

# **INNOVATE-MD 2026 Fellowship Programme: Call for Projects and Fellow Applications**



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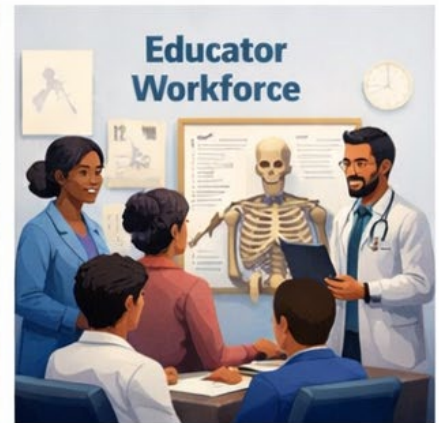
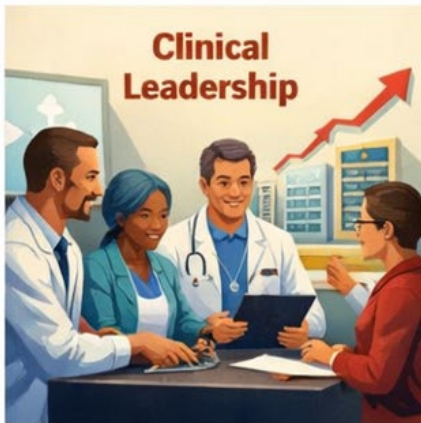
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## Introduction

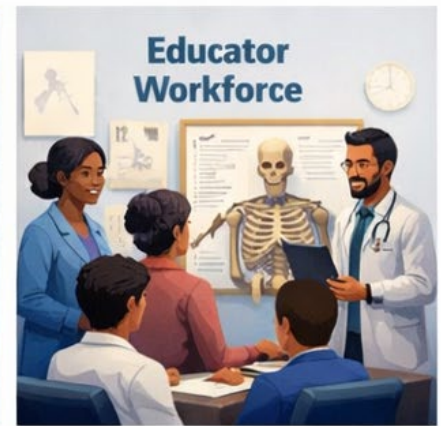
NHS England London are delighted to launch the second round of the Innovate-*MD* Fellowships. These form part of a prestigious 12-month part-time programme designed to empower the next generation of clinical and healthcare leaders. Delivered alongside clinical work, this fellowship supports exceptional talent to drive innovation, enhance leadership capabilities, and address critical challenges within London's health and care systems.

Fellows will engage in impactful projects aligned with NHS England - London's strategic priorities, contributing to the delivery of sustainable, inclusive, and effective healthcare. Further information about the programme and this years fellows can be found at [Innovate MD Fellowships Programme - Futures](#).

**Project areas**



We are supporting fellowships designed to align with nine overarching themes which are the priorities of the NHS England - London. Projects must align to one of these areas.



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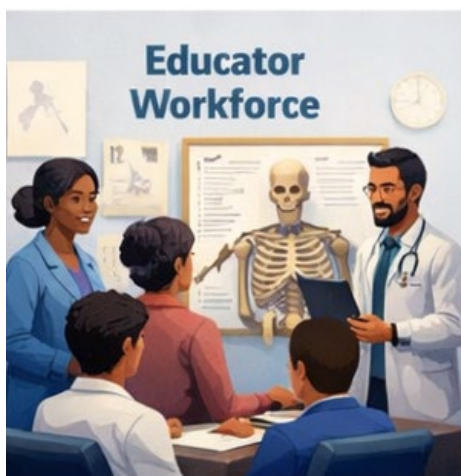
In 2025 we had 64 applications and awarded 28 fellowships.

The table below shows the breakdown of fellowships awarded in the different areas:

<b>Project Area</b>	<b>Number of Applications Submitted</b>
Clinical Leadership	10
Digital/Artificial Intelligence	21
Educator Workforce	3
Enhancing Doctors Working Lives	5
Global London	1
Health Inequality	11
Mental Health	3
Simulation/Technology Enhanced Learning	8
Sustainability	2

The Fellowship programme is designed to be broad and balanced and therefore applicants are recommended to consider carefully the project area to which they submit.

