

Spark* News

Autumn 2024

Dear Colleagues,

As we move into autumn, we are excited to share the latest edition of the Spark Innovation Programme newsletter. This year has been one of notable progress, driven by the passion and ingenuity of our healthcare community.

Through initiatives such as the Spark Seed Fund and Spark Impact Programme, we are empowering frontline staff to turn innovative ideas into real solutions that address everyday challenges in healthcare.

With over 250 applications to the Productivity Boost and new projects funded through Spark Seed, we continue to be inspired by the commitment of healthcare professionals to improve patient care, streamline operations, and enhance staff well-being. These initiatives reflect our shared belief that innovation starts at the front line, with those who know the system best.

We hope this edition motivates you as we head into the final months of 2024, and we look forward to another year of supporting innovation and driving positive change across the Irish healthcare system.

Best wishes,
The HSE Spark Team

Spark Summit 01



The Spark Summit – National Innovation Conference 2024 continued to be recognised as Ireland's leading platform for healthcare innovation. The event was held on 20/06/24 and brought together frontline healthcare professionals, designers, innovators and key decision makers to collaborate on solutions that address the most pressing challenges in healthcare. The summit highlighted the convergence of design thinking and clinical expertise, supported by high-level endorsements from key stakeholders within the HSE, Department of Health, and various clinical and academic partners. The event received strong support from HSE leadership, including participation from the HSE CEO Bernard Gloster and Robert Watt, Secretary General, Department of Health, Clinicians and Innovators from the frontline. This high-level involvement was crucial in driving the adoption of innovative ideas presented at the summit.

The summit highlighted several key projects, including those that have been successfully scaled across the national healthcare system such as Breathe Easy, Beat Strong (A unified cardiopulmonary service), Muma postnatal hub (using Human Centred Design to Implement a New Maternity Health Service) etc. These projects demonstrated significant improvements in areas such

as patient care, service efficiency, and overall healthcare delivery. The summit attracted attendees from a wide range of disciplines. Attendees appreciated the summit's emphasis on collaboration and the practical relevance of the innovations showcased.

[HSE Spark Summit 2024 - YouTube](#)

Dr Alanna Allen, National NCHD Innovation Fellow

Dr Alanna Allen is a Haematology Specialist Registrar and one of the National NCHD Innovation Fellows. With a background in clinical practice, research, and education, she brings invaluable expertise to the programme. Passionate about improving patient outcomes, especially for cancer patients, Dr Allen has a deep understanding of healthcare challenges. Alongside her clinical work, she has held leadership roles, including National BST GIM Lead for RCPI, and is currently pursuing a Master's in Healthcare Leadership at University College Cork. She has also contributed significantly to research as a Sub-Investigator at St. James's Hospital, and continues her research at RCSI, while working part-time at Beaumont Hospital.

Claire McElvanna, National HSCP Innovation Fellow

Claire McElvanna is a Senior Speech & Language Therapist who has worked across a wide range of teams and settings since graduating from Trinity College Dublin almost 20 years ago. In addition to her clinical expertise, she brings a passion for innovation and a commitment to social impact through her involvement in the social enterprise start-up space. Collaborating with healthcare staff, service users, and social entrepreneurs throughout her career has provided her with invaluable experience, insights, and opportunities for growth and learning. Claire is driven by a vision of healthcare that is not only patient-centred, responsive, and compassionate but also innovative and sustainable. She firmly believes that frontline healthcare workers are best placed to drive and implement this vision. In her role as HSCP Innovation Fellow, she looks forward to recognising and supporting innovative healthcare staff in bringing about meaningful change within the health service over the coming year.

Dr Eve Stanley, National NCHD Innovation Fellow

Dr Eve Stanley is one of the incoming NCHD Innovation Fellows with the Spark Innovation Programme this year. She is a Specialist Registrar in Geriatric Medicine, based in Cork, with over ten years of clinical experience in hospitals across the country. Dr Stanley is particularly passionate about collaborative models of care for older people and service design with a human-centred approach. She strongly believes in creating more efficient clinical pathways that prioritise patients' time and streamline their journey through the healthcare system.

