



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1 – 2025

IGNITING INNOVATION & INSPIRING GROWTH

01

Welcome
to 2025

Dear Spark Community

As we step into 2025, we're thrilled to share this exciting edition of the Spark Newsletter. This year promises to be one of bold innovation, impactful collaboration, and continued progress. With initiatives like Spark Impact 2025 and the upcoming Spark Summit, we're building on our past successes to drive meaningful change in healthcare.

We invite you to join us on this journey as we continue to empower healthcare professionals to transform ideas into reality, improving care for patients and driving innovation across the system.

*Best wishes,
The HSE Spark Team*



02

New Fellow Spotlight: Siobhán Power

We are delighted to welcome Siobhán Power, Clinical Specialist Dietitian and National HSCP Innovation Fellow for 2024/25, to the HSE Spark Innovation Programme.

With over two decades of experience in frontline healthcare, Siobhán is an accomplished clinician who brings a wealth of expertise in innovation and quality improvement. Her passion for meaningful change and dedication to person-centred care align perfectly with the mission of HSE Spark.

Here's what Siobhán shared at the start of her Fellowship experience:

"I am excited to join this progressive and forward-thinking team. HSE Spark recognises the inherent ability of frontline staff to create and implement meaningful solutions to everyday healthcare challenges. This firmly aligns with what I have observed in my own career. I have thrived in a multidisciplinary environment where I collaborated with patients and staff to deliver quality, person-centred care. I intend to use my National HSCP Innovation Fellowship to demystify healthcare innovation, and to inspire frontline workers with the confidence to take their first steps towards driving innovation."

We are thrilled to have Siobhán on board and look forward to the creative energy and fresh perspective she will bring to the Fellowship programme.

Spark*seed



03

Spark Seed

Bring Your Ideas to Life with the HSE Spark Seed Initiative

Do you have a solution to a challenge in healthcare?

The HSE Spark Seed Initiative is here to help you turn your ideas into impactful projects! Whether you are new to innovation or a seasoned problem-solver, Spark Seed offers the perfect platform to transform challenges in your clinical area into meaningful solutions.

As part of this exciting opportunity, all applicants gain access to our highly regarded Design Thinking Workshop. This workshop is designed to help you delve into your problem space, explore potential solutions, and equip you with essential skills for pitching your idea to key stakeholders.

Shortlisted Seed applicants are then invited to present their ideas to a panel of experts, with the chance to secure up to €5000 in funding or valuable design supports and mentorship to develop their project. This initiative also gives healthcare innovators access to a network of like-minded innovators and can be your gateway to making a real difference in healthcare.

The initiative is open all year around, only closing for short periods while we shortlist applications. Don't miss your chance to be part of this transformative initiative, your ideas matter – *let's innovate together!*

Find out more and apply today on the [HSE Spark Website](#)



Spark Impact

04

Spark Impact

Following on from the incredible success of Spark Impact 2024, we are excited to announce that we are seeking applications for Spark Impact 2025!

This ground breaking initiative offers funding opportunities ranging from €5,000 to €90,000, helping turn innovative ideas into impactful healthcare solutions. The online application portal is already open!

We're calling on frontline healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, midwives, and health & social care professionals to submit project proposals that address critical healthcare challenges.

We are looking for applications for frontline innovation projects that:

- **Identify a clear unmet need**
- **Have potential to scale and transfer**
- **Are innovative/novel**
- **Impact on the health service**
- **Deliver a return on investment**

* Whether you're at the concept stage, piloting a new initiative, or ready for implementation, your ideas matter.

Why Apply?

- Access funding tailored to your project's needs
 - Gain support from Spark's network of mentors, designers, and healthcare experts
 - Have the chance to showcase your project as part of Spark Summit taking place on 11th June at the Dublin Royal Convention Centre
-

Key Dates to Remember

- Jan 13th - Applications Open
 - Jan 15th & 05th Feb - Design Thinking Workshops
 - Feb 17th 5pm - Application Deadline
 - Week of March 17th - Pitching event for shortlisted applicants
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How to Apply

Our online application portal is now open

Apply here:

[Spark Impact Application Form 2025](#)

To see our comprehensive Applicant Guide visit

www.hse.ie/spark

Don't miss this opportunity to drive meaningful change in Irish healthcare!

