



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is the NHS Innovation Accelerator (NIA) for?

The NIA is for mature innovations with an evidence base, ready to scale in the NHS, and where there is no easy or obvious mechanism for adoption. As such, there is a clear need for a national platform like the NIA to assist in overcoming systemic barriers to adoption at scale in the NHS.

The 2017 Call for Applications is seeking innovations that address one or more of the following three challenges:

- Mental Health
- Urgent and Emergency Care
- Primary Care

Individuals from a range of organisations are eligible to apply, including NHS, public sector, University, industry, and voluntary sectors. The employing or host organisation needs to be established and beyond start up, but also requiring support through the NIA to expand within the NHS.

2. How were the 2017 NIA challenges decided?

The 2017 NIA challenges have been identified as three of the main 2017/18 national service improvement priorities for the NHS in the [Next Steps of the Five Year Forward View](#).

The challenges were agreed through national engagement with NHS stakeholders, patients, Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) and NHS England, with a focus on the priorities detailed within the country's 44 Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

3. What will be the application and selection process in 2017?

Applicants need to submit an application form detailing information about themselves and their skills, experience and competencies to spread an innovation; as well as their innovation, the problem it addresses, the evidence as to its effectiveness and the strategy for scaling in the NHS.

Application forms will then be shortlisted by a minimum of four assessors drawn from a range of perspectives, including clinical, patient, commercial and implementation. Applications will be assessed on the basis of the applicant, the innovation, and confirmation that there is no straightforward nor 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.

Once shortlisted, applicants will be invited to a panel interview. At the same time, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) will review all shortlisted applications. After the interviews, a final decision panel chaired by Professor Sir Bruce Keogh, Medical Director at NHS England and Chair of the NIA Programme Board, will assess the recommendations from the

assessment process (application, NICE review and interview) to agree which Fellows will be offered a conditional place on the NIA in 2017.

At this stage, two references will be taken up for each Fellow - one of whom needs to be a senior representative from your employing organisation. We will also undertake a period of due diligence, and request - where relevant - two years of annual accounts, a list of company directors and any published annual report. All Fellows will be asked to sign an agreement with UCLPartners - hosts for the NIA - before being formally announced as an NIA Fellow. A version of this and on which wording the 2017 contract will be based, can be viewed on the application page. Applicants should check that they and their employing organisation would be happy to sign this contract before applying.

4. Where will the panel interviews take place?

Face-to-face panel interviews will take place in London. For international candidates who are unable to travel, skype interviews will be made available.

5. What are the key dates for the NIA Call in 2017?

The key dates are as follows:

Activity	Date
NIA opens for applications	14 June 2017
Application deadline	Midnight, 26 July 2017
Screening	27 July - 3 August 2017
Application form assessment	4 August - 5 September 2017
Shortlisting panel	15 September 2017
Invitation to interviews	w/c 18 September 2017
Interviews	26, 27, 29 September 2017
Decision making panel	10 October 2017
Outcomes communicated to applicants	12 October 2017
Due diligence and contracting	12-30 October 2017
Launch event	22 November 2017
Quarterly events (Fellows' attendance mandatory)	25 January 2018 25 April 2018 18 July 2018 26 September 2018
NIA Summit	Autumn 2018

6. I've read the Call for Applications and the Guide for Applicants but I still have further questions

If you have read all the published documents but still have questions, there are a number of webinars and information events you can join to find out more:

Weekly webinars

The weekly webinars are open to anyone without prior registration. The webinars will provide detailed information about the application process and the NIA. Slides will be made available for these sessions and there will be an opportunity for Q&A.

Date	Time	Joining details
Monday 19 June	11.30am-12.30pm (GMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer: https://join.me/596-008-251 • Join.me app (meeting code: 596-008-251) • Phone: 033 0088 2634 (access code 596-008-251#)
Thursday 29 June	4.00pm-5.00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer: https://join.me/523-874-781

