

Nursing and Midwifery contribution to the HSE Spark Innovation Programme

Annual Report 2023



Innovation Programme



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MESSAGE FROM DR GERALDINE SHAW

I am pleased that we are continuing our collaboration with the HSE Spark Innovation Programme through the Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD). In this annual report, we highlight the significant contributions of nursing and midwifery to service improvement via the Spark Innovation Programme in 2023.



Building on the establishment of the first ONMSD-supported Nursing and Midwifery National Fellowship in Innovation in 2022, and the success of our first Fellow, Ms. Amy Carroll (Midwife), we are thrilled to continue sponsoring an annual fellowship. Amy's pioneering achievements and the positive evaluation of the first fellowship have set a high standard.

In June 2023, Ms Catherine Marsh, our second Fellow, (Nurse) joined the HSE Spark team. Her leadership and passion for innovation have resulted in an increased engagement from nurses and midwives in the programme. We extend our gratitude to Catherine for her exemplary leadership.

HSE Spark continues to excel in encouraging and supporting frontline innovation. Through the HSE Spark Innovation Programme, nurses and midwives bring their insights and empathy to develop and promote new methods of delivering safe, high-quality, person-centered care.

Year on year, the HSE Spark Innovation Programme receives an increased number of applications from nurse and midwife-led projects across the country, representing diverse settings and disciplines. This impressive response is a testament to the dedication and effort of all applicants. This report showcases excellent examples of creativity and achievement when nurses and midwives commit themselves to implementing their innovative ideas. Notably, many of the multidisciplinary teams included a nurse or midwife.

We remain excited about and committed to our strong relationship with HSE Spark Programme. As demonstrated in this report, our collaboration leads to improvements in the overall experience for both patients and staff, better health outcomes, and pioneering nursing and midwifery practices.

Congratulations and thank you to everyone involved.

Dr Geraldine Shaw, Nursing & Midwifery Services Director, Office of the Nursing & Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD), Clinical Programme Implementation & Professional Development, Office of the Chief Clinical Officer

FOREWORD FROM JARED GORMLY

It is with great pleasure that we present the 2023 HSE Spark report, outlining the specific contribution of Nursing and Midwifery Professionals to the HSE Spark Innovation Programme. The contents of this report are a testament to the remarkable achievements and innovations spearheaded by nurses and midwives within the Irish health service. This report offers a comprehensive look at the initiatives that have emerged through the HSE Spark Innovation Programme, showcasing the creativity and commitment of healthcare professionals across diverse clinical settings.



This year, we celebrate the fourth anniversary of our fruitful collaboration with the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD). This partnership has been instrumental in advancing the programme's reach and impact, ensuring that the opportunities provided by HSE Spark are accessible and well-publicised among nurses and midwives. The ONMSD's steadfast support and strategic guidance have been crucial in fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement within these professions.

A cornerstone of this partnership is the National Nursing & Midwifery Innovation Fellowship, which brings invaluable nursing and midwifery perspectives to the Spark team. This year's fellows, Ms. Catherine Marsh and Ms. Amy Carroll, have played a pivotal role in driving forward initiatives that are both patient-centered and professionally enriching. Their work, particularly in human-centered design, has significantly enhanced the programme, making it more inclusive and responsive to the needs of frontline staff.

In 2023, we made notable strides in expanding the 'Spark Seed' initiative, focusing on accessibility and the broad dissemination of innovation skills among clinical staff. The efforts to increase visibility and engagement within the nursing and midwifery community have been successful, thanks in large part to the dedicated outreach and educational activities led by our fellows. These activities have not only fostered greater participation but have also solidified the role of nurses and midwives as key drivers of innovation in healthcare.

The introduction of Spark Connect has created a dynamic platform for interprofessional collaboration, enabling healthcare professionals to share insights and solutions that address common challenges. This initiative exemplifies our commitment to nurturing a vibrant innovation ecosystem, where shared learning and collective problem-solving are paramount.

As we look ahead, we are grateful for the continued support from the ONMSD, which has committed to funding the Nursing & Midwifery Fellowship for 2024/25. This sustained investment is a powerful endorsement of our collective mission to empower frontline staff, enhance patient care, and drive systemic change across the health service.

We remain committed to cultivating an environment where innovation thrives, and we look forward to the continued partnership with the ONMSD and our dedicated healthcare professionals. Together, we will continue to push the boundaries of what is possible in public healthcare, ensuring that our services are not only effective but also exemplary in meeting the needs of all our patients and communities.

Jared Gormly, Head of HSE Spark



SPARK 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 Director (ONMSD) and National Health & Social Care Professions Office (NHSCPO), the programme has grown to extending that support to all clinical staff right across the health service.

In June 2023, the programme transitioned from its original home within the National Doctor's Training and Planning Office into the newly established Office of Clinical Innovation and Simulation. The establishment of the new office reflects both the growth of the programme and the broader representation of frontline innovators supported by HSE Spark which has expanded beyond Doctors solely, to include Nurses, Midwives and the 26 Health and Social Care Professions.

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 to 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 manner.

Through engagement with the programme and our multiple initiatives, frontline healthcare workers can access funding, mentorship and professional development opportunities through fellowship and innovation training.

SPARK TEAM 2023



Jared Gormly
Head of Programme



Caitriona Heffernan
HSE Spark
Innovation Lead



Dr. Rachel McNamara
National NCHD
Innovation Fellow



Dermot Burke
National HSCP
Innovation Fellow



Amy Carroll
National Nursing/Midwifery
Innovation Fellow



Dr. Cathal MacDháibhéid
National NCHD
Innovation Fellow



Dr. Bobby Tang
National NCHD
Innovation Fellow



Catherine Marsh
National Nursing/Midwifery
Innovation Fellow



Dr. Michelle Howard
National HSCP
Innovation Fellow



Dr. Emily Wallace
National NCHD
Innovation Fellow

AIMS & OBJECTIVES



The aims and objectives of the HSE Spark Innovation Programme align closely with the HSE Corporate Plan 2021-2024, ensuring that activity receives strong support from the centre of the organisation.

1

ENGAGE & EMPOWER FRONTLINE STAFF

We seek to empower staff to deliver change, identify barriers and implement improvements for patients and service- users.*

- Promote and celebrate initiative, creativity and collaboration
- Create funding streams for staff-generated solutions to identified problems and opportunities
- Enable access to training in design and innovation methodologies
- Provide mentoring
- Share success stories

*HSE Corporate Plan 2021-24

2

CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM FOR HEALTH INNOVATORS

With a shared vision of improving patient and service-user experience, we will work together more effectively and overcome barriers that have made change more difficult in the past.*

- Create an innovation-friendly workplace
- Promote collaborative work practices
- Normalise innovation practices
- Promote the role of human-centred thinking in the health system
- Promote early engagement with emerging technology

3

DEVELOP SYSTEMATIC CAPABILITY

To create this environment... an increased focus on teamwork and collaboration... education and training programmes... and developing necessary structures (e.g. locally based change and improvement networks, communities of practice etc)*

- Create an innovation-friendly workplace
- Promote collaborative work practices
- Normalise innovation practices
- Promote the role of human-centred thinking in the health system
- Promote early engagement with emerging technology

PILLARS OF THE SPARK PROGRAMME

In pursuit of our organisational aims and objectives, we have established a strategic framework built upon seven core pillars of activity. These pillars provide the solid foundation for our operations, guiding our efforts to maximise engagement, innovation and impact.



RESEARCH

Contributing to the body of research in the frontline innovation space both nationally and internationally.



INITIATIVES

Creating opportunities to develop skills, secure micro funding, access mentorship and embed innovation.



DESIGN

Implementing user informed change and innovation.



NETWORK

Gathering and connecting our internal and external partners.



ENGAGEMENT

Providing multimodal engagement opportunities for our innovation collective across the health service.



