

2024/25 North Central London Cancer Alliance Innovation Fund: Improving Patient Experience

Guidance documentation

Key Information

Objective of 2024/25 Innovation Fund	Identify, implement, and evaluate novel innovative solutions which aim to directly improve patient experience across cancer pathways within North Central London.
Applications open	01 st August 2024
Applications close	07 th October 2024 at 12:00pm
Publication of successful award(s)	11 th November 2024
Grant duration	1-2 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-year proposals will be considered if a clear delivery and evaluation plan is cited within the application.
Target audience	<p>North Central London stakeholders from the below groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary care • Secondary care • Tertiary care <p>We strongly encourage project teams to submit applications which evidence genuine collaboration with other NCL organisations including Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations (at least one NHS NCL organisation must be involved in the partnership). Submissions to the 2024/25 Innovation Fund will need to be sent from the key contact within the host organisation (see page 9).</p> <p>Project teams will need to adhere to internal procurement guidelines when partnering with VCSE organisations.</p>
Scope criteria	The open call will focus on supporting local NCL innovators to deliver innovation into clinical/operational practice which has a primary focus on improving patient experience.

	<p>Solutions will need to align to one (or more) of the below themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication 2. Access and Navigation 3. Coordination of Care. <p>Examples of potential proposals that would be in scope are outlined below though this is not an exhaustive list and creativity is encouraged:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Software/digital solution 2. Behavioural intervention 3. Workforce solution (note: funded posts to support business as usual cancer services will be considered out of scope) 4. Educational tool 5. New model of care
Maximum grant award sum	Up to £200,000.00

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1. Introduction

Following a successful Innovation Fund in 2023/24, we are pleased to announce the launch of our 2024/25 Innovation Fund which will focus on improving patient experience across cancer services in North Central London.

Background

The focus of the 2024/25 Innovation Fund will be on harnessing the power of innovation to improve patient experience outcomes across North Central London. The Alliance has a prioritised strategic objective to improve patient experience so that its performance in the National Cancer Patient Experience Survey (NCPES) reaches the top quartile nationally by 2028. Results from 2023 revealed that North Central London Cancer Alliance is currently ranked 17th/21 for patient experience. Whilst national incentives exist to support project teams through quality improvement processes, there are limited national and local funding opportunities for stakeholders to undertake projects within this domain.

Document purpose

This guidance aims to provide information on how to apply for funding as part of the 2024/25 North Central London Cancer Alliance Innovation Fund: Improving Patient Experience.

Objectives of 2024/25 Innovation Fund

- Identify, implement, and evaluate innovative solutions across North Central London which aim to improve patient experience across cancer pathways.
- Contribute to improving North Central London's performance in the National Cancer Patient Experience Survey in line with NCLCA's strategic objective to perform in the top quartile nationally by 2028.

2. Scope

Target audience

Note: Where 'host organisation' is referenced within this documentation it refers to that organisation in which the innovative solution will be delivered.*

**Where more than one organisation is delivering the innovation through a partnership application, applicants should nominate a host organisation which will be responsible for submission of the application, receiving, and coordinating the funding if awarded.*

For this Fund, we welcome applications from the below organisations across North Central London:

- Primary care
- Secondary care
- Tertiary care

To have the largest impact for our patients, we will strongly favour applications that evidence collaboration between organisations, including Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations (project teams will need to adhere to internal procurement guidelines of the host organisation when partnering with VCSE organisations.). Our local VCSE network has been informed

of the upcoming funding opportunity and of potential incoming partnership requests from NHS organisations. While we encourage project teams to explore and establish partnerships directly, we are more than happy to support in facilitating introductions where appropriate. If required, please email me on lily.mackay1@nhs.net with details of your proposal and/or organisations wishing to be contacted. Partnership applications must demonstrate that the innovation will be delivered in at least one NHS Trust/organisation.

Prioritised themes

Through analysis of North Central London's performance in the 2022 and 2023 National Cancer Patient Experience Survey Results, as well as consultation with key stakeholders across our network, we are looking to support innovations that help tackle one or more of the below themes. Note: priority areas also align with NHS England's Cancer Improvement Collaboration for 2024.

