

Hello, I am delighted to be here tonight representing Nigel Wright Recruitment. For those of you that are not familiar with our business, we are a market leading pan-European Recruitment services provider, headquartered in Newcastle with offices in London and throughout Europe.

We have an extensive track record of successfully recruiting individuals to key functional, technical and managerial roles across the private, public and third sectors - from start-ups and SMEs to blue-chips - across Europe and beyond. Despite our international growth, we are still very much committed to serving the North East business community. We have been a trusted advisor to the region's businesses for over 20 years - supporting their growth through attracting and retaining talent.

We recognise the vital importance of the healthcare and life sciences sectors to the future of the North East. That is why we have a dedicated scientific recruitment team, serving the region's healthcare and life sciences organisations.

My background in the scientific sector makes me all too aware of the importance of these awards, which recognise individuals who have made a significant contribution to the healthcare and life science sectors. Once again the HealthConnect category has been extremely hard to judge due to the high standard of entries. This, I believe, highlights the truly exceptional talent we have in the region.

So, without further ado I would like to announce this year's winner. A Durham born science pioneer, his many achievements include research which uncovered the importance of folic acid in preventing spina bifida in babies and the importance of aspirin in reducing hereditary cancer risk. He is also the man responsible for bringing the Centre for Life to the region.

Our winner is Professor Sir John Burn.