PIONEERING

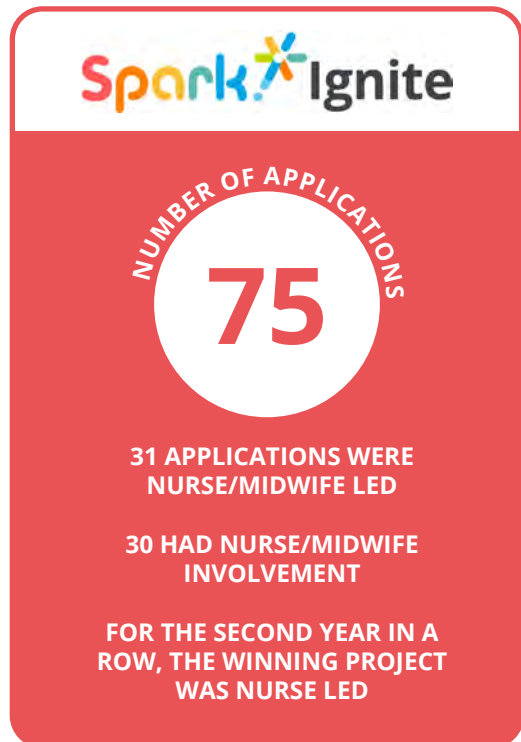
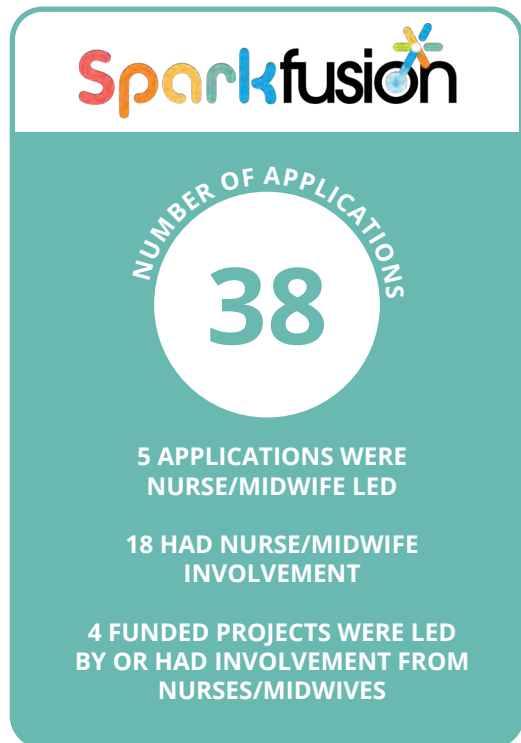
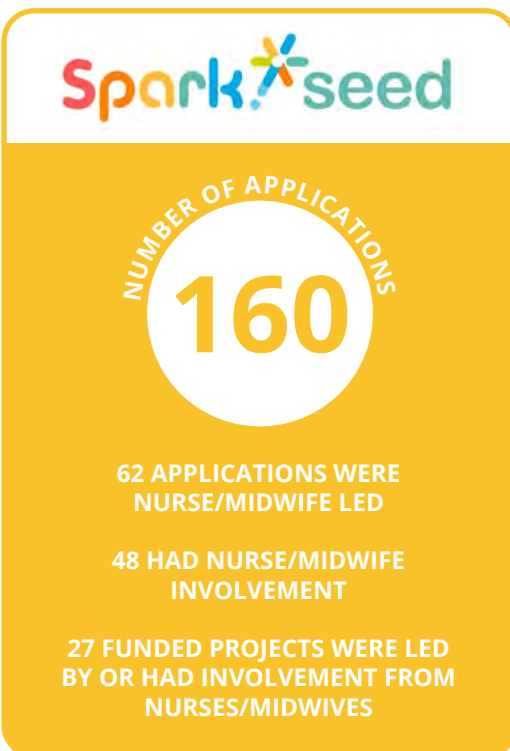
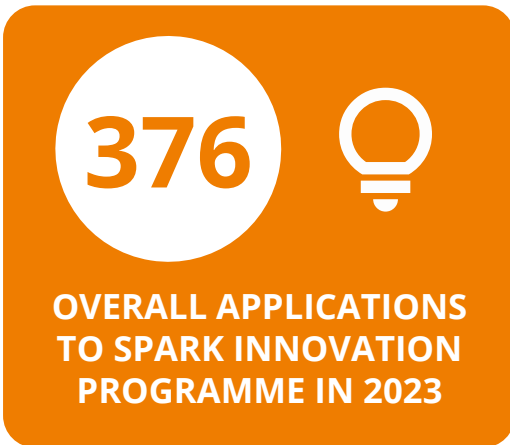
Leading the way with new products, services and ways of working through pilots and validation studies.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Developing our staff's capability and impact.

2023 AT A GLANCE



NURSING & MIDWIFERY 2023 AT A GLANCE

134

NURSE/MIDWIFE LED PROJECT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

62

NURSE/MIDWIFE LED PROJECTS REPRESENTED AT DESIGN WORKSHOPS

33

NURSE/MIDWIFE LED PROJECTS WERE FUNDED OR SUPPORTED IN 2023

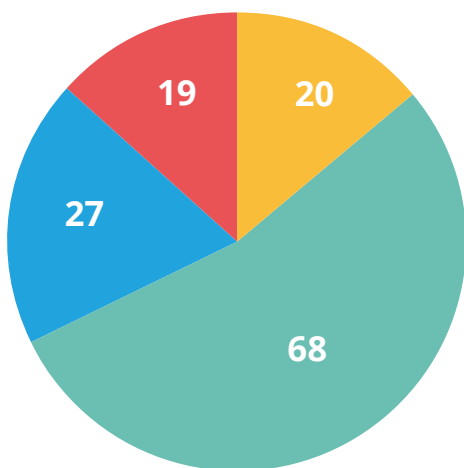
€228,300

FINANCIAL INVESTMENT OFFERED TO NURSE/MIDWIFE-LED PROJECTS

NURSING/MIDWIFERY INNOVATOR ROLES

134

TOTAL APPLICANTS



- Director of Nursing (DON)/Assistant Director of Nursing (ADON)/Director of Midwifery (DOM)/Assistant Director of Midwifery (ADOM)
- Clinical Nurse Managers 1, Clinical Nurse Manager 2, Clinical Nurse Manager 3, Clinical Midwife Manager, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Clinical Midwife Specialist, Clinical Skills Facilitators, Public Health Nurse
- Advanced Midwife Practitioner/Advanced Nurse Practitioner
- Staff Nurse/Midwife

THE ONMSD & HSE SPARK COLLABORATION

The collaboration between the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD) and the HSE Spark Innovation Programme marked its fourth year in 2023. This partnership continues to play a pivotal role in fostering innovation within the nursing and midwifery professions across the health service in Ireland.

Throughout 2023, the ONMSD and HSE Spark Programme Collaborative Group maintained regular meetings, ensuring robust guidance, oversight and across HSE communication. This year, the group's shared objective was that of increasing the awareness of the HSE Spark Innovation Programme among nurses and midwives, promoting further engagement with the programme and ensuring that the opportunities and initiatives offered by HSE Spark were highly visible across the professional groups.

A key contributor to the success of this collaboration is the National Nursing & Midwifery Innovation Fellowship. The Fellowship provides a registered nurse / midwife the unique opportunity to join the HSE Spark Innovation team and represent the needs and priorities of nurses, midwives and their leadership within the programme. Their deep understanding of their domain area, the lived experience

of their clinical colleagues and their leadership skills combine to significantly shape the programme's activity each year. The Fellow also plays an active role in nurturing innovative ideas, driving forward-thinking projects, and supporting the initial implementation of new initiatives led by clinical staff in practice.

In June 2023, Ms. Catherine Marsh joined HSE Spark as the second Nursing/Midwifery Fellow. She worked in partnership with the inaugural fellow, Ms. Amy Carroll for a number of months and their overlap period as Fellows provided an invaluable opportunity to reflect on advances made in the first year of the Fellowship role and to plan for future progress. Both Fellows gained formal qualifications in the field of Human Centred Design during their Fellowships and their commitment to the ethos of Human Centeredness and good quality Service Design became evident in all aspects of their role.



Much of the focus for 2023 was on the redesign of the 'Spark Seed' initiative to ensure that accessibility for clinical staff was prioritised and reflected their need to access the Spark initiatives at their convenience. Additionally, the redesign of the Spark Seed initiative saw the expansion of knowledge and skills building in the area of Human Centred Design being made available to all applicants to the HSE Spark Programme. These developments have had a significant impact on the user experience of the programme and the access to capability building tools for innovation.

Another key focus for 2023 was creating greater awareness of the Spark Programme at every level across the nursing and midwifery professions. This evolved from the recognition of the important role played by clinical managers and key decision makers in supporting their frontline colleagues to both identify challenges and implement innovative solutions within clinical services. Throughout the year, Catherine engaged extensively in professional development meetings and ANP (Advance Nurse Practitioner) & AMP (Advance Midwifery Practitioner) meetings. She engaged with senior management & leadership teams, provided many Nursing/Midwifery educational online sessions and attended numerous national conferences. This visibility fostered greater interest and engagement

in Spark initiatives, further embedding the culture of innovation within the nursing and midwifery community in Ireland.

Finally, 2023 saw a greater focus on supporting nurses and midwives to connect with their peers for the purposes of driving innovation and committing increased levels of funding to Nurses and Midwives to deliver high impact projects across the system. In collaboration with her multidisciplinary co-fellows on the programme, Catherine was instrumental in developing our newest offering - Spark Connect. As the first event in an ambitious programme of future work planned, Spark Connect 2023 provided an opportunity for nurses, midwives and all clinical staff across the HSE to learn from the experiences of other innovators across the country. It also offered tools and support with a step-by-step guide for staff to work within their teams to identify workplace challenges and take the first steps towards innovation.

We remain committed to advancing the HSE Spark Innovation Programme and making meaningful improvements in patient care and interdisciplinary collaboration. We are delighted that the Director of the ONMSD has agreed to continue funding the Nursing & Midwifery Fellowship for 2024/25, ensuring sustained support for frontline innovation.



THE NURSING & MIDWIFERY INNOVATION FELLOWSHIP

Midwifery Fellow Ms. Catherine Marsh.

Catherine is the National Nursing and Midwifery Innovation Fellow for 2023-24. Catherine brings over 25 years of nursing experience to her new role. She has extensive experience as a Clinical Nurse Specialist and Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner at the Mullingar Sexual Assault Treatment Unit, where she earned a Post Graduate Higher Diploma in Sexual Assault Forensic Examination from the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland in September 2019.



While working as a Community Liaison Nurse for the homeless in 2014, Catherine pursued a Masters in Applied Health Care Management from University College Dublin, focusing her research on the lived experiences of the homeless population. She completed her nurse prescribing training in 2020 and in June 2023, she received certification in Advanced Practice, becoming a registered Advanced Nurse Practitioner with Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI).

Catherine's journey with HSE Spark began in 2022, when she and a colleague presented an innovative idea to implement a novel photography system for documenting injuries following sexual assaults. Passionate about enhancing patient accessibility and patient experience, Catherine has gone on a journey from innovator to innovation leader in her role as National Nursing & Midwifery Innovation Fellow.

What has been the main focus of your work throughout the Fellowship?

Throughout the year, I have been involved in supporting various innovative projects, each presenting its own set of challenges and learning opportunities. These experiences have honed my problem-solving skills and reinforced the importance of innovation in healthcare. I have also represented the needs of the nursing and midwifery professions in the development and growth of the HSE Spark Programme and its many different offerings.

As the Nursing/Midwifery Fellow for Innovation, I have been granted the unique opportunity to observe the many new, creative and forward-thinking solutions to health care challenges that are identified by my Nursing/Midwifery colleagues across the country. This role is like no other, getting to work in an environment where I can support my colleagues to develop and implement their innovation projects and to create a space where their ideas are always welcome and encouraged. It is inspiring to meet so many colleagues who want to improve the health service for their patients and their colleagues.

