



# National Innovation Fellowships 2024

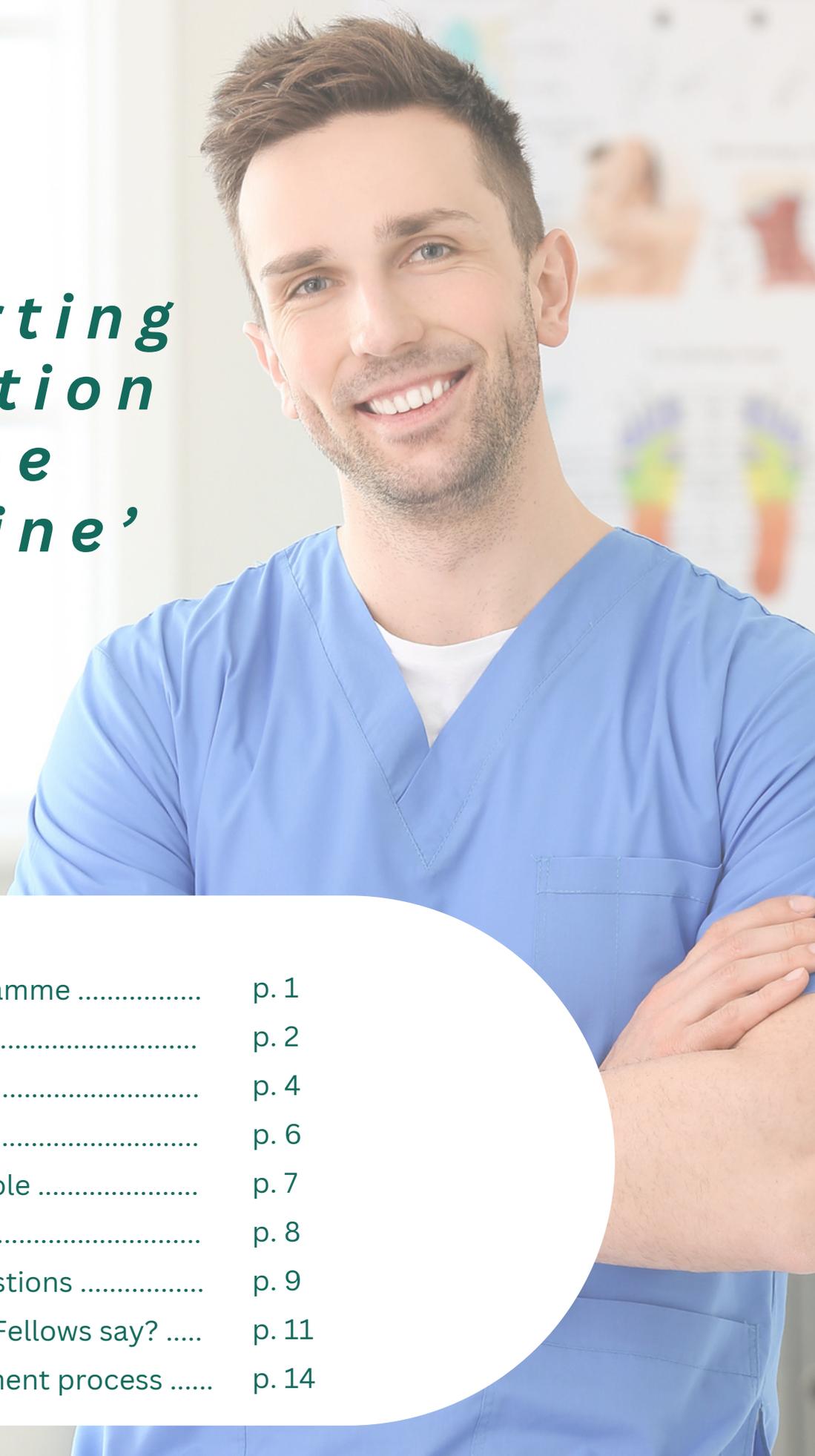
## Applicant Brief

*Immersive  
Professional  
Development  
Programme for  
Innovation  
Leadership*





# *‘Supporting Innovation at the Frontline’*



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# WELCOME TO THE PROGRAMME

We are delighted that you are considering a Fellowship position at the HSE Spark Innovation Programme. The Spark Programme has been offering Fellowship opportunities to clinicians across the HSE since its inception in 2017.

