

Support Available

The following offers a summary and links to some of the support available for innovations nationwide. It is set out depending on stage of innovation:

1. Getting to market and building the evidence base
2. Wider spread and adoption
3. Useful reading

1. Getting to market and building the evidence base

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

NICE offer a broad range of [information and advice](#) to those developing innovations and wishing to bring them to market, particularly with regards to evidence.

The NHS Innovation Service

The [NHS Innovation Service](#) is a new initiative from the NHS Accelerated Access Collaborative which aims to support innovators with:

- Information and guidance to help them understand and navigate the healthcare system as they develop their innovations
- End-to-end support from different organisations, helping them to take their innovation from idea to adoption faster

Research Councils in the UK

There are [seven research councils](#) in the UK which work in collaboration with the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), 5 of which may be of relevance. They offer research funding based on specific criteria:

- [Biotechnology and Biological Science Research Council \(BBSRC\)](#) – Funding opportunity open 9 August 2023 until 4 October 2023 4:00PM UK time
- [Economic and Social Research Council \(ESRC\)](#) – Funding opportunity open 15 August 2023 until 10 October 2023 4:00PM UK time
- [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council \(EPSRC\)](#) – Funding opportunity open 8 August 2023 until 10 October 2023 4:00PM UK time
- [Medical Research Council \(MRC\)](#) – Funding opportunity open 14 August with no closing date
- [Science and Technology Facilities Council \(STFC\)](#) – Funding opportunity open 3 August 2023 until 3 October 2023 4:00PM UK time

Innovate UK

[Innovate UK](#) work with people, companies and partner organisations to find and drive the science and technology innovations that will grow the UK economy. This includes working with companies to de-risk, enable and support innovation. Their responsibilities include:

- determining which science and technology developments will drive future economic growth
- meeting UK innovators with great ideas in the fields they're focused on
- [funding](#) the strongest opportunities
- connecting innovators with the right partners they need to succeed
- helping their innovators launch, build and grow successful businesses.

SBRI

Small Business Research Initiative for Healthcare (SBRI HealthCare)

The [Small Business Research Initiative](#) for Healthcare (SBRI Healthcare) is an NHS England initiative, championed by the Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs), which aims to promote UK economic

growth whilst addressing unmet health needs. They launch competitions for funding each year focused around specific challenges facing the health system; further information can be found [here](#).

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)

Funded by the Department of Health and Social Care to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. They can provide advice and signposting to companies looking to conduct research within the NHS. Further information can be found [here](#) or by emailing supportmystudy@nihr.ac.uk.

Invention for Innovation

For early stage/ product development. They provide funding for collaborative R&D projects in medtech, vitro diagnostics and high-impact patient-focused digital health technologies for NHS use. Projects that have demonstrated proof-of-concept and have a clear pathway towards adoption and commercialisation are eligible to receive funding. The aim is to de-risk projects, making them attractive to follow-on funders and investors. More information on their funding calls can be found [here](#).

RCGP Innovators Mentorship Programme

They work with researchers and innovators whose work focuses on general practice priorities to help disseminate and implement their findings. More information can be found [here](#).

MedTech SuperConnector

For Post-Docs and graduate students. This programme is a consortium of eight London universities, led by Imperial College, to support medtech discoveries on their path from the lab into viable companies. More information can be found [here](#).

MidTech

MidTECH help individuals and organisations with innovations across the West Midlands, and work with most of the Trusts in the region. More information can be found [here](#).

West Midland's AHSN

For Industry and Social Enterprises in the West Midlands: General support for adoption of innovations. Further details can be found [here](#).

NIHR

For AI innovations: Three funding streams to support applications for health and care research involving artificial intelligence (AI). Further details can be found [here](#).

NHS AI Lab Skunkworks

For AI innovations at proof-of-concept stage: free short-term expertise and resources to public sector health and social care organisations with the aim of solving existing issues being experienced in the NHS. Further details can be found [here](#).

NHS Innovation Lab

For innovations at initial idea or proof of concept stage: support to innovative ideas including helping with piloting in real-world health and social care settings and evaluation of benefits. Further details can be found [here](#).

UCLPartners Innovation Fellowship

For NHS clinical or non-clinical entrepreneurs working in an organisation providing or commissioning NHS services within North Central London, North East London or Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Systems. Further details can be found [here](#).

The Hill

Part of Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. For digital technology and new innovations at initial idea stage: support entrepreneurs to develop innovations at initial idea stage to SMEs that can catalyse commercial and impactful technological solutions in healthcare. Further details can be found [here](#).

2. Wider adoption and spread

Academic Health Science Networks

There are 15 [Academic Health Science Networks](#) (AHSNs) across England, commissioned by NHS England to spread innovation at pace and scale – improving health and generating economic growth. Each AHSN works across a distinct geography serving a different population in each region.

