

# Nursing and Midwifery National Fellowship in Innovation



 Oifig an Stiúrtóra Seirbhísí Altranais & Cnáimhseachais | Office of the Nursing & Midwifery Services Director



@programmespark



spark@hse.ie

**Deadline** for submission of applications to the Spark Innovation Programme:

**Friday January 16<sup>th</sup> 2026**

## Introduction

The Health Service Executive (HSE) 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 the National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP), the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD) (commencing 2019) and the National Health and Social Care Professions Office (NHSCPO) with the goal of encouraging innovation across the health service. The Spark Innovation Programme encourages frontline healthcare staff to develop and implement their ideas to continuously improve care provided to patients by the Irish health service.

The Spark team and its collaborators believe that the opportunity to develop one's ideas is central to staff engagement and that it inspires staff, encourages recruitment and supports staff retention. The Spark team also believes that success is not solely dependent on successful ideas but also includes the potential of shared learning. Engaging with innovation builds capability for leadership, change and improvement. Additionally, it enables frontline staff to make a valuable contribution to the ever-changing world of healthcare - beyond the traditional boundaries of their clinical practice.

## Fellowship role

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 led the innovation initiatives during a one-year fellowship. The fellows change each year and pass on their work to the incoming fellows, like rotations in clinical practice. You can read about the fellowship in more detail here: <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/spark-innovation-programme/professional-innovation-fellowships/>

The role of the National Nursing and Midwifery Innovation fellow is critical in leading and shaping the Spark Programme. The fellows play a key part in supporting ideas, design, innovation, collaboration and initial implementation of initiatives led by frontline staff. The National Nursing and Midwifery Innovation Fellow joins medical, health and social care professional and pharmacy fellows so that all professional groups are represented in the decision-making processes, and the support to and implementation of projects - making it truly interdisciplinary. This reflects how interdisciplinary collaboration is at the heart of healthcare.

The purpose of the National Nursing and Midwifery Innovation Fellowship is to give a registered nurse or registered midwife working in clinical practice the opportunity to lead and shape the Spark Programme.

### **The Award**

The successful candidate will be awarded a Spark National Innovation Fellowship and will receive a salary equivalent to their current rate of remuneration for the duration of the one-year fellowship. In addition, funding for a postgraduate programme may be provided during the year of the Fellowship only (the programme must be agreed in advance with the Spark Programme HSE Lead).

### **The Call for the National Nursing and Midwifery Fellow in Innovation**

The HSE is now inviting applications for a National Nursing and Midwifery Innovation Fellowship commencing in 2026. The Innovation Fellowship presents an exciting opportunity for a clinical nurse/midwife to develop their innovation and leadership skills. This will be done in collaboration with NDTP, ONMSD, HSCP Office and other stakeholders.

The Fellowship can be a full-time or part-time commitment for a nurse/midwife for a one-year period. The Spark Programme is open to the fellow working less than full-time in the role if desired and also working from other locations with days in the Spark Office/Dr Steevens' Hospital Dublin/working from home as required. Access to appropriate transport to fulfil the requirements of the role will be required as the role involves travel.

If the Innovation Fellow enrolls in a relevant postgraduate programme the specific course would be agreed with the Spark Programme Lead and the successful applicant. Time required to undertake the postgraduate programme and associated research will be agreed with the successful applicant.

### **Remit of the National Innovation Fellow**

The remit of the Fellow will include:

#### **Main Duties:**

- Develop a vision of the one-year fellowship and promote interdisciplinary team working
- Lead and continue to develop the Spark Programme in collaboration with the NDTP, ONMSD leads, HSCPO, the National Lead Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors (NCHD), healthcare providers including NCHDs, Nursing/Midwifery colleagues, HSE Integrated Health Areas (IHA), HSE Regions and other relevant stakeholders
- Act as a resource for healthcare providers to help drive innovation, change and collaboration in the health services
- Develop and lead spark initiatives to support innovation and collaboration within the HSE
- Encourage engagement with the Spark Programme via site visits to health-related services, attend training days, grand rounds and conferences
- Develop a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to report the impact

- of the role, projects and nurses and midwives 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
- Prepare reports, articles and or updates for a variety of purposes including the Spark Programme Updates, ONMSD and other website blogs, Health Matters, Lead NCHD Newsletter, Annual Reports, Human Resource updates, media press releases, social media, etc.
- Communication with healthcare colleagues via various platforms e.g. social media, LinkedIn, X, email, website etc.
- Undertake further duties as required.

### **Leading and developing the SPARK initiative:**

The Spark Programme encompasses a wide range of initiatives designed to support and encourage innovation amongst nurses/midwives, NCHDs, health and social care professionals, pharmacists and other healthcare staff. Innovation Fellows will be expected to lead the programme and shape it over their year in the role.