The Fellowships offer a unique opportunity for clinicians from across the country to take on an important leadership role and support their fellow clinicians to embed innovation culture and propagate an innovation mindset across the health service.

The programme is supported by our three key stakeholders, NDTP, ONMSD and HSCP who are committed to activating the talent and creativity of their professional members to identify and solve key challenges in the system. The Fellowship offers the exciting opportunity to work with these key stakeholder groups in developing the innovation capability and capacity of all their members.

We hope that this briefing document will help you to learn more about the programme and the details of the fellowship. We look forward to receiving your application for a Fellowship role and to meeting you at interview.



**Jared Gormly,**  
Head of the HSE Spark Innovation Programme



**Caitriona Heffernan,**  
HSE Lead, HSE Spark Innovation Programme



# ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

*“Fostering  
frontline  
innovation”*

The HSE Spark Innovation Programme was established by the National Doctors Training and Planning office (NDTP) in 2017 to encourage and support innovation among doctors working at the frontline of healthcare in Ireland. Through the support of our colleagues at the Office of Nursing and Midwifery Service Division (ONMSD) and the office of Health and Social Care Professionals (HSCP), the programme has grown to extending that support to all clinical staff right across the health service.

The Spark Innovation Programme seeks to support, promote and recognise innovation amongst healthcare staff within the HSE. The programme recognises the unique insights and perspectives of all frontline healthcare workers and trusts in their ability to generate creative and novel solutions to the challenges that exists in their service and right across the health service. The Spark programme believes that the best way to become active agents of change and learn more about innovation is to engage in innovation activity through projects. To that end we offer a number of initiatives every year that allow frontline staff to engage in innovation activity in a meaningful and impactful manor.

In the spirit of learning, the programme offers National Innovation Fellowships annually for healthcare staff working at the frontline of Irish healthcare. The National Innovation Fellowships offers staff a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of healthcare innovation, learning about this exciting field and developing their own leadership skills to become innovation leaders of the future.

The Spark Programme is dedicated to developing a culture of innovation across the health service, creating opportunities for skills and capability building and creating capacity for clinicians to engage in innovation activity. This is achieved through a number of mechanisms.



The programme offers supports for clinical innovators across the system to include:



- **Funding:** The programme offers funding support between €3,000 and €90,000 to undertake innovation project that will benefit their patients, colleagues and the service at large.
- **Advice and Mentorship:** The programme offers advice and tailored mentorship to clinical innovators who are navigating an innovation project or have an innovation idea they wish to explore.
- **Training:** The Spark Programme offers a number of training opportunities throughout the year to equip clinical innovator with the knowledge and skills they need to successfully engage with an innovation project.
- **Signposting:** The Spark Programme is deeply embedded in the innovation eco-system in Ireland. We pride ourselves as being the first point of contact for frontline healthcare workers who wish to access the world of healthcare innovation in Ireland and be directed to suitable supports.
- **Networking:** We create a number of opportunities across the year for innovators to meet and engage with one other, form partnerships, communities of practice and a support network to support them in their work.
- **Awards and Recognition:** We understand the importance of recognising the brilliant contributions of frontline healthcare workers to healthcare in Ireland. To that end, we host annual awards and showcase the work of our community regularly.

The HSE Spark Innovation Programme is an exciting, dynamic and progressive programme dedicated to the advancement of Human Centered Design and Innovation across the Irish health service. We are constantly seeking new ways to create impact, activate frontline health care workers and add value in all its forms for patient's staff and the health service at large. The programme is constantly evolving to respond to the ever changing demands of a complex healthcare environment and the needs of the staff who wish to change services for the better through novel ideas that are steeped in their unique insights gathered in their daily work.



