

2025 PROGRAMME



CHANGEMAKERS SERIES

Frugal AI use in Healthcare

Keynote | Panel | Showcases | Networking



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Welcome



Lopa Patel MBE



Ramesh Vala CBE



Sherad Dewedi



Alice Huang



Francesca Jus-Burke



Sareeta Vala

We are pleased to welcome you to the first in our *Changemakers Series*, a programme of public conversations on innovation, equity and inclusion in emerging technologies.

The *Changemakers Series* is rooted in social justice: from addressing inequalities of ethnicity, gender and social background in the workplace to examining how technology itself can deepen or reduce such divides. At Diversity UK we have focused on health inequalities for several years by championing healthtech and medtech founders, hosting panel debates on investing in women entrepreneurs, and organising events on closing the gender health gap.

Health inequalities represent a drain on economic growth

Health inequalities are not only unjust, they represent a serious drag on economic growth. Women founders, for example, attract less than 2% of global venture capital funding, and women also spend 25% more of their lives in poor health than men. The social and economic consequences are stark.

A recent report from the McKinsey Health Institute, *Closing the Women's Health Gap: A \$1 Trillion Opportunity to Improve Lives and Economies*, estimates that narrowing this gap could improve the lives of 3.9 billion women worldwide and add \$1 trillion annually to the global economy by 2040.

But gender is only part of the picture. Inequalities persist across ethnicities, age groups, communities and regions, with patients too often facing a “postcode lottery” for life-saving treatments and services. Achieving health equity is therefore not just a moral necessity; it is an economic imperative.

UK 10-year Health Plan: Fit for the Future

The founding of the NHS in 1948 was a choice for fairness. In launching the Government's new *10-year Health Plan: Fit for the Future*, the Health Secretary emphasised our generation's responsibility to renew that principle, reshaping healthcare to focus on access, quality and prevention.

Convening New Voices: Earning Trust for AI in Health

With this event, Diversity UK brings together new voices to consider how the principles of Frugal AI, which emphasise cost-effective, sustainable and practical innovation, can support these ambitions. The discussion will connect ideas of fairness and efficiency in healthcare with the priorities of the 10-year Health Plan, asking how AI can contribute to a system that is both equitable and resilient.

We look forward to an engaging and timely discussion.

Warm regards,

Lopa Patel MBE (Chair)
On behalf of the Trustees of
Diversity UK

Event Overview



Frugal AI Use in Healthcare

Diversity UK, in collaboration with Cambridge Judge Business School and the Frugal AI Hub, invites you to a panel discussion on Frugal AI use in Healthcare. This event will take place at Cambridge Judge Business School on Wednesday 17 September 2025, from 5.00pm to 7.00pm, followed by a drinks and networking reception.

This event forms a fringe session as part of Cambridge Tech Week 2025 and is one of the opening discussions in the Diversity UK *Changemaker Series*, a new programme of public conversations on innovation, equity and inclusion in emerging technologies in support of the next generation of changemakers.

The event will bring together a range of contributors to consider how the principles of Frugal AI, which focus on cost-effective, sustainable and practical innovation, can be applied to healthcare. The discussion will explore how these ideas relate to the Government's [10-year Health Plan: Fit for the Future](#) and its focus on Genomics, Data, Artificial Intelligence for predictive analysis, Wearables and Robotics.

The event will explore the key theme of Frugal AI use in Healthcare with:

- Practical examples of Frugal AI in healthcare
- Approaches to testing and validating AI tools
- Challenges of AI implementation
- Governance and oversight of AI in healthcare
- Addressing bias in healthcare-related AI
- The role of synthetic data in filling healthcare data gaps

Event Schedule

Programme

Registration & Networking

5.00pm - 5.30pm

Host Welcome

5.30pm - 5.45pm

- *Sareeta Vala, Trustee, Diversity UK*
- *Venkata "Serish" Gandikota, Co-Lead, Frugal AI Hub and Visiting Fellow, Cambridge Judge Business School*

Keynote

- *Niels Peek, Professor of Data Science and Healthcare Improvement, The Healthcare Improvement Studies (THIS) Institute*

Panel debate: Discussion, Q&A

5.45pm - 6.45pm

moderated by Lopa Patel MBE, Chair, Diversity UK

- *Mohammed 'Sadeq' Ali, Co-Founder & COO, AccurKardia*
- *Caroline Cake, Founder & CEO, NeuHealth*
- *Kelvyn Hipperson, CDIO, NHS Cornwall & Isles of Scilly ICB*
- *Dr Chris Laing, CEO, UCL Partners*
- *Dr Neel Sharma, Founder, The Clinician Engineer Hub*

Tech Showcase + Q&A

6.45pm - 7.00pm

moderated by Elizabeth Osta, Co-Lead, Frugal AI Hub and Visiting Fellow, Cambridge Judge Business School.