	(GMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join.me app (meeting code: 523-874-781) • Phone: 033 0088 2634 (access code: 523-874-781#)
Friday 7 July	10.00am-11.00am (GMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer: https://join.me/962-105-931 • Join.me app (meeting code: 962-105-931) • Phone: 033 0088 2634 (access code: 962-105-931#)
Friday 14 July	3.00pm-4.00pm (GMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer: https://join.me/552-672-579 • Join.me app (meeting code: 552-672-579) • Phone: 033 0088 2634 (access code: 552-672-579#)
Wednesday 19 July	9.30am-10.30am (GMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer: https://join.me/415-348-969 • Join.me app (meeting code: 415-348-969) • Phone: 033 0088 2634 (access code: 415-348-969#)

How to join the webinars:

- **By computer:** click on the appropriate link above.
- **By tablet:** open the join.me app and enter the appropriate meeting code above
- **By computer via internet:** Join the meeting, click the phone icon and select 'call via internet'. A small download might be required.

Information events

These face-to-face events are designed to:

- Provide an overview of the NIA and the application process
- Information as to the support available via the NIA and the benefits of being an NIA Fellow
- Give insights as to what makes a strong scaling plan in the NHS

Places are limited and you must register to attend these events:

Date	Time	Location	Registration link
Wednesday 28 June	11.30am - 1.00pm	Manchester: Innovation Centre Dalton Room 46-48 Grafton St Manchester M13 9XX	https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/meet-the-nia-manchester-tickets-35258747864
Monday 3 July	9.30am - 11.00am	London: UCLPartners Boardroom, 3 rd Floor 170 Tottenham Court Rd London W1T 7HA	https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/meet-the-nia-london-tickets-35258921383

7. What support does an NIA Fellow receive?

The NIA cannot offer a guaranteed route to widespread adoption across the NHS.

The ethos of the accelerator is to provide a range of support in response to the needs of each Fellow and the barriers to uptake their innovation faces within the NHS. This includes a bespoke learning

programme, mentorship and networking opportunities to equip Fellows with critical knowledge, relationships and skills to scale innovation in the NHS.

Each NIA Fellow is provided with:

- Access to a pool of mentors
- Networking with AHSNs
- Quarterly learning events
- Peer-to-peer support
- Ad hoc specialist information sessions, as required (e.g. procurement, NHS commissioning, health economics, business case development, etc.)
- Navigation to existing innovation initiatives locally within AHSNs (e.g. SETsquared) and nationally (e.g. vanguards)
- Access to a bursary

At the end of the initial 12 months, each Fellow should have the following in place:

- **Robust diffusion plan:** A critically appraised, robust diffusion plan for the NHS, which they have made progress on implementing (e.g. new contracts signed, resources secured, etc.)
- **Expanded networks:** Built a network of decision makers, 'critical friends' and other key stakeholders
- **Navigation of innovation opportunities:** The ability to navigate innovation initiatives, support infrastructure and national levers
- **Expanded knowledge:** Addressed critical knowledge gaps as agreed with their mentors/lead AHSN/NIA core team at the programme outset

8. Is the NIA about individuals or innovations?

Unlike other accelerators, the NIA is both a fellowship programme (focused on capability building for individuals, and in some cases their wider team) and an accelerator of innovation adoption (providing a 'lit runway' for high impact innovations).

9. What is the role of a 'lead AHSN' in the NIA? What is the time commitment?

All 15 AHSNs across England are official NIA partners. The role of a lead AHSN for a particular Fellow will entail providing local networking, showcasing and championing to facilitate opportunities for local adoption of NIA innovations. It will also provide feedback and constructive advice as to the Fellow's 12-week Sprint plans (e.g. diffusion strategies/approaches) and how these could be strengthened. Furthermore, AHSNs will navigate fellows to local innovation support infrastructure and information, e.g. fellowships, training opportunities, IP and commercial expertise, etc.

It is anticipated that this will entail fortnightly meetings at the beginning of the programme, which may then move to monthly, plus email/telephone communication in between meetings. We recognise that every Fellow will have a bespoke set of needs, as will the level of support that an AHSN can provide. As such, there is a degree of flexibility as to what is provided by the lead AHSN, the mentor and the NIA core team.

10. What is the role of an NIA Mentor?

The NIA Mentors bring a broad range of skills and experiences, and as such we try to match Fellows to mentors depending on their support needs. This means Fellows might not be assigned a single mentor for the duration of the NIA but are more likely to be able to draw on a range of expertise from different mentors throughout the year.