Dublin Royal Convention Centre, Le Pole Square,
Chancery Lane, Ship Street Great, Dublin 8, D08 E6PD

11
JUNE 2025

Spark Summit

Healthcare Innovation for All



05

Spark Summit
2025

Save the date!

Spark Summit is taking place on 11 June 2025 in the Dublin Royal Convention Centre. Spark Summit is the HSE Spark Innovation Programme's annual conference and is a unique conference for healthcare staff. The conference focuses on the exciting innovations transforming the way that healthcare is provided in Ireland.

Are you a healthcare professional who is curious about innovation in healthcare? Are you in a leadership position within the health service? If so, this conference is for you.

Spark Summit provides a dynamic platform for showcasing innovative projects, fostering collaboration, and inspiring creative problem-solving within the healthcare sector. Learn how frontline innovation is making a real difference to how healthcare is being delivered in Ireland and how human-centred design is re-shaping service delivery.

For more information on the HSE Spark Innovation Programme visit www.hse.ie/spark

or contact the Spark team directly at spark@hse.ie



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Patient Flow Academy Excellence Awards

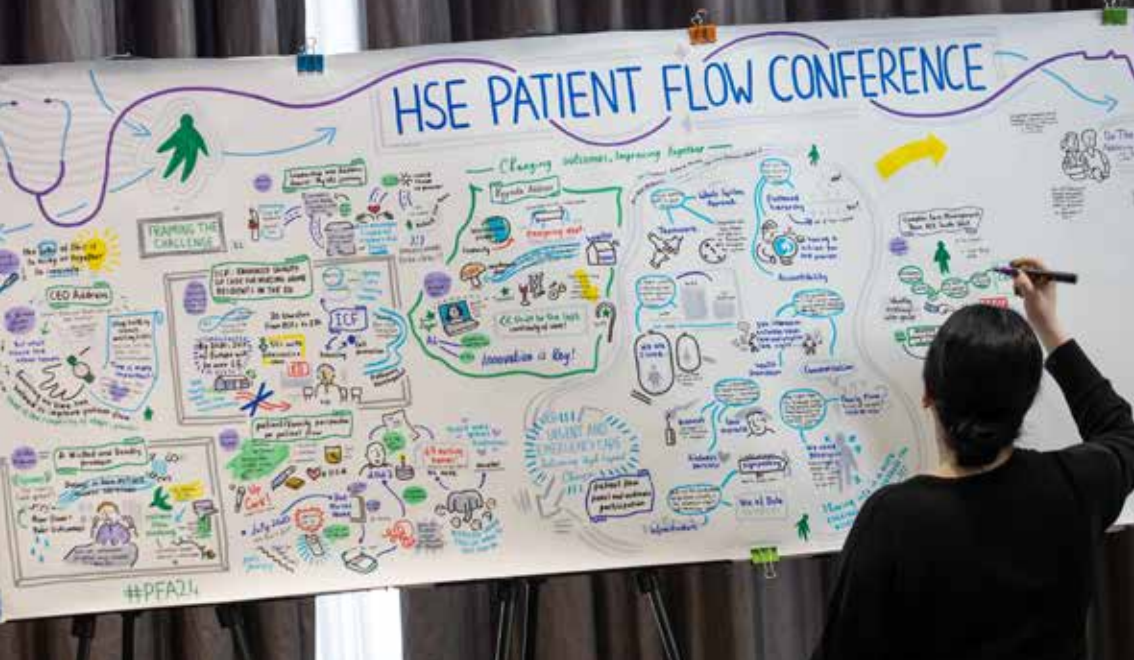
Celebrating Success: Inaugural Patient Flow Academy Conference

In November 2024, HSE Spark proudly partnered with the HSE Patient Flow Academy for its first conference, themed “Changing Outcomes, Improving Together.”

The conference’s main aim was to enhance patient flow in our services by supporting healthcare staff in identifying, defining, and improving processes, pathways, and systems for the safe and timely delivery of care while creating a community of improvement and excellence in safe patient care.

A highlight of the event was the patient story – Catherine Murphy told the story of her father Pat Dineen and his family’s journey as they traversed illness and his final days in and out of hospital. It was a beautiful story, beautifully delivered by Catherine and reminded everyone in the room about what really matters – the people we care for.