- *Viktorija Smith, Co-Founder, Respoken*
- *Linia Zambezi, Founder, Afromics*
- *Mohammed 'Sadeq' Ali, Co-Founder & COO, AccurKardia*

Closing remarks

7.00pm - 7.15pm

- *Alice Huang, Trustee, Diversity UK*

7.15pm - 8.00pm

Networking, drinks & canapes

Close

8.00pm

Niels Peek

PROFESSOR OF DATA SCIENCE AND HEALTHCARE IMPROVEMENT;
THE HEALTHCARE IMPROVEMENT STUDIES (THIS) INSTITUTE

KEYNOTE

Niels Peek is Professor of Data Science and Healthcare Improvement at The Healthcare Improvement Studies (THIS) Institute, Department of Public Health and Primary Care, University of Cambridge, where he leads a programme of research to develop and evaluate possible solutions and interventions to support improvement in healthcare. Niels has a global reputation for his work on data-driven informatics for healthcare improvement, health data science, clinical prediction models, and computerised decision support tools. With a background in computer science and artificial intelligence, Niels was President of the Society for Artificial Intelligence in Medicine until 2017. He also led the Greater Manchester Connected Health City, part of a £20 million government investment to establish a learning health system in the north of England.

A widely published researcher, Niels has co-authored more than 250 peer-reviewed scientific articles. He is an associate editor of BMJ Health and Care Informatics, and a member of the editorial boards of the Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association and Artificial Intelligence in Medicine. He is a fellow of the American College of Medical Informatics and the International Academy of Health Sciences Informatics.

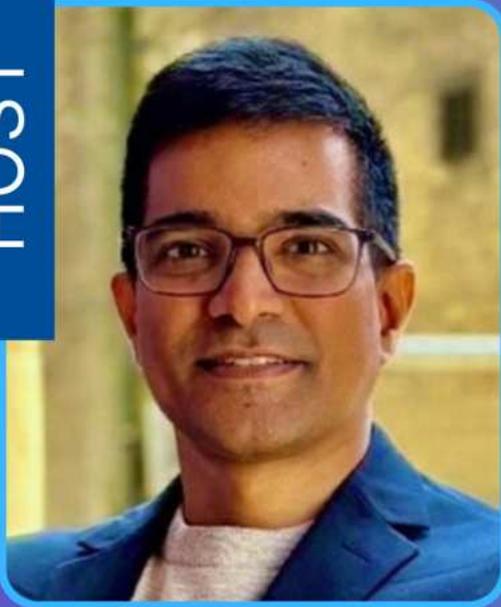
Niels was previously based at the University of Manchester, where he was Professor of Health Informatics and led the Christabel Pankhurst Institute, a partnership of academic, healthcare, industry and public sector organisations that aims to accelerate the translation of new technologies into healthcare practice.



Venkata 'Serish' Gandikota

CO-LEAD - FRUGAL AI HUB

HOST



Venkata "Serish" Gandikota is Co-Lead, Frugal AI Hub and a Visiting Fellow at Cambridge Judge Business School. Serish is an innovation strategist, impact & climate fund adviser, entrepreneur, and researcher focused on frugal innovation, sustainability, and impact investing. He has delivered EU-funded projects and founded InnoFrugal to advance accessible innovation globally.

Serish played a pivotal role as a founding partner in raising €17.5M for an Impact Investing VC Fund called Vault Impact, demonstrating proficiency in navigating the complex landscape of sustainable finance which underscores his commitment to not only talking about change but also financially empowering it. He has worked on deal flow management, impact frameworks, and business plan coaching for impact startups since 2017.



Lopa Patel is a digital entrepreneur with significant experience of creating start-ups and transforming businesses through technology. The founder of two ventures in online media and a data-driven marketing consultancy, she is also Chair of equality and inclusion charity, Diversity UK; Chair of the Finance & Performance Committee and a NED of The National Archives and she is Deputy Chair & Non-Executive Director on the NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Lopa is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (FCIM) and a Fellow of the Institute of Data & Marketing (FIDM); holds a BTEC in Computer Science; a BSc degree in Biochemistry, attained at the University of Manchester (UMIST) and a postgraduate qualification, the FT Diploma in Corporate Governance. With a lifelong love of science and technology, she is an evangelist for STEM, innovation and bridging the skills gap in business.



MODERATOR

Lopa Patel MBE

CHAIR - DIVERSITY UK

Mohamed 'Sadeq' Ali

CO-FOUNDER & COO - ACCURKARDIA

SPEAKER



Mohamed 'Sadeq' Ali is Co-Founder & COO at AccurKardia, a venture that leverages AI to interpret the visible and hidden signals within ECGs, transforming them into a more powerful diagnostic and broad biomarker that improves outcomes and saves lives.

Sadeq is a serial entrepreneur with successful companies in Data Analytics, Cloud Computing, and the Future of Work. He completed his MBA in Finance & Economics from Columbia Business School in 2009. Prior to that, he obtained a BE, Honors in Computer Engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology.

Sadeq is also a Board Member at The Sadanah Foundation, a non-profit organisation building sustainable access to healthcare and education in low-resource settings.



Caroline Cake is the co-founder and CEO of Neu Health, a University of Oxford spinout built on a decade of research into Parkinson's and dementia. She was previously Entrepreneur in Residence at Oxford Science Enterprises and CEO of Health Data Research UK, the UK's national institute for health data science.

Caroline has advised health systems, universities, and government as a director at The PSC, following earlier roles as an Engagement Manager at McKinsey & Company and a Chartered Engineer at ICI. She holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and MA/MEng degrees from the University of Cambridge.



SPEAKER

Caroline Cake

FOUNDER & CEO - NEU HEALTH

Kelvyn Hipperson

CDIO - NHS CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLY ICB

SPEAKER



Kelvyn Hipperson is the CDIO for NHS Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board and Chief Information Officer at Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust & Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust. Before joining the NHS Kelvyn had an extensive civil service career of almost 20 years. He has worked in senior technology roles in both the private sector and civil service. During his career he has transformed some of the largest IT service contracts in the UK. Kelvyn is a Chartered Engineer. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Engineering and Technology.