*Now we want to  
work with you!*



# ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

Each year, the HSE Spark Innovation Programme seeks out talented individuals from across the clinical disciplines represented by NDTP, ONMSD and HSCP who share in our ambition to drive innovation at the frontline of healthcare in Ireland. The Fellowships offer clinical staff already working inside the health system the opportunity to enter into an immersive, ‘action learning’ environment. National Innovation Fellows learn about the exciting world of healthcare innovation while delivering a dynamic programme that supports clinicians right across the health system to engage in innovative activity.

The Fellowship programme is unique in its model of delivery. Fellows follow a dedicated programme of professional development throughout their fellowship. The Fellowship supports their knowledge and skills development in the domain of healthcare innovation and their leadership skills in designing and delivering an effective innovation programme.

The Fellowship offers a flexible learning and professional development environment where Fellows can leverage their clinical interests and personal skills to shape and grow the programme year on year. While the individual and personal goals of each Fellow are supported within the programme, the primary focus for the National Innovation Fellows is to identify and implement the necessary supports to develop and sustain a healthcare workforce that is hardwired for improvement and innovation.

*‘Placing you at the center of the  
National Innovation Fellowship Programme’*





## As a National Innovation Fellow, you will : -

- Gain first-hand experience and exposure to innovative practices, methodologies, and technologies shaping healthcare, fostering a deeper understanding of innovation in clinical settings.
- Explore a structured curriculum focusing on healthcare innovation, equipping fellows with in-depth knowledge about various facets of innovation within the healthcare system.
- Engage with tailored leadership training, honing skills in designing and executing effective innovation programs, empowering them to become catalysts for change within their clinical settings.
- Contribute to shaping a national programme dedicated to supporting staff in becoming active agents of change and innovation and demonstrating their ability to identify and address challenges within the health service.
- Develop expertise in identifying, implementing, and sustaining innovative solutions within the healthcare settings, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.
- Collaborate with clinicians from various specialties and engage with external partners in the innovation eco-system, promoting cross-disciplinary interactions that stimulate diverse perspectives and innovative thinking and network building.
- Become a catalyst in developing a healthcare workforce adept at embracing innovation, positioning them as drivers of transformative change within the system.



*Apply,  
today!*

## Our objectives

- **Empower health care workers to identify and address healthcare challenges through innovative means.**

It is our core belief that frontline healthcare workers are both ideally placed to identify challenges in need of innovative solutions in the health service and to respond effectively to those challenges. The programme exists to support that belief and it drives all of our strategic decisions.

- **Deliver value in all its forms to patients, service users, and the Irish Healthcare System.**

We believe that change, improvement and innovation can deliver many different types of value to patients, staff, the healthcare system and society as a whole.

We recognise that value in all its forms - improved patient experiences, lower costs of care, better staff experience and better health outcomes as a result of our the work that we support.

- **To uphold the values and methodologies of Human Centred Design for better health.**

We believe that healthcare is made 'better by design'. Good design underpins the vision for all improvement and innovation supported by the programme.

We cultivate Human Centred Design Mindset and skills building through training and development and providing access to the professional design expertise of Service, Interaction, Visual, UX and Product Designers to fully unleash the impact of creative problem solving.

# REQUIREMENTS OF THE ROLE



## Deliver

As the National Innovation Fellow, one of your primary roles is to deliver the key activity of the programme year to year. These are the established elements of the programme that need to be delivered in order to maintain the programme. This can include running our core initiatives, project management, running key programme operations, engaging in communications activities etc.

Each Fellow has an important role in ensuring that the high standards of the programme are upheld and that our initiatives are available for access to the frontline innovators we engage with.

## Drive

The National Innovation Fellows are responsible for supporting the innovation activity of their own primary membership group (ONMSD, HSCP as NDTP) as well as increasing the level of engagement and innovation activity for all staff across the health service.

