

Health and Social Care Professions National Fellowship in Innovation



Deadline for submission of applications to the Spark Innovation Programme:

Friday, January 16th 2026 at 17:00

Introduction

The HSE's Spark Innovation Programme was established in 2017 as a national programme to encourage, support and recognise innovation among frontline healthcare staff in Ireland. The programme is funded and supported by National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP), the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD) and the National Health and Social Care Professions Office (NHSCPO) with the goal of encouraging innovation across our health service. The Spark Innovation Programme encourages frontline healthcare workers to develop and implement their ideas so that the care for patients and the Irish health service can continuously improve.

The Spark team and its partners believe that the opportunity to develop one's ideas is central to staff engagement and that it inspires staff, encourages recruitment and supports retention. The Spark team also believes that successful innovation activity is not solely dependent on successfully implemented ideas but also includes the potential for shared learning for the system. Finally, we believe that staff within the system are uniquely positioned to identify challenges, patient needs and process inefficiencies that could be successfully addressed through innovation and Human Centred Design. The ultimate vision of the Spark Programme is to empower all HSE staff to innovate and improve the health service in a collaborative manner.

The Role of Innovation Fellow

Since its inception, the Spark Innovation programme has been led by National Spark Innovation Fellows. To date these have been frontline staff with a passion for innovation who have led our innovation initiatives during a one-year fellowship. You can read about the current programme Fellows here: <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/spark-innovation-programme/innovation-and-change-fellows/>

The role of the HSCP Fellow is critical in leading and shaping the Spark Programme. The Fellow plays a key part in supporting ideas, design, innovation, collaboration, and initial implementation of initiatives led by frontline staff. The HSCP Innovation Fellow joins Nursing/Midwifery, NCHD, and Pharmacy Fellows for the duration of their fellowship. Fellows work collaboratively within the programme. In this way, we ensure that Fellows represent their own professional group and the wider healthcare workforce in all decision making around how best to support innovation at the front line of Irish healthcare.

The Award

The successful candidate will be awarded an Innovation Fellowship for a 12 month period and will receive a salary equivalent to their current rate of remuneration for the duration of the Fellowship. The fellowship can be taken in a full or part time basis and the HSE Spark is open to the Fellow working less than fulltime in the role if desired.

HSE Spark will make arrangements with the employer of the successful candidate to obtain the fellowship for the period of one year. Upon completion of the one-year fellowship, the HSCP Fellow can reapply for a second term. Two years is the maximum length of time for a fellowship.

HSE Spark operates a hybrid working model. Our base office is located at NDTP in Dublin and we are required to attend multiple events in Dublin and around the country. The HSE Spark team and the Fellows meet regularly at our base location. Otherwise, Fellows have the freedom to work from their home base or another HSE hub location by arrangement. This will be discussed at appointment stage.

The Innovation Fellowship presents an exciting opportunity for a HSCP to develop their leadership and management skills. The purpose of the Innovation Fellowship is to give a HSCP the opportunity to be part of the leadership team and shape the Spark Programme. This will be done in collaboration with the National NDTP, NHSCPO, OMNSD and other stakeholders.

Remit of the National Innovation Fellow

The remit of the Fellow will include:

General Duties:

- Leading and continuing to develop the Spark Programme in collaboration with the NDTP, ONMSD, NHSCPO, healthcare providers including NCHDs, HSCPs, nurses, midwives, hospitals, community services, Health Region representatives and other relevant stakeholders
- Liaise on a regular basis with the NHSCPO to ensure cross body alignment.
- Act as a resource for healthcare providers to help drive innovation, change and collaboration in the health services
- Encourage engagement with the Spark Programme via site visits to hospitals/community, attend training days and conferences.
- Develop a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to report the impact of the role and projects supported by Spark
- Assist with scaling up and/or transferring successful initiatives and projects that have been undertaken in one clinical site to other sites
- Develop and lead initiatives to support innovation, collaboration and change within the HSE
- Prepare reports, articles and or updates for a variety of purposes including the Spark Programme Updates, Annual Reports, HR updates, internal reports, newsletters, media press releases, social media, etc.

