

Your guide to innovation in the NHS

Commissioning and adoption stage

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Commissioning and adoption

Throughout the development of your healthcare innovation, the ultimate aim is for it to be spread and adopted by NHS services.

The [NHS Innovation Service](#) can put you in touch with organisations that can support you along a pathway towards this goal.

This section outlines some of the frameworks within the NHS that might lead to successful commissioning and adoption.

Health technology evaluation

NICE Centre for Health Technology Evaluation (CHTE) undertakes health technology evaluations and produces guidance for NHS England on the use of new and existing treatments such as medicines, medical devices and surgical procedures. The process includes the evaluation of clinical, economic and other types of evidence about the use of the innovation or existing treatments.

There are different types of NICE guidance and advice, including:

- diagnostics guidance assesses innovative diagnostic technologies.
- highly specialised technologies guidance assesses technologies that are intended for people with very-rare conditions that are likely to be very expensive.
- interventional procedures guidance assesses whether new or significantly modified interventional procedures are effective and safe enough for use in the NHS.
- medical technologies guidance assesses innovative medical devices that are likely to be cost saving or cost neutral to the NHS.
- technology appraisal guidance assesses medicines and other innovations that cannot be assessed in the other types of NICE guidance.
- NICE guidelines sets out care and services for people with a specific condition or need, or in particular circumstances or settings.

Delivering a net zero health service

The NHS in England is aiming to become a net zero carbon national health service, in response to the profound and growing threat to health posed by climate change. To support this, the NHS has committed to

- reaching net zero by 2040 for the emissions the NHS controls directly
- reaching net zero by 2045 for the emissions the NHS influences, through the goods and services it buys from partners and suppliers

To achieve this goal, the support of all suppliers is required.

The NHS has set out the Net Zero Supplier Roadmap to help suppliers align to its net zero ambition between now and 2030. If you intended to supply your innovation to the NHS you will need to consider several of the milestones in the supplier roadmap. This includes the first milestone, implemented in April 2022, that added a minimum of 10% weighting for net zero and social value in all NHS procurements.

Since April 2023, for all new contracts above £5 million per annum, the NHS has also required suppliers to publish a carbon reduction plan (CRP) for their UK Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and a subset of scope 3 emissions as a minimum.

From April 2024, the CRP requirements have been proportionally extended to cover all new procurements. A CRP template has been published by the Cabinet Office.

Further guidance is available on these net zero requirements for NHS contexts. The NHS England Net Zero and Sustainable Procurement Team are also running a programme of webinars where you can access support.

Understanding the NHS

To understand more about the NHS and its ongoing development, read the [NHS Long Term Plan](#). Find out more about [how the NHS works from The Kings Fund charity](#) which works to improve health and care in England.

To have your innovation adopted into the NHS you need to understand the complexity of the NHS and the related barriers this creates to procurement. [Integrated care systems \(ICSs\)](#) are partnerships that join up the care provided by local councils, the NHS and other partners. There are 42 regional ICSs covering England. They embed collaboration between care providers with a regional focus, to ensure that communities receive joined up support from local health and care providers.

ICSs comprise two components:

- Integrated care boards (ICBs) - statutory bodies that are responsible for planning and funding most NHS services in the area
- Integrated care partnerships (ICPs) - statutory committees that bring together a broad set of system partners (including local government, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE), NHS organisations and others) to develop a health and care strategy for the area.

Working through their ICB and ICP, ICSs have four key aims:

- improving outcomes in population health and health care
- tackling inequalities in outcomes, experience and access
- enhancing productivity and value for money
- helping the NHS to support broader social and economic development.

ICSs have a statutory duty to support innovation adoption and spread. The Accelerated Access Collaborative (AAC) has co-developed a [series of case studies](#) with AAC partners on the implementation approaches taken in local integrated care systems (ICS) to promote the adoption and spread of proven innovation.

[Find out more about ICSs](#) from The Kings Fund.