They act as connectors, sense makers, facilitators, mentors and creators who respond to the needs of staff engaging in innovation activity. They are constantly seeking new ways to grow the existing network of clinical innovators, connect like minded improvers, remove barriers to engagement and develop enablers to allow staff to be active agents of change, improvement and innovation.

## Develop

The activity and impact of the programme grows year on year and this is in no small part due to the hard work and dedication of the Fellows. Each Fellow is responsible for driving the future of the programme and working with the management team to create and deliver the future activity of the programme in line with our strategic objectives.

The National Innovation Fellow is a custodian of the role during their time at the programme and their unifying ambition should be to progress the programme forward during tenure and leave the programme in an improved state due to their hard work and dedication.

# WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUITABLE FELLOWSHIP APPLICANT?



**There is no such thing as the 'perfect Fellow'. A Fellowship is a learning environment and each Fellow brings their own skills, personality and experience to the role. However, applicants who possess a combination of the following personal qualities, skills, and characteristics are well-suited for a fellowship role.**

- **Curiosity and Openness:** A good fellow is inherently curious, eager to explore new ideas, and open-minded to different perspectives. They actively seek knowledge and are receptive to learning from various sources.
- **Adaptability and Flexibility:** Fellows often encounter diverse environments and challenges right from the start of the fellowship. Being adaptable and flexible allows them to navigate uncertainties, embrace change, and thrive in different situations.
- **Initiative and Self-Motivation:** Taking initiative is crucial. A good fellow is self-driven, proactive. They identify opportunities for impact and thrive on solving problems.
- **Communication and Collaboration:** Effective communication skills are vital for fellows to convey ideas, collaborate with diverse teams, and engage with stakeholders. They should excel in both verbal and written communication.
- **A growth mindset:** The nature of the fellowship is such that Fellows are required to learn new skills and competencies throughout the journey. A willingness to use new tools and methods and learn skills through action are essential for the fellowship role.
- **Leadership and Teamwork:** Being a good team player while also showcasing leadership qualities is important. Fellows should know when to lead and when to collaborate or check in with the leadership team.
- **Curiosity and Continuous Learning:** A desire for continuous improvement and a thirst for lifelong learning are essential. Good fellows are always seeking ways to expand their knowledge and skill sets.
- **Passion and Commitment:** Commitment to making a positive impact and a passion to drive the programme forward is the driving forces of a good fellow. They are dedicated to supporting frontline healthcare workers to be active agents of change, improvement and innovation right across the health service.



# Frequently asked questions...



## **Where will I be based during the fellowship?**

The Spark Team works as a hybrid team. For the most part you will work from home but you will be required to attend our Dublin office regularly.

## **Is there a requirement to travel as part of the fellowship?**

Yes, the HSE Spark Programme is a national programme and the Fellowship is a national role. During the fellowship, you will be required to attend meetings and events around the country.

## **Do I get travel expenses?**

There is a provision made in the terms of your fellowship to cover your costs for travel associated with delivering your role in the programme.

## **How is my salary calculated?**

Your salary will be matched to the salary you are on at the start of the fellowship. Your terms and conditions of employment do not change during the fellowship

## **Where does my line management sit while I am undertaking the fellowship?**

Your line management will sit at the Spark Programme for the duration of your Fellowship. All leave etc, should be agreed with the management team at the Spark Programme.

## **Can I develop my own innovation idea during the fellowship?**

It is important to understand that developing your own innovation is not the purpose of this fellowship. The fellowship is about developing your knowledge and skills associated with innovation and developing your leadership skills to lead in the field of healthcare innovation. However, we appreciate that each fellow enters the programme with personal objectives and comes with their own set of unique skills. The fellowship can be flexible to accommodate personal objectives to some extent if you can demonstrate that there would also be a benefit for the wider clinical community that you represent.

## **Will I get training to deliver the role?**

Yes, you will have a fully supported induction period at the start of your fellowship. You will have access to regular teaching, mentorship and supervision. You may also wish to undertake some formal training in the field of Human Centered Design, Healthcare Innovation or another relevant field during your fellowship. This can be discussed on a case by case basis.