He is also a Fellow of the British Computer Society (BCS) and Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET). He holds a Bachelor of Science (BSc) honours in physics and computer science. Alongside this, he holds a Master's in Philosophy (MPhil).



Dr Chris Laing is the Chief Executive Officer at UCLPartners, leading its work as a health innovation partnership and providing executive oversight of the NHS Innovation Accelerator. Prior to this role, he held positions such as Honorary Associate Professor at UCL and Consultant Nephrologist at Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust. He worked for four years as Divisional Director of Emergency Services in University College London Hospitals where he oversaw the acute care pathway, leading an extensive programme of transformation.

He also founded and led London Acute Kidney Injury Network. Chris completed his Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of Glasgow in 1993 and went on to obtain a Master's Degree in MD (Res) at UCL. Chris undertook specialist training in nephrology, critical care and internal medicine, and continues to practise as a consultant nephrologist at University College London and Royal Free Hospitals, where he is also Honorary Associate Professor of Nephrology at the UCL Centre for Nephrology.

He undertook research training in renal disease, genetics and physiology at UCL and INSERM Paris. He remained active in research through clinical trials, health services research and the use of artificial intelligence in predicting acute renal disease. Chris has a strong interest in digital health, technology and data science and worked for five years as a senior clinical advisor to DeepMind and Google Health.

SPEAKER



Dr Chris Laing

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - UCL PARTNERS

Dr Neel Sharma

SPECIALIST IN GASTRO ONCOLOGY & FOUNDER, THE CLINICIAN ENGINEER HUB

SPEAKER



Dr Neel Sharma is a Specialist in Gastro Oncology at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. He is also Founder of the Clinician Engineer Hub, aimed at bridging the gap between medicine and engineering.



Elizabeth Osta is a digital and data strategist advising CXOs on AI, innovation, and responsible data use. Former Chief Data Officer at HEINEKEN, she also founded Digital Forward and holds leadership experience across banking, consumer goods, and social impact. She is Co-Lead, Frugal AI Hub and a Visiting Fellow at the Cambridge Judge Business School.

As Chief Digital Officer at HEINEKEN, Elizabeth led the data transformation across 85 countries worldwide. Prior to HEINEKEN, Elizabeth worked in financial services at Barclays in London where she held several roles in Digital Transformation and Data aimed at improving financial health. She also held positions at dunnhumby (Tesco), Gillette and McKinsey, as well as worked on the impact of data for the vulnerable for Social Finance. Elizabeth advises and serves as a Non-Executive Director for a number of digital native start-ups in FinTech.



MODERATOR

Elizabeth Osta

CO-LEAD, FRUGAL AI HUB

Viktorija Smith

FOUNDER, RESPOKEN

SHOWCASE



Viktorija Smith is the founder of Respoken, a digital health platform helping people with communication difficulties following a stroke or brain injury access personalised support. She is also a second-year PhD candidate in Medical Sciences at the University of Cambridge and a specialist speech and language therapist, where her research explores the neural correlates of linguistic and cognitive variation in dementia.

Viktorija previously worked as a data analyst at Stanford University, gaining expertise with large multi-cohort datasets and PET imaging in Alzheimer's disease. Clinically, she has specialised in adult neurology across acute, rehabilitation, and outpatient settings, combining her frontline experience with AI technology to transform how speech and language therapy is delivered.



Linia Tendai Zambezi is the CEO and Co-founder of Afromics, a genomics startup building a large scale African biobank to drive inclusive precision medicine. She is completing her Masters in genomic medicine at the University of Cambridge where her research focuses on implementing Pharmacogenomics in the NHS.

Linia is the winner of the She Soars female entrepreneurship program and is an alumna of the She starts accelerator at Murray Edwards College, Cambridge.

SHOWCASE



Linia Zambezi

CEO & CO-FOUNDER, AFROMICS

Radical Shifts Needed to Rescue an NHS in Critical Condition



The National Health Service is at breaking point, according to Lord Darzi's landmark review, which warns that the health service is in critical condition but still capable of recovery. Commissioned by the Prime Minister, the investigation describes an NHS struggling with record waiting lists, staff shortages and crumbling infrastructure, yet also highlights the strengths that can underpin renewal if decisive action is taken.

The report sets out a bleak picture. More than 7.6 million people are waiting for treatment, accident and emergency departments are regularly missing their targets and cancer care is lagging behind international peers. Shortages of fully qualified GPs and mental health professionals mean patients are waiting longer, often in distress. Darzi notes that the NHS "has not been able to meet the most important promises made to the people since 2015", resulting in record-low public satisfaction.

To reverse this decline, the review identifies three fundamental shifts. First, care must move from hospitals into the community, with greater investment in general practice, mental health and preventive services. Second, the focus must shift from treatment to prevention, tackling the wider causes of ill health such as poverty, poor housing and unhealthy lifestyles. Third, the NHS must move from an analogue system to a digital one, embracing technology and artificial intelligence to boost productivity and improve patient care.

The Prime Minister welcomed the findings, saying that "major surgery not sticking plaster solutions" are required to rebuild the NHS, while the British Medical Association described the review as a sobering account of a "severely broken NHS" that demands urgent reform.