1. Communication,
2. Access and Navigation, and
3. Co-ordination of Care

Types of innovation

The Alliance defines innovations as:

“Approaches, technologies, and products that help deliver our cancer aims that are significantly different from other solutions already in place across the health system”.

For Innovation Fund 2024/25, awards can be used to develop, deliver, and evaluate new initiatives or adopt innovations into North Central London that have proven to be a success across other pathways and/or geographies. Awards can be specific to an individual tumour site or have a pan-cancer application.

Whilst we encourage the submission of innovative ideas/solutions that meet the key criteria, the below list is to be used as a guide to support project proposal development and would be considered in scope for this fund:

- Software/digital solutions
- Behavioural interventions
- Workforce solutions (note: funding will not be awarded to support business as usual positions)
- Educational tools
- New models of care

Out-of-scope criteria

This is a non-recurrent revenue funding stream which should be used to directly deliver innovation within patient experience in North Central London and is not to be utilised to support the below:

- Proposals that support the delivery of business-as-usual cancer services (e.g. CNS posts with no evidence of the implementation of an innovative solutions)

- Early-stage innovation in the research phase of development (applicants should check <https://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/> if they are unsure)
- Industry partners without a partnered NHS NCL organisation
- Proposals exceeding £200,000.00.

Key inclusion criteria

1. Objective

The main objective of the project must centre around improving patient experience across cancer pathways in North Central London. Applications in which this is a secondary and/or complementary aim or objective will be considered ineligible for this fund.

2. Governance

Applicants must evidence in Section 1 of their application internal approvals (or that in principle) from key stakeholders in the delivery of the project at the host organisation and against the timelines as specified in their application. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Information Governance
- Operational/service management
- Procurement
- Information Technology
- Finance
- Human Resources

A senior sponsor at the host organisation must be identified and sign the application documentation accordingly. We also welcome letters of support from other key stakeholders for example a Patient Experience Manager, QI lead or other relevant groups but this is not essential.

3. Health Inequalities

Applicants must evidence how their innovation works to tackle and not exacerbate health-related inequalities within North Central London, specifically the 20% most deprived populations (NHS England's Core20PLUS- [NHS England » Core20PLUS5 \(adults\) – an approach to reducing healthcare inequalities](#)).

Available funding

To make a genuine difference to patient experience in North Central London, we are looking to support a small number of large-scale projects up to a maximum of £200,000.00 per project proposal. Note: costs requested must not exceed this figure in their totality.

Expenditure can include, but is not limited to:

- Salary costs or 'backfill funding' as per whole time equivalent for project staff to directly deliver the innovation proposal,
- Supplies, consumables, services, or licencing costs relating to the project,
- Training costs,

- Patient involvement reimbursement costs (please kindly refer to https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/B0869_Working-with-patient-and-public-voice-partners-reimbursing-expenses-and-paying-involvement-payments.pdf for guidance), and
- Evaluation costs.

As per our 2023/24 Innovation Fund, the Alliance reserves the right to part or match-fund successful bids at its discretion. Applications should be based on estimated expenditure and all figures entered should be in GBP (£ Sterling) and inclusive of VAT.

As detailed in our draft grant letter (please see Annex 1) funding awards will be dispensed in accrual each financial quarter following completion of a progress review meeting with NCLCA and assurance of delivery of associated milestones. Applicants must therefore assume that absorption of costs may be required by the host organisation prior to fund release.

UCLPartners will continue to support the Innovation workstream of NCL CA and will be contributing to the selection and management of the selected awards for the 2024/25 Innovation Fund.

Evaluation

This section is to provide transparency on how NCLCA will evaluate the bidder’s submission to the 2024/25 Innovation Fund.