How would you say the fellowship has impacted on your professional development?

The fellowship role has pushed me to think outside the box and develop new skills in leading and delivering innovation. I have expanded my skill set beyond my traditional nursing roles by pursuing a Professional Diploma in Service Design with NCAD (National College of Art & Design). This was particularly daunting and outside my comfort zone. The course has equipped me with valuable knowledge in project management, designing service, data analysis, Human Centered Design and other areas crucial to driving innovation. These new skills have not only made me more versatile as a healthcare professional but I believe they have also prepared me for future leadership roles.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of undertaking the National Innovation Fellowship role?

A particularly fulfilling aspect of this fellowship has been the potential to directly impact patient outcomes. By identifying and supporting projects through Spark Seed applications, I feel I have contributed to improvements in patient care, safety, and satisfaction. Knowing that my efforts are leading to positive changes in healthcare is incredibly satisfying and motivates me to continue striving for excellence. Innovation in healthcare necessitates collaboration across multiple disciplines. I have been fortunate to work with professionals from diverse backgrounds, including other healthcare providers/disciplines and designers. Building these networks has enhanced my skills and broadened my perspective on healthcare. I have also been fortunate enough to be invited to present to Nursing and Midwifery Managers across Ireland and attended numerous conferences to embed a culture of innovation in healthcare. Representing

the Nursing and Midwifery Professions at both 'grass roots' and senior leadership level has been a very rewarding experience for me.

What has been your greatest personal or professional achievement during your Fellowship?

Thanks to the Spark Leadership team, I have had the chance to lead out on a project that is a real personal passion of mine. The project focused on implementing innovative and sensitive photo documentation for physical injuries in individuals attending Sexual Assault Treatment Units. Having worked on this project for over two years, we are now set to begin its initial evaluation at the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin in early 2024. Leading this initiative in my role as the National Innovation Fellow for Nursing and Midwifery has enabled me to apply my leadership skills through engaging with stakeholders, and overseeing the implementation of the project. It has proven to be a real learning curve but I am very proud of my achievement, and that of my colleagues, in delivering such an important service.

Any final words?

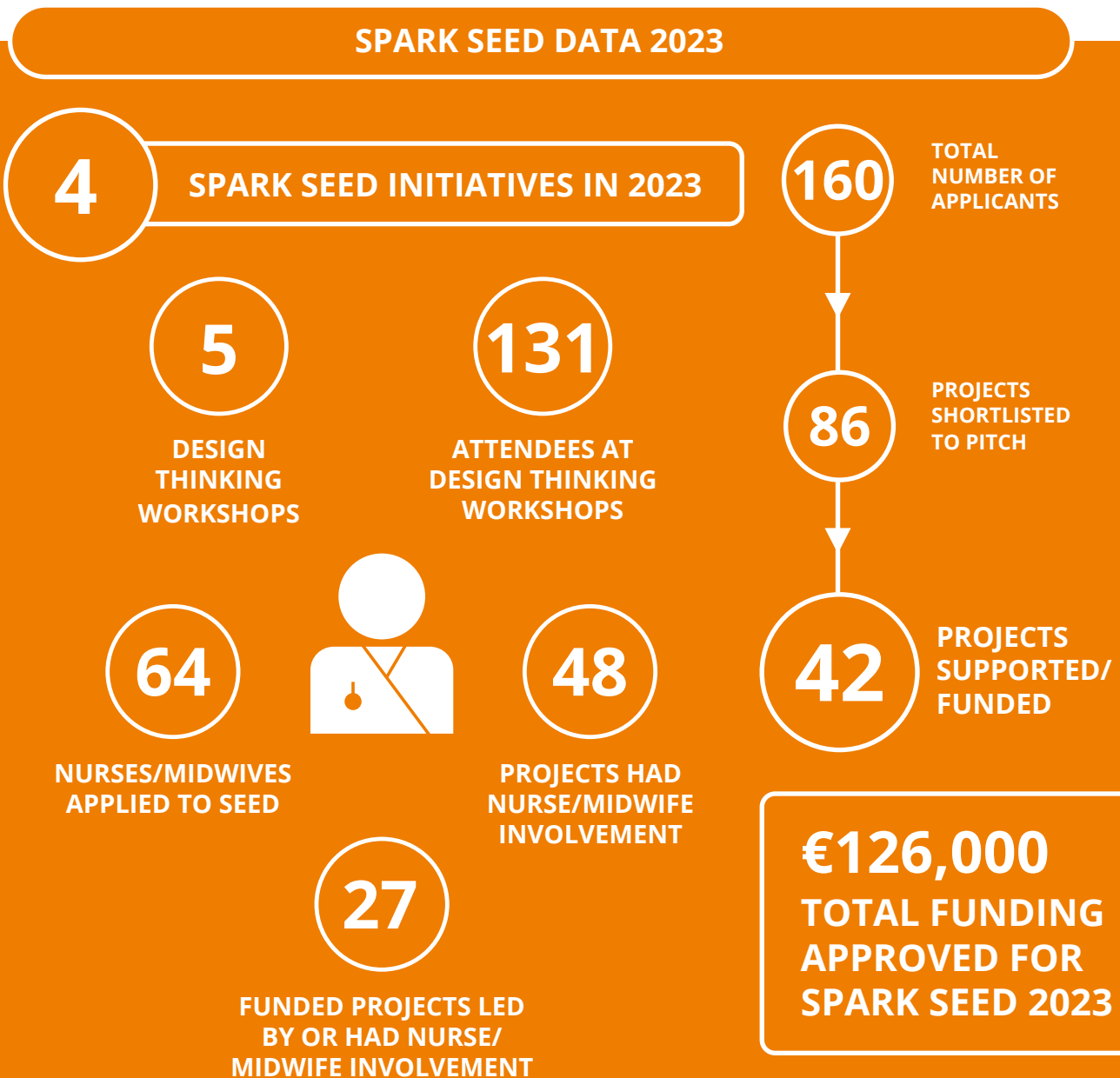
The Nursing & Midwifery Innovation Fellowship with the HSE Spark Innovation Programme has been a transformative experience. It has allowed me to step out of my clinical practice and comfort zone and immerse myself in the world of innovation. Grateful for this opportunity and the journey I have been on to date, I am excited about the future and the possibilities it holds. With the foundation laid over the past year, I am confident in my ability to contribute to the ongoing transformation of healthcare, ensuring that it remains patient-centered, innovative, and inclusive to all.



Spark Seed acts as an important gateway to the Spark Innovation Programme. Through the Spark Seed initiative, frontline staff can apply for micro-funding and other supports to help them deliver innovative projects that will improve patient outcomes and service delivery.

The initiative focuses on small, rapidly implementable projects which take an approach to innovation and change from the ground up. While small in scale, these projects have great potential to make meaningful improvements to patient care, increase service capacity, improve the working lives of clinicians and generate cost savings for the service.

Spark Seed is open to all frontline clinicians across the health service. The response to the Spark Seed Funding calls grows year on year with excellent representation from right across all the different professional groups, settings and locations. Many of the applicants to Spark Seed go on to have a long standing relationship with HSE Spark and make subsequent applications to our other initiatives.



SPARK SEED PROJECT EXAMPLES

MATERNITY SERVICES TRANSLATION APP

TEAM: Una Rodgers (Midwife), Deirdre Naughton (Director of Midwifery)

LOCATION: Portiuncula University Hospital Galway

THE PROBLEM: In 2022, 18% of women who booked into the Maternity Department at Portiuncula University Hospital, did not have an understanding of English. These women relied on a 3rd party for their communication requirements throughout their pregnancy. 75% of these women used family members to communicate and the remaining 25% used a HSE financed interpreter.



THE SOLUTION: A Free Android App that can instantly translate text into any of the 114 supported languages. The audio output allows users to hear the translated text in their native accent. It can also recognise and translate text from an image.

THE BENEFITS: Through the use of this app, the need for 3rd party involvement in the maternity care of these women was eliminated. Patients are able to have personal and sensitive conversations take place in private with their clinician. The cultural barriers of the presence of male interpreters for some pregnant women has been addressed. The Healthcare Worker is satisfied about the quality assurance of the translation through visual text after speech. There is no delay in emergency situations due to impaired communication and there is a reduction of cost for the hospital.

END OF LIFE CARE, HOW YOU MAY FEEL WHEN SOMEONE DIES

TEAM: Lisa Whitem (End of Life Coordinator), Sarah Gleeson (Clinical Nurse Specialist in Palliative Care), Miriam Colleran (Palliative Medicine Consultant), Cliona Hickey (Senior Speech and Language Therapist), Project Search Interns

LOCATION: Naas General Hospital

THE PROBLEM: Easy-read information about end-of-life care (EOLC) is not available in Naas General Hospital for people with intellectual disabilities. This lack of accessible information can lead to confusion and anxiety among patients and their families, making it difficult for them to understand and make informed decisions about their care options. Additionally, the interns from Project Search have expressed a desire to learn more about EOLC in an easy-to-read format. Their interest highlights the broader need for accessible educational materials that can benefit not only patients with intellectual disabilities but also caregivers, healthcare professionals, and the general public who seek to better understand EOLC.



SOLUTION: The solution is to develop an Easy Read Information Booklet specifically designed for people with intellectual disabilities to explore end-of-life care (EOLC) and how they may feel when someone dies. By providing accessible information, the booklet aims to empower patients and their families, reduce anxiety, and facilitate informed decision-making. Additionally, it will be a valuable resource for healthcare professionals and caregivers to support meaningful conversations about EOLC.