Muthu Thangaramanujam, National HSCP Innovation Fellow

Muthu Thangaramanujam is a Chartered Physiotherapist, Innovator, and Educator with over 20 years of experience in healthcare transformation. His work focuses on frontline innovation and developing cutting-edge solutions to enhance patient care. Throughout his career, Muthu has led quality improvement initiatives and managed multidisciplinary teams. A key achievement is his pioneering work on 3D-printed, patient-specific prostheses, which has attracted significant funding from NCAD, UCD, and Enterprise Ireland. Muthu is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor and Principal Investigator at Trinity College Dublin, specialising in neurodegenerative diseases and prosthetics. His fellowship is driven by his passion for cross-disciplinary collaboration, merging clinical expertise with innovative technologies to create practical solutions for patient care.

Productivity Boost Initiative: 03
A Huge Response!

HSE Spark recently ran its initiative ever—the Productivity Boost—which attracted over 250 applications from across the country. This overwhelming response shows the eagerness of frontline clinical staff to engage with new and innovative ways of improving processes and services within healthcare.

The initiative highlights the incredible commitment to finding practical, design-led solutions that enhance productivity, streamline operations, and ultimately deliver better outcomes for patients and staff alike.

We're excited to see the impact these projects will have!



HSE Spark Impact Initiative: Driving Healthcare Innovation **04**

The HSE Spark Impact Initiative continues to empower frontline healthcare staff by supporting innovative ideas that address real challenges in the Irish healthcare system. Through Spark Impact, healthcare professionals are given the tools, mentorship, and resources to develop their ideas into tangible solutions that improve patient care, streamline operations, and enhance staff well-being.

Applicants to Spark Impact 2025 will have the opportunity to receive funding up to €90,000, mentorship, and access to innovation experts to help bring their ideas to life.



Successful applicants will also gain access to workshops, tailored support, and networking opportunities with other innovators across the healthcare system. This is a chance to turn creative ideas into real-world solutions with the backing of the HSE Spark Programme.

We're excited to announce that Spark Impact 2025 will be opening soon – keep tuned to our social media! We encourage all staff to start thinking about the challenges they see every day and how they might solve them through innovation.

05 Patient Flow Academy Excellence Awards

HSE Spark is collaborating with the HSE Patient Flow Academy in their efforts to enhance patient experiences and efficiency across hospitals. As part of this collaboration, the Patient Flow Academy Excellence Awards are now open for applications, with a focus on projects that improve patient flow.

This initiative aims to celebrate projects completed over the last 5 years which have improved patient flow. Successful projects will be awarded up to €5,000. The deadline for submissions is Monday October 31, 2024.



[Find more details and apply for the Patient Flow Academy Excellence Awards](#)

HSE Spark Seed: Calling Frontline Innovators **06**

The HSE Spark Seed Fund offers frontline healthcare staff the opportunity to bring their early-stage ideas to fruition by providing essential support for small-scale, innovative projects. Spark Seed is designed to enable healthcare professionals to explore solutions that tackle everyday challenges in the healthcare system, with a focus on improving patient care, increasing efficiency, and promoting staff well-being.

Through the Spark Seed Fund, applicants can receive up to €5000 to pilot their ideas, test concepts, and initiate innovation projects. In addition to funding, successful applicants will have access to expert advice, tailored support, and the chance to join a dynamic network of innovators across the HSE. This is an excellent opportunity for healthcare staff to take the first step in transforming their creative ideas into practical solutions.

Applications for Spark Seed are open throughout the year, so start considering the challenges you encounter in your daily work and how innovation could address them. For more information and updates, visit our website or follow HSE Spark on social media.

Calling Frontline Innovators!

Have you noticed a problem in your clinical area?