- Promote interdisciplinary and inter-professional collaborations
- Attend meetings as required both internally and externally, therefore a willingness to travel is essential
- Join boards/working groups where the innovation fellow has a presence. These will be discussed and agreed with the Fellow.
- Communication with HSCPs via various platforms e.g. social media, email, website etc.
- Input on various projects/initiatives with stakeholders for example, HSCP Deliver – A Strategic Framework for Health and Social Care Professions 2021 – 2026, HSE People Strategy, etc. as requested
- Further duties as required.

Helping Lead and Develop the Spark Programme:

The Spark Programme encompasses a wide range of initiatives designed to support and encourage innovation amongst healthcare staff. The Innovation Fellow will be expected to be part of the leadership team to shape the programme over their year in the role. HSE Spark offers a range of funding opportunities to support the implementation of innovation projects led by frontline staff. Visit www.hse.ie/spark for more details on some of Spark's initiatives.

The Fellow will be expected to establish and maintain positive relationships with relevant academic institutions, industries, and international organisations. The Fellow will contribute to HSCP and wider HSE policy and planning, including discussion papers and strategies. The Spark programme requires multidisciplinary/ interdisciplinary collaboration and involvement of patients/service users where possible so the Innovation Fellow must be able to work with stakeholders from all disciplines.

As the Spark Programme continues to grow, sharing the work supported by the programme becomes more important. The Innovation Fellow, together with their co-fellows, is responsible for managing the portfolio of projects supported and disseminating this information through case studies, presentations and other publications.

Other Duties:

The National Innovation Fellow will be expected to encourage and support planned and unplanned innovation whilst developing novel approaches to support innovation. Indicative examples of what developing the HSE Spark Programme could involve:

- Developing initiatives/mechanisms to support innovation at clinical sites
- Cultivating and developing relationships internal and external to the HSE. Examples include NHSCPO, ONMSD, NDTP, E Health Ireland and Office of the Clinical Information Office, Integrated Healthcare Managers, Professional Bodies, HSCP Clinical Programme Leads and Representatives
- Shaping innovation events for healthcare staff
- Creating, disseminating, and assessing applications for funding and support
- Overseeing the HSE Spark budget under the supervision of HSE Spark Programme Lead / HSE Business Manager
- Developing opportunities for shared learning across various sites and assist with transferring successful projects in one clinical site to other sites.

- At interview, applicants will be expected to discuss their strategy for the year in terms of: Communication and engagement, new ideas and a brief outline of their goals / targets for the year.
- Contribute to the body of research around frontline innovation and take steps to prove the value of the programme.

It is envisaged that the Fellows will support/lead on the delivery of current successful long-standing initiatives within the programme, while bringing their creativity and ingenuity to new and existing initiatives.**Competencies Required:**

Professional Knowledge & Experience

Demonstrate:

- Familiarity and demonstrable track record in innovation/improvement
- An understanding of the breadth of different HSCP professions
- Knowledge of clinical workforce structures
- Knowledge of Irish Health Service structures and strategic direction (Slaintecare)
- Excellent ICT skills

Planning, Organising and Delivery of Results

Demonstrate:

- Excellent organisational and time management skills to meet objectives within agreed timeframes and achieve quality results
- Evidence of effective planning and organisational skills including an awareness of resource management and the importance of value for money
- The ability to improve efficiency within the working environment and the ability to evolve and adapt to a rapidly changing environment
- A capacity to operate successfully in a challenging operational environment while adhering to quality standards
- Results focused, motivated and enthusiastic with a 'can do' attitude
- The ability to successfully manage a range of different projects and work activities concurrently
- A proven ability to prioritise, organise and schedule a wide variety of tasks and to manage competing demands while consistently maintaining high standards and positive working relationships.

