



NHS PATIENT
ENTREPRENEUR
P R O G R A M M E

PATIENT ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAMME

Application Guidance - Cohort 4

NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme

2026

NHS

Introduction



This guidance aims to support all potential applicants when applying for the NHS CEP Patient Entrepreneur Programme, exploring assessment questions, top tips and further information.

Important initial checks:

Are you eligible to apply?

The programme is open to **Those who have experience as a patient, carer or family member of a health condition, who are developing an innovation based on that experience.**

Individuals that have a project or innovation that is already in development and beyond the idea stage. Applicants need to have done some market research, understand priorities to the health services and how their idea could potentially impact different populations. This programme is aimed at those individuals who don't already have support from an organisation.

Applicants need to be based in England and be 18 years and over.

Please read the eligibility criteria carefully, as applications from individuals who do not fall into the categories outlined on our website will not be considered.

Have you read about the programme and what it offers?

The NHS CEP Patient Entrepreneur Programme (PEP) is a pilot programme aimed at people with experience of an illness or condition who have developed novel or new innovation to improve patient care. The programme aims to give these individuals the skills and knowledge to develop their innovation, while giving them access to a network of mentors, healthcare experts and patient support.

Delivered by the NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme (CEP) this initiative allows patients to join an already established and respect programme of innovation learning and development while benefitting from additional wrap around support and bespoke opportunities..

The programme is a 1-year workforce development programme. It is not an application for employment, and we do not offer funding. The programme is completely free to those who are successful, however you will be responsible for funding your own travel and accommodation to in-person events.

You can read more about the programme on our website www.nhscep.com/programme

What are we looking for in an application?

All applications are scored exploring these 5 main areas:

Personal Motivation

Priority to the NHS

Lived Experience

Viability of Innovation

Clinical Impact

The applicant needs to have researched the problem and show that their idea is worth pursuing, have clear motivation, is committed and passionate to support the NHS and has the right drive to succeed on the programme.

Introduction

Assessment Criteria



Personal Motivation

Share why you care about improving patient care and making a difference in the NHS. Talk about any experiences that have inspired you, and your commitment to reducing health inequalities and supporting a greener, more inclusive NHS. Show passion for your idea and what you hope to bring to the programme.

Lived Experience

Lived Experience is a key criterion that values personal insight gained through being a patient or carer. We're looking for applicants who have used their experience to shape and drive their innovation, demonstrating empathy, understanding, and a clear link between their journey and the problem they're solving.

Clinical Impact

Explain how your innovation could help improve patient care, clinical processes, or NHS services. Share any evidence or examples that show how it could benefit patients or save money. Think about how it supports fair access to care and includes people from different backgrounds. If you've worked with a range of patients or staff, mention this—or explain how you plan to do so.

Priority to the NHS

Show how your innovation supports NHS goals, such as those in the [NHS Long Term Plan – Fit for the Future](#) or helping groups with greater health needs. Explain how it meets a current or future need in the NHS and what makes it different or better than other options. Think about how widely it could be used and how it could help improve care for people who need it most.

Viability of Innovation

Describe clearly what your innovation is and who your innovation is for. Explain your business model and long-term plan—whether it's a social enterprise, a business, or something developed within the NHS. Show that your idea is realistic by talking about demand, how it could grow, and how you'll manage risks or challenges.

Important Information

Please read the following guidance carefully before submitting your application form.

- Please read the eligibility requirements carefully before proceeding with your application.
- Incomplete applications will not be able to progress, and they will be removed. To ensure your application progresses, please ensure all key documentation is uploaded and reviewed before 4pm on **20th November 2026**.
- Applications will only be accepted when submitted through submit.com, applications sent via email will not be valid and please only submit one application.
- Once you have submitted your application, you will not be able to amend the information or add attachments after the application deadline.
- This is not a paid fellowship, and the programme does not offer any funding or grants.
- Questions marked with a * are included to help the team monitor progress throughout your time on the programme. You will not be disadvantaged if you answer 'no' to these questions.
- We cannot accept joint applications but can accept applications from co-founders and teams working on the same innovation (as long as they meet the initial criteria (Those who have experience as a patient, carer or family member of a health condition.). Each application is based on a combination of the individual and their innovation.
- We aim to notify all candidates about the outcome of their application by March 2027, **with the programme starting in Spring 2027**

Application PEP Cohort 4 Assessed Questions

Question: Please tell us about yourself and how your lived experience as a patient or carer has influenced the development of your innovation

Why are we asking about this?