Do you have a solution or want to learn more about healthcare design principles to try and address the solution?

Then Spark Seed wants to hear from you!

Spark seed provides training, micro-funding and support to healthcare workers enabling you to develop ideas and solutions.

Spark seed

HSE Spark is reminding Consultants that the Consultants Innovation Fund is still open for applications, offering a fantastic opportunity to bring your healthcare innovation ideas to life. Whether you're looking to improve patient care, redesign systems, or introduce new services, this fund can help transform your vision into a reality.

Consultants can avail of funding up to €8,000 per annum in funding, but if your project requires more substantial support, there's the option to pool resources with colleagues up to €50,000 in total funding for larger initiatives.

This fund empowers Consultants to explore new approaches to clinical challenges, create impactful solutions, and implement meaningful changes within healthcare settings. From streamlining hospital processes to developing cutting-edge treatments, the fund is designed to support ideas that enhance both patient and operational outcomes.

The final deadline for applications is October 31, 2024, and the last funding window for 2024 will close shortly after, with transfers taking place in early November.

This is the last chance this year to avail of funding, so we strongly encourage consultants to submit their applications. For full details on the application process, eligibility criteria, and examples of previously funded projects, visit:

[Spark Innovation, Consultants Innovation Fund](#)

You can also reach out to the Spark team for guidance or to discuss how your project can make a difference.

08 Public Transformation Week

Stay tuned to our social media to hear more about the events taking place during the week relating to healthcare.

This year's Public Transformation Week, from 21 – 25 October 2024, provides Public Service organisations such as the HSE, with the opportunity to showcase their journeys involving people, process, technology and innovations which demonstrate our commitment to transformation under the [Better Public Services strategy](#)

The week is an opportunity to hear about the breath of innovation and transformation in our Public Service through events highlighting projects and initiatives which are delivering enhanced services for the Irish public.

Each year the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform (DPENDR) invites Public Servants to host events showcasing their contribution to better public services.

Design Symposium 09

DESIGN SYMPOSIUM

Transforming healthcare by design

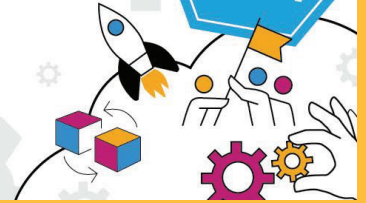
October 22nd - Lighthouse Cinema, Market St S., Smithfield, D7



An Roinn Caitreachais Phoiblí
Sheachadadh PFN agus Aitheoírínne
Department of Public Expenditure
NDP Delivery and Reform

Part of Public Service Transformation Week 2024

REGISTER NOW



At Spark we've seen first-hand how design-led approaches can dramatically change the way we address challenges in healthcare. It's why we celebrated the [Government Design Principles](#), launched two years ago, and their potential to transform public services, including healthcare.

The Government Design Principles are built on the idea that public services should be designed around the people who use them. These principles emphasize accessibility, simplicity, and a deep understanding of the user's journey. They encourage us to listen, learn, and co-design solutions with the public, rather than for the public. This shift toward human-centred design helps to create services that are not only efficient but empathetic.

In the healthcare sector, this approach is particularly powerful. We deal with complex, deeply personal needs, and the Spark Programme has worked to embed these principles into our work, collaborating with similar converts across the country. From tackling issues like patient flow to mental health services, we've seen real change when we bring the voice of patients and healthcare workers into the process.

Our upcoming **Design Symposium on October 22, 2024**, as part of **Public Transformation Week**, is a perfect opportunity to showcase this. Held at the same venue where the Government Design Principles were first introduced, this event will highlight design-led healthcare projects that demonstrate the real-world impact of these principles.

It will be an opportunity to hear how design thinking has improved outcomes, from simplifying administrative processes to improving patient experiences in hospitals.

