

*The* **AHSN** *Network*

# Supporting innovators



ACCELERATED  
ACCESS  
COLLABORATIVE

  
Office for  
Life Sciences

**NHS**

## Academic Health Science Networks work with health and care businesses and individual innovators to help realise the potential of their ideas.

There are 15 regional Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) across England. Their unique role is to bring the NHS, care, research and industry together, so that more people can benefit from the very best innovative solutions, and to create economic growth.

The AHSN Network, which is the collective voice of the 15 AHSNs, exists to transform the way the NHS identifies, adopts, and spreads innovation.

We operate simultaneously as a single national network, and as 15 locally embedded and integrated organisations with strong partnerships at place and Integrated Care System (ICS) level.

AHSNs support the rapid 'importing and exporting' of innovations, and have created a national pipeline of more than 1,200 proven technologies that can be matched to local health and care needs.

AHSNs are commissioned by NHS England, and the Government's Office for Life Sciences. The AHSN Network is also a partner in the NHS Accelerated Access Collaborative, which involves key organisations working together to streamline the adoption of new innovations in healthcare.



### In 2021/22, we have achieved the following impact:



**2,438**

companies supported



**1,273**

innovations in our national pipeline of innovation

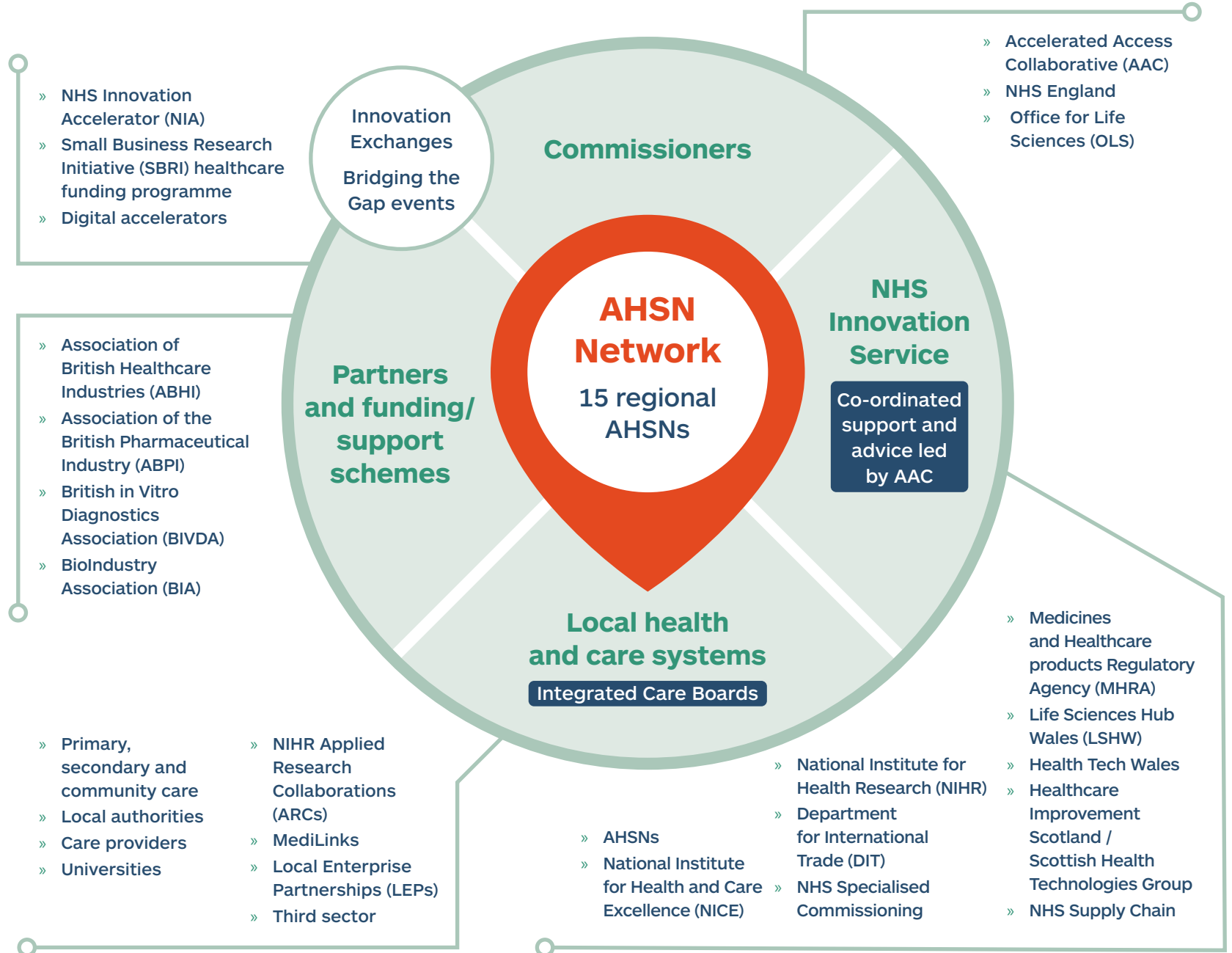


**£455m**

investment leveraged by companies supported by AHSNs

## A connected 'network of networks' providing:

- Support to innovators
- Help to navigate the NHS
- Signposting to resources
- Market access studies and research
- Developing a value proposition
- Evaluating real-world impact
- Health economic reports / business cases
- Implementation support and advice for adopting organisations
- Grant funding opportunities
- Product development



# How we support innovators



- ✓ Identify and respond to local health needs and challenges
- ✓ Match health and care partners with industry and third sector innovators
- ✓ Connect health needs with potential solutions
- ✓ Recommend products with most potential for national impact

AHSNs provide a wide range of support to innovators. The type and level of support depends largely on the needs and development stage of the specific innovation.