It is expected that Mentor interactions with Fellows will include:

- Introductions and representation to national leads, e.g. National Clinical Directors, leads at NHS England, PHE, etc.
- Introductions to national charities with the influence to be able to forge national-level partnerships
- Introductions to and championing of Fellows and their innovations to national level organisations and networks, e.g. the Association of UK University Hospitals, Royal Colleges, etc.
- Sharing personal insights and empathy around the journey of an ‘innovator into practice’
- Depending on the background of the Mentor, sharing perspectives of either the NHS or commercial acumen to increase Fellow’s understanding of how to engage key stakeholders
- Skills based advice/training/information, e.g. business case and pitching training for Fellows and potentially their wider company, commercial advice as to optimum business models for a Fellow’s innovation and support for implementing alternative models

The pool of mentors will be expanded in 2017 following the experiences and identified needs of the Fellows in 2016.

11. What can I spend my bursary on?

In 2017, a bursary fund of £240k will be available. The fund will be allocated evenly across all appointed, eligible Fellows. To be eligible to access the bursary, Fellows will need to demonstrate a clear need for this funding within their application form. It will be assumed that large private companies will not seek to access the NIA bursary. The bursary is intended to support the scaling of your innovation and/or your own personal development to support you in your scaling efforts. You can also use your bursary for travel to NIA events.

The uses for the bursary are likely to fall into the following categories:

- Personal development, including expert advice (e.g. legal or commercial) or specific training courses, where not directly provided or available through the NIA
- Enablement of effective engagement with key stakeholders, including organisation of meetings and events (e.g. venue hire, refreshments, speakers, travel costs for potential adopters and patients etc.), development of engagement materials (e.g. videoing, editing, designer costs, etc.) and design of supporting diffusion tools (e.g. design and production costs relating to training and marketing materials)
- Innovation development and adaptations where these have been suggested through the NIA as enablers to diffusion
- Evidence gathering and analysis including, for example, the application of health economics, market testing or technical analysis
- Travel and other costs (e.g. subsistence) directly relating to the participation by the NIA Fellow in the NIA

The bursary cannot be used to cover, for example:

- The NIA Fellow’s salary or other related payroll costs
- Any costs for services contracted from consultancy firms or other external agencies for the delivery of support otherwise available to the NIA Fellow via the NIA

12. How and when can I access the bursary?

The NIA year is structured around a series of four 12-week sprints, which support delivery of your overall scaling ambition. At the beginning of each 12-week sprint, you will be asked to set out a plan for the coming 12 weeks, including the type of support you need from the NIA. As part of this, you can request to use your bursary but you will need to clearly show how it supports delivery of the 12-week sprint.

13. What is the role of the NIA core team?

The core NIA team provides administration and co-ordination for the accelerator including:

- Working with the AHSNs and a range of supporters (e.g. UKTI, The Health Foundation, etc.) to optimise the value of the NIA for Fellows and the wider NHS
- Administering the selection, recruitment and contracting process of the NIA Fellows
- Administering the launch event, quarterly events and year-end summit
- Matching of Fellows to lead AHSNs and Mentors
- Developing core materials, e.g. action plans and sprint templates
- Identifying and meeting any gaps in the support package offered to Fellows
- Providing secretariat for the NIA Programme Board and NIA Operational Group
- Engaging with NHS England to optimise opportunities for the Fellows and to address systemic barriers
- Working with NHS England and AHSNs on communications around the NIA
- Providing day to day support to the Fellows

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

The NIA focusses on the development and support of individuals, and therefore all applications must include a sole named applicant.

15. I'm from a start-up, can I apply to 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. Therefore the NIA is looking to recruit SMEs and larger organisations, rather than start-ups.

16. Do NIA Fellows need the support of an AHSN before they can apply to the NIA?

An application does not need the support of an AHSN prior to submitting an application form. However, you may wish to engage your local AHSN to discuss your application and to seek advice on your scaling plans before submitting your application.

Furthermore, to be appointed, at least one AHSN must be willing to support the scaling of the innovation. The NIA core team will co-ordinate this process. There is likely to be value in engaging your local AHSN to discuss your application and seek advice.