The Spark Programme offers a range of funding opportunities to support the implementation of innovation projects led by frontline staff. For details of these refer to [Spark Innovation Programme - Staff site \(hse.ie\)](https://www.hse.ie/eng/innovation/Spark/Spark%20Innovation%20Programme%20-%20Staff%20site%20(hse.ie).htm)

### **Other Duties:**

The Nurse and Midwife 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 Spark Initiative could involve:

- Developing initiatives/mechanisms to support innovation at clinical sites
- Cultivate and develop internal and external relationships with HSE.  
Examples include National Lead NCHD /NDTP Fellow, E-Health Ireland and Office of the Clinical Information Office, ONMSD, National Clinical Leadership Centre for Nursing and Midwifery, Regional Directors of Nursing and Midwifery, Trainee Committee of the Forum of Postgraduate Training Bodies
- Shaping innovation events for nurses and midwives and other healthcare staff
- Create, disseminate, and assess applications for funding and support
- Oversee elements of the Spark Innovation Programme budget under the supervision of the Spark Programme Lead/HSE Business Manager
- Develop opportunities for shared learning across various sites and assist with transferring successful initiatives that have been undertaken 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 for nursing and midwifery innovation and a brief outline of their goals/targets for the year.

## Competencies:

### Professional Knowledge & Experience

Demonstrate:

- Familiarity and demonstrable track record in innovation and change
- Knowledge of nursing and midwifery structures
- Knowledge of Irish Health Service structures, integration and reconfiguration
- 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 and 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 challenging and at times stressful working environments
- Excellent people skills and the ability to achieve "buy-in" from major stakeholders
- Negotiation/influencing skills

### Leadership and 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
- The ability to lead the team by example, coaching and supporting

individuals as required

- 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 person-centred services
- Commitment to developing own knowledge and expertise.

## **Fellowship Contractual Arrangements**

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

- The Fellowship opportunity is for a one-year period (fixed term) on your current employment terms and conditions/salary working within the Spark programme team.
- Governance with the Spark Programme Director, reporting relationship with Spark Programme Manager and a professional link with a nurse/midwife lead within the ONMSD.
- A second term may be applied for – two years is the maximum length of time that a nurse or midwife can undertake the fellowship.

## **Who Should Apply**

To apply applicants must possess the following:

- Be employed by the HSE funded organisations (including Section 38) and registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)
- Have at least two years' post registration clinical experience
- Be currently working in a clinical setting (as a Staff Nurse/Staff Midwife or Clinical Nurse/Midwife Manager, or Clinical Nurse/Midwife Specialist or Registered Advanced Nurse/Midwife Practitioner)
- Demonstrate a successful track record in engaging and contributing positively to innovation/change programmes and quality improvement initiatives
- Have the innovation knowledge, skills and attributes to make a contribution to the health service through the Fellowship.

## **How to Apply**

To submit your application on <https://surveys.hse.ie/s/WI02EA/> and include the following:

- A comprehensive Curriculum Vitae clearly demonstrating 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 Fellowship.

### Closing date for Applications:

Applications should be made by submitting the application form, a detailed CV and cover letter to <https://surveys.hse.ie/s/WI02EA/> no later than 17:00 on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Informal enquiries to:

Jared Gormly, Head of the Spark Programme at [jared.gormly@hse.ie](mailto:jared.gormly@hse.ie) or by phone 087 1242317

Dr. Maureen Flynn, ONMSD at [maureena.flynn@hse.ie](mailto:maureena.flynn@hse.ie) or by phone 087 9317014

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

- The candidate's experience of:
  - Contributing to innovation/improvement/change programmes
  - Engaging with stakeholders in the health service including nursing and midwifery colleagues and MDT
- The candidate's possession of the following knowledge, skills and attributes:
  - Professional Knowledge and Experience
  - Planning, Organising and Delivery of Results
  - Communication and Interpersonal Skills
  - Leadership and Teamwork
  - Commitment to a Quality Service
- Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend for interview with a panel formed by the HSE. Shortlisted applicants may be asked to prepare a short presentation as part of the selection process.

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

- All candidates are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with the Applicant's Guide which can be found here: <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/spark-innovation-programme/professional-innovation-fellowships/>

The Spark Programme will make arrangements with the employer of the successful candidate to support the organisation in enabling the individual to undertake the fellowship for the period of one-year. Upon completion of the one-year fellowship, the Nurse/Midwife can reapply for a second term. Two years is the maximum length of time that a nurse or midwife can undertake the fellowship.