### **Educator workforce**



The growing complexity of healthcare education demands a robust and well-supported educator workforce. This is a priority in the Educator Workforce Strategy<sup>1</sup> and the Long-Term Workforce Plan<sup>2</sup> which set out actions to ensure sufficient capacity and quality of educators to allow the growth in healthcare workforce that is needed to deliver care, now and in the future.

This presents an opportunity to rethink the approach to enabling and sustaining high quality healthcare education and training. Ensuring educators have the resources, skills, and support they need enhances the quality of education and promotes the wellbeing of both educators and learners. Fellows will focus on creating resources for educators, integrating workforce planning into educational systems, and promoting mental health initiatives for educators.

This Fellowship is aimed at supporting collaboration within NHS Trusts, Primary Care, and Higher Educational Institutions to support Educators. This fellowship would be suitable for

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<sup>1</sup> [NHS England » Educator Workforce Strategy](#)

<sup>2</sup> [NHS England » NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#)

clinicians interested in medical education and senior trainees working with NHS Trust Education Teams. Examples of projects could include developing online toolkits for new educators, piloting a mentorship program for diverse educator groups, and implementing workforce analytics tools to optimize planning with an aim to increase educator capacity, improved mental health support, and produce a more inclusive and well-resourced workforce.

### Clinical leadership



Effective leadership is critical for navigating the challenges of modern healthcare systems. Empowering clinicians with leadership skills ensures the delivery of high-quality care and the successful implementation of innovative practices. These fellowships would be suitable to receive mentorship from Medical Directors/CEOs, participate in shadowing opportunities, and access leadership development programs. The fellowship is aimed at senior specialty trainees (ST5+) who are the aspiring clinical leaders of the future. Collaborating with Medical Chief Executives,

Integrated Care Boards and the London Leadership Academy<sup>3</sup>. Potential projects could include pathway design and development within institutions or systems with a focus on cross-departmental collaboration model. Enhanced leadership skills improved clinical outcomes through better decision-making, and a pipeline of future healthcare leaders. Applications from Medical Chief Executives, Medical Directors of Trusts and ICB are particularly welcome. Potential collaborations with the London Leadership Academy are encouraged.

### Sustainability



The NHS is committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2045.<sup>4</sup> Sustainability projects are essential to reducing the environmental impact of healthcare while maintaining high-quality services. Fellows will lead initiatives such as decarbonizing supply chains, developing green plans, and evaluating the environmental impact of clinical practices.<sup>5</sup> Clinicians enthusiastic about sustainability within NHS Organisations. Collaborative projects with the NHS Sustainability Unit, Greener NHS, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), and the Mayor of London's Office are encouraged.

Projects could include development of a sustainable procurement policies, piloting energy-

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<sup>3</sup> [London Leadership Academy](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Greener NHS](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Green physician toolkit | RCP London](#)

efficient technology in hospitals, and establishing a carbon footprint tracking system. The benefits of reduced environmental impact, cost savings from sustainable practices, and improved public trust in NHS sustainability efforts.

### Medical and Dental Health Inequality



Inequalities in healthcare access and outcomes persist across London. Core20+5 is a programme designed to addressing these disparities is vital to creating an equitable healthcare system<sup>6</sup>. Fellows could work on initiatives to improve access for underserved populations, enhance continuity of care, and address systemic barriers to equity. Public health trainees, primary care clinicians, and those involved in community healthcare. OHID, London ICBs, community health organizations, and advocacy groups. Designing an outreach

program for marginalized communities, analysing healthcare access data to identify disparities, and implementing targeted intervention to reduce health inequalities. Improved health outcomes for vulnerable groups, reduced disparities in access, and a more equitable healthcare system.

### Mental health



Mental health challenges are a significant burden on individuals and healthcare systems. Innovative approaches are needed to improve mental health services and outcomes. Fellows will develop projects to promote mental health inclusion, support criminal justice populations, and reduce suicide rates. Mental health clinicians, psychologists, and those working with vulnerable populations. Mental health trusts, criminal justice teams, NHS England, and public health bodies. Establishing mental health support hubs in underserved areas, creating training programs for

mental health first responders, and piloting digital mental health tools. Enhanced mental health services, reduced suicide rates, and improved outcomes for vulnerable populations.