Commissioning in the NHS

The commissioning of services in the NHS changed with the introduction of ICS partnerships. NHS England retains some funding for the commissioning of specific services including primary care services and specialised services such as pioneering procedures and new treatments. The national tariff payment system is a set of pricing rules established to help commissioners and providers of NHS care to provide the best value to their patients.

Who is going to pay for your innovation? Who would be responsible for commissioning your innovation, ICSs or NHS England?

It is not enough to create a product that simply makes patients better. Your innovation will need to:

- be something that clinicians will be able to accommodate in their clinical practice
- work in the whole organisation
- be something that someone is willing to pay for

Often the person paying for the innovation is completely different to those who deliver care. The evidence needed to make a decision about the uptake of innovation into the NHS is different depending on the part of the NHS the person works in. Healthcare professionals will support the uptake of an innovation if they can see the benefits that it can bring to patients. Those commissioning the innovation also need to weigh this up against how cost effective it will be for the NHS. The Clinical Priorities Advisory Group (CPAG) make recommendations on what innovations NHS England should consider commissioning. Find out more about how CPAG advise NHS England.

Supporting the adoption of new innovations into the NHS

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) Award is an NHS AI Lab programme run by the Accelerated Access Collaborative (AAC) in partnership with the NIHR. It will accelerate the testing and evaluation of AI technologies. The awards support technologies at various stages of development, from initial feasibility to evaluation within the NHS.

The Early Access Medicines Scheme (EAMS) aims to give patients with life threatening or seriously debilitating conditions access to medicines that do not yet have a marketing authorisation.

The MedTech Funding Mandate from the AAC aims to direct healthcare providers and commissioners within NHS organisations towards cost-effective MedTech innovations that have been recommended by NICE diagnostics guidance, or medical technologies guidance.

NHS Supply Chain

NHS Supply Chains' role is to source, deliver and supply healthcare products, services and food for NHS trusts and healthcare organisations across England and Wales.

NHS Supply Chain have the expertise to ensure that goods are clinically safe and reflect the needs and preferences of the NHS.

You can access support from NHS Supply Chain through the [NHS Innovation Service](#).

Find out more about [NHS Supply Chain Innovation Services](#).

Procurement frameworks

Procurement frameworks are agreements that enable NHS organisations to buy services and goods from one or more supplier. New suppliers cannot be added to an agreed procurement framework. These agreements usually last a maximum of four years before a tender for a new framework is published. You can access the [procurement and savings calendar](#) for an overview of upcoming tender activities. This enables new or existing suppliers to forward plan for procurement frameworks which are coming up for tender.

There are other places you can go to search for upcoming tenders and opportunities:

- [Find a Tender](#) for high-value opportunities or awarded contracts across the whole of the UK
- [Public Contracts Scotland](#)
- [Sell2Wales](#)
- [eSourcing NI](#) and [eTendersNI](#) for Northern Ireland

The suppliers must pass rigorous selection criteria to become part of a procurement framework.

Procurement frameworks that are already implemented within the NHS

- [Health Systems Support Framework](#). This enables NHS organisations to buy supportive services from innovative third-party suppliers including advanced analytics, population health management, digital and service transformations.
- [G-Cloud Framework](#). This enables providers to sell cloud services including hosting, software and support to the public sector including the NHS.
- [Dynamic Purchasing System](#). Unlike the other purchasing frameworks, suppliers can join this electronic system at any time. It is an 'open market' solution designed to give NHS organisations a pool of suppliers who they can buy works, services or goods from. This system is particularly beneficial for small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who want to become NHS suppliers but have little or no experience in tendering for work with the public sector.

There are four NHS procurement hubs:

- [London Procurement Partnership](#)
- [North of England Commercial Procurement Collaborative](#)
- [East of England Collaborative Procurement Hub](#)
- [NHS Commercial Solutions](#)

Contact the relevant procurement hub to find out more about becoming a supplier of services or goods in the NHS.

We hope you have found this guide useful and we wish you well on your innovation journey.

NHS Innovation Service, brought to you by the Accelerated Access Collaborative.