The Patient Entrepreneur Programme criteria is around those who have a lived experience as a patient or carer. We would like to know how your experience has led to your ideas.

What should be included?

Introduce Yourself: Briefly mention your name and background.

Share Your Experience: Describe your journey as a patient or carer, focusing on key moments and challenges.

Connect to Your Innovation: Explain how your experiences inspired your innovation. Highlight specific features or aspects that were directly influenced by your journey.

Application PEP Cohort 4 Assessed Questions

Question: Please upload or record a one-minute video elevator pitch introducing yourself, your innovation or idea.

Why are we asking you to record an elevator pitch?

The Patient Entrepreneur Programme requires all applicants to upload a one-minute elevator pitch to introduce yourself and your innovation/ Idea. This allows the team to get to know you and explore if you are suitable for the programme.

The elevator pitch is a quick and concise speech which should highlight the key components of your innovation, and theoretically be the same length as an elevator ride. This task explores the idea that you have a small amount of time with someone, and you need to make your idea stand out and be impactful within that time.

What should be included?

- An introduction to you and your background and experience .
- The problem your innovation addresses
- Whether there is evidence to support the benefit of your innovation.
- What impact your innovation will have on patients/service users

Our top tips!

Avoid the use of abbreviations or overly-technical terminology.

You will need to record your 1-minute pitch directly onto the application portal, but don't worry, you can re-record your video as many times as you like before submitting. Please note the video will stop at 1 minute!

Record in a well-lit area, with limited background interruptions, and address the camera.

Unfortunately, if your application does not include the pitch, you will not be considered for the programme.

Please do not include any patient identifying or confidential information, including pictures of individuals or names without permission.

Most important, be yourself!

Application PEP Cohort 4 Assessed Questions

Question: What is the problem or challenge you are addressing in the NHS and why is it important?

The Patient Entrepreneur Programme aims to provide the commercial skills, knowledge and experience needed to successfully develop and spread innovative solutions to the challenges facing the NHS and improve patient care.

This question ensures that your idea has been thought through and is viable. It is also an opportunity to showcase your research and how your innovation/idea would benefit the NHS and patients.

We welcome all innovations but are particularly interested in those addresses the NHS three focus areas of:

- **From hospital to community:** This shift aims to deliver care in local community settings, closer to people's homes, rather than solely in hospitals.
- **From analogue to digital:** The NHS is transforming its services by moving from traditional analog systems to digital technologies.
- **From sickness to prevention:** This focuses on shifting the emphasis from treating illness to actively preventing it, which includes investing in population health and addressing health inequalities.

What should be included?

- The problem your innovation addresses and if it meets an unmet need in the NHS.

- Whether there is evidence to support the benefit of your innovation to the NHS.
- What impact your innovation will have on patients/service users (e.g. better clinical outcomes, cost efficiencies so increased opportunity for service transformation, better staff wellbeing so improved performance, etc.).
- Whether your innovation focuses on a high priority area for the NHS (i.e. clinical areas referenced in the NHS 10 Year Health Plan) or a high-need population (e.g. those experiencing significant health inequalities).

Our top tips!

Research is key - please ensure that you have conducted the relevant research to demonstrate clear justification.

Read the **Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England** – the plan provides an overview of key challenges facing the NHS, and key focus points which need support.

Explore NHS England, NHS Digital, local trust and Health Education England priorities to identify how you align.

Ensure you have completed a Lean Canvas exercise to get to the heart of your idea.

Application PEP Cohort 4 Assessed Questions

Question: Please write a summary of your innovation (one paragraph/200 words only)

This question allows us to learn more about your idea or innovation. Whether it is in the early concept phase or already in market, tell us why your innovation is unique, and the challenges it addresses within the NHS.

What should be included?

- A clear concise introduction to your innovation/idea.
- Why your innovation is unique and what challenges it addresses within the NHS.
- Statistics and research to support the validity of your innovation/ideas.

Our top tips!

- Avoid the use of abbreviations or overly-technical terminology.
- Clearly communicate the need for your innovation/idea within the NHS.
- Do not include any patient identifiable or confidential information.
- Include the key information around your innovation, to demonstrate its viability and benefit to the wider NHS.
- Remember you only have 200 words so make sure it clear and concise.

Application PEP Cohort 4 Assessed Questions

Question: Please describe how you plan to deliver your idea or innovation, and please provide details of your next steps.

This question allows us to understand how your innovation has developed so far. If you have not explored business modelling before, please join for CEP Prep, with one of the sessions exploring 'Working on your innovation', looking at Lean Canvas and the steps you should take to support your application.