17. What will I be spending the two days per week required commitment to the NIA doing?

NIA Fellows need to be able to commit two days per week to scaling their innovation as part of the NIA. These two days per week will include attendance at quarterly events, working up and implementing sprint plans, providing updates to the NIA team, meeting mentors and lead AHSNs, etc.

For some Fellows, this will be part of your normal jobs - where scaling their innovation is their everyday business. For others, particularly those who are based in clinical roles, it might mean a different set of tasks from the day to day. This could range from building a compelling business case for intended purchasers, developing and executing a stakeholder engagement and marketing plan, building a network, developing a health economic case, presenting to target purchasers, and so on.

We would expect the two days per week will vary for each Fellow depending on the type of innovation and your strategy for scaling.

18. Who are the Mentors on the NIA?

The following were Mentors for the second-year NIA Fellows. We are in the process of confirming their continued involvement, as well as adding further Mentors.

- Adrian Downing, Healthcare Director, Concentra
- Professor The Lord Ajay Kakkar, Chairman, UCLPartners, Professor of Surgery, UCL
- Professor Andrew Morris, Director, Usher Institute for Population Health Sciences and Informatics, Director, Farr Institute
- Professor The Lord Darzi of Denham, Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation, Imperial College London
- Celia Ingham Clark, Medical Director for Clinical Effectiveness, NHS England
- Professor Donal O'Donoghue, Medical Director, Greater Manchester AHSN
- Dr Eliot Forster, CEO, Immunocore
- Professor Joanne Hackett, Commercial Director, Genomics England (GeL)
- Professor Sir John Burn, Professor of Clinical Genetics, Newcastle University, Non-Executive Director, NHS England
- Lucy Heady, Impact Director, Nesta
- Manish Miglani, Investment Director, Nesta
- Noel Gordon, Chairman, NHS Digital, Non-Executive Director, NHS England
- Pam Garside, Partner, Newhealth, Fellow, Judge Business School, University of Cambridge
- Dr Robert Winter, Former Executive Medical Director, Cambridge University Hospitals, Director of Cambridge University Health Partners
- Dr Samantha Barrell, Chief Executive, Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
- Samantha Jones, Former Director of the New Care Models Programme
- Dr Thomas Lee, Chief Medical Officer, Press Ganey
- Dr Tom Weaver, CEO, Congenica
- Professor Tony Young, National Clinical Director for Innovation

19. Is there ever a circumstance when an NIA Fellow could be asked to leave the NIA?

The bar for NIA Fellows/innovations is high, and the requirement for full participation needs to be demonstrated by all Fellows throughout the accelerator, with a consequence of exiting the programme if requirements are not met.

The expectations placed upon Fellows is detailed within the Call for Applications and also within the contract Fellows are required to sign, along with their organisations, to formally join the NIA. As part of this commitment, Fellows agree to spend two days per week on the NIA, are required to attend the launch and four quarterly events, and submit progress reports. At the start of the NIA, they will develop and agree a scaling plan with their lead AHSN and the NIA core team. As part of this, Fellows agree a minimum set of activities they will deliver during the coming 12 months.

Fellows may be asked to leave the programme in the circumstance that they:

- Break any condition in the NIA contract
- Are unable to attend the launch and/or quarterly events
- Do not deliver on agreed activities during the course of the NIA
- Behaviour in a manner unacceptable to the NIA and its ethos

20. How does the NIA differ from the Clinical Entrepreneurs programme?

The Clinical Entrepreneurs programme provides specialty fellowship training for Doctors and wider health professionals who have a great idea for a commercial, social or charitable enterprise. Fellows on the Clinical Entrepreneurs programme will be supported to develop entrepreneurial skills alongside their clinical training.

In contrast, the NIA is for anyone with a mature, evidence-based innovation that is ready to scale and provides the support to both develop the individual and to scale their innovation at pace.

21. I do not think the NIA is right for me. Where else can I go for support for my innovation in the health sector?

The Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) are uniquely placed to identify and spread health innovation at pace and scale; driving the adoption and spread of innovative ideas and technologies across large populations. There are 15 across the country and these should be your first port of call for support with your innovation. Visit www.ahsnnetwork.com to identify your local AHSN.

For more information about the NIA:

Email: NIA@uclpartners.com

Website: www.NHSaccelerator.com

Twitter: [@NHSaccelerator](https://twitter.com/NHSaccelerator)