Driver Project Awards – call for applications

Context for the funding call

The NHS in London, together with London Councils and the GLA, are working to make London the healthiest global city, and the best place to receive health and care services.

Delivering this commitment will require new ways of working, based on processes across the innovation lifecycle – from invention, to implementation, to improvement. To do this we are working to make London the best place to innovate to drive outcomes and productivity in healthcare delivery.

To deliver a thriving Innovation Ecosystem in London we must coordinate our research, evaluation, and implementation expertise to generate insights, and to turn insights into clinical-operational impact for patients and staff on-the-ground. An important part of enabling stronger collaboration is through the launch of London's Secure Data Environment. This is a new way to access health and care data for research, which scales city-region models that have already shown utility in parts of London – such as in NW London through DiscoverNOW (hosted at Imperial College Health Partners), in NE London through the Clinical Effectiveness Group (hosted at Queen Mary University of London), and through the AI Centre (hosted in Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust).

At its core, the London SDE includes a linked longitudinal record for the London population (linking structured GP data and commissioning datasets for acute, community and mental health); alongside mechanisms for London's trusts and academic institutes to federate their data assets under the same 'six safes' governance controls. We are now at a point of development where that linked longitudinal record is becoming available, covering Londoners in each ICB geography, and accessible in one place under a common data sharing framework and research access process.

But data for its own sake is not the goal, so we are seeking to fund driver projects that showcase and strengthen the London SDE, in tight alignment with London's wider health innovation ecosystem, and in ways that can combine the existing 'core' of the London SDE with 'deep' datasets held in our pre-eminent clinical-academic trusts.

What we are seeking to commission

To showcase and enhance the London SDE we are looking to fund three projects that:

1. Tackle a high-priority real-world challenge in London's health and care system
2. Demonstrate the utility of infrastructure in ways that:
   a. Make use of the benefits of a large-linked population data set covering structured GP data and commissioning datasets
   b. Augment assets available in the London SDE, either through either new ingestion, curation, and use (e.g. of pathology data); and/or linkage with trust data assets through six-safes compliant federation / collaboration mechanisms

3. 'Drive' the translation of research insights into implementation and impact, through partnerships across existing units in London's Innovation Ecosystem (see 'C' below), and with those accountable for operational adoption. In considering routes to implementation, projects should consider the role of OneLondon Products, such as the London Care Record or Universal Care Plan, in surfacing contextualised clinical information; and/or the role of Federated Data Platform (FDP) products in making aggregate outputs available for operational and reporting purposes.

To enable these driver projects, we are making available up to **£250,000 of funding**, for each of three successful bids. The funding can be utilised for directly incurred and directly allocated costs (but the funding does not cover indirect costs). Successful applicants will have flexibility in the use of that resource to deliver the project, noting that we expect it to be spent on activities such as:

- Data engineering resource for data pipeline development
- Data curation and clinical validation
- Analyst resources to undertake health systems research and data science tasks
- Compute resources
- Patient and public engagement activities
- Implementation support, blueprinting, and scale-up plan
- Dissemination activities

To help mobilise and coordinate the Innovation Ecosystem in London we are looking for bids from consortia that can demonstrate:

A. **The benefit of using a longitudinal population health dataset to support actionable insights at scale in London** (i.e. operating across at least two ICS areas).
B. **Delivery system sponsorship** – with demonstrable support from participant ICB CMOs and relevant provider collaboratives to prioritise the work and enable scale-up.
C. **Collaboration across the NHS and NIHR infrastructure**. This could include input from any/all local NIHR units (BRCs, RDNs, ARCs), and/or CEGs as 'effector functions' that help blueprint how research artefacts, insights, or products would be implemented in clinical-operational settings in practice.
D. **Strategic innovation partnerships and co-investment** with charities, institutes, and/or industry collaborators who are making matched-resource contributions to tackle the selected health and care challenge.
E. **Engagement of the public** in terms of the specific focus of the research, and/or to explore general policy issues relating to the use of an SDE to power impactful research.

Requirements of a response

i. **Why** is this project important: what real world problem are you trying to address, why is this a priority for action in London, and how does it build on existing strengths in London?
ii. **Who** is the accountable lead for the project, who forms the wider delivery consortium, and what will each partner contribute? Lead applicants must be affiliated with a London-based research institution, NHS trust, or healthcare organization.
iii. **What specific research question**(s) are you proposing to explore?

iv. **What research assets do you need** to access to deliver this project, and where new data assets / flows are being incorporated:
   a. please provide confirmation of the data controller agreement to provide those data assets / items; and/or
   b. please provide an indication of the mechanism for the data provision (ingestion pipelines versus federation).

v. **When** are activities likely to happen: please provide a high-level project plan, alongside the costing template provided, indicating how the resources will be used and where matched resourcing is being contributed, include a description of deliverables / outputs throughout the year and evidence of your institutional approval of the costing.

vi. **Evidence of engagement with your local Health Innovation Network**(s) as a delivery partner in the driver project.

vii. **Confirmation of commitment to apply OneLondon policies** in relation to:
   a. Using OneLondon Data Sharing Protocol for any data sharing agreements
   b. Using the OneLondon Data Access process for application to the SDE
   c. Using OneLondon and SDE Network branding and identities in presentation materials, including common document templates provided by the central team

viii. **Confirmation of commitment to ongoing programme engagement** and update of the London Innovation Ecosystem through (i) participation in the quarterly London SDE NIHR Research User Group, and supporting working groups; and (ii) presentation of deliverables on a quarterly basis to the London SDE Research Leadership Group / MedICS Meeting

To help make the submission process straightforward, a template for responses will be provided with a word limit for each section. We will accept letters of support where they provide evidence for the above criteria.

Important dates:

Activity	Date
Launch of the call for driver projects	18th June 2025
Stakeholder webinar	20th June 2025 (13:00-14:00)
Submission date	31st July 2025 (17:00)
Bids reviewed and shortlisted	Early August 2025
Shortlisted bidders interviewed	w/c 8th Sept 2025
Independent Information Access Group (IIAG) Review	15th September
Award notification	End Sept 2025
Start date and launch event	November 2025
Mobilisation report	January 2026
Interim update	April 2026
Early outputs	July 2026
Final outputs	Sept/October 2026

For further details around this funding call please join us using this link to the **OneLondon Driver Project Webinar - 20 June (13:00-14:00),** or contact **mark.kewley@nhs.net**.

Join us in advancing health research across London through the power of secure data collaboration!