Your answer will also help us to explore your developmental requirements and what you will need moving forward to support your innovation journey.

What should be included?

Please consider:

- The type of business model you might use.
- The revenue model for your innovation, e.g. advertising, sales, subscription, etc.
- Do you have funding for the project or idea?

Our top tips!

The **Lean Canvas** is a business modelling tool created by Ash Maurya to help deconstruct a start-up idea into its key and most risky assumptions. Deeply influenced by the lean start-up methodology, the Lean Canvas serves as a tactical plan to guide entrepreneurs when navigating their way from ideation to building a successful start-up.

The NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme encourages all aspiring entrepreneurs to complete their Lean Canvas and provides a preparation session around 'Working on your innovation', which includes the exploration of this exercise.

To register for the CEP Prep sessions, please visit our **[CEP Prep pages of the website](#)**

Application PEP Cohort 4 Assessed Questions

Question: Does your innovation impact different populations?

Why are we asking if your innovation impacts different populations?

As a key priority within the NHS, Anglia Ruskin University, and the NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme, we are committed to tackling Health Inequalities (HIs) and ensuring Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). This question aims helps us to understand whether EDI and HIs have been considered within your innovation.

Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair, and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. The programme supports 'Core20PLUS5' and the 'NHS Long Term Plan' in tackling inequalities and improving health outcomes for our population.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity is central to the programme's vision and values, and it is important to ensure the NHS CEP reflects the diverse workforce and patients of the NHS.

The NHS CEP are proud to be supporting the reduction in Health Inequalities and the promotion of EDI.

What should be included?

- Have you considered the needs of your target population and thought about how your innovation could include and exclude different populations?

- Have you considered the accessibility of your innovation and where it adversely affects health inequalities?
- Have you involved your target groups in the development of your innovation (these groups could include patients/service users and/or staff) and have you thought about how you will continue to engage with these groups?

Our top tips!

Research is key - ensure you have a strong understanding of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Health Inequalities.

If you require further information on this subject, contact your local EDI team, who will be able to signpost you to resources, events and further information.

Please explore the next slides for worked examples.

Click on the icon for more information on the 'Core20PLUS5' approach and explore the infographic on the next slide.

REDUCING HEALTHCARE INEQUALITIES

The Core20PLUS5 approach is designed to support Integrated Care Systems to drive targeted action in healthcare inequalities improvement

CORE20

The most deprived 20% of the national population as identified by the Index of Multiple Deprivation



Target population

PLUS

ICS-chosen population groups experiencing poorer-than-average health access, experience and/or outcomes, who may not be captured within the Core20 alone and would benefit from a tailored healthcare approach e.g. inclusion health groups



CORE20 PLUS 5

Key clinical areas of health inequalities

1



MATERNITY

ensuring continuity of care for 75% of women from BAME communities and from the most deprived groups

2



SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS (SMI)

ensuring annual health checks for 60% of those living with SMI (bringing SMI in line with the success seen in Learning Disabilities)

3



CHRONIC RESPIRATORY DISEASE

a clear focus on Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), driving up uptake of Covid, Flu and Pneumonia vaccines to reduce infective exacerbations and emergency hospital admissions due to those exacerbations

4



EARLY CANCER DIAGNOSIS

75% of cases diagnosed at stage 1 or 2 by 2028

5



HYPERTENSION CASE-FINDING and optimal management and lipid optimal management



SMOKING CESSATION

positively impacts all 5 key clinical areas

Worked Example 1: Digital Health Solution

Question: Does your innovation impact different populations?

Our virtual physical therapy platform is designed to address the needs of diverse populations, including:

1. **Rural communities:** Our innovation eliminates the need for patients to travel to physical therapy clinics, enabling individuals in rural communities to receive high-quality care without geographical barriers.
2. **Elderly individuals:** By providing virtual physical therapy, our innovation ensures that elderly patients with mobility issues or difficulties travelling to appointments can conveniently access therapeutic interventions from their homes, promoting independence and improving their quality of life.
3. **People working long hours or unable to attend appointments during office hours:** With our virtual platform, busy individuals can schedule physical therapy sessions that fit their availability, reducing the need for them to take time off work and facilitating the integration of therapy into their busy lives.
4. **Patients with chronic conditions:** Individuals with chronic conditions, such as arthritis or musculoskeletal disorders, may require ongoing physical

therapy to manage their symptoms and maintain functional abilities. Our virtual platform enables regular therapy sessions, ensuring consistent care for patients with chronic conditions and empowering them to actively participate in their own treatment.