BENEFITS: The project was part of a Hospice Friendly Quality Improvement Initiative and in March members of the working group attended the IHF (Irish Hospice Foundation) Forum on End of Life to present the booklet concept. The Project received a lot of positive feedback and attention, highlighting its importance. The booklet is due for launch in NGH in April 2024 and plan is to disseminate around all wards and key areas. The booklet will also be available in audio and braille. It is expected that the booklet will not only provide people with intellectual disabilities knowledge and understanding but also encourage future conversations about end-of-life care and death and dying.

IMPROVING THE PATIENT EXPERIENCE IN ICU THROUGH STATIONARY CYCLING AND VIRTUAL REALITY

TEAM: Emily Naylor Jones (Clinical Facilitator), Joanne Dowd (Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist)

LOCATION: ICU St James's Hospital

THE PROBLEM: Muscle Weakness is the most common physical problem faced by patients following critical illness (ICU Steps: registered Charity). By day 10, as much as 50% muscle mass is lost. Research has shown that early mobilization and early initiation of physical therapy consistently portends a better functional outcome for critically ill patients. This can be achieved through in-bed/stationary cycling, however a limitation of this is that patients become bored and are unmotivated to engage. Implementing Virtual Reality (VR) offers an immersive and engaging experience for patients to reap the benefits of early mobilization.



THE SOLUTION: Developing a suite of VR programs specifically designed for critically ill patients for early mobility. Exploring the potential to expand VR use for delirium management. Creating a supportive ICU VR community to share experiences and best practices.

THE BENEFITS: The benefits of this project include improved patient outcomes, in terms of engaging in early mobility and reducing critical illness myopathy, reduced recovery times, and enhanced mental well-being by providing an engaging and immersive experience during recovery. This learning will be shared with the broader critical care community through posters and presentations at conferences.

MONITORING AND PREVENTION OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IN COMMUNITY GROUP HOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

TEAM: Irene Drury (Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Chronic Disease Management), Lorna Allard (Behaviour Support Therapist), Alan Nolan (A/DON)

LOCATION: Intellectual Disability Residential Service (IDRS) Springfield Centre, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

THE PROBLEM: Individuals with intellectual disabilities have higher morbidity and earlier mortality than that of the general population. Access to primary health care is lower, despite a higher prevalence of many long-term conditions. The prevalence of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) in this population group may be greater and apparent earlier in life than that found in the general population.



THE SOLUTION: The team's solution involved the development of a screening programme that will identify patients who are at high-risk for developing CVD. These CVD conditions can include atrial fibrillation (AF), hypertension and raised cholesterol, which are shown to significantly increase the risk of CVD events such as heart attack, stroke and dementia. Optimal treatment of AF, high blood pressure and raised cholesterol is highly effective in the prevention of CVD events.

THE BENEFITS: This initiative has reduced appointments to the acute hospital services/GP clinics by having the facilities locally to undertake screening and by providing care in the patient's own home. There is flexibility to where the service can be delivered as per resident's preference. Many individuals with learning disability and/or autism find clinical areas stressful which can negatively impact on outcomes. Therefore the provision of this service in CGH (Congregated Group Home) has shown successful outcomes and benefits to the residents.

MEET THE INNOVATOR - JULIE GRENELL

Nurse & Project Manager, Mater Misericordiae University Hospital

Before joining the Mater Transformation team, nurse Julie Grennell had spent six years working in spinal injuries and another six in nurse practice development, during which she implemented the new nursing professional practice model and philosophy, Careful Nursing. This project overhauled nursing documentation and brought in large-scale education and staff support. Driving big change initiatives that enhance excellence in patient care is clearly where Julie feels most at home.



It was while working on the Careful Nursing project that Julie noticed the poor compliance with the nurse assessment, a 19-page form that was unintuitive and made it difficult to track a full cycle of care. Regular handovers meant a lot of transcribing and duplication, which led to fatigue and a general sense of disenfranchisement from the process.

"I was doing a Professional Diploma in Human Factors in Patient Safety (with RCSI), learning about situational awareness, safety, and pain points. During the course, I did a project with two other students called The Protection List - a handover document to take a patient from the emergency department to the ward. The opportunity came to do the NCAD Design Week - a one-week sprint as part of the post-graduate programme. We were selected to work with two designers on refining the nurse assessment."

Over 25,000 patients are admitted to Mater Hospital every year, each one requiring a nurse assessment that follows their care journey through the hospital. Capturing critical information, the form tells the story of the patient on admission to nurses on the ward. Miscommunication can have a direct impact on the patient's experience, but Julie found that the form didn't have the end user in mind and appeared at times to gather information for the sake of it. She imagined an alternative that would capture only essential data, using clear language and avoiding duplication.

The design sprint had provided the foundation for a new nurse assessment, but more input was needed to realise the dream. Spark's design activity includes access to designers in residence and design intern roles. Conveniently, some of that design resource is based at the Mater Hospital and within 'Mater Transformation'. During a secondary research phase, supported by Designers, the team looked at nursing forms in Mater Hospital and elsewhere. In collaboration with nurses, they identified key ways to highlight the most pertinent information, prioritising questions that need to be asked within the first 24 hours.

Securing Spark support and Mater Transformation support, raised the profile of the project and generated a lot of good will among peers. A working group was created to continue the design iterations, testing each one with various case studies and working with colleagues across the organisation to ensure all nursing care elements are well reflected.

"I learned transformative skills, both professionally and personally, during the design week. I hadn't come across this way of working before; it opened my eyes to the possibilities of design thinking, service design, and user experience. One of the things we did during this process was to create journey maps for patients. We identified that there are seven different ways that patients might access the hospital, so our document had to account for that. If data was captured anywhere else, we took that out of form, eliminating duplication. "The new version of the form is just 6 pages long. That's 375,000 pages per year that are no longer needed. It is concise and to the point, using accessible everyday language.."

When Julie first applied to Spark, it was the first time she had heard of the programme. Nonetheless, that application has proven to be a catalyst for change in her career and she has now moved from nurse practice development to innovation, as a Project Manager within Mater Transformation. Spark funds various projects within the unit and Julie has received a Spark bursary to complete a Professional Diploma in Service Design.

"Having a design team and embedding design thinking in an organisation is not a luxury. It's a necessity. Clinicians and healthcare workers are brimming with ideas and initiatives. Across the health service, we need to be better at tapping their knowledge and experience, bringing these ideas to the point where they can be implemented. Decisions should always be based on the lived experience of frontline workers and patients. With a holistic, human-centred approach to designing services and solutions, you can make magic happen!"



Features of the Innovation Fund

- 1. Nationwide calls open to all clinical facilities and staff cohorts**
- 2. Once-off non-recurring funding to validate innovative ideas**
- 3. Investment in new equipment, process changes or exploration of novel ways of working**
- 4. Delivering cost savings, increased capacity, best practice care delivery, productivity or improved patient experience**
- 5. Led by multi-disciplinary teams with Senior Management support**

'Spark Advance' compiles a number of advanced initiatives within the programme. These initiatives seek out responses to key clinical challenges and strategic priorities from across the health service. They are designed to target projects that can have a significant impact on issues that affect the health service at a local, regional and national level.

The Consultants Innovation Fund (2019), the Hospital Innovation Fund (2022) and the Community Innovation Fund (2022) were developed as a collaboration across multiple stakeholder groups.

These independently constructed partnerships and projects indicate an effective model for transformation within healthcare as we strive for the delivery of integrated clinical services that deliver optimum value for patients.

These funding streams recognised both the ability of clinical sites to identify opportunities for change and innovation and the ability to deliver that change and innovation, at the point of care, through collaboration between clinical and senior management teams.

By providing higher level funding (up to €60,000), teams in both acute and community settings have been empowered to create meaningful change at a local level and demonstrate impact that can be scaled and applied at a national level.

Teams undertaking innovation activity under our Spark Advance umbrella exhibit some unique features. These include the independent assembly of cross-functional teams inside and between clinical settings and locally negotiated and agreed project scope and roles.

CRISP (COMMUNITY LED REHABILITATION INPATIENT SPECIALIST PROGRAMME)

TEAM: Mary Doyle (RANP Older Persons Care), Dr Ruth McDonagh (Consultant Geriatrician)

LOCATION: Peamount Healthcare

THE PROBLEM: Patients attending CRISP are typically frail and have complex, multi-morbid medical backgrounds. Many have had a fall, or multiple falls, prior to admission. Additionally, many people who experience a fall develop 'fear of falling' and are at risk of losing their ability to live independently. Older adults who are both frail and have impaired orthostatic blood pressure (OH) control have a particularly high risk of falling and should receive tailored management to mitigate this risk. Ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM) is especially helpful for identifying ambulatory hypotension in patients who are older and where antihypertensive treatment should be individualised. Typically, patients who require 24-hour ABPM are referred to the Cardiac Investigations Department in Tallaght University Hospital where the waiting list is currently 12 months. Patients must attend the Cardiac Department twice, for fitting and removal of monitors, and generally also an outpatient's clinic for results.

THE SOLUTION: The purchase of two 24-hour ABPMs that generate immediate diagnostic reports are now used on site to enhance the comprehensive geriatric assessment (CGA). New diagnosis of hypertension or poorly controlled hypertension that require alterations to antihypertensive medication are now diagnosed and promptly treated on site, as is suspected orthostatic hypotension and concurrent hypertension and orthostatic hypotension.

THE BENEFITS: The use of ABPMs on site has not only benefited the patients attending CRISP but are also used for patient attending the rehabilitation services, and the on-site nursing home residents. The reduction in waiting time for patients to undergo ABPM has reduced from 12 months to 1-2 days, with 120 ABPMs completed on site to date resulting in medication changes and/or education on the management of OH.