Despite its harsh diagnosis, the report underlines that the NHS retains strong foundations. It continues to be staffed by committed professionals and enjoys deep public support for its founding principle: healthcare free at the point of use. Lord Darzi cautions that improvement will not be instant: waiting times must come down quickly, but it is likely to take years rather than months to return the service to peak performance. Clearing the backlog and restoring public confidence, he warns, cannot be achieved within a single parliamentary term.

Darzi concludes that although recovery will be long and difficult, with bold reforms, sustained investment and political will, the NHS can once again deliver high quality care and secure its future for generations to come.

From the Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, 11 Sept 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-major-surgery-not-sticking-plaster-solutions-needed-to-rebuild-nhs>

Government Sets Out 10-Year Plan to Make NHS “Fit for the Future”

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting, has announced the government's new 10-Year Health Plan for England, called Fit for the Future. Speaking in the House of Commons on 3 July 2025, Mr Streeting described the plan as a major step in rebuilding the National Health Service and ensuring it is able to meet the needs of patients throughout the 21st century.

He told MPs that just as the founding of the NHS in 1948 was a choice based on fairness, this generation has the responsibility to renew that principle by reshaping healthcare to focus on access, quality and prevention.

Three Key Shifts

At the centre of the plan are three broad changes: moving care from hospitals into communities, transforming the NHS from analogue to digital, and shifting focus from sickness to prevention.

From hospital to community:

The plan will see the NHS evolve into what Mr Streeting described as a Neighbourhood Health Service. The approach means that care should be delivered as close to home as possible. Where appropriate, consultations will take place digitally or in people's homes. Neighbourhood Health Centres will be set up in every community, bringing together GPs, nurses, physiotherapists, therapists, care workers and other professionals under one roof. These centres will also provide access to tests, scans and treatment for minor injuries.

Pharmacies will take on a wider role by managing long-term conditions, providing treatment for common illnesses, offering screening and delivering vaccinations. The government will also reform the dental contract to encourage more dentists to carry out NHS work and strengthen access to dentistry.



The plan aims to make it easier to see a GP, with same-day consultations and the return of the family doctor model. More GPs will be trained and recruited to the frontline. Patients with complex needs will have personal care plans developed with them to ensure that treatment is coordinated.

Over time, the majority of outpatient appointments currently taking place in hospitals will move into the community. Funding will follow this shift, with a greater share of NHS resources directed to primary and community services.



From analogue to digital

The government intends to modernise technology within the NHS. A single patient record will be created for each individual, allowing clinicians to access medical histories and reducing duplication. Patients will be able to view and control their records securely.

Wearable devices will feed health information directly into systems, allowing clinicians to monitor patients remotely and respond at the first sign of problems. The NHS App will be developed into a central access point for services.

Patients will be able to book and rearrange appointments, refer themselves to specialists where appropriate, seek advice through artificial intelligence tools, book urgent care slots, and give feedback on services.

The plan is designed to remove administrative burdens from staff, ensuring they spend less time logging in to multiple systems or entering data, and more time providing care.

From sickness to prevention:

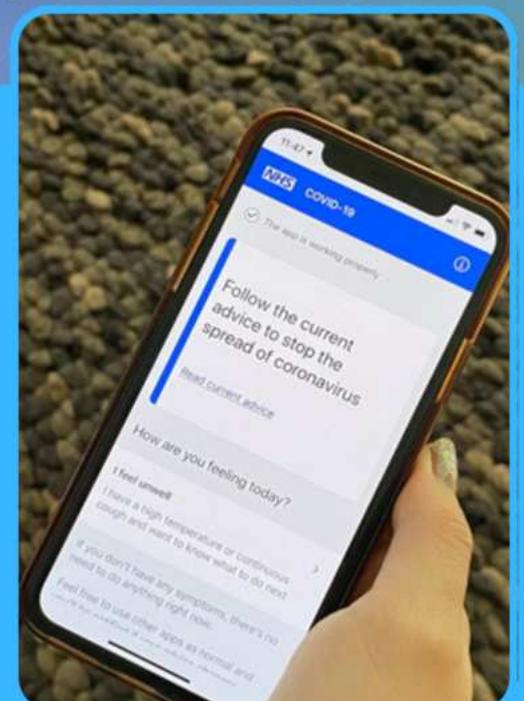
Prevention will be a key focus, with new measures to encourage healthier lifestyles and identify risks earlier. The NHS will work with the food industry to reduce calorie consumption, while access to obesity treatments will be expanded. A new NHS Points scheme will encourage physical activity. School food standards will be updated to ensure children receive nutritious meals.

In mental health, support will be embedded in schools to identify issues early. Virtual therapists will be available 24 hours a day for those with moderate needs, and specialist emergency departments will provide dedicated help for people in crisis.

Innovation and Science

Mr Streeting highlighted the role of innovation in shaping the next decade of healthcare. Advances in artificial intelligence, data analysis and robotics will be adopted across the service. Regulatory processes at NICE and the MHRA will be reformed to speed up the introduction of new medicines and treatments.

Robotic surgery will be expanded for certain procedures, helping patients to recover at home more quickly. Genomic testing will be made available to every newborn baby by 2035, supporting early identification of health conditions.



Investment and Reform

The 10-Year Plan is backed by an additional £29 billion a year by the end of the spending review period, as well as significant capital investment.

