

This guidance sets out what innovators¹ can expect from working with the Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) and what we expect in turn.

Sections 1-3 are common to all AHSNs.

Section 4 relates only to those AHSNs providing a Funding Support Service.

1) Aims and Objectives;

What to expect from us;

1.1 We provide a range of support services and guidance to innovators and innovations² which have potential to improve patient outcomes, reduce overall NHS expenditure and grow the UK health sector economy.

1.2 Innovators which lack the potential to reach the market, are likely to increase NHS costs, or are primarily based overseas are likely to fall outside the scope of work carried out by AHSNs.

1.3 All decisions on whether to provide any form of support to Innovators are made at the sole discretion of the AHSN.

What we expect from you;

1.4 Innovators must be open and honest in all communications about their evidence base, business plan and cost structures and to act in good faith at all times.

1.5 Innovators must recognise that AHSNs are not commissioners or service providers and are therefore not themselves potential buyers of products or services.

1.6 Innovators must inform an AHSN if they are already working with a different AHSN this is not necessarily a barrier but enables us to provide effective support and avoid wasteful duplication of effort.

2) About your Innovation;

What to expect from us;

2.1 Only information about your innovation which is already in the public domain will be shared publicly unless explicit consent is given by the innovator.

2.2 Unless information sharing is restricted by a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) agreed with us, information shared by the innovator with any AHSN for supporting product development, spread, evaluation or adoption may be shared with other AHSNs and or NHS bodies for those purposes.

[The AHSN's in the Network have signed a confidentiality agreement to ensure that information about your innovation shared with an AHSN will be kept confidential.

2.3 An AHSN will consider signing appropriate NDAs to protect innovators Intellectual Property (IP).

NDAs must be prepared and presented by the innovator for consideration by the AHSN.

2.4 All advice is offered with reasonable care and skill with regard to AHSNs understanding of the marketplace and innovator's circumstances.

What We Expect from You

2.5 Innovators requiring an NDA will prepare and provide a draft agreement for the AHSN to consider.

3) About the support we offer;

What to expect from us;

3.1 As a publicly funded body, each AHSN reports back to our commissioners on how our funding is spent (i.e. how many innovators receiving how much support). Each AHSN keeps appropriate records to enable that reporting.

3.2 As a publicly funded body, each AHSN reports back to our commissioners on the impact that our support has. We measure our impact by asking innovators to complete a questionnaire 2-3 times per year for up to 2 years after the end of our interaction.

3.3 As a publicly funded body, each AHSN may publicise the support given to innovators, and the outcome of that support through public channels such annual reports, public presentations, newsletters and social media posts and our reporting will be consistent with paragraph 2 above.

3.4 Each AHSN may pro-actively inform innovators of relevant opportunities e.g. grant funding, educational events, networking meetings etc. and AHSNs will maintain records to enable appropriate communications.

3.5 All advice offered by an AHSN is subject to the innovator conducting their own due diligence before implementation and AHSNs does not take any responsibility for funding applications that fail to win funding for any reason

3.6 Our data collection and retention complies with UK data protection laws.

What we expect from you;

3.7 Innovators will complete annual questionnaires (as detailed in 3.2 above) to help AHSNs and our commissioners understand the impact of AHSN support.

- 3.8 Innovators may publicise that they are working with one or more AHSNs but may not state or imply that our support (e.g. to develop, pilot or evaluate) constitutes endorsement of the product or its potential benefits without prior explicit written permission.
- 3.9 Where support from one or more AHSNs helps achieve demonstrable outcomes (e.g. funding, evaluations, contracts) then that support will be publicly acknowledged by the innovator.

4) Funding Support Service

A funding support service is currently available through Wessex AHSN. Other AHSNs connect to this service and you can access this through Wessex or the national digital entry (subject to availability).

What to expect from us;

- 4.1. Wessex AHSN's Funding Support Service (FSS) identifies and publicises health-focused funding opportunities (e.g. grant funding). The FSS does not ordinarily draft funding applications, but does by mutual agreement, check and advise on funding application forms written by innovators prior to submission in order to maximise the chance of success.
- 4.2. For grants of £1 million or more Wessex AHSN may, at the innovators request and at its own discretion, also provide support in drafting funding applications.
- 4.3. To date, last-minute applications have a 100% failure rate. Some funding bodies will not re-review applications in a subsequent round so last-minute applications can block good future applications. To protect your time and ours Wessex AHSN will not support or review last-minute applications. To allow us to review your application and to allow you time to consider our suggestions we ask to see first draft at least 5 working days before the grant deadline. First draft applications sent to us with less than 5 days to the grant deadline are unlikely to be reviewed or commented on.
- 4.4. The FSS is not Financial Services Authority (FSA) accredited as its function is to showcase funding opportunities to interested health-focused organisations. The application check and drafting service provides a second pair of eyes on an application and therefore innovators must assure themselves that their application meets their own and their funder's criteria / standards before submission.
- 4.5. Due to this, Wessex AHSN does not take responsibility for funding applications that fail to win funding for any reason.
- 4.6. The FSS is unlikely to support a funding application that requires more than 8 hours support without special agreement.

- 4.7. Wessex AHSN will publicise (e.g. newsletters and social media) successful FSS-supported applications and the values of those applications and our reporting will be consistent with paragraph 2 above. The publicity will outline how Wessex AHSN was involved in the support of the successful applications and will also mention any partners involved.
- 4.8. Wessex AHSN will report **all** successfully-supported funding applications to its UK government funders (NHS England, Office for Life Science and NHS Improvement) and to the Wessex AHSN Board. The report will outline how Wessex AHSN was involved in the support of the successful applications.
- 4.9. Provision of the FSS is subject to clause 1.2.

What we expect of you;

- 4.10 Innovators must request use of the FSS before sending draft applications to Wessex AHSN.
- 4.11 Innovators must send draft applications for review by the FSS at least 5 days before the final submission deadline.
- 4.12 Innovators will report back on the impact of the FSS in accordance with clause 3.7

Definitions;

- 1 An innovator is a person or organisation developing a product or service. The term 'innovator' includes companies, academics and clinicians as well as individuals planning to register a company who have not yet done so.
- 2 An innovation is a product or service bringing new benefits to the payer, user or patient.