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<sup>6</sup> [NHS England » Core20PLUS5 \(adults\) – an approach to reducing healthcare inequalities](#)

## Digital & Clinical Artificial Intelligence



Digital and clinical artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have the potential to transform healthcare delivery, improving efficiency and outcomes while reducing costs. Fellows could explore the lifecycle of AI applications, from development to implementation, and foster collaboration across digital health networks. This fellowship would appeal to clinicians with an interest in technology. Potential projects could include field testing evaluation of AI technology for diagnosis and treatment planning, implementing predictive analytics tools in hospitals, developing AI-driven diagnostic

models, and creating a regional AI knowledge-sharing platform. Improved efficiency, enhanced diagnostic accuracy, and the establishment of London as a leader in healthcare AI would be the goals of these projects.

## Neighbourhood Health London



London's diverse population offers unique opportunities to address global health challenges and promote social cohesion and resilience. Fellows could work on initiatives that address social isolation, improve public health, and enhance global health partnerships. This fellowship is aimed at public health trainees, primary care doctors, and those with an interest in global health. Potential collaborators include the Mayor of London's Office and the Office for Health Inequality and Disparities (OHID)<sup>7</sup>. Ideas for project could include developing a city-wide social

connection program, piloting community health initiatives in diverse neighbourhoods, and fostering health collaborations and improved public health outcomes.

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<sup>7</sup> [Office for Health Improvement and Disparities - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-health-inequality-and-disparities)

## Simulation and Technology Enhanced Learning



Simulation and Technology Enhanced Learning<sup>8</sup> are proven methods for improving clinical competence and confidence. Expanding these technologies ensures equitable access to high-quality training. Fellows could lead the deployment of simulation technologies, develop interprofessional learning programs, and create resources for TEL standardization Educators, trainees, and multidisciplinary clinical teams. Fellowships could be based in the NHS Learning Hub, Trust simulation centres, and educational institutions. Projects might

look at simulation-based training program for emergency care, designing a TEL curriculum for primary care healthcare providers, and creating a repository of e-learning resources. The aims of the fellowship would be to increased confidence among healthcare providers, and greater access to training across London.

## Enhancing Resident Doctors' Working Lives



The Enhancing Doctors' Working Lives 2023 report<sup>9</sup> and the NHS 10-point plan highlight initiatives to improve the working conditions and training experiences of postgraduate doctors in England, addressing flexibility, recruitment, training quality, cost, and diversity. Fellowships in this area will look at approaches to streamlines processes within Trusts, focus on wellbeing such as the impact of psychological support, wellness spaces, and train-the-trainer programs for mental health and neurodiversity. Identify and strengthen partnerships with underrepresented groups to refine equality

measures and recruit trainers from diverse backgrounds and evaluate the impact of these initiatives on retention. Examples of projects could be an evaluation of the Flexible Portfolio careers initiative and the impact on improvements to the recruitment experience for junior doctors and study leave process and the recommendations from the NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Commission<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> [Technology Enhanced Learning \(TEL\) | NHS England | Workforce, training and education](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives 2023](#)

<sup>10</sup> [NHS \(HEE\) - Mental Wellbeing Commission Report.pdf](#)

## How does the Fellowship work?

Fellowships will last 12 calendar months and fellows will work on their project for 2 days a week (0.4 FTE) with the rest of their time allocated to clinical duties.

Fellows will apply to their Training Programme Director (NHSE Trainees) or Clinical Director (LAS/SAS doctors) to work less than full time clinically (0.6 FTE) with the remained of their time (0.4 FTE) allocated to the Fellowship.

They will continue to be paid 1.0 FTE by their employer and employers will receive reimbursement to cover salary and onboarding costs to cover 0.4 FTE. Fellows will receive project supervision during their fellowship from a named supervisors and be supported in their work by the Fellowship programme. There will be 4 academic days which fellows will be expected attend these. Fellows will be required to submit a written report at the end of the fellowship and present the results of their project during the fellowship year.

## How to apply

There are 2 types of applications:

**Type A: Named Fellow and Project Proposal:** This is the preferred route of application. Applications are co-created between the potential fellow and the fellowship supervisor. Eligibility for the Fellow and supervisor are detailed [here](#). If the application is successful, the Fellowship is expected to commence in 2026.