The Patient Flow Academy Conference also featured expert speakers, engaging panels, and networking opportunities, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration among healthcare professionals. Attendees shared best practices and innovative solutions to address patient flow challenges, contributing to the overall enhancement of healthcare delivery in Ireland.



The day also featured the introduction of the Patient Flow Academy Excellence Awards, in collaboration with the Spark Innovation Programme. These awards recognised projects completed over the previous five years that had significantly improved patient flow in the sites they were established in. Awards of up to €5,000 were granted, with a particular focus on areas such as integrated operations, demand and capacity management, ward processes, integrated discharge processes, older persons care and frailty, and length of stay reduction.

The Patient Flow Academy Conference was a celebration of patient safety and excellence; however, it was also a platform to shine a light on the greatest asset of our health service – the staff who work tirelessly to improve and innovate with the patient and their families at the centre of all they do.





Consultant Innovation Fund

07

Consultant Innovation Fund 2025

Consultant Innovation Fund 2025: Driving Change Together

The Consultant Innovation Fund under the Public Only Consultant Contract (POCC) 2023 offers an exciting opportunity for healthcare workers across the HSE to lead meaningful innovation. This fund empowers consultants to implement projects aimed at enhancing patient care, fostering teamwork, and introducing cutting-edge solutions to clinical practice.

How Does It Work?

The fund provides up to €8,000 per calendar year for individual projects, with the potential to pool unused CME funds for a total of €20,000 annually. Larger collaborative projects can access up to €50,000, depending on the scope and funding calls. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, and early submissions are encouraged to secure timely approval.

We are delighted to invite consultants to an upcoming 30-minute webinar on the Public Only Consultant Contract (POCC) Innovation Fund – a funding opportunity providing potentially up to €20,000 per year for innovative translational research and innovation projects.

Webinar Details:

- Date: - **Thursday, 20 February 2025**
- Time: - **12:00 PM – 12:30 PM GMT**
- Location: - **Online (Microsoft Teams)**

This session will cover

- **Eligibility criteria**
- **Application process**
- **How to maximise available funding for translational research and innovation in patient care**

To register, email cif@hse.ie and receive the webinar link.

We encourage all consultants to attend and make the most of this funding opportunity.

How to Apply?

- **Identify an innovative idea that addresses a clinical need**
- **Engage your Clinical Director for support and sign-off**
- **Submit proposal via the HSE Spark Innovation Programme portal**

The Spark team provides guidance, mentoring, and resources to optimise your project's success. Start your journey today and help shape the future of healthcare! Visit hse.ie/spark or contact cif@hse.ie for more information.

Consultants highlighted significant challenges in 2024, such as fund transfer delays and inefficiencies caused by changes to financial mechanisms.

To address these issues and speed up the process, 2 application deadlines have been introduced:

- **Monday 24 Feb 2025** (for March fund transfers)
- **Monday 26 May 2025** (for June fund transfers)

Bright Spark

National Clinical Innovation Awards

Applications Now Open!



08

Bright
Spark

'Bright Spark'

National Clinical Innovation Awards – Applications Now Open!

The HSE Bright Spark Awards celebrate and recognise projects that have enhanced patient care and service delivery across Ireland. Each year, at the Spark Innovation Summit, we honour the incredible work of frontline clinical healthcare teams who are driving innovation and making a real impact.

- **Do you have an innovative service or product that's improving patient care?**
- **Or would you like to nominate a project team that's delivering excellence in the Irish healthcare system?**

We want to hear from you!

The application portal goes live on - **24th Feb 2025**

Submissions close on the - **18th April 2025**

Visit the [HSE Spark Website](#) to learn more and check out last year's winners.

Let's celebrate frontline clinical innovation together!



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Bright Spark 2024 - Overall Winner

Breathe Easy, Beat Strong

This award-winning initiative, led by Dr. Lavanya Saiva and Dr. Abirami Subramaniam, exemplifies the power of integrated care in transforming patient outcomes.

Key Achievements

- **Reduced waiting times from 18 months to 3 months**
- **Saved €239,173 by reducing 187 inpatient bed days.**
- **Improved environmental impact with carbon savings of 906.085 kg CO2e.**

The project's success demonstrates how collaborative care models can address complex healthcare challenges while improving patient experience.