For example, in the case of early-stage innovator support this may include advice and guidance on gaps in an innovator's value proposition, gaps in their evidence base, and potentially helping to develop a proof-of-concept prototype. Much of the early work AHSNs do with innovators is around helping them to understand the complexities of the health and care sectors.

For more advanced, pre-commercial innovations, AHSN support can extend to supporting with the development of a value proposition, health economics support, impact modelling, and brokering connections with health and care experts.

For market-ready innovations, AHSNs can support with business case development, real-world evaluations, roll-out and adoption.

## Distinctive

A unique offer provided depending on resource availability

## Enhanced

14 services available to selected innovators where the solution meets a local priority or unmet need

*Transition to Enhanced Offer guided by meeting the AHSN threshold, for example is there a local demand or does it meet a priority of the AHSN*

## Universal

4 core services available to all innovators at no cost – UK and International

### An overview of the AHSN Network 'innovator offer'

#### Universal

- Review and respond
- Assess and triage
- Advise, guide and signpost
- Develop health and care understanding

#### Enhanced

- Broker connections to NHS and social care organisations
- Support to develop value proposition
- Support for qualitative market research
- Budget impact and benefits modelling advice
- Assess gaps in evidence and insights
- Evaluation advice
- Health economics advice
- Research and evaluation planning
- Broker evidence gathering
- Support to apply for funding
- Research and evaluation support
- Health economics support
- Business case development advice and guidance
- Provide showcase opportunities

#### Distinctive

- Critical appraisal and evidence synthesis
- Support for quantitative market research
- Marketing, communications and stakeholder engagement
- Intellectual property advice
- Market access launch planning
- Product development support
- Other distinctive offers unique to individual AHSNs

## NHS Innovation Service

The new NHS Innovation Service is led by the Accelerated Access Collaborative and has been developed to accelerate the spread of promising and impactful innovations into the NHS.

Innovators using the service may receive co-ordinated and bespoke support from all 15 AHSNs and national support organisations including NICE, MHRA, NIHR and NHS Supply Chain. The service will help innovators to understand the regulations and standards they need to meet, the evidence they should demonstrate, and the NHS procurement and reimbursement processes.

Access the NHS Innovation Service: [innovation.nhs.uk](https://innovation.nhs.uk)



*“An online service for health innovators, to support them to get their products, services or ideas adopted in the NHS, and in turn provide innovative solutions to NHS challenges.”*



## How do AHSNs help companies sustain economic growth?

Nicola Hutchinson, the AHSN Network’s national co-lead for Innovation Exchange and Economic Growth, gives a personal take on our innovator offer in this blog.



**“** *We have had excellent support from multiple AHSNs. One developed a business case for us to go to every care home in Cheshire and Mersey, another put us through a process to prove the value of the innovation, then they helped us with adoption and scaling and pitching to Integrated Care Systems. I'd go so far as to say my business wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the AHSN Network.”*

*Lee Omar, Founder of Safe Steps*

## Matching innovation with system needs

The current priority areas for AHSN supported innovation, aligned with the NHS Long Term Plan priorities, are:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Respiratory disease
- Mental health
- Maternal and neonatal health

These are underpinned by cross-cutting themes including: **tackling health inequalities, helping the NHS achieve net zero, digital technologies, and innovations to support the workforce.**



## We also support:

### The NHS Innovation Accelerator

Supporting 'fellows' with development and bespoke support.

Find out more: [nhsaccelerator.com](https://nhsaccelerator.com)

### The SBRI Healthcare (Small Business research Initiative)

A funding programme for health and care innovators and SMEs.

Find out more: [sbrihealthcare.co.uk](https://sbrihealthcare.co.uk)

# Find out more

For a conversation about your innovation, contact your local AHSN.  
[www.ahsnnetwork.com/contact](http://www.ahsnnetwork.com/contact)

Discover how AHSNs support the regional 'import and export' of healthcare innovation through our Innovation Exchanges:  
[www.ahsninnovationexchange.co.uk](http://www.ahsninnovationexchange.co.uk)

Hear from other innovators on our **Health Innovation Podcast**



Read our regular **Meet the Innovator blogs**



Sign up for regular updates via our **e-newsletter**



## Innovator guide: Real-World Evaluation



This simple guide is designed to help innovators in gathering real-world evidence to support scale up and spread of their ideas. It clarifies the Real-World Evaluation process for health and care innovators and offers useful tips on best practice.



Access the guide: [www.ahsnnetwork.com/rwe-guide](http://www.ahsnnetwork.com/rwe-guide)