MUMA POSTNATAL HUB

TEAM: Amy Carroll (ADOM)

LOCATION: St. Luke's General Hospital, Kilkenny

THE PROBLEM: Despite advances in prenatal care, many new mothers continue to experience high levels of physical and mental postpartum morbidity. This affects not only their well-being but also the health and development of their babies and the overall family dynamic. Current postpartum support services often lack the structure, multidisciplinary approach, and accessibility required to effectively address these challenges.

THE SOLUTION: Muma Postnatal Hub aims to tackle the high levels of physical and mental postpartum morbidity

through a structured, multidisciplinary support service to mothers, their babies, and partners. It was developed using human-centred design and will continue to incorporate user feedback as it evolves. Through early intervention for those experiencing post-birth challenges, this midwifery service supports mothers via phone and social media. Additionally, they provide face-to-face contact such as assessments, feeding sessions, or coffee groups. The core hub is located in St Luke's General Hospital and its outreach clinics offer midwifery services seven days a week.

THE BENEFITS: This safe, inclusive, and accessible space offers a responsive and proactive service based on individual needs. Most mothers have multiple direct contacts with the hub over the six months after birth (or longer if needed). In March 2023, the hub saw 110 mothers and provided 274 touchpoints. 74 stories were posted on Instagram and 16 mothers attended the 'Check, Chat and Coffee' meeting. The inclusion of direct access to specialist women's health physiotherapists has markedly improved physical recovery outcomes. The effectiveness and importance of the postnatal care delivered is reflected in feedback from many mothers who report that, without it, they would have instead consulted their GP.

MEET THE INNOVATOR - AMY CARROLL

Assistant Director of Midwifery (ADOM) at St Luke's General Hospital.

Midwife Amy has 20 years' experience in practice and has seen the service change significantly over this time. A natural organiser, she started to hone her skill for bringing projects to fruition back in 2010, occupying the first Clinical Placement Co-ordinator role her service created.



"I've always been interested in processes and optimising and streamlining ways of working. Not everyone can get excited about that kind of thing, but it was part of my role, so I was able to really draw on that side of my personality. I'm known for being very persistent, which I now recognise is a key trait of an innovator. I also learned early on how important relationships are if you are trying to bring in any kind of change."

After a maternity leave, Amy went back to midwifery in Waterford and then into a full-time Clinical Placement Coordinator (CPC) role in practice development in Kilkenny. Seeing opportunities for change all around her, she applied to Spark Seed in 2021. The design thinking workshop was a revelation for Amy; she had found the innovation tools she had been looking for and now nothing was going to stop her.

Amy joined Spark as the first Midwife/Nursing Fellow, learning about human-centred design and innovation while driving the national programme on behalf of nurses and midwives. As the year ended, she was excited to get back to the frontline as ADOM at St Luke's and bring the methodologies she had learned to bear on real-world problems. The Muma Postnatal Hub was born.

"The old school way of doing things is to jump to the solution. Supporting people to stay in the problem space can be a challenge. We created a working group, which included a designer supervised by the National College of Art & Design, and started to map out what was there already and then where the gaps and pain points were. The next step was using the wonderful qualitative data already collected by maternity services, looking at women's experiences and where the issues are. That's how we were able to then develop the 'how might we...' solution."

The solution is a ground-breaking multidisciplinary support service for mothers, their babies, and partners. The core hub in St Luke's General Hospital and its outreach clinics offer midwifery services seven days a week, aiming to tackle high levels of physical and mental postpartum morbidity through early intervention and access to specialist women's health physiotherapists. The hub supports mothers via phone and social media as well as through physical contact such as assessments, feeding sessions, or coffee groups.

“It became clear that after the baby is born, all the focus is on them. But what about the mum? We needed a service that wouldn’t duplicate existing services but could provide support when it was needed. Some women will be getting along fine and have no concerns. But for anyone with a question, a problem, a worry, there’s now somewhere to turn and make sense of things. We also developed an Instagram account. It’s bespoke, it’s women-focused, it’s easy to navigate. I suppose it all seems very simple. That’s the key thing about human-centred design.”

One of the core tenets of human-centred design is iteration, firstly, because it is impossible to come up with the perfect solution to a problem from day one and, secondly, because requirements are always evolving. This means that any product or service needs to keep changing too. Amy sees that the project has influenced her team’s mindset. They are now proactive in identifying new problem spaces or potential opportunities, as well as thinking about the business case for change. Rather than top-down decision-making, they have embraced collaboration and discussion as a way to find solutions.

“Spark has changed my approach completely. It takes a lot of vulnerability and faith to walk into a room and say, ‘No, we don’t know what this solution is going to look like yet. That’s what we’re here to discover together.’ Traditionally, people would have thought that if they didn’t have all the answers, they might look incompetent. But it doesn’t help anyone to cling to your assumptions. Because of my work in Spark and seeing all these projects coming together in other places, I had the confidence to step into the unknown. Organisations like HSE Spark help us spread the idea of human-centred design and its impact. I believe every project should be approached like this, whether it’s a national programme for 19 units or a single project in one clinical setting. I’m so proud of what we have achieved in Kilkenny because we’re just a small hospital. This is why I wanted to come back into practice, to see innovation happen on the ground. When we get feedback from women like ‘Muma makes me feel seen’, I know we achieved what we set out to do.”



In August 2023, The Spark Programme unveiled its newest initiative, Spark Fusion. The Spark Fusion initiative was developed in the knowledge that good health and social care is not only delivered inside the walls of hospitals, clinics and other traditional health care settings.

It is well understood that many of the factors that determine our health and health outcomes, exist outside the walls of our healthcare settings. Spark Fusion supports innovative individuals in the public sector to solve challenges relating to these determinants.

Spark Fusion brought together healthcare and other public sector staff to look outside the boundaries of their institutions and to drive true cross-sectoral collaboration towards better population health. Spark Fusion built on the work already undertaken as part of the Healthy Ireland Framework 2013 – 2025 which aims to improve health and wellbeing and reduce the risks posed to future generations.

Spark Fusion was launched by Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and National Drugs Strategy Ms. Hildegard Naughton in University Hospital Galway. There was a fantastic response to the call. Thirty-eight collaborative teams applied with exciting projects to improve public health. Seven projects were shortlisted which addressed public health concerns across a broad range of industries, from health education initiatives in schools to solutions to support farmers with physical and mental health.

FUNDING AT A GLANCE



38

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED



€1.24m

TOTAL REQUESTED FUNDING



36

PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS



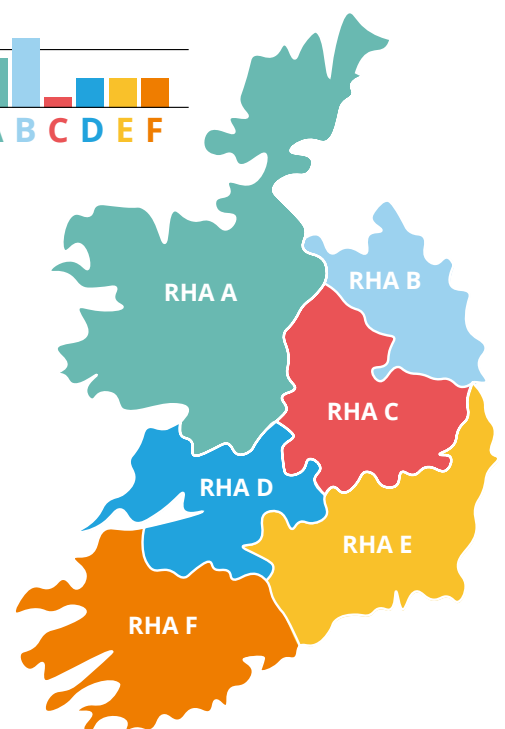
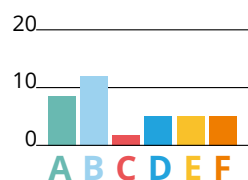
20

APPLICATIONS FROM NURSING & MIDWIFERY



4

NURSE/MIDWIFE LED PROJECTS FUNDED



PROJECT SITES



21

HOSPITALS



4

PUBLIC HEALTH PROMOTION



10

COMMUNITY HOSPITAL ORGANISATIONS



3

PUBLIC HEALTH

PARTNERSHIPS



2

GARDA
SÍOCHANA



10

UNIVERSITIES



6

PRIMARY/
SECONDARY
EDUCATION



5

LOCAL
COUNCIL



5

SPORTS
PARTNERSHIP

'SPARK FUSION' SUPPORTED PROJECTS 2023

DR. ANNE DEE – Public Health Consultant

TITLE: “Strong Roots” - using a local primary school as a hub for driving health improvement in an area of high deprivation

DR. AILEEN REDDAN – Senior Medical Officer

TITLE: Be Sun Smart at the Seaside

FERGAL FOX – General Manager

LAURA TULLY - Nurse

TITLE: Farmer Health Hub app

DEIRDRE MCNALLY – Senior Social Worker

TITLE: Dementia Training for An Garda Síochána

NESSA GILL – Advanced Nurse Practitioner SATU

TITLE: Healthy Relationships for Secondary School Students

RITA CORCORAN – Respiratory Clinical Nurse Specialist

TITLE: Implementation of a digital interactive programme with CBT

DEIRDRE BRADLEY - Senior Speech & Language Therapist

TITLE: Promoting parent-child interaction to increase speech exposure in the Neonatal Unit 'A Quality Improvement Initiative'



Spark Ignite is our annual initiative designed to support frontline staff within the health service who have an idea that could be commercialised and brought to market. It is also intended for those who have an idea that has the scope to be scaled across the organisation for mass benefit.

HSE Spark Ignite is open to all disciplines and departments within the HSE, enabling staff to develop their ideas through the validation of clinical need and determining the market for their proposed solution, product, or service. The initiative provides funding, mentoring support and network building to help participants on their entrepreneurial journey.

