**NHS Innovation Accelerator**

**FAQs 2024 Intake Call**

Updated September 2023

1. **When can I apply for the NHS Innovation Accelerator 2024 cohort?**

Recruitment for the 2024 NIA cohort opens the morning of 12 September 2023 and closes at 23:59 on 27 October 2023.

1. **Who can apply for the 2024 NHS Innovation Accelerator?**

The NHS Innovation Accelerator (NIA) is open to innovations of all types, from the UK or elsewhere, and innovators from any background. Innovations should be able to demonstrate an evidence base from real-world use and should align with one of this year’s recruitment themes.

Applicants can be clinicians, academics, from a public-sector, charitable or not-for-profit organisation, from a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME), or from a large corporate. You can be the inventor of the innovation, the lead for it within your organisation or simply the representative of an innovation you find compelling, and as such, wish to scale it across the NHS.

To apply, you should be able demonstrate the following:

* Significant outcomes for significantly lower cost
* An evidence-base for your innovation that shows it is already in use in a healthcare setting and ready to diffuse across the NHS
* A personal set of strong values as well as a passion for learning and sharing your insight widely
* A commitment to scaling evidence-based innovations for patient and population benefit
* A commitment to understanding health inequalities and to improving equity of access, experience and outcomes through innovation.

Innovators from all genders, ethnicities and backgrounds are encouraged to apply for our accelerator. We know that many groups have been underrepresented in our past cohorts and we are keen to move toward a cohort of Fellows that better represents the diversity of the people served by the NHS.

1. **Is the NIA only for UK-based companies?**

No. Applicants from across the UK and overseas are encouraged to apply. However, non-UK applicants should have a presence in the UK. Applicants should note the mandatory requirement to attend the NIA launch, summit and quarterly events in person.

1. **I am from a start-up, can I apply for the NIA?**

The NIA is for innovations that are both ready to scale across the NHS in England, and that have the necessary resources and team to scale across England over a 12-month period and beyond. Your organisation should therefore have sufficient resources to be able to scale up at pace – and be able to take up opportunities that arise from your participation in the NIA.

1. **I am a clinician, can I apply for the NIA?**

Yes, the NIA is open to Fellows from any background, and we have supported several clinicians to scale their innovations. If you have queries or concerns regarding the time commitment of 2 days a week for Fellows, we encourage you to contact the NIA team to discuss your options.

1. **What are this year’s recruitment themes?**

For the 2024 intake, the NIA is seeking innovations that can address a health inequalities challenge within the themes highlighted in the [Core20PLUS5](https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/core20plus5/core20plus5-cyp/), for both Adults and Children and Young.

Additionally, the call is open to all therapy areas with innovations that specifically support NHS centred Carbon Reduction solutions.

The themes proposed are:

* Maternity (Adults)
* Mental Health/ Severe Mental Illness (Adults, and Children and Young People)
* Cancer (Adults)
* Respiratory Disease / Asthma (Adults, and Children and Young People)
* Hypertension/ Cardiovascular Disease (Adults)
* Diabetes (Children and Young People)
* Epilepsy (Children and Young People)
* Oral Health (Children and Young People)
* Carbon Reduction/Net Zero

Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with the NHS Core20Plus5 manifesto prior to completing the NIA application form.

1. **How do I apply to join the NIA?**

You can apply for the NIA via our Survey Monkey apply online portal. The link to the application will be available on the NIA website’s [Apply](https://nhsaccelerator.com/apply/apply-nia-2024-intake/) page from 12 September 2023.

Before applying, please ensure that you have reviewed the [*Call for Applications*](https://nhsaccelerator.com/wp-content/uploads/NIA-Call-for-Applications-2024-Intake-3.pdf) document which provides a useful starting point for learning more about the NIA. You should also read the [*Guide for Applicants*](https://nhsaccelerator.com/wp-content/uploads/NIA-Guide-for-applicants-2024-Intake-3.pdf) and review the wording of the contract, which both you and your organisation will need to sign should you be invited to join the NIA.