5. **Individuals with limited mobility:** People with limited mobility, such as those with disabilities or recovering from surgery, face challenges in accessing in-person physical therapy. Our innovation brings therapy directly to their homes, making it more accessible and convenient for them to receive the necessary rehabilitative support.

Worked Example 2: Medical Technology

Question: Does your innovation impact different populations?

The portable ultrasound device revolutionises medical imaging by offering a compact and affordable solution for healthcare providers in various settings. This innovative device enables healthcare professionals to perform ultrasound examinations at the point of care, providing rapid and accurate diagnostic information.

The VR therapy innovation has a broad impact on different populations, including:

1. **Rural communities:** Our portable device brings the power of ultrasound to rural communities, enabling local healthcare providers to conduct diagnostic scans without the need for patients to travel, reducing carbon emission. This improves access to timely and accurate medical imaging, leading to better diagnosis and treatment decisions for individuals living in remote areas, whilst reducing the environmental impact of travelling to appointments.
2. **Emergency medical services:** Rapid ultrasound assessments on-site in emergency care aids timely diagnosis and triage of patients. This helps identify life-threatening conditions, such as internal bleeding or organ damage, allowing for prompt intervention, impacting the number of lives saved.
3. **Low-resource settings:** The affordability and ease of use make the portable device accessible to medical professionals in resource-constrained settings. This allows for early detection of conditions, contributing to improved maternal and general healthcare outcomes.
4. **Home healthcare:** The ageing population and the preference for home-based care have increased the demand for medical services delivered at home. The portable ultrasound device facilitates remote care, reducing unnecessary travel, and patient engagement work shows reports of improved patient wellbeing.
5. **Training and education:** The portable ultrasound device provides a valuable tool for medical students, trainees and healthcare professionals to learn and practise ultrasound imaging techniques. By offering a hands-on experience in a portable format, our innovation enhances the training opportunities and skill development of future and current healthcare practitioners.

Worked Example 3: Patient-Facing Therapy

Question: Does your innovation impact different populations?

The virtual reality (VR) therapy innovation leverages immersive technology to offer a patient-centred approach to health management, providing engaging and interactive experiences for individuals seeking mental health support.

The VR therapy innovation has a broad impact on different populations, including:

- 1. Those with mental or emotional health difficulties:** The VR therapy offers immersive environments that simulate real-life scenarios, allowing careful patient exposure to situations to help manage their trauma in a controlled and supportive setting. Exposure therapy and relaxation techniques have been delivered effectively in pilot studies, offering a unique and impactful therapeutic approach for those with mental or emotional health difficulties.
- 2. Children and adolescents with anxiety can find it difficult to access health care:** VR therapy offers an interactive and visually stimulating environment that encourages participation and creates a safe space to address fears and practise coping strategies. The VR environment can be customised for specific countries and cultures.
- 3. Neurodiverse individuals can find it difficult to access health in certain real-world environments:** VR therapy provides controlled and immersive bespoke environments to allow patients to feel more comfortable accessing health care or therapy. VR has been shown to improve coping mechanisms in a controlled and
- 4. Individuals with chronic pain:** VR therapy offers distraction and relaxation techniques that help individuals focus their attention away from pain sensations. By immersing patients in calming and visually engaging environments, our innovation provides an alternative form of pain management and promotes overall psychological well-being.
- 5. Seniors with dementia:** Individuals with dementia often experience fear of situations and social isolation. VR therapy can provide cognitive stimulation, reminiscence therapy, and virtual social interactions, improving their cognitive functioning and overall quality of life. By creating a sense of presence and engagement, our innovation offers a therapeutic tool for seniors with dementia, enhancing their cognitive abilities and emotional well-being.

supportive setting. The innovation also has research to support its use as an effective approach to social phobia treatment for adults, enhancing their quality of life and overall well-being.

Negative Worked Example

Question: Does your innovation impact different populations?

Our innovation impacts different populations because it is a patient-facing therapy innovation. It uses virtual reality (VR) technology to provide therapy to patients. This innovation is beneficial for people with various mental health conditions.

VR therapy creates a virtual environment where patients can confront their fears and practise coping strategies. This helps them manage their anxiety and improve their overall well-being.

Additionally, our innovation is also suitable for people with depression. By immersing patients in a virtual world that promotes positive emotions and relaxation, it can help alleviate symptoms of depression and improve their mood.

Through exposure therapy in virtual environments, patients with phobias can gradually confront their fears and overcome phobic reactions.

