

## Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Clinical trials to prove the effectiveness of specialist seating provision for patient care

### Seating Matters Ltd

<b>Location:</b>	Limavady
<b>Project length:</b>	2 years
<b>University School:</b>	School of Health Sciences, Ulster University
<b>Academic Team:</b>	Mrs Jacqueline Casey and Professor Suzanne Martin



### The Company

Seating Matters manufactures and supplies a range of specialist chairs for adults and children with disabilities. This specialist equipment aims to reduce pressure ulcers, improve posture, comfort and function, thereby significantly improving quality of life. Founded in 2006, the company currently supplies health services, government, care facilities and private individuals. Individuals are assessed for their seating needs and a customised chair is created around their requirements.

### The Challenge

The KTP aimed to research the effectiveness of Seating Matters' chairs in positively impacting people in nursing and care environments. Anecdotal evidence showed that the chairs benefitted patients but this was never evidenced in an independent and thorough clinical trial and the company did not have the skills to complete a clinical trial. A partnership with Ulster University was formed to design, implement and analyse the study from start to finish.

### The KTP

This partnership successfully secured ethical approval to undertake research directly with participants in nursing homes. From this work the team demonstrated that personalised seating assessment and provision makes a significant and positive impact on the experience of older people in nursing homes.

As a result of the research Seating Matters can now provide evidence of the effectiveness of their products and subsequently increase domestic and global demand.

Regular discussions with the Associate, University and company led to discussions around such topics as pressure management and which tools to use to measure the change in pressure ulcer risk. By using a pulse oximeter the team were able to get accurate readings of blood oxygenation. This real data showed that improved posture through the company's seating products actually helped increase blood oxygen levels and accelerate the skin recovery of research participants.

## Company benefits

Since the KTP, the company's clinical focus has moved towards evidence-based practice and clinical trials to endorse the effectiveness of its chairs. The company now has a strong clinical team working on education, research, dissemination and has published new clinical guides for its customers.

Through the KTP Seating Matters has gained an invaluable amount of clinical research and evidence into the effectiveness of its products. This has enabled the company to provide its customers with more meaningful information to consider when purchasing its chairs.

As a result of the KTP the company now realises the value of evidencing the effectiveness of its products in a very competitive market. Having a greater clinical and research profile has enhanced the company's credibility with a larger audience, which it believes will positively impact upon patient care and demand for their products.

## University benefits

This KTP has enabled two academics from the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences to experience the realities of applying their research in the commercial sector. They have gained first-hand experience of how the commercial sector develops its promotional materials and have been able to input to the content and design of these for a clinical and public audience.

Additionally the academics have realised how their evidence-based knowledge of the literature and research can be interpreted and directly lead to new product development.

This KTP has further developed the academics' experience of delivering robust practical research within industry. This is a challenging process but has led to impressive outputs providing evidence of the effectiveness of interventions with service users who have very complex needs.

*"Our association with Ulster University has been invaluable. The University's worldwide recognition as a leader in the area of seating, posture and pressure management has given Seating Matters increased credibility as a clinically led company."*

**Mrs Martina Tierney, Director  
Seating Matters Ltd.**

*"This has been a very rewarding partnership that has produced some amazing clinical results. These have the potential to reduce costs to care homes, improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of nursing home residents, and increase product sales."*

**Jackie Casey  
School of Health Sciences**



## How to apply for a KTP

### Contacts

Check the feasibility of your idea with your University Programme Manager.

Ulster University Programme Manager  
Ms Amanda Fullerton  
E: [a.fullerton@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:a.fullerton@ulster.ac.uk)

Or you can call Ulster University  
on **028 7167 5236** or go  
to [www.ulster.ac.uk/ktp](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/ktp)



Or with an Invest Northern Ireland executive.

Contact the Invest NI Programme Manager  
Karen Hastings  
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Or you can call Invest NI  
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to [www.investni.com/ktp](http://www.investni.com/ktp)