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PRESS RELEASE

Diversity UK launches *Changemakers Series* with call for 'Frugal AI' in healthcare

Event at Cambridge Judge Business School sparks national debate on equitable innovation

L-R: Professor Niels Peek, Kelvyn Hipperson, Dr Chris Laing, Caroline Cake & Sadeq Ali speaking at the Diversity UK Changemakers Series: Frugal AI use in Healthcare debate at CJBS, 17 September 2025.

[Cambridge, 19 September 2025] Diversity UK has launched its new *Changemakers Series* with a high-profile debate on *Frugal AI use in Healthcare*, held at Cambridge Judge Business School during Cambridge Tech Week.

The event brought together leading academics, clinicians, entrepreneurs and NHS leaders to explore how artificial intelligence can deliver affordable, accessible and equitable healthcare, not just high-cost solutions for elite institutions.

AI must work in the real world

Professor **Niels Peek** of The Healthcare Improvement Studies (THIS) Institute, University of Cambridge delivered the keynote, highlighting the three *Darzi shifts* that are reshaping the NHS: moving care from hospitals into communities, using digital tools to drive efficiency and focusing on prevention over treatment.

While AI has promise for precision medicine and productivity, he warned of an "*evidence gap*". Thousands of predictive models have been developed, yet very few are in clinical use. "*The trials to prove technology safe and effective take years*," he said, "*but AI evolves in months. The translation from lab to bedside remains especially difficult.*"

Doing more with less

Chairing the discussion, **Lopa Patel MBE**, Chair of Diversity UK, challenged perceptions that AI in medicine must always be expensive. *"When we think about AI, we picture cutting-edge systems in specialist hospitals*," she said. "*But the real challenge and opportunity lies in Frugal AI - tools that do more with less, using limited data, less computing power and simpler models, while still delivering meaningful outcomes*."

She added: "*Frugal AI must be **accessible**, **affordable**, **scalable** and **equitable**, from large hospitals to small community clinics and even in our homes.*"

Insights from the frontline

A panel of experts then shared their experiences of bridging innovation and implementation:

- **Kelvyn Hipperson**, Chief Digital & Information Officer at NHS Cornwall & Isles of Scilly ICB, stressed the difficulty of choosing solutions that make the biggest difference. "*Implementation is not just about technology*," he said. "*It requires good governance, collaboration and an innovation pipeline that can survive the realities of the NHS*."
- **Dr Chris Laing**, CEO of UCL Partners, pointed to the untapped power of existing data. "*Simple algorithms are under-utilised*," he noted. "*We can already predict 80% of acute admissions using simple algorithms, yet much of that insight isn't being deployed*."
- **Caroline Cake**, CEO of Oxford spin-out Neu Health, described her journey from leading Health Data Research UK to launching a company tackling Parkinson's and dementia. She emphasised the importance of design. "*If you bring in clinicians and patients early, you improve effectiveness and equity*," she said.
- **Mohammed 'Sadeq' Ali**, Co-Founder of AccurKardia, spoke about the long road from academic research to FDA approval for his ECG-based technology. "*The challenge is aligning high-quality datasets with real-world population data*," he explained. "*Ultimately, your models must work for everyone, not just controlled samples*."

Barriers to progress

Across the debate, several challenges were repeatedly raised:

- **Regulation**: approval pathways remain slow and complex.
- **Data quality**: biased, incomplete or poor-quality datasets risk undermining models.
- **Clinician engagement**: frontline staff often do not see the potential of AI, while innovators may not grasp clinical realities.
- **Equity**: if poorly designed, AI could widen health inequalities rather than reduce them.
- **Diversity**: Synthetic data, panellists agreed, can help fill gaps, but it is no substitute for real-world diversity in datasets.

Imagining the next five years

Asked what breakthroughs they hoped to celebrate in five years, the panellists were optimistic:

- "*Cradle-to-grave personalised medicine for everyone*" - **Sadeq Ali**
- "*The first patient cured of dementia with AI-driven therapies*" - **Caroline Cake**
- "*Digital care pathways that reduce health inequalities"* - **Chris Laing**
- "*AI voice transcription that gives doctors more time with patients delivering a better overall experience for clinicians and people.*" – **Kelvyn Hipperson**
- "*A stronger innovation ecosystem in the NHS*" – **Niels Peek**

For Alice Huang who gave the closing remarks, the vision was clear: "*Every resource matters, every life matters. Equitable models are fundamental to delivering a step change in healthcare.*"

Tech showcase highlights

The discussion was followed by a lively **Tech Showcase**, moderated by **Elizabeth Osta**, Co-Lead of the Frugal AI Hub and Visiting Fellow at Cambridge Judge Business School.

Three innovators presented solutions that embodied the spirit of frugal innovation:

- **Viktorija Smith**, Co-Founder of **Respoken**, showcased a digital health platform designed to help people with aphasia and other communication difficulties access personalised support.
- **Linia Zambezi**, Founder of **Afromics**, described how her genomics start-up is building a large-scale African biobank to enable inclusive precision medicine.
- **Mohammed 'Sadeq' Ali**, Co-Founder of **AccurKardia**, demonstrated how the company uses AI to interpret both visible and hidden signals in ECGs, creating a broad biomarker to predict cardiovascular disease and other conditions – ultimately aiming to save lives.

Looking ahead

The *Changemakers Series* is a new initiative by Diversity UK to convene thought leadership on innovation, equity and inclusion. Future sessions will cover themes such as *The Entrepreneurial Mindset*, bringing together different sectors and voices to influence the next generation of changemakers.

Lopa Patel concluded: "*Frugal AI is not about cutting corners. It is about making sure technology works for everyone. Doing more with less may well be the key to saving lives*."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The *Changemakers Series: Frugal AI in Healthcare* took place on Wednesday 17 September 2025 at Cambridge Judge Business School, in collaboration with the Frugal AI Hub. Speakers included Professor Niels Peek (THIS Institute), Kelvyn Hipperson (NHS Cornwall & Isles of Scilly ICB), Dr Chris Laing (UCL Partners), Caroline Cake (Neu Health) and Mohammed 'Sadeq' Ali (AccurKardia).

To download Press Photos from the event visit https://bit.ly/48nn0CO

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About the Organisers

About Diversity UK

Diversity UK is a registered charity (No. 1155189) that researches, advocates and promotes ideas to improve diversity and inclusion across Britain. The charity delivers its mission by conducting research, hosting debates, organising roundtable discussions, producing white papers, and publishing newsletters focused on contemporary equality issues.

Key achievements include:

- Publication of the flagship *Beyond the Glass Ceiling* research report (2013)
- Engagement with four key government reviews, including the Davies Review (Women on Boards) and the McGregor-Smith Review (Race in the Workplace)
- Participation in four national consultations and DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) initiatives
- Sponsorship of the 2016 *Women in Science* Conference; hosting of 3 Diversity Tech Summits including this year's '*Investing in Women's Health*' and 5 '*Investing in Women Founders*' debates.
- Collaborations on gender-focused research

The 'Changemakers Series' marks the start of a new initiative to convene thought leadership and dialogue on emerging technologies like AI and undertake a deep dive on sectors such as healthcare to help improve equity, fairness and social justice across domains. For further information visit www.diversityuk.org

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/

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/