

Meet our 2025 innovators

Innovations supporting
Elective Recovery
and Patient Flow



| About us

Health Innovation Network
DIGITAL *North*

Digital North

The 2025 programme will deliver game-changing digital innovations that will help to address the problem of elective recovery and patient flow across the health and care system.

The Health Innovation Network and four Northern Networks

The Health Innovation Network incorporates 15 regional bodies which operate as the innovation arm of the NHS. Across the country the health innovation networks act as a bridge between health care providers, commissioners, academia and industry. By connecting these sectors, we provide a pipeline of solutions from research and product development through to implementation and commercialisation.

Of the 15 health innovation networks, there are four in the north: Health Innovation Yorkshire & Humber, Health Innovation Manchester, Health Innovation North West Coast and Health Innovation North East

and North Cumbria. We aim to embed innovative products and services within routine clinical practice, stimulating regional economic growth whilst improving patient outcomes and transforming lives.

The Digital North Accelerator programme is a collaborative enterprise established by the four northern Health Innovation networks. It aims to support regional digital health technology firms in the adoption and spread of their proven innovations within the healthcare system. Successful regional solutions are then guided towards national adoption through the Innovation Exchange programme.



Elective Recovery and Patient Care

Patient waiting times

- Between March 2010 and June 2024, the elective waiting list has grown from just over 2.4 million to over 7 million and those waiting more than a year is up from 20,000 to more than 300,000.
- As of June 2024, over 1 million people were waiting for community services, including more than 50,000 people who had been waiting for over a year.
- By April 2024, about 1 million people were waiting for mental health services.
- There were 345,000 referrals where people were waiting more than a year for first contact, and 109,000 of those were for children and young people under 18.
- Accident and emergency departments are under unprecedented pressure. In May 2024, just over 60 per cent of people attending a type 1 or type 2 A&E were seen within four hours and nearly 10 per cent are now waiting for 12 hours or more.

Productivity and flow

- Despite the increase in acute hospital staff and expenditure, the number of appointments, operations and procedures has not increased at the same pace and so productivity has fallen.
- There are 7 per cent fewer daily outpatient appointments for each consultant, 12 per cent less surgical activity for each surgeon, and 18 per cent less activity for each clinician working in emergency medicine.

Our 2025 cohort

Health Innovation Network
DIGITAL North

We are delighted to introduce the eight companies who will be taking part in the 2024/25 Digital North accelerator programme:



Isla Health

Isla is a powerful digital pathway platform for healthcare providers to support patients throughout their care journey. Trusted by over 30 NHS partners and used in more than 40 clinical specialties, it is transforming healthcare by seamlessly providing real-time, continuous insights into patients' health.

The platform empowers clinicians to monitor patients remotely, intervene proactively, and make faster, more confident decisions. Handling over 1 million submissions each year, Isla improves patient flow and throughput and frees up clinicians to focus on patient care, not admin. It also improves patient engagement and safety.

<https://isla.health/about-us>



DocAbode

Doc Abode is an award-winning digital health company revolutionising workforce management in healthcare. Our innovative dynamic scheduling platform intelligently matches healthcare professionals with patient needs in real-time, optimising urgent community response (UCR), virtual wards, and out-of-hospital care pathways.

Already proven in North Central London ICS, where service capacity increased by over 50%, our solution reduces costs, eliminates reliance on agency staff, and improves workforce productivity. Backed by NHS England's National Innovation Accelerator (NIA), we align with NHS priorities to modernise community care, support integrated care systems, and enable seamless cross-boundary working. Doc Abode is driving sustainable, patient-centred healthcare transformation.

<https://docabode.com>



SHREWD

VitalHub UK (VHUK) is a leading provider of health technology solutions. Its innovation SHREWD, is a powerful, real-time operational management platform that transforms complex healthcare data from multiple providers across healthcare systems, from acute and community trusts to ambulance and primary care. It creates instant, automated, whole-system visibility of pressure, providing one single version of the truth.

Designed to enhance decision-making and system performance, the platform visualises critical metrics such as bed availability, emergency department activity, and discharge bottlenecks, as well as OPEL statuses. Its intuitive dashboards and early warning alerts empower healthcare leaders to respond proactively to pressures, optimise patient flow, and improve resource utilisation, helping to deliver safer, more effective care for patients.

 www.vitalhub.uk/brand/shrewd



Rego

Rego is an intelligent system designed to eliminate the bureaucracy and treatment delays caused by rejected referrals. Used by thousands across primary care it guides clinicians to the right pathway in as little as 86 seconds, making every referral right first time.