**Type B: Project Proposal only:** An application for a fellowship project can be submitted as a project proposal and then if the application is successful, the supervisor is required to recruit a fellow to undertake the project commence in 2026.

Type A projects will receive priority in the selection process.

## Eligibility guidelines

Fellows: Must be medical or dental graduates with GMC or GDC professional registration and a current licence to practice **AND** Hold a National Training Number in a UK medical or dental specialty training programme for the duration of the fellowship **OR** be a Locally Employed Doctors or SAS doctor employed by an NHS Trust in the London region.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [NHS England » London region](#)

Supervisors: Should be appropriately qualified (e.g. Head of School, TPD, Educational Supervisor) **AND** be working in an NHS Trust in the London region **AND** have a permanent control of employment covering the whole period of the fellowship.

### **Selection of Fellowship applications**

Applications for the Fellowships will be carefully reviewed to ensure alignment with the program's objectives and potential for impact. Selection will be based on two key criteria: the strength of the proposed project and the capability of the nominated fellow. Strong projects will demonstrate clear objectives, alignment with the fellowship's focus areas, and the potential to deliver meaningful and measurable improvements within the healthcare system. Equally, the nominated fellow will be assessed on their experience, leadership potential, and ability to drive the project forward successfully. Together, these factors will ensure the fellowships are awarded to individuals and initiatives with the greatest capacity to create positive change.

## Application form

The Project Application form can be found at: <https://forms.office.com/e/AVid6SFVQv>

If you are applying with a named Fellow on the project application, then the Fellow should also complete this application form: <https://forms.office.com/e/geuUEEtme0>

If there is a named fellow they should also request their Training Programme Director, or in the case of a SAS/LED their Clinical Director, to complete the Approval in Principle form which can be found at: <https://forms.office.com/e/SUZU2deCmd>

Before applying you are strongly advised to read the [Frequently asked questions section](#) and check the [eligibility guidelines](#).

## Recruitment timelines

**23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026:** Applications open.

**9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 15:30:** Webinar and Q&A session. This will be recorded and the recording available after the event. The link to attend the webinar is: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/32238708833242?p=6mW4jZEekMEBf0I6rS>

**13<sup>th</sup> April 2026:** Applications close at 10:00am

**\*29 May 2026:** Supervisors and Fellows notified of outcomes

**October 2026:** Scheme commences

\*Please note that some dates may occasionally be subject to change.

## Contract arrangements

Successful candidates will undertake the fellowship as a secondment from their current employer on existing employment terms and conditions. Fixed-term contracts are not available for this post. Contract arrangements are organised between successful candidates, employing organisations and host organisations. NHS England London WTE are not responsible for contract or salary arrangements/agreements.

### **For doctors in training who are in training programmes:**

Applicants in training programmes must inform their respective LETB or Deanery and employers of a possible out-of-programme experience on application to allow timely

conversations regarding arrangements for secondment. Candidates will need to declare that they have discussed support to go less than full time to conduct the Fellowship 0.4 FTE with their relevant Training Programme Director, or equivalent, on the application form.

Successful candidates must contact their nominated HR leads to notify them of appointment at the very earliest opportunity and will need to arrange a secondment contract.

For GP trainees with an expected CCT completion date around or before 1 September 2026, an appointment to the scheme would extend training at the grade they have reached to ensure completion of the scheme within the shorter training window. This should be discussed with the relevant training supervisor upon application.

**For doctors in training between training programmes, or who have completed foundation training (FY2) without a successive training post:**

Trainees who will not be in a training programme as of 1 September 2026 (e.g. current FY2) must still be employed by an NHS trust, Lead Employer or organisation for the purpose of participating in the scheme. Successful candidates are therefore responsible for arranging a contract extension with their current employer to cover their entire secondment period. Early discussions should have already taken place. The fellowship will be arranged as a secondment from the employing organisation, therefore candidates NOT in a training programme should make contact with their Training Programme Director/educational supervisor and local HR contact or partner immediately upon application to seek support in principle for gaining a contract extension for one year to facilitate a place on the scheme, in lieu of a successive employer.