Alongside funding, structural reforms will be introduced. More than 200 national bodies will be abolished, with responsibilities returned to the NHS. Patient safety, complaints and whistleblowing processes will be managed directly by the health service. Performance will be monitored through published league tables, and failing providers will face intervention. A reformed foundation trust model will create a system of earned autonomy, linking pay to performance.

Block contracts will end, with funding tied to outcomes and productivity encouraged through revised tariffs. Investment will also focus on addressing health inequalities by targeting working-class communities.



Sandra Igwe, a pioneering Black maternal health leader and FemTech innovator, speaking at the Diversity Tech Summit 2025 on revolutionising digital support for Black mothers through AI-powered platforms.

National Initiatives

The plan includes the establishment of a National Investigation into maternity and neonatal services, aimed at delivering justice and improvements for bereaved families.

Mr Streeting emphasised that NHS staff and patients have been central to the development of the plan. He said that while some believe the health service resists change, staff on the frontline are calling for it and are already piloting new approaches in different regions.

Looking Ahead

The Secretary of State concluded by stating that the plan seeks to restore the founding promise of the NHS: to be available to everyone when they need it. He said that if successful, this generation will be able to claim that it built an NHS “fit for the future” and a fairer health system for all.

From the [Department of Health and Social Care, 3 July 2025](#)

NHS App to Become Digital Front Door in UK 10 Year Health Plan

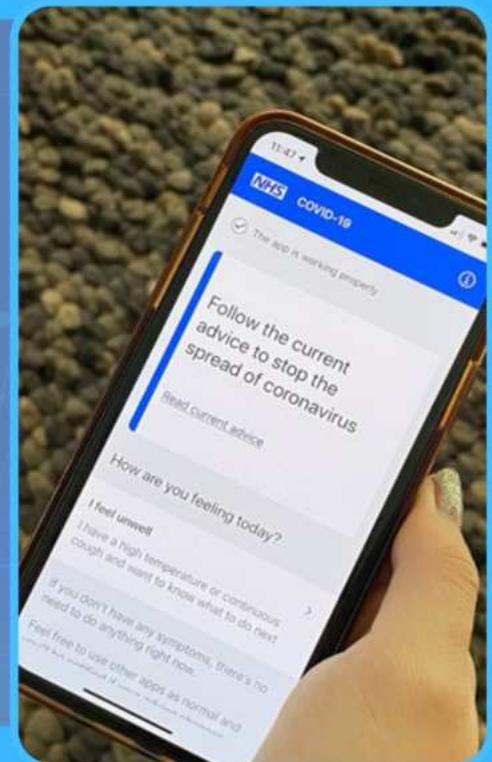
The NHS App is set to become the main way patients access health services under the government's 10 Year Health Plan, announced by Prime Minister Keir Starmer. The plan outlines how patients will be able to book appointments, manage prescriptions and view medical records from their phones. The government says the reforms will make care easier to access while reducing pressure on staff.

"For far too long, the NHS has been stuck in the past, reliant on letters and long phone queues," Mr Starmer said. *"Our 10 Year Health Plan will bring it into the digital age by opening up fairer and more convenient access to healthcare."*

Single patient record

A central part of the reforms is a new single patient record. From 2028, medical information will be brought together in one secure file, accessible through the app. Patients will no longer have to repeat their history to different clinicians.

The system will be designated as critical national infrastructure, with strict security controls. Patients will be able to see who has accessed their records and decide who else can view them. Health Secretary Wes Streeting said: *"The NHS App will become a doctor in your pocket. Our reforms will bring instant advice, remote consultations and better management of appointments to every patient, not just those who can afford private healthcare."*



Expanded features

Patients will be able to self-refer to services such as mental health therapies, physiotherapy and podiatry, bypassing the need to go through a GP. The government says this will shorten waiting times and free up doctors for those who need direct care.

Artificial intelligence will also play a role. A new "My NHS GP" tool will provide advice and help direct patients to the most appropriate service, whether that is self-care, a pharmacist or emergency care. Parents will gain access to a digital version of the red book, which tracks children's health. It will provide guidance on issues such as weaning and sleep, and over time will use AI to support parents when children are unwell.

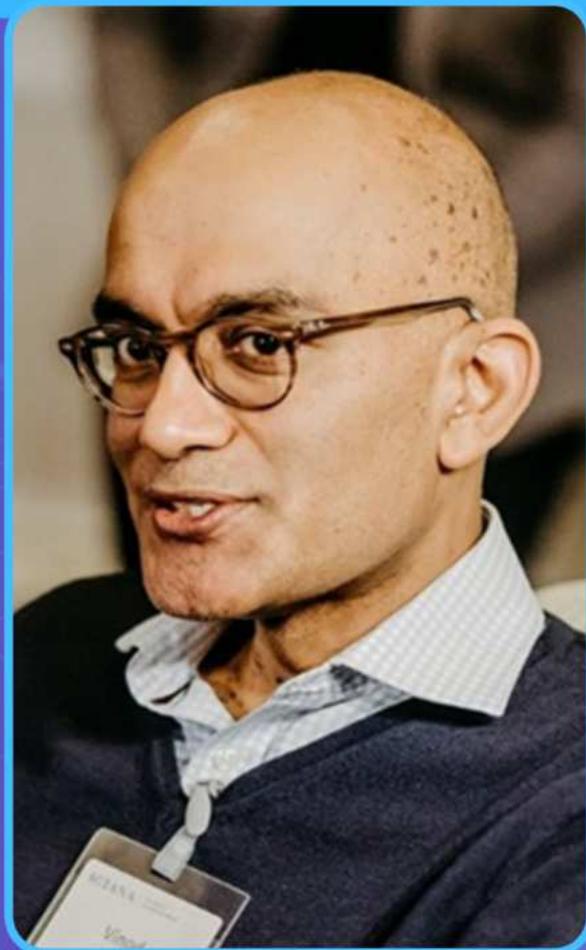
Wearables such as fitness trackers will be able to feed data into the app, including blood pressure, heart rate and glucose levels. The aim is to provide personalised advice and detect health problems earlier. Other planned features include prescription reminders, vaccine booking, the option to leave questions for specialists, and tools for carers to communicate with care teams.