It is beneficial for individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). VR therapy allows them to revisit traumatic events in a safe and controlled setting, helping them process and heal from their trauma.

Overall, our patient-facing therapy innovation impacts different populations by providing effective treatment options for anxiety, depression, phobias, and PTSD. It offers a personalised and immersive therapeutic experience that promotes mental health and well-being.

(Please note that this is an intentionally poor example answer. Although the answer does mention overall benefit of the innovation, it lacks specificity, and meaningful explanation about which health inequalities are addressed. A well-constructed response would highlight the unique impact on the differences in health outcomes between different groups of people, resulting from social, economic, and environmental factors that create unfair advantages and disadvantages. Examples of health inequalities include those finding it difficult to access health care, those with chronic disease, those in poverty or marginalised communities and those with neurodiverse or mental health differences.)

Application PEP Cohort 4 Assessed Questions

Question: Please detail any research you have undertaken around your innovation/idea? and what makes it unique or different? (max. 200 words)

Why are we asking about the research you have undertaken?

The solid foundation of an effective idea is research. This question allows you to provide evidence to support your application, to ensure your idea/ innovation has been thought through and is viable.

When undertaking research, it is important to identify if your idea/similar ideas are already on the market, and if there is a need for your innovation in the NHS.

What should be included?

- Your potential market and your competitors.
- Outline any market research you may have done – focus groups, interviews, surveys.
- The type of business model you might use.
- If your innovation is viable, and how you will make your innovation scalable and sustainable.
- What further work needs to be done and the steps you intend to take to get there.
- Why your innovation is different from existing solutions available.

- Whether your idea is innovative and whether it would provide benefit to those using it.

Our top tips!

Local NHS Trust libraries often have free training and access around effective researching using programmes such as Open Athens. We would encourage aspiring entrepreneurs to visit their libraries and explore what is available.

Get to know the problem you would like to resolve in depth and understand the need within the NHS, linking back to key documentation, including the NHS Long Term Plan and People Plan.

Identify your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and how you will stand out against competitors.

Complete a Lean Canvas exercise to support your business modelling.

Application PEP Cohort 4 Assessed Questions

Question: Why do you want to join the programme? (Max. 200 words)

Why are we asking you this question?

The Patient Programme supports the individual as well as providing them skills to develop the innovation they are working on. So, we would like to learn a bit more about you and what attracted you to the programme and why you have applied

Our values and vision are very important to the programme, and therefore having entrepreneurs who align with the importance of community, empowerment, inclusivity, innovation, education and collaboration is key.

What should be included?

- Why should we choose you?
- What makes you a good candidate for the PEP (what are your skills, capabilities, interests, ambitions and values?) and what can you bring to the programme?
- What do you think you need to learn?

Our top tips!

Be authentic!

Please refer to the NHS CEP values and vision web page as this will help you explore your alignment with the programme's mission.

Highlight your unique qualities and provide relevant examples.

Application PEP Cohort 4 Assessed Questions

Question: If applicable, briefly outline any previous experience of developing and/or implementing innovations. (Max. 100 words)

Why are we asking you this question?

This question aims to examine if you have any experience of working on innovative or entrepreneurial projects; this could include projects in your workplace. This will help the programme team to understand your relevant experience around innovation.

What should be included?

- Any experience you have had working on innovative or entrepreneurial projects, including examples. This can include projects within your workplace.
- Your career ambitions/goals and your resilience and drive to succeed.
- What you will bring to the programme.
- Your development needs and how the programme can assist with these.

Our top tips!

Please highlight all relevant experience, this may include innovative projects in your career.

If you do not have experience, please do not worry - this information will help us to understand your development needs.

Please do not include confidential information or patient details in examples.

Application PEP Cohort 4 Assessed Questions

Question: Please attach your CV

Why are we asking you to provide your CV?

When applying for the programme, it is important that the team understands your experience and background. Your CV will act as evidence around your justification for joining the programme. This will also help the team to understand more about you and your journey.

What should be included?

- A full professional curriculum vitae, including your background, education and personal information.
- The CV cannot exceed our two-page upload limit.
- The CV should be submitted in a MS Word or PDF file.

Our top tips!

If you would like an example of a professional CV, Microsoft Word and Google have a large range of free downloadable templates. Your NHS organisation may also have its own standard template.

Please ensure you upload an up-to-date CV before submitting your application as applications with missing information will not be able to progress.

Please ensure that the file is easily opened.

Contact us

NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme

Let's talk. If you have a question, please use the contact information below and we will get back to you as soon as possible – thank you!

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