**Working arrangements**

**Less than full time posts**

Due to the intensive nature of the scheme and the window being limited to 12 months, posts are not offered at less than 0.8 FTE. Requests for less than full-time working will be considered by host organisations on a post-by-post basis and the decision as to whether this can be accommodated will reside with them.

**Office attendance and remote working**

Remote working arrangements may be required by some hosts, and they will specify the working arrangements for each post in the job description. To take full advantage of the

opportunities and access available, you should be prepared to travel to and from host organisation offices as required and when appropriate.

In addition to host arrangements, all successful candidates will be expected to attend the Academic Programme as required to gather as a cohort and to spend time with the Fellowship Programme Director.

### Frequently asked questions

**Can I put in more than one application?** Yes, provided the applications are aligned to the project themes there is no limit to the number of applications that can be submitted.

**How many fellowships are you awarding in 2026/7?** The exact number has not yet determined. It will depend on the quality of the applications and the total funding envelope for the budget year. In 2025/6 28 fellowships were awarded, details of these can be found on the London Futures Website.

**Why does the fellowship have to be based in London?** These fellowships are funded via NHS England - London. Other regions have their own fellowship programmes.

**Is the fellowship full-time?** The fellowship is 0.4 WTE (2 days per week), integrated alongside clinical work or training.

**Can the fellowship be done at a lower time commitment than 0.4FTE?** Having a lower time commitment is not suitable to be able to complete the objectives of the programme and the project will be structured to deliver the fellowship objectives on a 0.4 FTE unbanded working pattern. It may be possible to undertake the fellowship at 80% of FTE and this should be discussed and agreed between the supervisor and fellow.

**Can the fellowship be compressed into a shorter and more intensive placement?** No. the fellowship programme is designed to last one year.

**Can fellowship be done without reducing the training/working pattern, i.e. on top of normal working hours?** Due to the time commitments of this programme, a fellow must not have a total working pattern >1.0 FTE.

**Will the time on the fellowship count towards medical or dental speciality training?** No. Fellows must agree with their Training Programme Director to enter less than full time training for the duration of the fellowship. The time spent on the fellowship is then added on extend the expected duration of training. The educational content of the fellowship is not expected to align sufficiently with current medical or dental curricula to count towards competencies.

**What is the funding arrangement?** Salary back-fill is provided to the fellow's employing Trust, enabling them to dedicate the necessary time to the program.

**Does the fellowship pay my salary directly?** The fellowship and NHS England – London are not your Employer. Your existing Employer is reimbursed for your salary (0.4FTE for 12 months) to release your time for the fellowship post by the regional or professional sponsoring organisation for your post. The salary that the Employer is reimbursed is determined by the Employer's quote at the start of the fellowship.

**What happens if I move to a new employer (e.g. rotating through training) during the fellowship?** Salary reimbursement for fellowship time is transferred to your new employer.

**What happens if I go on sick leave, parental leave, or any other extended leave during the fellowship year?** This fellowship is a time-bound opportunity that runs for 12 months between the dates specified. The educational activities and project placements hosted by supervisors are structured to deliver the fellowship curriculum within this period. The project projects related to cohort dates and are not required to provide supervision beyond these dates. In general, interrupted time on the fellowship year cannot be added on beyond the end of the fellowship year. Individual situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the supervisor.

**What certification do fellows receive at the end of the fellowship year?** Fellows receive a certificate of completion of the fellowship from NHS England – London endorsed by the Postgraduate Dean.

**How are projects selected?** Projects are assessed based on quality of the project, supervisor and host institution together with alignment with the strategic priorities, and potential impact.

**Are the fellow's travel and other expenses covered?** Travel required for fellowship-related activities is expected to be supported by the employer.

**What approval does the fellow need before applying?** Potential fellows on NHS England training programs must have approval from their Training Programme Director to allow them to go to 0.6 FTE for the duration of the Fellowship. If the potential fellow is a Locally Employed Doctor or SAS doctor, they must have approval from their Clinical Director to move to a 0.6 WTE contract during the fellowship and their contract of employment must cover the whole period of the fellowship.

### Further information

If you have enquiries or require further information about the programme or wish to discuss your application please contact us at [england.londonfellows@nhs.net](mailto:england.londonfellows@nhs.net)