### **What is the duration of the fellowship?**

The Fellowship is for one year with the option to reapply for a second consecutive year if you wish.

### **What happens at the end of the fellowship?**

At the end of your fellowship, you will return to your primary place of work. However, in our experience, most Fellows who complete the fellowship take on formal or information roles in healthcare innovation or leadership after their fellowship has ended. To that end, the fellowship has a significant impact on career progression



### **What can I expect to be doing day-to-day during my Fellowship?**

The hallmark of an innovation Fellowship at the HSE Spark Innovation Programme is that no two days are the same. You might be delivering a key note address at a conference, facilitating a workshop, assessing project applications, hosting online webinars, creating reports, mentoring clinical innovators out in the field or developing a new initiative that will bring value to clinical innovators and patients across the country. Though the days to day roles are varied, each fellow on the programme is allocated responsibility for an element of the programme during their tenure. In addition to managing the core activity of the programme the fellowship offers fellows the opportunity to shape the programme through their own skill set or abilities. It can be said that each Fellow that spends time in the programme leaves an indelible mark on the programme and their legacy lives on year after year.

### **How many fellowships are available?**

There are separate Fellowships available for members of ONMSD, NDTP and HSCP so you will be joined by a team of co-fellows for your fellowship journey, You will work together to drive innovation for your own membership body and collaborate to create initiatives and supports that will benefit all of your respective stakeholder groups.

### **Is it better to come from a particular profession or clinical setting?**

No, not at all. We welcome applications from any member of the NDTP, ONMSD or HSCP membership bodies. We are keen to ensure that the programme does its best to represent the diversity of the health sector both in terms of the Fellow themselves, the profession they represent and the clinical setting they come from.

### **What is involved in the recruitment process?**

In the first instance, you should make your application and upload your CV and cover letter using the application portal link. A shortlisting process will then take place and successfully shortlisted applicant will be invited to interview.

# WHAT DO OUR FELLOWS SAY?



**Dr. Rachel McNamara**  
**NCHD Fellow 2020-2023**

The HSE Spark Innovation fellowship was a transformative experience for me. As a doctor in training, moving through the system, it can often feel like you do not have the power and influence to impact positively on your hospital, CHO or the system as a whole. This fellowship turns that on its head - giving you the tools, the experience and the opportunity to mobilise innovative potential across the service. It was wonderful to work as part of such a dynamic multi-disciplinary team. The fellowship should appeal to those who are energised by change.

For years to come I know I will look back on my fellowship at the Spark Innovation Programme as a pivotal point in my career. At Spark I was able to pursue my passion in innovation and creativity and drive others to do the same. I returned to my clinical role with new learning, experience and a whole new network of national colleagues. I now problem solve, build relationships and implement change with a new mindset ensuring deeper understanding of issues and other peoples insights.

The Spark fellowship allowed me to explore my interests and I was able to reflect on my career to date and plan my future direction. I engaged in further study during my time at Spark, gaining qualifications to support my career development. During my fellowship, I saw the power and difference that innovative and compassionate nursing and midwifery leaders can make and now, back in practice, I lead with that belief.



**Ms. Amy Carroll**  
**ONMSD Fellow 2022-23**

The Spark Innovation Fellowship, has been instrumental in shaping my career to date. The fellowship provides a practical canvas to develop a wide range of skills spanning the spectrum of healthcare innovation from Human Centred Design and creative problem solving to project management, leadership and strategic thinking. It is a unique, fast paced immersive experience that allows and encourages you to step out of your comfort zone to develop the program itself as well as your own professional journey.

The exposure gained and the connections made during this transformative fellowship have not only enriched my skill set but have also opened doors to a network of like-minded innovators and inspiring people, advancing my career to new heights.



**Mr. Dermot Burke**  
**HSCP Fellow 2022-24**

# WHAT DO OUR FELLOWS SAY?



**Dr. Emily Wallace**  
**NCHD Fellow 2023**

“The fellowship has been an amazing opportunity to combine my passion for innovation and creating a positive impact for patients and health services. Some highlights for me include working within a multidisciplinary team alongside the HSCP and Nursing/Midwifery fellows as well as the connections I have made with many inspiring clinical innovators.

