions on a national level.

### **AI software**

I have used the platform of the fellowship to engage with various AI software providers for general practice. This has been educational for me personally and helped me to understand the challenges of working at scale as every provider and sector has different needs and expectations. Through these experiences I developed some specific knowledge about AI software, but also learnt more broadly about engagement with AI software providers and the challenges of working at scale.

### **CPD:**

The opportunity for CPD and personal development throughout the fellowship has been invaluable. I feel that I have benefitted enormously through the fellowship in this regard in both defined learning experiences and in my own personal leadership skills.

### **AI in Healthcare**

I undertook a 6-week course in AI in healthcare from MIT Sloan. This involved weekly written assessed submissions and webinar and discussion forum based learning around a basic understanding of AI and then its various opportunities for application in healthcare, present and future. This course was joined by participants from across the world and gave a significant grounding for my subsequent project work with Wolfram, AI software providers and the AI ambassador network.

## **Future Leaders Course**

As a fellow I was granted a place on the training hub's Future Leaders Course. Over 6 months we explored various aspects of system leadership and had multiple opportunities for discussion and leadership development. I found the 'Insights discovery' a particularly valuable aspect of the course which led me on to further CPD related to personal leadership development. I would highly recommend the course for other aspiring leaders working in healthcare.

## **Personal Leadership Development**

The fellowship has also offered me excellent opportunities for personal reflection, reading and leadership development. I have read books on various aspects of leadership in and outside of healthcare, engaged with the King's Fund Shiftworks online leadership modules and have some further CPD planned to continue this journey going forward.

Both the CPD and project work I have been involved in through the fellowship have contributed to a significant year for me professionally and personally. My own understanding of the healthcare system and system leadership has grown substantially as well as my own personal leadership skills. I feel enabled to enter into discussions at a system level and contribute in areas of healthcare leadership previously unknown to me. Throughout the fellowship year I encountered various challenges including working at scale, the need for negotiations and stakeholder involvement with commissioning decisions and the difficulties with working with AI within the current healthcare system. Through exposure to these challenges and participating in meetings and discussions I have developed negotiating skills and a new understanding of how to be an effective leader within these environments. I believe these leadership skills will enable me to be a more effective leader in my own practice, PCN and wider healthcare system.

Going forward I hope to continue with my interest in artificial intelligence in healthcare and my work with Wolfram in their AI software development. I believe that the skills gained through the fellowship will help me in my current day to day role as a GP partner and involvement in broader discussions about the ongoing changes in the NHS as part of the NHS 10-year plan both locally and within my PCN and the wider system. I am still to take part in some further leadership training with a course on "clean language" and plan to continue to engage with national AI implementation plans and discussions. Without the opportunity of this fellowship I would not have been able to engage with these important issues and develop the specific leadership skills required for this work. I would highly recommend the fellowship to anyone working in primary care as it offers a unique opportunity to engage with system leadership and leadership development and I am very grateful for the opportunity that it has provided to me both personally and professionally.