Please only apply if you are assured that you and your innovation meet the specifications, and that you can commit to the time requirements (including attendance at the NIA Fellows Launch event and **all quarterly and Year 1 events**) and have the written support of your employing organisation.

1. **Is the NIA for individuals only or can teams/ companies apply?**

While the innovation may have been created by a team/company, the NIA focuses on the development and support of an individual representing that innovation as a Fellow. Therefore, all applications must include a sole named applicant who will be the innovation’s representative while active on the NIA.

1. **Do applicants need the support of an Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) before they can apply to the NIA?**

An application does not need the support of an [Academic Health Science Network (AHSN)](https://www.ahsnnetwork.com/) prior to submitting an application form. However, applicants may wish to engage with their local AHSN to discuss applications and to seek advice on scaling plans before submitting their application.

For information on your local AHSN, please visit the [AHSN Network Innovation Exchange website](https://www.ahsninnovationexchange.co.uk/).

1. **Why is there a time commitment for Fellows of 2 days a week?**

In order to ensure they can take advantage of the benefits of being on the NHS Innovation Accelerator (NIA), Fellows need to be able to commit two days per week **to scaling their innovation**. These two days per week could include for example attendance at quarterly events, producing and implementing sprint plans, meeting mentors and [Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs),](https://www.ahsnnetwork.com/) developing stakeholder engagement and marketing plans, building networks, or a health economic case.

For some Fellows, this will be part of their normal day jobs - where scaling their innovation is their everyday business.

For others, particularly those who are based in clinical roles, it might require setting aside the 2 days for the completion of these discreet tasks.

1. **How has Covid-19 affected participation in the NIA programme?**

The NIA learning programme has been previously delivered face to face with quarterly and learning events as well as meetings held in London. Due to the Government guidelines during the pandemic, events and meetings were successfully held virtually on platforms easily accessible on all devices including those used in NHS settings. As the guidelines now allow for face-to-face sessions to be held, the programme will revert to running in-person sessions which Fellows are expected to attend.

1. **What is the selection process?**

When submitted, application forms are reviewed by a minimum of four assessors drawn from a range of perspectives including clinical, patient, commercial and implementation. Applications are assessed on the basis of the applicant, the innovation, and confirmation that there is no straightforward or obvious local mechanism for scaling; in other words, there needs to be a clear reason as to why the applicant needs the support of the NIA. Please note that references will be requested during the application process, and two references are requested for each Fellow - one of whom needs to be a senior representative from the Fellow’s employing organisation; the other should be from a healthcare provider/ commissioner site where your innovation is currently in use (this does not need to be an NHS site).

Once shortlisted, applicants are invited to a panel interview. At the same time, the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)](https://www.nice.org.uk/) and NHS England informally review all shortlisted applications. The applications will also be formally reviewed for Health Inequalities and Patient and Public Involvement (PPIE) involving NHS patients. After the interviews, a final decision panel chaired by Professor Stephen Powis, National Medical Director at [NHS England and NHS Improvement](https://www.england.nhs.uk/), and Chair of the NIA Programme Board, reviews the recommendations from the assessment process (application, NICE review and interview) to agree which applicants will be offered a conditional place on the NIA.

At this stage, we will undertake a period of due diligence, and request - where relevant - two years of annual accounts, a list of company directors and published annual reports. All Fellows will be asked to sign an agreement with [UCLPartners](https://uclpartners.com/) (who host the NIA) before being formally announced as an NIA Fellow. An example contract will be available on the application page of the NIA website when the Call is launched. Applicants should check that they and their employing organisation would be happy to sign this contract before applying.

1. **How many Fellows will be selected to join the NIA 2024 intake?**

Up to 24 individuals will be selected to join the NIA 2024 intake. These individuals will join the existing Fellows from the 2022 and 2023 cohorts, who have progressed to Years 2 and 3 of the Fellowship.