Communication & Interpersonal Skills

Demonstrate:

- Excellent oral and written communication skills including the ability to produce professional reports.
- A track record of building positive working relationships with people who work in a challenging and at time stressful work environment
- Excellent people skills and the ability to achieve "buy-in" from major stakeholders
- Negotiation/influencing skills

Leadership & Teamwork

Demonstrate:

- The capacity for management responsibility and demonstration of initiative
- The ability to achieve results through collaborative working
- The ability to build and maintain relationships with colleagues and other stakeholders and to achieve results through collaborative working
- The ability to work both independently and collaboratively within a dynamic team and multi-stakeholder environment
- Flexibility, adaptability and openness to working effectively in a changing environment.

Commitment to a Quality Service

Demonstrate:

- An ability to pay close and accurate attention to detail in personal work and to create a culture where high standards are valued and respected
- Evidence of practicing and promoting a strong focus on delivering high quality customer service for internal and external customers
- Commitment to developing own knowledge and expertise.

Employment and Contractual Arrangements

The following employment and contractual arrangements will apply to the Fellowship:

- The Fellowship is a fixed term position for a period of one year.
- The role reports into the Head of the Spark Innovation Programme.

Who Should Apply

To apply applicants must possess the following:

- A recognised qualification for entry to practice in one of the 26 Health and Social Care Professions
- Must be employed by the HSE (or HSE funded organisation including Section 38)
- Be practising in a HSCP discipline at staff, senior or clinical specialist grade
- Minimum of 2 years clinical experience post qualification
- Applicants should have a recognised qualification in a health and social care profession and where applicable be either registered or eligible for registration on the appropriate register held by CORU.
- Demonstrates a successful track record in engaging and contributing positively to innovation/change programmes and quality improvement initiatives
- Demonstrates an appetite to take on new challenges and acquire new skill sets as required
- Experience of engaging with and working with a range of stakeholders including HSCP colleagues
- Possess the requisite knowledge, skills and attributes to make a contribution to the health service through the Fellowship
- Must be willing to travel to our base location in Dublin and attend events around the country regularly

The Selection Process

The HSE will consider the applications submitted to it and shortlist the applications. Consideration will include:

- The candidate's experience of:
 - i. Contributing to change, innovation and/or improvement projects or programmes
 - ii. Engaging with and influencing peers and other stakeholders in the health service
- The candidate's possession of the following knowledge, skills and attributes:
 - i. Professional Knowledge & Experience
 - ii. Planning, Organising and Delivery of Results
 - iii. Communication & Interpersonal Skills
 - iv. Leadership & Teamwork
 - v. Commitment to a Quality Service
- Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview with a panel formed by the HSE
- Shortlisted applicants may be required to prepare a presentation that will form part of the selection process.
- The application form will form part of the shortlisting process.

Failure to include information regarding these requirements may result in you not being called forward to the next stage of the selection process.

How to Apply

To apply please, fill out the application form on the online portal:

<https://surveys.hse.ie/s/WI02EA/>

Here, you will also be asked to submit the following:

- A comprehensive Curriculum Vitae clearly showing relevant achievements and experience from your career to date
- A cover letter/personal statement (maximum 2 pages) outlining why you wish to be considered for this Fellowship and where you believe your skills and experience meet the requirements for the Innovation Fellowship

Please include:

- Evidence of experience in delivering effective change, innovation and/or improvement projects
- Any evidence of experience engaging, influencing and leading other towards a mutual target
- Formal qualification/courses related to the role (Design, change, Project Management, Lean, innovation)

Closing date for Applications:

Applications must be submitted via the <https://surveys.hse.ie/s/WI02EA/> no later than 17:00 on Friday 16th January 2026

Interviews will take place online in the week beginning 9th February 2026

Informal enquiries to:

Jared Gormly, Head of HSE Spark Innovation Programme at jared.gormly@hse.ie or by phone 087 1242317