In secondary care, Rego helps to speed up the triage process by bringing together all the information that's needed to make the right decision.

When used as part of an integrated system, it transforms referral management. As well as gold-standard referrals and faster triage, it provides real-time data on demand trends, helping to increase capacity in elective care.

 www.necsws.com/customised-patient-referral-system



eConsult

eConsult specialise in Digital Triage in both primary care (triage from home) and urgent and emergency care (waiting-room triage) and we support productivity and patient flow through both of those systems. We support clinical teams to ensure patients are efficiently supported based on their clinical presentation AND acuity.

Huma (our parent company) also own iPlato (patient communication and engagement) and specialise in AI and RPM. Its innovative, needs-based approach to patient management provides a highly localised offer that supports productivity, flow and waiting times.

The halo value of the combined offer provides a system-led solution in multiple health environments.

 <https://econsult.net/nhs-patients>



Open Medical

We are a team of clinician-led digital health experts delivering award-winning, cloud-based software for clinical pathway management, powered by our Pathpoint® platform. Our solutions streamline clinical and operational workflows from referral to discharge, across various specialties, for projects of any size—from small departments to regional & nationwide transformations.

Our mission is to achieve sustainable healthcare through digital excellence and to date, over 200 healthcare sites across the UK, Europe, and the Middle East use our solutions every day to deliver efficient patient care.

 www.openmedical.co.uk



Remcare

Remcare is an end-to-end digital solution for surgical pathways. The automated risk stratification and algorithmic clinical prioritisation tool on Remcare allows redesign of clinical pathways customised to patient risk, which includes fewer appointments, identify potential deterioration (pre and post-treatment) and minimise health inequalities while reducing staff burden.

Remcare has shown to:

- Increase patient throughput by 30 per cent in preoperative assessment pathways with no increase in staffing levels
- 7 to 10 per cent increase in theatre utilisation
- ROI of £7 to NHS Trust for every £1 spent on Remcare

Such pathways are perfectly suited for delivering more productivity with less resources safely.

 www.remcare.co.uk



Buddy Healthcare

Buddy Healthcare significantly supports elective recovery by streamlining patient pathways and enhancing efficiency in healthcare systems through its care coordination platform and patient facing App. By automating pre-operative assessments, patient communication, and post-discharge follow-ups, it reduces administrative burdens and optimises resource use.

The platform ensures patients are well-prepared for surgery, reducing cancellation rates and improving surgical outcomes. Its user-friendly app provides timely information and reminders, keeping patients informed and engaged throughout their care journey.

For healthcare providers, reporting and analytics help identify bottlenecks and improve operational performance, enabling hospitals to positively impact Patient flow and enhance overall patient care.

 www.buddyhealthcare.com/en

The 2025 programme

Digital North was created to provide innovative organisations with access to tailored support and advice.

Digital North promotes the uptake and growth of innovative technologies, accelerating engagement with NHS stakeholders and stimulating market presence across the north of England.

Assistance includes:

- Providing a named support lead within the Health Innovation Network.
- Identifying stakeholders currently engaged with the SMEs with a review of the current position identifying any gaps with bespoke support.
- Co-developing the value proposition.
- Reviewing business cases and associated evidence to date and co-developing a localised business strategy.
- Co-creating a narrative for adoption of the solutions across the north of England.
- Promoting the solutions to key decision-makers via NHS-focused virtual events in the north of England.
- Publicising the solutions through the Health Innovation Network.
- Providing a series of tailored masterclass modules delivered by experts from the Health Innovation Networks.

Programme priorities:

- Supporting our NHS partners with innovation that aligns with their key requirements
- Increasing engagement between companies and commissioners
- Increasing the number of digital innovations successfully introduced to the NHS across the north of England
- Increasing the number of patients benefitting from the uptake of digital innovations
- Enabling companies to benefit from information, advice, signposting and support
- Supporting company growth by attracting investment and increasing market share.

Programme timeline:

- Recruitment cohort, 1:1 introductory briefing session: January 2025
- Deliver 1:1 support January – July 2025
- IRP event – March 2025
- Deliver masterclasses March – April 2025
- Evaluation and case study: May 2025.



“Digital North will promote the innovations to key NHS stakeholders at virtual events”

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Health
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