We will complete an initial sift based on the above [Key inclusion criteria](#) before applicants are invited to an expert panel interview in which they will be assessed against the below eight evaluation criteria:

Evaluation Criteria		Weighting (Total 100%)
1	Feasibility: The innovator’s ability to adopt a practical solution that works within the existing clinical/operational environment.	20%
2	Impact: The potential for the innovation to improve patient experience outcomes across cancer pathway(s).	20%
3	Scalability: How easily the innovation can be adapted and implemented across other clinical/operational settings at the local and national level.	10%
4	Safety: The safety of the innovation and potential risks to both patients and providers.	10%
5	Data and evaluation: The quality of the data generated, adherence to data governance standards, and inclusion of a clearly defined evaluation plan.	10%

6	Sustainability: The potential for the innovation to be sustained over time and how it will be sustained financially and/or operationally (if applicable).	10%
7	User experience: How the patient/carer voice has been considered and incorporated into the innovation proposal.	10%
8	Health-related inequalities How well the proposal contributes to addressing health-related inequalities across North Central London.	10%

Project teams may be asked to complete additional governance activities following award, for example a detailed evaluation logic model or a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment.

3. [How to apply](#)

Parties who wish to apply for funding as part of the 2024/25 Innovation Fund will need to complete step 1 below, and shortlisted applicants will also need to complete step 2:

Step 1: Application pack submission (inclusive of both Section 1: Governance Approvals and Section 2: Application Form)

Step 2: Expert panel review and interview to explore shortlisted bids in further detail.

Step 1 is designed to signal your interest to the NCLCA and provide an overview of the innovative solution(s) your organisation(s) wishes to introduce within cancer services across North Central London. On receipt of the proposal, we will assess whether this aligned with the aims and evaluation criteria of the Innovation Fund for 2024/25.

Proposals that satisfy step 1 criteria and evaluation will be invited to provide further information by way of panel review (step 2). Applicants can expect to receive additional guidance ahead of the interview on key areas of focus. This is likely to be via Microsoft Teams but may take place in person. Final decisions will be validated by the NCLCA Programme Board.

4. [Key dates and timeline](#)

The overarching timeline for NCLCA Innovation Fund 2024/25 is as follows:

Key steps:	Key dates:
Applications open	01 st August 2024
NCLCA drop-in Q&A via Microsoft Teams	20 th August 2024 (12:00pm-13:00pm) Please email lily.mackay1@nhs.net for the MS Teams link 16 th September 2024 (13:00pm-14:00pm)

	Please email lily.mackay1@nhs.net for the MS Teams link
Deadline for applications (Applications submitted after this date and time will not be considered for shortlisting)	07 th October 2024 at 12:00pm (noon)
NCLCA Panel Review	07 th October 2024 – 25 th October 2024
Shortlisted applicants invited to interview	28 th October 2024
NCLCA Interview panel for shortlisted applicants	08 th November 2024
Awards confirmed to successful applicants	11 th November 2024
NCLCA recommendations submitted to Programme Board	November 2024
Note: Successful applicants will be invited to attend North Central London Cancer Alliance’s in-person conference on Tuesday 19th November 2024.	

5. Contact Information

Applicants should engage with their lead contacts and ensure that all communications and bid submissions are routed exclusively via the below associated individuals. **Applications will only be accepted if they are submitted by the lead contact.** This will ensure oversight and support an efficient process.

Applications are to be submitted in word format to uclh.nclcanceralliance@nhs.net.

The agreed list of contacts are as follows:

Organisation/Trust	Lead(s) for bid submissions
Borough of Haringey	Kate Rees (North Central London Cancer Alliance GP Clinical Lead)
Borough of Islington	Seema Chaudhari (North Central London Cancer Alliance GP Clinical Lead)
Borough of Camden	Seema Chaudhari (North Central London Cancer Alliance GP Clinical Lead)
Borough of Enfield	Nitika Silhi (North Central London Cancer Alliance GP Clinical Lead)
Borough of Barnet	Zareena Cuddis (North Central London Cancer Alliance GP Clinical Lead)

Please address all other questions to Lily Mackay (NCLCA Innovation Project Manager) at lily.mackay1@nhs.net.