

The NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme

Launched in 2016 the NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme (NHS CEP) is a free award-winning entrepreneurial work force development programme aimed at NHS/HSCNI staff and healthcare professionals.

The programme brings together industry, government, regulators, patients and the NHS to remove barriers and accelerate the introduction of new ground-breaking treatments and diagnostics which have the potential to transform care.

Now in its tenth year, this NHS initiative has steadily expanded, supporting over 1800 individuals to date.

Hosted by Anglia Ruskin University the Programme has cultivated a culture of entrepreneurship within the NHS and nurtured a community of forward-thinking healthcare professionals aiming to better the system.

The programme in Northern Ireland

The CEP was launched in NI in 2022, championed and run by HIRANI, funded by Invest Northern Ireland (and now funded

the Department of Health NI and Department for the Economy NI) working in partnership with the Clinical Entrepreneur Team in NHS England, the programme has supported over 30 HSCNI entrepreneurs; including hospital doctors, GPs, nurses, social workers, dentists, and clinical psychologists. This has led to significant impact in attracting additional funding and new collaborations in health innovation in the region.

The NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme is designed to support and empower HSCNI staff by fostering innovation within the healthcare system and plays a significant role in retaining and empowering NHS staff, enabling them to develop and implement transformative healthcare solutions while remaining within the HSCNI workforce.

Historically, innovation was often unrecognised and unsupported, leading to a “brain drain” where clinicians left the NHS to pursue entrepreneurial endeavours. The establishment of the NHS in 1948 marked a pivotal milestone in global health



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Health



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Economy



**NHS CLINICAL
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innovation, but integrating innovation into the NHS framework has been a systemic challenge. Clinicians with the foresight to enhance patient care through novel approaches often found themselves unsupported within the NHS, leading to the loss of valuable talent and innovations.

The impact of CEP in Northern Ireland has been both economic and systemic. Participants have secured additional funding, created jobs, and contributed to wider UK success, where the programme has generated hundreds of millions in investment and supported thousands of innovations. Crucially, CEP strengthens workforce retention by providing alternative career pathways within the health service.

Key achievements accomplished by Northern Ireland participants include:

Addressing and developing innovations across mental health, cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease, maternity and neo natal

Several entrepreneurs receiving nominations and awards from Women in Business, Institute of Directors UK, and the Great British Entrepreneur Awards

One participant registering over 6,000 downloads and users of their app in 178 countries

One participant having their innovation adopted across 13 NHS trusts and 100 private sector practices, while another achieved adoption in five private sector practices, one NHS trust, two academic institutions and 26 GP Practices

By May 2022, it is estimated that support from CEP has helped to create 882 jobs and generate £37 million in cumulative sales in the UK.

For more information visit <https://nhscep.com/>

Impact and Benefits of the CEP

The CEP offers a comprehensive support system for entrepreneurial NHS staff, including hybrid education and networking days, access to mentors, business planning advice, and a dedicated online platform. Initially open only to junior doctors, the programme has expanded to include all

clinical and non-clinical NHS staff, with the largest cohort to date accepted in 2024. The inclusivity of the CEP is one of its strengths, welcoming applicants from Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, and the Republic of Ireland, and supporting a diverse range of clinical and non-clinical staff and students.

The programme has retained and reintegrated over 1000 healthcare professionals within the NHS, supporting new innovations to reach patients. This programme fosters a sense of belonging and values entrepreneurship within the NHS, contributing to broader NHS transformation. By promoting a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation to emerging medical technologies, the CEP reinforces a progressive NHS ecosystem that values and integrates clinical innovation and entrepreneurship.

A strength of the CEP is its inclusivity of a diverse range of clinical and non-clinical staff and students. Student Selected Component (SSC) projects have also been supported cultivating digital health competencies, quality improvement awareness, research skills and translational capabilities.

With over 1000 alumni and growing, the CEP has retained and reintegrated healthcare professionals within the NHS, while supporting new innovations to reach patients. This reinforces a progressive NHS ecosystem that values and integrates clinical innovation and entrepreneurship.

(UK wide):

- Nearly 35,000 hours of mentoring
- A total of 3887 jobs created
- Over 3,500 occurrences and organisations adopting CEP innovations
- with 223.9 million private, professional and patients using products, processes and services developed by clinical entrepreneurs.
- 686 innovations are currently being developed with a total of £1.1 billion of funding raised.
- Nearly 67,000 CPD points have been awarded to professionals from across health and social care who have taken part in the programme.



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