In 2023 we partnered with our colleagues EIT Health Ireland-UK and the Guinness Enterprise Centre (GEC). Eighteen high potential projects were selected from a pool of eighty four applications and the successfully shortlisted participants took part in a two day expert delivered workshop. Over the two days, participants were introduced to essential knowledge about

healthcare entrepreneurship and equipped with the skills and supports needed to bring their idea to fruition. Additionally, they benefited from the expert guidance of established entrepreneurs based in the GEC health cluster who have vast experience in bringing products and services to market.

Following additional 'pitch training' where skills on crafting and delivering the perfect pitch were honed, participants were invited to pitch their ideas to three industry experts competing for the top prize of €3,000 towards the further development of their project. They were also given an opportunity to take part in the Spark Ignite Grand Final at the annual Spark Summit where the overall winner Ms. Siobhan Meany from the Rapid Innovation Unit in Limerick was announced.



OVERALL WINNING PROJECT



INNOVATOR: Siobhan Meany

ROLE: CMN2 - Clinical Lead Rapid Innovation Unit

ORGANISATION: St. John's Hospital, Limerick

PROJECT: Pressure Boxes for surgical procedures

THE PROBLEM: Theatre staff nurses identified the challenge of manually pressurising and maintaining the pressure of saline bags used for irrigation during laparoscopic procedures. This task requires

continuous monitoring by a nurse, distracting them from other critical duties. Inadequate pressure hampers visibility, prolongs the procedure, and diverts nurses from essential responsibilities, impacting overall efficiency in the operating room.

THE SOLUTION: A unique device will be developed to ensure a consistent flow of saline during operations. This device is simple, inexpensive, and easy to use, leveraging existing infrastructure in every theatre without requiring additional power sources. The Constant Pressure Device aims to save significant operation theatre time and enhance healthcare efficiency by eliminating the need for manual pressure maintenance.

THE BENEFITS: The prototype is currently in use at St. John's Hospital, and due to positive feedback from surgeons, requests for the device have been made by Ennis and Nenagh theatres. The device's ability to streamline saline irrigation during laparoscopic procedures has garnered interest, demonstrating its potential to improve operational efficiency and surgical outcomes across multiple sites.

RUNNERS UP

INNOVATORS: Michelle Mattews & Anne-Marie Fay

ROLE: Oncology Nurses

ORGANISATION: Mater Misericordiae University Hospital

PROJECT: Answers for Cancer

THE PROBLEM: Current facilities for providing information to cancer patients are inadequate. This was especially highlighted during the Covid 19 pandemic. Information is often disjointed, verbal or paper-based, and not accessible in real time. Communication about timelines, treatments, and medications lacks coherence. There's no single service offering personalised information on diagnosis, treatment plans, medications, follow-up care, and prognosis. This leads to anxiety, loneliness, and fear among patients and their families, prompting them to search for information online or make frequent calls to oncology nurses, increasing hospital workloads and causing frustration and confusion for already fatigued patients.



THE SOLUTION: The lack of a unified information system results in poor patient experience, confusion, and a lack of control over their cancer journey. Patients turn to unreliable online sources, leading to misinformation and anxiety. Hospital staff face increased workloads, helping patients understand their specific diagnosis and treatment plans. Similar digital solutions exist for other diseases, such as Mypatientspace in Ireland and Outcomes4me in the USA. However, Irish hospitals currently lack access to a digital solution like ours, which would provide a streamlined, bespoke source of cancer care information from diagnosis to aftercare and survivorship.

THE BENEFITS: Our proposed app will provide cancer care information, linked to hospital systems, offering real-time, personalised data from diagnosis to survivorship. Patients will access relevant information on their cancer type, treatment, medications, appointments, and follow-up steps from a secure, accredited source. Features include podcasts addressing patient questions, wellbeing monitoring, treatment timelines, side effect tracking, and preparation for consultations. The app will also connect patients with others on similar journeys, enhancing social support and empowerment. By reducing the need for clarifications and calls, the app will improve hospital efficiency and reduce staff stress.

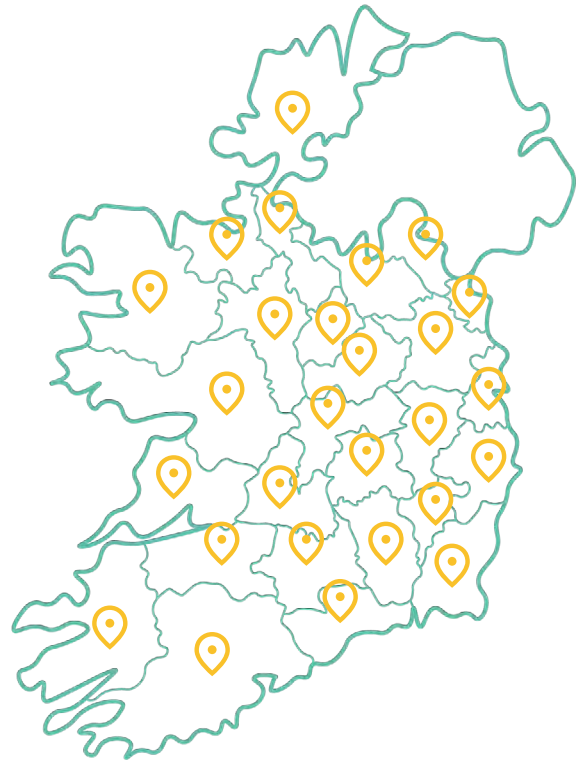


HSE Spark is committed to ensuring that the resources, tools and skills essential for innovation are accessible to frontline staff across the country. We acknowledge the diversity of skills and strengths found in different healthcare settings and geographical contexts. We are highly motivated to support and inspire individual innovators or teams of innovators to become active agents of change in their clinical settings.

To that end, October 2023 saw the launch of the Spark Connect campaign. Launched during Public Service Transformation Week, Spark Connect aims to bring innovation directly to healthcare settings across Ireland. During Public Service Transformation Week, frontline staff were invited to access our first ever Spark Connect Toolkit, offering them resources to facilitate hosting an Innovation Workshop in their respective departments or interdisciplinary settings. In addition, they were invited to engage with other innovators from across the clinical innovation ecosystem nationally as they tuned in to our live online session "Interviews with Innovators".

We were delighted to welcome six inspiring frontline staff members who shared their experiences of developing and implementing healthcare innovation projects nationwide. They generously allowed attendees to gain insight into the challenges they encountered and the highlights of innovation project delivery. The Spark Connect campaign 2023, highlighted the power of connecting with others, affirming our belief that true innovation potential is harnessed by collaborating with colleagues and fellow innovators.

The response to the Spark Connect call this year was overwhelming, with over 100 frontline teams representing every county of Ireland actively participating in the Spark Connect campaign. Teams showcased their events from their service areas using #SparkConnect via email and across our social media channels. This first iteration from the Spark Connect portfolio has yielded invaluable insights from the engaged participants, which have been instrumental in shaping our next steps. We look forward to sharing these developments with you in 2024.

An icon representing three stylized human figures in white, positioned above the number 36.

36

**TEAMS WITH NURSE/
MIDWIFE REPRESENTATION**

MEET THE INNOVATOR - SIOBHAN MEANY

Nurse & Clinical Lead of the Rapid Innovation Unit, St John's Hospital, University of Limerick

Formerly a theatre nurse manager, Siobhan always had an eye on innovation, even if the word itself wasn't much in use 25 years ago. While a nurse manager, she introduced in pre-operative visiting after talking to patients and realising that their recovery was enhanced by a greater understanding of what to expect during and after their surgery. Her hospital was the first in the group to bring in such visits, improving clinical outcomes.

But that was clearly only the beginning, as today Siobhan is a self-styled 'innovation junkie', having joined the Rapid Innovation Unit three years ago. In this role, she bridges the gap between the clinical and the academic teams, drawing inspiration from the processes and frameworks used by her academic colleagues. The unit develops bespoke solutions to challenges or problems presented by clinicians at St John's.

"We might develop a prototype for an individual patient or small group of patients. It's all about the patient and how we can change their experience using the 4D framework of discover, define, develop, and deliver. These are one-off projects that often bring significant value to the patients' lives. Innovation Units are a must these days."

Siobhan applied to the Spark Ignite programme in 2023 to address a critical challenge faced by nurses in theatre. A lot of manual effort was required to pressurise and maintain pressure on the saline bags used for irrigation during laparoscopic procedures. Low pressure hampers view of the field, extending the length of procedures but also taking nurses away from other important tasks.

Siobhan attended the Spark Ignite two-day design workshop for semi-finalists. "I didn't know what to expect, but it was inspiring. I sailed out of that workshop feeling really empowered, thinking 'How can I take this to the next level?' It gets you asking questions and finding solutions. I was in a room full of like-minded people, everyone brimming with ideas. We started picking the various projects apart by mapping them out with pen and paper, which was a very hands-on and tangible way of working through the process."



The unique 3D-printed device that Siobhan and her team went on to develop ensures an uninterrupted flow of saline during an operation. It is simple, inexpensive, and easy to use, requiring no auxiliary power as it uses the existing infrastructure present in every theatre. The Constant Pressure Device saves significant amounts of operation theatre time and delivers more efficient healthcare.

"You're never going to solve anything by yourself. You might have the idea, but multidisciplinary expertise is the only way to reach that goal. I made great connections during the Spark workshop that are ongoing. I'd love to see more and more of these happen at a local level. Getting the right people around you is a challenge, but it's so important when it comes to innovation and Spark facilitates that. We recently ran a half-day 3D innovation workshop and had 50 people from across the healthcare sector in the Midwest. Everyone was sharing their ideas, and we were able to brainstorm solutions. The energy in the room was incredible."

Having embarked on her healthcare entrepreneurial journey, Siobhan is keen that her peers get involved in innovation too. The Spark application process is streamlined and quick. Having submitted your idea, you will receive feedback from the team to help you refine or adapt your approach if you weren't successful.

