

## Evidence Generation Case Study: White Swan

### Overview

[White Swan](#) is a registered charity whose product, Million Minds, aims to accelerate the path to diagnosis through symptom tracking and the use of data science to match potential diagnoses to the symptoms. An additional function of the product is to support the patient to manage their symptoms, which would be particularly beneficial in cases where there are symptoms presenting without a potential diagnosis.



White Swan was successful in being selected for the fourth cohort of the [DigitalHealth.London Accelerator](#) in 2019-20. When White Swan joined the programme they did not have a prototype product however they did have proprietary technology which would provide the infrastructure to derive analysis and decision making from symptom data. The White Swan team, being non-clinicians, were not aware of the evidence generation curve and requirements for launching a product that would impact on clinical activity. They had a strong use case, and an understanding of what their technology could do, however the application into a real-world clinical setting and the evidence requirements were unknown.

### Supporting Evidence Generation

Working very closely with their DigitalHealth.London Navigator and the Clinical Lead, Professor Paul Wallace, White Swan began piecing together the evidence generation journey. The core value of the product was in its data and symptom capture, and its analysis and inference checking against various sources. The link that needed to be made was around its accuracy and effectiveness in deriving clinical outputs.

The White Swan team were incredibly proactive. They attended the Accelerator Evidence Generation workshops which provided their baseline information, they had one-to-one sessions with Paul which helped them in deriving their key research questions, and meetings with GPs and other clinicians to understand various perspectives on what information clinicians would value.

During the programme, quarterly meetings between White Swan, their Navigator and a senior member of the DigitalHealth.London team were used as reflection points to realign how they needed to progress on their evidence generation journey. Challenges included access to data and access to clinicians, both of which were overcome through activities organised through the [Generator](#) such as Evidence Generation workshops.

## Building Partnerships with Academics

White Swan eventually found themselves in a position where they were ready to engage with academics who might help them in answering their research question, as well as academics that would be able to sit on their advisory board.

While White Swan were developing an app to help patients without a diagnosis to track and characterise their symptoms and together with their doctors, reach a diagnosis, they were also keen to ensure that Million Minds did not exacerbate the anxiety felt by undiagnosed patients or cause them to focus too much on how they feel.

Through an individualised matching exercise, Professor Paul Wallace and their NHS Navigator were able to identify the correct professional that would find mutual benefit from a collaboration with the charity and subsequently connected White Swan with Prof Trudie Chalder. She is a Clinical Psychologist with a research interest in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and it was a natural alignment.

In addition to this, White Swan were looking for academics and clinicians to join their advisory board to help inform their roadmap. A shortlist of academics, researchers and clinicians were identified and engaged with, of which Professor Amitava Banerjee was identified as the best suited candidate. Through advice and guidance from the Accelerator, White Swan were successfully able to engage with Professor Banerjee, and they agreed to co-produce literature which would promote the use of social data analytics in solving healthcare challenges. This would form part of the publication of results from the Proof-of-Concept stage of development, assessing the concordance between clinician decisions and decisions made by Million Minds.

## Looking to the Future

White Swan have developed significantly through the focus on evidence generation provided by the Accelerator. They were able to pivot their product development roadmap to ensure they are clinically robust, as well as develop a roadmap for, and implement parts of, their evidence generation pathway. They have become advocates of evidence generation and have been able to link it in with their product development and commercialisation planning.

[Visit the White Swan website.](#)

"We came to the Accelerator not knowing what we didn't know, and we very quickly understood the importance of evidence generation. This was one area in particular that we realised we needed to focus on.

"The pathway and the roadmap that we are now on has been largely dictated by what we learnt in those first few months of the Accelerator workshops."

**Beth Fordham, Operations Director for White Swan,  
DigitalHealth.London Accelerator 2019-20**