Design isn't just about aesthetics; it's about rethinking how we solve problems. In healthcare, the stakes are high, and by adopting a human-centred approach, we ensure that the systems we design genuinely serve the people who need them most. The journey is ongoing, but I'm confident that through collaboration, innovation, and empathy, we can create a future where public services, especially healthcare, work better for everyone.

[Join us at the symposium and be part of this transformation!](#)



10 Spark Connect



Building on the success of our inaugural Spark Connect event in October 2023, we are delighted to introduce the Spark Connect 2024 campaign, which will take place across Public Service Transformation Week 2024 (October 21-25). Spark Connect supports you to promote and showcase the innovative work happening in your department as well as providing you the tools to solve new challenges within the health system.

HSE Spark Innovation Programme is inviting HSE frontline staff with a passion for innovation to engage in Spark Connect by:

Requesting the Spark Connect Toolkit to support you to host an Innovation event in your local healthcare settings, sharing knowledge, fostering creativity and building a network in which innovation can prosper.

Registering for the online session 'Interviews with Innovators' (24th October 2024)

Learn about a range of innovative projects from across the country that are being developed and implemented within healthcare.

Gain insights into the real life experience of the innovative journey, as told by inspiring HSE frontline staff members.

Scanning the QR Code to request your very own Spark Connect Toolkit and to register for the online Interviews with Innovators. (24th October 2024)



Spotlight 11

We're thrilled to see the **Muma Postnatal Hub**, led by **Amy Carroll, ADON** and her colleagues at **St. Luke's General Hospital**, continuing to receive positive feedback for their fantastic, design-led, human-centred initiative. This

the often-overlooked physical and mental postpartum challenges that many new mothers face, offering structured and multidisciplinary support to mothers, babies, and their families.

The hub uses a combination of early intervention, phone and social media support, and in-person care to ensure mothers receive the help they need. With outreach clinics operating seven days a week, the Muma Hub has created a safe, inclusive space for mothers to access midwifery services, attend assessments, and connect with others through 'Check, Chat and Coffee' meetings. Their proactive approach has been widely appreciated, improving physical recovery and reducing the need for GP consultations. **This initiative is a shining example of human-centred design making a real difference in healthcare.**



12 National Innovation Fellowships in Pharmacy & Nursing / Midwifery Fellow

National Innovation Fellowships Opportunities: Coming Soon!

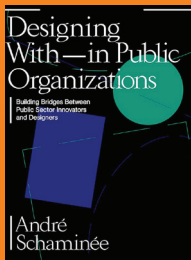
The National Innovation Fellowships offer a unique opportunity for healthcare professionals to work with HSE Spark and develop leadership skills in innovation. These fellowships are designed for HSCPs, Nurses/Midwives, NCHDs and Pharmacists

to drive engagement in innovation across the country and support positive change in healthcare delivery. Participants will gain access to mentorship, resources, and the chance to implement impactful solutions.

Keep an eye on our social media for updates - applications will be opening in October!

Read / Listen / Watch 13

Innovation-related recommendations to help inspire you!



READ
Design with and within Public Organisations, 2023
by André Schaminée

This insightful book explores how design thinking can be embedded within public organizations to create innovative solutions. It offers practical examples and frameworks, making it a valuable read for anyone working in or with healthcare and public services looking to apply human-centred design.



LISTEN
The Health Design Podcast
by Patient Innovation Center

This podcast explores innovation in public healthcare, featuring conversations with healthcare professionals, designers, and innovators who are shaping the future of the industry. It covers a wide range of topics, from patient experience to system-wide design changes, offering insights into how human-centred design is transforming healthcare



WATCH
IDEO: Human-Centered Design
YouTube

A short, insightful video from IDEO, showcasing the principles and real-world impact of human-centered design. It's a great visual overview of how design thinking can transform healthcare systems and services

We always want to hear from you, so if you have anything to suggest or highlight, please get in touch at spark@hse.ie or reach out on our social media channels where you can keep up to date with our latest news and events.

Best wishes,
The Spark Innovation Team

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Spark_Programme

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