1. **Are there opportunities to connect with NIA team before I apply?**

There are a number of ‘Meet the NIA’ online information events during the recruitment period that you can join to find out more.

These online Q&A sessions are open to anyone, but we do ask that you register via Eventbrite beforehand. The interactive sessions will provide detailed information about the NIA, the recruitment process and this year’s application. Slides will be made available and there will be an opportunity for Q&A with the NIA core team.

Dates for Meet the NIA online sessions:

* Tuesday, 19 September: 12:30 - 13:30
* Monday, 25 September: 12:00 - 13:00
* Wednesday, 4 October: 13:00 - 14:00
* Tuesday 10 October: 13:00 - 14:00

Please register for a session on Eventbrite [here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/meet-the-nia-three-virtual-sessions-in-september-october-tickets-713057603487).

Joining details will be sent to you in the confirmation email upon registration.

If you have any questions you need answered ahead of these events, please feel free to email us at nia@uclpartners.com.

1. **Will I receive feedback if my application is unsuccessful?**

Unsuccessful applications will receive feedback by the end of February 2024. The level of detail of the feedback will depend on the stage to which the application progressed e.g. applicants that have not progressed to the full assessment phase will receive basic feedback whilst those fully assessed will receive detailed feedback.

1. **What are the key dates for this year’s call?**

The key dates are as follows:

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| **Activity** | **Date** |
| NIA opens for applications (7 weeks instead of 8 weeks and 3 days) | 12 September 2023  |
| ‘[Meet the NIA’](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/meet-the-nia-four-virtual-sessions-in-september-october-tickets-713057603487) informational webinars | 19 September – 12:30 - 13:3025 September – 12:00 - 13:004 October – 13:00 - 14:0010 October – 13:00 - 14:00 |
| Application deadline | 23:59, 27 October 2023 |
| Application form assessment | 4 November – 26 November 2023 (3 weeks) |
| Review of applicants to be interviewed (Sustainability, PPIE, NICE and Health Inequalities) | 28 November – 4 January |
| Shortlisting panel | 11 December 2023 |
| Invitation to interviews | 13 December 2023 |
| Unsuccessful applicants notified | 14 December 2023 |
| Interviews | 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 January 2024 |
| Final decision-making panel | 5 February 2024 |
| Outcomes communicated to applicants | 7 February 2024 |
| Deadline for due diligence docs to be returned from applicants | 16 February 2024 |
| Due diligence and contracting | 12 February – 8 March 2024 |
| Feedback sent to unsuccessful applicants | 23 February 2024 |
| ***The following dates/ sessions are a mandatory part of the NIA. You will not be able to take up a fellowship unless you are able to attend all of them.*** |
| Induction and preparation day for NIA Launch | 18 March 2024 |
| Launch event | 27 March 2024 |
| NIA induction event/ panel session | 17 April 2024 |
| New Fellow 1:1 meetings with NIA team | w/c 22 April 2024  |
| Quarterly events | Tuesday 14 May 2024 Tuesday 23 July 2024Tuesday 15 October 2024Tuesday 4 February 2025 |
| Year 1 learning events | Tuesday 4 June 2024Tuesday 10 September 2024Tuesday 4 March 2025 |

1. **When will the panel interviews take place?**

Panel interviews will take place virtually throughout 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 January 2024.

1. **I have not completed an application form like this before, where can I go for support?**

*UK based Applicants*

Your local Academic Health Science Network may be able to provide support and advice in applying for the NIA. Find your local AHSN here: <https://www.ahsnnetwork.com/>.

*International Applicants*

You should contact [Healthcare UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/healthcare-uk) to access the dedicated support on offer for international companies looking to come to the UK.

**For more information about the NIA, please review our** [**programme FAQs**](https://nhsaccelerator.com/about-us/faqs/)**. You are also welcome to email us at** **nia@uclpartners.com****.**

**Follow the NHS Innovation Accelerator on Twitter** [**@NHSAccelerator**](https://twitter.com/NHSAccelerator)**.**