Spark* Ignite

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Spark
Ignite

Spark Ignite 2025 Launching February 24th!

We are delighted to announce Spark Ignite 2025 will be launched on the 24th February 2025! Spark Ignite is an initiative designed to support frontline healthcare workers to develop innovative products or services that have clear commercial potential.

Open to all HSE and Section 38 funded staff, the competition provides an opportunity to validate ideas, assess market potential, and receive the necessary supports to bring them to life for successfully shortlisted applicants.

This competition is a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit of healthcare professionals and their ability to create impactful solutions.

Spark Ignite offers successfully shortlisted applicants the chance to receive:

- **Access to a bespoke healthcare entrepreneur skills workshop**
- **Expert input to refine their solutions**

- **Funding of up to €5,000 for idea development**
- **Mentorship from leading healthcare entrepreneurs**
- **Networking opportunities within the healthcare innovation ecosystem**
- **Shortlisted applicants will also have the chance to pitch their ideas and solutions to be crowned our overall 'Spark Ignite Winner 2025'.**

The Spark Ignite 2025 application portal goes live on **24th Feb 2025.**

Visit the [HSE Spark Website](#) to learn more and check out our previous winners.





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Spotlight: Irish Healthcare Awards

Celebrating Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery

We are thrilled to highlight the remarkable achievements of Catherine Marsh, our National Nursing and Midwifery Fellow. Catherine's dedication and innovative contributions have significantly advanced healthcare practices, earning her well-deserved recognition.

Recently, Catherine, alongside her colleagues, received the **Best Nursing & Midwifery Project of the Year Award** at the prestigious Irish Healthcare Awards 2024. This accolade is a testament to the outstanding work within the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) at the Rotunda Hospital, made possible with the support of the Spark Innovation Programme.

Since early 2024, the HSE Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) at Rotunda Hospital, Dublin 1, has been trialling the inclusion of forensic photography as part of its service. This project integrates photography within SATU to reduce patient stress, visit length, and provide trauma-informed care. By completing this simple yet vital element of a forensic examination onsite, the hope is to reduce the number of people an individual needs to interact with at a time of immense crisis, as well as making their visit to the SATU much shorter.

Evidence collected by SATUs may play a crucial role in investigations of sexual violence. Currently, body injury photographs are taken by An Garda Síochána, but offering photography as part of the SATU service aims to reduce the stress and duration of SATU attendance and lessen the burden on other agencies. The Rotunda SATU sees 42% of the people attending the SATU service nationally, making it the natural choice for a robust assessment in terms of the quantity and diversity of people seen. There is no statute of limitations when reporting a sexual crime, and timely collection of evidence gives individuals more options.

In a recent interview with RTÉ Radio 1, Catherine shared insights into her journey and the challenges she has overcome in her career. She emphasised the importance of continuous learning and collaboration in the healthcare sector. Her passion for nursing and midwifery shines through as she discusses her vision for the future of healthcare in Ireland.

To listen to Catherine's inspiring interview, simply click this [Link](#) or scan the QR code below. Her story is a testament to the impact that dedicated healthcare professionals can have on the lives of patients and the broader community.

We are incredibly proud of Catherine Marsh and her contributions to the field. Her achievements inspire us all to strive for excellence in our own roles, ensuring that we continue to provide the highest standard of care to our patients.



Read, Listen Watch



READ

Design for Care

by Peter Jones

Explore the intersection of design thinking and healthcare, with actionable methods and case studies for enhancing patient experiences and system efficiency.

[Read Here](#)



LISTEN

BMJ Podcast: From Surgeon to CEO

Jean Nehme shares his journey from founding Digital Surgery to acquisition by Medtronic, offering insights on navigating the healthcare innovation space.

[Listen Here](#)



WATCH

Doug Dietz Ted Talk

YouTube

Doug Dietz redesigns MRI machines for better patient experiences, highlighting the power of empathy and design thinking.

[Watch here](#)

Innovation-related recommendations to help inspire you!

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Looking Ahead...

2025 is shaping up to be a transformative year for healthcare innovation. Whether through the Spark Seed Initiative, Spark Impact 2025, or the Spark Summit, we're committed to empowering healthcare professionals to lead change.

Together, let's continue to create a healthcare system that serves everyone with compassion and innovation.

Stay connected with us:



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