‘Innovator passports’ to speed up NHS access to new technology

NHS patients are set to benefit from quicker access to cutting-edge treatments through a new digital system designed to reduce bureaucracy and accelerate innovation.

The “innovator passport”, due to be introduced over the next two years, will allow medical technology that has been approved by one NHS organisation to be rapidly rolled out across the health service. This streamlined approach will prevent multiple compliance checks and cut delays that have previously discouraged businesses from working with the NHS.

The initiative is part of the government’s Plan for Change and 10 Year Health Plan, which aim to modernise the health service and strengthen the UK’s life sciences sector. The passport will be delivered through MedTech Compass, a digital platform developed by the Department of Health and Social Care to showcase proven technologies and make them easier to adopt nationwide.



Examples of successful innovations already making an impact include wound dressings at Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals, which have reduced surgical site infections by 38 per cent. At Barts Health NHS Trust, protective coverings for cardiac devices have cut infections and saved over £100,000 per year. University Hospitals Dorset has introduced rapid influenza testing, reducing bed occupancy and antibiotic use.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting said the new system would put an end to repeated requests for the same data across different NHS trusts. *“These innovator passports will save time and reduce duplication, meaning our life sciences sector can work hand in hand with the health service and make Britain a powerhouse for medical technology,”* he said. *“Frustrated patients will no longer have to face a postcode lottery for lifesaving products.”*

Dr Vin Diwakar (pictured above), Clinical Transformation Director at NHS England, added: *“We want to make sure NHS patients can benefit from the latest medical technology and innovations. The new passports will speed up the roll-out of proven treatments so that patients can benefit much sooner.”*

By creating a “one-stop shop” for approvals, the government hopes to free up NHS resources, support business growth and ensure patients across the country gain faster access to the latest healthcare advances.

From [Department of Health & Social Care, 2 July 2025](#)

Millions to benefit from NHS robot drive

Millions of patients are set to benefit from a major expansion of robotic surgery on the NHS. By 2035, half a million operations a year will involve robots, up from 70,000 in 2023/24. Nine in ten keyhole procedures could be robot-assisted within a decade, compared with one in five today. NHS leaders say the technology will become the default option for many operations, including some emergencies, because it offers greater precision than the human hand.

The projections follow NHS England's first national guidance on how robotic surgery programmes should be delivered. Sir Jim Mackey, NHS Chief Executive, said: *"The NHS has pledged to return to shorter elective waiting times by 2029. Expanding robotic surgery will speed up procedures, improve outcomes and cut recovery times for patients."*

Unlike traditional keyhole surgery, robotic systems give surgeons finer control. They operate from a console using a 3D camera, while instruments move with enhanced dexterity. Patients typically recover faster. Some bladder cancer patients now leave hospital in five days, compared with ten after open surgery.

The range of operations using robotics is widening fast. In 2011/12, 80 per cent of cases were in urological cancer. By 2023/24, this had dropped to 44 per cent as the technology spread into colorectal, gynaecology, orthopaedics and ear, nose and throat surgery.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has conditionally approved five robotic systems for soft tissue procedures and six for orthopaedics, including hip and knee replacements.



John McGrath, consultant surgeon at North Bristol NHS Trust, said: *"Robot-assisted surgery is transforming the way the NHS works. Patients recover quicker, which relieves pressure on services and helps reduce waiting times. It also makes complex procedures less physically demanding for surgeons, allowing more operations each day."*

Health Secretary Wes Streeting, who had kidney cancer surgery with robotic support, said: *"Innovative treatments like this help cut waiting lists and deliver better outcomes. Our Plan for Change will make sure patients get care on time. We are investing record sums to bring more cutting-edge technology into the NHS."*

Patient groups told NICE that quicker recovery, less pain and smaller scars were the biggest benefits of robotic surgery. From [NHS England, 11 June 2025](#)

UK Launches Groundbreaking AI Trial to Improve Breast Cancer Detection

Nearly 700,000 women across the UK will participate in a pioneering trial to test how advanced AI tools can improve early detection of breast cancer, the Department of Health and Social Care has announced.

As part of a nationwide push to embrace innovative technologies, 30 screening centres will be equipped with cutting-edge AI systems. These tools will assist radiologists in analysing mammograms, identifying early changes in breast tissue that could indicate cancer and recommending further tests when necessary.

Currently, each mammogram requires two specialists to review the results. The new technology could safely allow a single radiologist to conduct the screening, potentially freeing up hundreds of clinicians to see more patients, reduce waiting times, and save more lives.



The EDITH trial (Early Detection using Information Technology in Health) is backed by £11 million in government funding through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). It reflects the UK's commitment to leading global cancer care through research and innovation.