The Innovation Exchange is an AHSN-coordinated approach to identify, select and support the adoption of innovations which have the potential to transform the lives of patients and support growth of the businesses we work with. You can access this here: <https://ahsninnovationexchange.co.uk/>

What types of support do AHSNs offer?

All AHSNs have a common ‘**innovation pathway**’, which provides an overview of the types of support AHSNs provide either directly or through their partnerships. The pathway was originally developed by North East and North Cumbria AHSN, further details can be found [here](#).

How do AHSNs raise awareness of innovation amongst their NHS members?

All [AHSNs](#) have developed mechanisms to promote innovations amongst their local commissioners and providers. Innovators should contact their AHSN directly to see what support is available.

The AHSN network has also created an Office of Life Sciences funded [Innovation exchange](#) to support individual AHSN activity. The Exchange can support innovators in their navigation of the NHS and connect them with the help they need either through their local AHSN or another AHSN if the innovation matches their local priorities.

What specific examples of support are available through AHSNs?

Below are some examples of AHSN activity. This is not in any way an exhaustive list. It simply aims to provide some examples of available support.

Learning opportunities: West of England AHSN has a [Health Innovation Programme](#) which gives innovators the opportunity to learn the skills needed to kick-start their business.

Procurement: Eastern AHSN has developed an online [procurement toolkit](#).

Digital health:

- [South West AHSN](#) has a particular focus on digital health
- [Innovation Agency](#) (North West Coast AHSN) hold quarterly digital showcasing events bringing together digital innovations with the local health economy
- [Digital Health.London](#) is a pan London initiative delivered by two of London’s AHSNs (the Health Innovation Network and UCLPartners). One of their objectives is to identify the digital solutions that meet the needs of patient and clinicians across London. Regional teams have also started to offer digital health accelerators, e.g., Greater Manchester, Kent Surrey and Sussex and South West AHSN.

Digital Catapult

The [Digital Catapult](#) works with SMEs to help them grow and scale faster as well as helping larger corporates in their digital transformation. It does this through programmes of collaboration and open innovation, by bringing academic leading-edge expertise into the mix combined with the organisation’s own business and technological expertise.

NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme (CEP)

CEP is designed to offer opportunities for NHS and healthcare professionals to develop their entrepreneurial aspirations and innovations. More about their annual call can be found [here](#).

Charities supporting health and care innovations

A number of charities and foundations provide support to those wishing to develop and scale health innovations. These include, for example:

- [Nesta](#) is an innovation charity with a mission to help people and organisations to bring great ideas to life. Information about the breadth of support they offer can be found [here](#).
- [The Health Foundation](#) is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and health care for people in the UK. They provide a range of [resources](#) to support innovation and its scaling in the NHS including innovation and research grants.

Regional Support available

- London and South East: MedCity <https://www.medcityhq.com/about-us/>
- Northern Health Science Alliance: one point of access to the health science system across the North of England - which has an industry offer working with AHSNs <http://www.thenhsa.co.uk/work-with-us/industry/>
- South East Health Technologies Alliance (SEHTA): <https://www.sehta.co.uk/>

3. Useful Reading

There have been a number of publications looking at innovation in the NHS and how to spread an innovation in the NHS. These include:

- Understanding how and why the NHS adopts innovation ([https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328981849 NHS Innovation Accelerator Understanding how and why the NHS adopts innovation NHS](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328981849_NHS_Innovation_Accelerator_Understanding_how_and_why_the_NHS_adopts_innovation_NHS))
- Your guide to innovation in the NHS – including creation, development, evidence, regulation and commissioning & adoption (<https://innovation.nhs.uk/innovation-guides/>)
- The Health Foundation: The Spread Challenge (https://www.health.org.uk/publications/the-spread-challenge?gclid=EAlalQobChMIibaYu4Cr-glVFeztCh3JsgLtEAAAYASAAEgLYBfD_BwE)
- The Health Foundation: Against the Odds: scaling successfully in the NHS (<http://www.health.org.uk/publication/against-odds-successfully-scaling-innovation-nhs>)
- NESTA's "making it big" <https://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/making-it-big-strategies-scaling-social-innovations>
- Balas, E. A., & Boren, S. A. (2000). Yearbook of Medical Informatics: Managing Clinical Knowledge for Health Care Improvement. Stuttgart, Germany: Schattauer Verlagsgesellschaft mbH
- Trisha Greenhalgh et al(2004). [Diffusion of Innovations in Service Organizations: Systematic Review and Recommendations](#). Milbank Q. 2004 Dec; 82(4): 581–629. doi: 10.1111/j.0887-378X.2004.00325.x
- IPPR: Unleashing innovation across the NHS - <https://www.ippr.org/publications/improved-circulation-unleashing-innovation-across-the-nhs>
- Kings fund report: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/innovation-nhs> (Adoption and spread of innovation in the NHS)