"Apply to Spark Seed! Getting the positive feedback from Spark gave me what I needed to keep going and keep doing what I love. It spurs you on. Whatever the setting, these successful projects help us all drive innovation around us. Because if you're using a workaround, that means there is a gap – either in your experience or the patient's experience. I believe that clinicians are inherently creative, we just need to tap into that. Once you know the problem, you can find the solution!"

EDUCATION

At HSE Spark, we strive to enable frontline innovators to build skills and competencies that will support their innovation practice.

To that end, each year HSE Spark offers a number of bursaries for frontline workers to engage in professional development that relate to innovation. In 2023, Spark offered bursaries to Frontline Clinicians who expressed an interest in learning about Service Design methods.

Though service development and restructuring are a common feature of clinical practice, the intentional design of complex and human centred services is not a skill that is taught through traditional clinical training models. Clinicians at the frontline expressed a desire to learn more about Service Design models and methods in the hope that they can deliver clinical services that are more clearly informed by, and responsive to, the needs of their patients as they engage with the health system.

It has been our pleasure to support this year's cohort and we are delighted to empower professionals to enhance their skills and knowledge in Service Design - a pivotal aspect of modern healthcare delivery. This strategic investment not only supports individual career development but also contributes to elevating the overall quality of healthcare services. Spark Innovation recognises the transformation potential of Service Design and is proud to facilitate access for dedicated healthcare professionals to further their education in this critical field.



“Undertaking the Professional Diploma in Service Design has been beyond amazing. It has opened my eyes to new ways of improving healthcare services while creating a different mindset. I would encourage all nurses and midwives to consider similar opportunities, as it offers wonderful insights and skills that can truly enhance our care for patients.”

- Sheila Heery, Nurse & recipient of HSE Spark Service Design Bursary 2023

MEET THE INNOVATOR - IRENE DRURY

Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Chronic Disease Management, Westmeath

Irene's background in learning disability, acute hospital, and GP practice has given her a broad professional experience. Prior to taking up her role in Mullingar, she had been involved in rolling out local chronic disease management programmes.

Irene's post at Mullingar was brand new in the community, so the programme was hers to create. From scratch. Having assessed her caseload and the core issues involved, she started to formulate a holistic approach for her residents. Making connections with her past experiences, she felt that delivering her programme in the community would be a vital factor. While clinical sites are suitable for some people, the busy environment can be very stressful for others. A community-based setting would benefit both the service and the residents.

Up to this point, Irene hadn't heard of the Spark Innovation Programme. But her programme would need diagnostic equipment and she started to discuss possible funding options with her colleagues. With support from her Director of Midwifery, she looked into Spark and felt it would be a good fit.

"The application process was quite straightforward, and I found it easy to follow. It also got me thinking more broadly about my project, because the questions required me to discuss why the equipment was needed, what I was going to do, and how this fell within my scope of practice. I had to plan out exactly what I needed and consider the health and safety aspects too.

Irene was shortlisted to pitch her project and invited to the design thinking workshop. This workshop provides attendees with an innovation toolkit that includes learning development, planning, and presentation skills. Taking a strategic look at their project as well as the award criteria, they build out their pitch presentations.

"The design thinking workshop made me think deeply and broadly about the different elements of my project. Even a simple idea has a lot of parts, and you have to spread these out and analyse them before you can bring the whole thing together. The PowerPoint side of my pitch was pretty straightforward, but I found the voiceover part more of a challenge. I contacted Spark, and they helped me with the technical issues so that everything went smoothly on pitch day. Pitching to a panel can feel intimidating, but preparation is the key to calming any nerves. At the end of the day, the finalists are the experts on the ground and the judges are only asking questions to find out more about the incredible ideas they have. The panel might ask about aspects such as the roll-out plan, possible savings to be made, or where the project could go next. Pitch day was a learning curve because I've never done something like that before. I learned a lot from listening to others and it gave me great confidence, not just for myself, but for the service I was creating. I thought 'We can do this; it's a simple project but it will be so meaningful.'"

Irene's flexible screening programme will play a crucial role in identifying people at high risk of developing cardiovascular disease, as people with intellectual disabilities have higher morbidity and earlier mortality than the general population. Conditions such as atrial fibrillation, hypertension, and raised cholesterol significantly increase the risk of Cardiovascular events, but there are also interventions such as ear care, which would otherwise only be picked up on at an annual GP check. House calls monitor patients and flag issues to relevant teams.

"This initiative has fostered collaboration and better ways of working with service labs, group home managers, local hospital services, mental health services, multidisciplinary teams, and GPs. Many interventions can be completed in the home environment, which means a positive impact on staffing. It's an excellent example of a responsive service built around the needs of the population, supporting and empowering them to optimise their health. To engage with a programme like Spark was incredibly beneficial. We have nearly all the equipment you would find in a GP practice, so the set-up cost was very high. The Spark funding helped with that, and we were able to secure funding from our local NMPDU too. If you have an idea, just take that first step and apply. There is a lot of support from the Spark team to help you bring your project together."



SPARK SUMMIT

The 15th June saw over 250 delegates convene in Clayton Hotel, Cardiff Lane, for the HSE Spark Summit 2023.

Opening addresses from HSE Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Bernard Gloster, HSE Chief Clinical Officer, Dr. Colm Henry, Assistant Secretary for Public Service Transformation Ms. Marianne Cassidy and HSE Spark Innovation Lead Ms. Caitriona Heffernan, outlined innovation as a strategic priority for public services and inspired attendees to engage in innovation that could result in better healthcare for the 5.1 million Irish citizens.

Once again, a number of fantastic clinically driven projects from across the country were showcased for the audience, illustrating the impact of frontline innovation on healthcare delivery.



The conference emphasised the ongoing commitment to integrating design in innovation while also reflecting on the potential for digital innovation. In recognition of our growing commitment to research and building skills in research methods alongside our support for live projects, we were joined by Ms. Frances Brown of 'Nightingale Design Research' who has undertaken many Design Research informed projects with the NHS in the United Kingdom.



We were honoured to be joined by Dr. Bon Ku, Assistant Dean for Health and Design at Thomas Jefferson University, USA. Dr. Ku delivered a fascinating keynote address outlining his work at the 'Health Design Lab'. The purpose of the lab is to bring people together to redesign healthcare inside and outside the walls of the hospital. Dr. Ku shared his insights about delivering care through the lens of Human Centred Design and highlighted the alignment between his work and the emerging portfolio of work relating to Design in Healthcare at HSE Spark.



HSE Spark Summit 2023 also recognised Innovation in Action through the presentation of 13 Bright Spark Awards, exhibition of 21 Poster Presentations and the final of the HSE Spark Ignite competition. A highlight of the award ceremony this year, was the awarding of the inaugural 'CEO's Choice Innovation Award'. This year, Dr. Patsy Lenane was announced as the worthy recipient for her work on the development of Sim-U-Skin, a high fidelity skin lesion teaching tool to assist clinicians in accurately diagnosing skin abnormalities.



ENGAGEMENT

Each year, the HSE Spark Programme prides itself on growing our network of engaged clinicians, building new and impactful partnerships and informing both the frontline and policy makers about the activity of the programme. Sustaining existing engagement and building new channels with new users and partners is a core objective of our activity throughout the year. Our engagement efforts take us all around the country and see us presenting, hosting and delivering key notes at conferences, grand rounds, lectures, launches and other events.



In 2023, The Nurse/Midwifery National Innovation Fellows attended a number of important events where they had the opportunity to engage with their clinical colleagues and senior leadership.

NURSING MIDWIFERY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT UNIT DKSW DUBLIN SOUTH, KILDARE AND WICKLOW CONFERENCE

THEME: Recognising Nursing & Midwifery Contribution in the current and Evolving Healthcare Environment

DATE: September 2023 - Dublin

HIGHLIGHT: Keynote Speaker to over 200 delegates on the topic of embedding a culture of Innovation in Healthcare.

IRISH ASSOCIATION DIRECTORS NURSING AND MIDWIFERY CONFERENCE

DATE: Oct 2023

LOCATION: Sligo

HIGHLIGHTS: Launch of 2022 Nursing & Midwifery Annual Report. Provided Information stand all things Spark at conference, Valuable engagement and networking opportunities with Nurses from diverse backgrounds.

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY NURSING

DATE: September 2023

THEME: Shaping the future of Intellectual Disability Nursing in Ireland

HIGHLIGHT: Invited guest speaker to 40 frontline staff and management on embedding a culture of Innovation.

NURSING AND MIDWIFERY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT MIDLANDS

DATE: November 2023

LOCATION: Online

HIGHLIGHTS: Presentations to Directors of Nursing and Midwifery in the Midlands on the Spark Programme and funding opportunities available and how best to support staff when present with an innovative initiative.



EVALUATING IMPACT

Understanding the impact of the HSE Spark Innovation Programme on the nursing and midwifery professions is a crucial aspect of our ongoing efforts to support and empower healthcare professionals. Outlined below are the areas of impact delivered by the programme with particular focus on the Nursing and Midwifery professions.

IMPACT AREA 1: GROWING VISIBILITY

The strategic elevation of the HSE Spark programme's visibility among senior health service leaders in 2023 has markedly enhanced its impact. By engaging these key decision-makers, we have not only highlighted the innovative potential within the nursing and midwifery professions but also secured top-level endorsement and support. This broader recognition empowers more clinicians to engage with Spark, fostering an environment where innovation is not just encouraged but actively pursued, leading to widespread positive change and improved healthcare outcomes across the service.

IMPACT AREA 2: GROWING INVESTMENT

Enhanced levels of funding for high-potential projects in 2023 represents a significant shift towards more strategic investments in healthcare innovation. This increased financial commitment underscores the trust in the capability of nurses and midwives to spearhead complex and impactful initiatives that address key national priorities. By concentrating resources on a selection of projects with the potential for broad-scale transformation, while maintaining our support for smaller-scale pilots, HSE Spark ensures that efforts are stratified and appropriately supported. This allows us to maximise the overall impact on patient care, service development and service delivery across the health system.