Breast cancer remains the most common form of cancer among women in the UK, with around 55,000 diagnoses each year. Women aged 50 to 71 are invited for NHS breast screening every three years - totalling about 2.1 million screenings annually. This programme is estimated to prevent approximately 1,300 deaths per year.

The trial's launch coincides with a broader effort to shape a new national cancer strategy. The Health and Social Care Secretary is expected to issue a call for evidence, inviting input from patients, professionals, and experts to inform the plan, announced at a Macmillan Cancer Support event for World Cancer Day.

Cancer remains a leading cause of death in the UK, with someone dying every four minutes. A recent review led by Lord Darzi found that survival rates here lag behind those in comparable countries.

The government aims to make the UK a global leader in cancer survival through better research, diagnosis, screening, treatment and prevention - investing in technologies like those trialled in EDITH to build an NHS ready for the future.

Government unveils £2bn Life Sciences Sector Plan to transform the NHS

The government has unveiled a £2 billion plan to cement Britain's position as a global leader in life sciences, promising faster treatments for patients and thousands of new jobs.

The ten-year Life Sciences Sector Plan aims to harness cutting-edge research to fuel economic growth and transform the NHS into a more prevention-focused health service. The strategy, developed alongside the 10 Year Health Plan, is built on three pillars: world-class research, backing business growth, and driving NHS reform.



Six flagship actions will kickstart the programme

1. Unlocking NHS data to find new cures
2. Up to £600 million will fund the world's most advanced health data system, giving scientists the tools to develop treatments faster.
3. Speeding up clinical trials
4. Streamlined rules will help patients join trials sooner and access new medicines more quickly.
5. Backing British manufacturing
6. Up to £520 million will support new life sciences manufacturing projects, creating high-skilled jobs and expanding domestic production.
7. Getting new treatments to patients faster
8. Extra funding for the medicines regulator MHRA will simplify approvals and cut delays.
9. Helping doctors use cutting-edge tech
10. An NHS "passport" will accelerate the rollout of innovations such as AI cancer scanners and wearable monitors.
11. Backing brilliant UK firms to grow
12. Support for fast-growing companies will help them secure investment and scale up, with at least one major industry partnership each year.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting said, "This Life Sciences Sector Plan represents a pivotal moment in our mission to rebuild the NHS and shift our healthcare system from one that treats illness to one that prevents it. By bringing together the brilliance of British science with the power of our NHS, we're not just improving healthcare outcomes – we're building a stronger economy and creating jobs across the country."

The sector is already worth around £100 billion and employs 300,000 people, most outside London and the South East. Ministers say the plan will ensure breakthroughs happen in Britain and stay in Britain, delivering growth as well as better health outcomes.

From [Life Sciences Sector Plan to grow economy and transform NHS](#), DSIT, 16 July 2025

Applications open for the NHS Innovation Accelerator 2026 cohort

From 1 September to 12 October 2025, the NHS Innovation Accelerator (NIA) is inviting healthcare companies and entrepreneurs to apply for this transformative 3-year fellowship programme.

Why apply?

The NIA, supported by NHS England's Accelerated Access Collaborative (AAC) and in partnership with 15 Health Innovation Networks, is designed to scale healthcare innovations to new heights. Whether you're developing a breakthrough medical device, a pioneering digital health solution, or a novel healthcare delivery model, the NIA is here to support your journey.

What the NIA offers

- Invaluable mentorship: Benefit from guidance and support from industry experts, NHS leaders, and experienced mentors.
- Deep NHS insights: Gain a comprehensive understanding of the NHS and processes to effectively navigate the system.
- National exposure: Enhance your visibility and reach across the NHS and broader healthcare landscape.
- Funding opportunities: Access potential funding sources to drive your innovation forward.
- Vibrant community: Connect with a dynamic network of over 100 Fellows and Alumni, sharing knowledge and opportunities.

About the NHS Innovation Accelerator (NIA)

Since 2015, the NHS Innovation Accelerator (NIA) has helped scale over 100 evidence led innovations across England, supporting the NHS to improve care quality, empower clinical teams, and achieve real operational efficiencies. These innovations have directly enhanced patient outcomes and service delivery. Funded by NHS England via the Accelerated Access Collaborative, and delivered by UCLPartners (UCLP), the NIA works through its Fellows and Alumni to embed inclusive, high-impact solutions that strengthen the NHS and drive a more responsive, innovative healthcare system.

Successes include

- 3,379 NHS sites using NIA innovations
- 228 awards won by NIA Fellows and their innovations
- £218.4m raised in external funding to support better patient outcomes.



To learn more about the NIA programme, explore the recruitment process, hear from current NIA Fellows and apply, visit: www.nhsaccelerator.com.

About Cambridge Judge Business School

Cambridge Judge Business School is a world leader in business research and education inspired by the values of scholarly excellence, equity, diversity, and inclusion. It is the business school of the University of Cambridge, providing management education and is named after Sir Paul Judge, a founding benefactor of the school. Since 1990, Cambridge Judge has forged a reputation as a centre of rigorous thinking and high-impact transformative education, situated within one of the world's most prestigious research universities.

Cambridge Judge pursues innovation through inter-disciplinary insight, entrepreneurial spirit and collaboration. Cutting-edge research is rooted in real-world challenges and students and clients are encouraged to ask excellent questions to create real-world change. Undergraduate, graduate and executive programmes attract innovators, creative thinkers, thoughtful and collaborative problem-solvers, and current and future leaders, drawn from a huge diversity of backgrounds and countries. Cambridge Judge Business School is ranked #1 in the UK's Research Excellence Framework. 94% of Cambridge's overall submissions have been rated as 'world leading' or 'internationally excellent'.