From a professional development point of view, my leadership and organisational management skills have been greatly enhanced during the fellowship and I have learnt a lot from bringing initiatives from initial concept to implementation. The exposure to an aspect of the HSE that differs from clinical medicine has given a unique understanding of the ecosystem of innovation and implementing change within health systems.”

I applied for the Spark National HSCP Fellowship with the view to supporting HSCPs and other frontline staff design, develop and implement innovative solutions to healthcare needs. However, it has also given me much more in terms of personal and professional growth. Leading out on national initiatives has developed my project management and leadership abilities. The fellowship has also enabled me to pursue further postgraduate studies in design research and service design. The encouragement and support to drive innovation aligning with my interests ensured that the skills and knowledge I gain will have long term benefits across my career.



**Dr. Michelle Howard**  
**HSCP Fellow 2023**

“The Spark Innovation Programme has been an instrumental catalyst in my journey toward healthcare transformation. The program's immersive environment facilitated a deeper understanding of the intricate healthcare innovation ecosystem, empowering me with the insights needed to navigate and contribute meaningfully to this dynamic field.

Moreover, Spark provided a platform for me to manage large-scale initiatives, fostering skills in project coordination and strategic planning. The Spark Innovation Programme isn't just about fostering innovation; it's about empowering individuals to drive tangible, positive change within our healthcare landscape.”



**Dr. Ivan Yu**  
**NCHD Fellow 2020**

# WHAT DO OUR FELLOWS SAY?



**Ms. Catherine Marsh**  
**ONMSD Fellow 2023-24**

“The National Innovation Fellowship has given me the opportunity to immerse myself in the world of innovation. It’s a year to step out of clinical practice and to learn, lead and guide around what innovation is and how it applies to healthcare. This experience has already been a catalyst for my professional growth, fostering a mind-set of continuous learning and adaptability. I’ve had opportunities to collaborate with a diverse range of professionals, not just in healthcare but in the fields of Design and Academia also. The program has cultivated my leadership abilities, emphasising the vital role of empathy in healthcare innovation. I am grateful for this enriching journey and I hope to emerge as a nursing trailblazer, passionate about driving positive change in the ever-evolving world of healthcare.”

The Spark Fellowship is a unique opportunity to gain experience in leadership, organisation and programme management. This time out of the ordinary run through approach of training schemes has given me much better awareness into the health system as a whole and crucially how to take advantage of opportunities to improve your service. I feel that as a consultant in the future, skills I took from project planning and eventually delivering, while working with nursing and HSCP colleagues will be invaluable. I learned that within the HSE there are people who want change and that getting a project off the ground is possible with the right people and a lot of these people are already working with the Spark programme.



**Dr. Alan Hopkins**  
**NCHD Fellow 2017**

The SPARK Innovation Fellowship has been a constant journey of growth and discovery. During the fellowship there is ample opportunity to get hands-on experience in real-world healthcare challenges. Through the programme’s expert mentorship, engagement with passionate peers and industry leaders I gained a deeper understanding of the healthcare ecosystem.

This experience has equipped me with key management and networking skills, fostering my confidence to drive meaningful change in healthcare. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity and highly recommend this fellowship to anyone eager to shape the future of healthcare.



**Dr. Bobby Tang**  
**NCHD Fellow 2023**

# Application & Recruitment Process

National Innovation Fellowship Application portal opens

## Stage 1

Apply for the National Innovation Fellowship by uploading your c.v. and a cover letter outlining your interest in, and suitability for the role

Shortlisting of applicants takes place

## Stage 2

Interviews take place

Successful candidates informed of the outcome of interview

*If you think you have what it takes to be a National Innovation Fellow in 2024...apply today!*

[CLICK HERE](#)

If you have further questions, drop us an email at [spark@hse.ie](mailto:spark@hse.ie) with the subject line 'Fellowship Enquiry'





Innovation Programme



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