IMPACT AREA 3: DELIVERING BETTER SERVICES

The positive impact of the HSE Spark programme is illustrated by the successful projects now operational within the system, each contributing positively to patient care, outcomes, and their experiences. This significant impact is one of Spark's most rewarding achievements, with evidence threaded throughout this document in the descriptions of various successfully implemented projects and the insightful interviews with the innovators behind them. These projects not only improve the quality of healthcare services but also affirm the value and effectiveness of fostering innovation among our healthcare professionals.

IMPACT AREA 4: RESEARCH AND RIGOR

HSE Spark's commitment to the evaluation and development of evidence-based interventions to support frontline innovation positions it at the forefront of innovation in healthcare. By critically appraising our initiatives and focusing on novel, research-driven approaches, Spark not only contributes to the theoretical underpinnings of clinical innovation but also advances practical applications. This dual contribution to both theory and practice is pioneering by international standards, establishing Spark as a leader in supporting frontline, clinically driven innovation. The Nursing and Midwifery contribution to this continuous evaluation and the iterative design of the programme ensures that supports are developed to best meet the needs of nurse and midwives who engage with innovation practice within the Irish healthcare system.

IMPACT AREA 5: BUILDING THE 'WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE'

HSE Spark's offerings and initiatives are integral to building a future-ready workforce that aligns with government priorities for a diverse, agile, and skilled public service (Better Public Services, Government of Ireland). Through the implementation of innovative projects and providing bursaries for education in innovation and human-centered design, Spark actively contributes to upskilling and reskilling staff within the health service. These efforts not only empower nurses and midwives to bring new ideas to life but also ensure that the health service can attract and retain talented professionals who are motivated to engage in dynamic career development. This proactive approach to workforce development positions the HSE as an Employer of Choice, ready to meet the evolving needs of the population it serves.

IMPACT AREA 5: IMPROVING STAFF EXPERIENCE

HSE Spark enhances the staff experience of their work by creating opportunities for nurses and midwives to engage in innovation practice. Through the evaluation of satisfaction that is carried out in relation to our upskilling opportunities, healthcare professionals universally report that, through Spark, they feel empowered to exercise agency and solve complex problems creatively within their work environments. The testimonials from participants of the programme in this report highlight how Spark has enabled them to expand their practice skills and contribute actively to healthcare improvements. This support fosters a sense of ownership and pride among staff, enhancing job satisfaction and professional growth by turning everyday challenges into opportunities for innovation and personal development.

IMPACT AREA 6: CONTRIBUTING TO THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE ORGANISATION

HSE Spark significantly enhances the capabilities of nurses and midwives working towards Advanced Practice status or working in Advance Practice roles by upskilling them in Service Design and Human-Centred Design principles. This up-skilling aligns directly with the PEPPA Framework, which emphasises coordinated, patient-centered care which is delivered independently by nurses and midwives. By equipping advanced practice nurses and midwives with these critical skills, Spark enables them to lead and innovate in developing healthcare services that prioritise patient needs and outcomes. This approach not only supports their professional development but also positions them as key drivers in the strategic evolution of healthcare services. It ensures that their work enhances patient quality of life and meets the complex demands of Advanced Practice roles.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024

As 2023 draws to a close, we are excitedly preparing for the 2024 programme of activity, with a keen focus on elevating healthcare through innovations led by our nurses and midwives. Acknowledging that frontline professionals are best placed to identify and address the complex challenges in healthcare, our plan is to enhance their capabilities in innovation through targeted support in project development and expanded learning opportunities.

Next year promises further development of activity in the area of Design Led and Design Informed Innovation across the health service. This aligns with our organisational transition to Health Regions and supporting our nurses and midwives in their efforts to design patient services as continuous, integrated journeys.

In 2024, we will launch a series of CPD opportunities designed specifically for healthcare staff. This activity, bolstered by a new academic partnership, will provide our nurses and midwives with the tools they need to lead in innovation. Our focus on research will intensify, equipping them with robust methodologies that underpin their innovative activities and contribute to both practical outcomes and theoretical advancements in healthcare.

Internally, we will continue to advocate at the highest levels for the essential provision of protected time for nurses, midwives, and all healthcare professionals to engage in innovation activities. Recognising that the ability to dedicate time to innovation is critical for unleashing their full potential, we are committed to ensuring that staff have the support and resources they need to explore and implement new ideas.

We continue to be inspired by the dedication and creativity of the nurses and midwives across the service, whose commitment to improving patient care appears to be stronger than ever. Their ongoing engagement and innovative efforts are crucial as we move into a year of expected growth and impact, and we eagerly anticipate supporting their transformative work in 2024.

Ms Catherine Marsh & Ms Amy Carroll, ONMSD National Innovation Fellows



INNOVATOR AWARDS 2023

A TOTAL OF
€228,300

**WAS OFFERED OUT TO
NURSE/MIDWIFE SPECIFIC LED
PROJECTS.**

**(This does not include projects
that had nurses/midwives as
part of the overall team).**

**At HSE Spark Innovation, we offered
more than financial support to projects.**

In 2023, Nursing and Midwifery Projects
Benefited from:

- FUNDING
- EDUCATION
- MENTORSHIP
- SIGNPOSTING
- ADVICE

	Name	Role	County	Initiative	Title of Project	Support/ number of euros given/ offered out	
1	Julie Grennell	CNM2 2 Nurse Practice Development	Mater Hospital	Design	Nursing assessment form	€50,000	
2	Amy Carroll	ADOM	Kilkenny	Design	Muma Hubs	€50,000	
3	Michelle Matthews and Anne-Marie Faye	CNM2 Oncology nurses	Mater Hospital	Ignite	'Answers for Cancer'	€3,000	
4	Ruth McGirr	CMM2	Louth	Seed	Bridging the Generations And supporting Practice (GAPP)	€3,000	
5	Mairead O'Sullivan	CNM2 Infant Feeding Coordinator UHK	Cork	Seed	Breastfeeding milestones	€3,000	
6	Maria Murtagh	CMM3, Midwifery manager	Waterford	Seed	Parent Education Videos with Subtitles and sign language in different languages	€3,000	
7	Lynne Cunningham	Midwife	Maternity services Sligo University Hospital	Seed	Bonding hearts	€3,000	
8	Una Rogers	Clinical Midwife Manager 2 - Maternity OPD	Galway	Seed	HSE Translation App	€3,000	
9	Roselind Mary George	Integrated Care Program for Older Person (ICPOP)	Mayo	Seed	My Care Guide	€3,000 + designer	
10	Blanaid Mc Cabe	C.N.S. Care of the Older Person	Louth	Seed	Dementia Symbol	€3,000	
11	Emily Naylor	Clinical Facilitator ICU	St James's Hospital, ICU	Seed	Improving the patient experience in ICU with virtual reality	€3,000	

	Name	Role	County	Initiative	Title of Project	Support/ number of euros given/ offered out	
12	Marie Gardiner	Nurse/ Department of Public Health Midwest	Limerick	Ignite	The Immunisation Passport App.		
13	Ciara Moran	Nurse/ ICPOP	Sligo	Ignite	Remote digital health monitoring		
14	Allie Tomas	Nurse/ ICU	Mayo	Ignite	Endotracheal tube holder		
15	Siobhan Meany	CNM2	Limerick	Ignite	Standardising Kits.		
16	Deirdre Bradley	Midwife, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda	Louth	Ignite	Feeding Passport		
17	Siobhan Quinlan	Research Fellow	Limerick	Ignite	Atraumatic device for the removal of foreign bodies from children's orifices.		
18	Siobhan Meany	CMN2 - Clinical Lead Rapid Innovation Unit	Limerick	Ignite	Pressure Boxes for surgical procedures	€6,000	
19	Nicole Andrea Barbadillo	Senior staff nurse	Dublin	Ignite	Wound Intelligence Device		
20	Gemma Smyth	Nurse- Community Disability team - CHO1	Monaghan	Ignite	Body map		
21	Nessa Gill	ANPSATU	Westmeath	Fusion	Healthy relationships for secondary School Students	€65,000K + designer	
22	Rita Corcoran	Respiratory CNS	Mayo Chronic Disease HUB (Castlebar, Co. Mayo)	Fusion	Implementation of a digital interactive programme with CBT	€15,700	
23	Lisa White	End of Life Care Coordinator	Kildare	Seed	'Care Comfort Care packs'	€3,000	
24	Irene Drury	Advance Nurse Practitioner in Chronic Diseases	Westmeath	Seed	Monitoring and Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in Community Group homes of those with a Learning Disability	€3,000	
25	Catherine Marsh	National Nursing Fellow for Innovation	Spark Programme	Bursary	Professional Diploma in Service Design	€2,200	
26	Sheila Heery	Nurse Practice Development, National Community infection Control Team	Kerry	Bursary	Professional Diploma in Service Design	€2,200	
27	Julie Grennel	CNM2 Nurse Practice Development	Mater	Bursary	Professional Diploma in Service Design	€1,100 (co funded)	

STAY IN TOUCH



@spark_programme



HSE Spark Innovation Programme

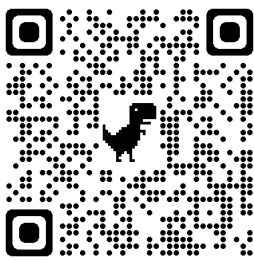


@ProgrammeSpark

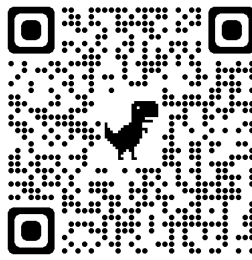


spark@hse.ie

For more information on HSE Spark Innovation and ONMSD, scan below:



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