For further information visit <https://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/>

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FRUGAL AI HUB

FRUGAL AI HUB at  **UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE**
Judge Business School

About Frugal AI Hub

The Frugal AI Hub at Cambridge Judge Business School serves as a catalyst and connector for advancing Frugal AI principles and practices. It fosters a vibrant ecosystem, bringing together researchers, industry leaders, policymakers, and innovators to champion responsible and resource-efficient AI solutions. The Frugal AI Hub is co-led by Venkata Serish Gandikota and Elizabeth Osta, Fellows at the Cambridge Judge Business School. For further information visit <https://frugalai.org/>



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DIVERSITY UK

Diversity UK is a charity whose mission is to improve equality and inclusion in Britain. We do this by: informing and educating the public about equality and inclusion initiatives, particularly in relation to race diversity; holding public bodies to account about the appointment of ethnic minority individuals to senior positions in the public sector and by promoting greater diversity in the tech sector in Britain.

Diversity UK has achieved many successes over the years, including:

- Publishing a flagship 'Beyond the Glass Ceiling' Research Report in 2013.
- Participating in 4 Reviews including the McGregor-Smith 'Race in the Workplace' Review.
- Establishing the annual Paul Stephenson lecture on race equality.
- Devising and leading the Asians in Tech initiative over the past decade.
- Supporting 160 industry events; organising 38 events; celebrating 14 IWD events & 2 Summits.

Diversity UK is a registered charity (No: 1155189) in England & Wales. For further information, visit

<https://diversityuk.org/>



Sherad Dewedi

MANAGING PARTNER - SHENWARD

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Sherad Dewedi is the Managing Partner of Shenward, a chartered accountancy and business advisory firm with offices in Cleckheaton, Leeds and London. Under his leadership, Shenward continues to grow its national and international presence while maintaining a commitment to high-quality professional services.

In addition to Sherad's role as a Trustee of Diversity UK, he serves as a Finance Governor at Ghyll Royd School, a board member of Bradford Breakthrough and an Ambassador of the 1662 Committee at Bradford Grammar School.



Alice Huang is a dedicated working professional venturing into healthcare studies, driven by a passion for tackling health inequalities. She has worked for PwC in the UK for over 6 years and experience in media agencies and professional services, she has leveraged her networks to champion various meaningful initiatives close to her heart, including diversifying the stem cell registry, neurodiversity empowerment and addressing the gender health gap at work. As the organiser for the 2025 TEDx Square Mile Women event, she established a collaboration between Wellbeing of Women and her company's Gender Balance Network to curate an impactful event for International Women's Day. She now focuses on creating platforms that amplify the voices of invisible women, ensuring their stories and challenges are heard and addressed.

Alice holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Harbin Institute of Technology, China, and is currently pursuing Master's degree in Healthcare and Design at Imperial College London.

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Alice Huang

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Francesca Jus-Burke

MANAGING ASSOCIATE - GREENWOODS LEGAL LLP

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Francesca Jus-Burke is a corporate and commercial lawyer at Greenwood Legal LLP in Cambridge. She advises businesses and individuals based in the UK and internationally with private acquisitions and disposals, joint ventures and shareholder arrangements, as well as contract reviews, general commercial issues and company law matters. At her previous firm she founded a CSR Committee and sat on its D&I Steering Committee.

Before becoming a lawyer, Francesca worked as a rowing coach for Putney High School and Barn Elms Boat Club, as a tutor & assessor for British Rowing, and as a sports performer coordinator and mentor for the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust. More recently, Francesca has been a trustee of Love Rowing (British Rowing's charitable foundation), a charity that changes lives by increasing diversity in the sport.



Ramesh Vala CBE is a Consultant and International Brand Ambassador, having worked for a number of leading law firms, including as a Partner and Head of Property, where he gained extensive experience in advising clients on property related matters. Graduating from the London School of Economics, Ramesh went on to achieve a distinction in his finals at Lancaster Gate College of Law. He became a partner within eighteen months of qualification and soon became one of very few Asian equity partners in a top UK law firm.

In his personal life, he is dedicated to improving the lives of those less fortunate by fundraising for various charities. In 2001, Ramesh was appointed an OBE for his charitable work and in 2022, he was honoured with a CBE in recognition of his services to the community and to the Covid-19 Response.



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Ramesh Vala CBE

DEPUTY CHAIR - DIVERSITY UK

Sareeta Vala

TRUSTEE - DIVERSITY UK

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Sareeta Vala is a passionate NLP (Neurolinguistic Programming) Trainer and Consultant, part of the NLP Global Training and Consultancy Community and Neuroscience Coach, dedicated to helping individuals master confidence, relationships and financial success. Having trained under renowned figures like Robert Dilts and Judith Delozier at NLP, she integrates proven NLP methods to inspire personal and professional growth.

With a rich background in business and retail management, product design, and procurement, Sareeta combines her expertise in business with her deep understanding of human behaviour. This unique blend enables her to provide tailored strategies that foster both personal development and business excellence. Sareeta's approach focuses on unlocking potential, driving positive change, and guiding clients on their path to self-improvement and lasting success.



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