



Using health data to improve care for everyone

Competition launched to find projects that put data to work for patients

The Health Data Research Service (HDRS) is launching a competition to fund projects that demonstrate the enormous value of health data and its benefits to public and patients across the UK. The successful projects will be called 'Data Driver Projects'.

Health data helps doctors and researchers to learn what causes disease, find new treatments, and run clinical trials. The UK has some of the best health data in the world, but it is held in lots of different locations within the health and care system, often making it slow and difficult for researchers to access. This means that the UK public and patients aren't benefitting as much as they could be from their health data. More information on how health data is gathered, stored and used in the NHS can be found here: [WHAT HAPPENS TO HEALTH DATA: A guide to large datasets](#)

HDRS is here to change this. Our mission is to make it easier and safer for approved clinicians and researchers to use health and care data from across the UK. The service will help bring together the right data for approved purposes, with safeguards in place, so it can support new treatments, clinical trials, and better care for patients. Read more about: [Why is it important to use patient data? | Understanding patient data](#)

The Data Driver Projects will not create new central databases. Instead, they will show how existing health and care data can be brought together safely and responsibly to benefit patients, the public, and the NHS. The projects will be focused on one or more of the following themes:

1. Discovery research – showing how data can help with our understanding of health and disease. For example, bringing together data from different NHS trusts to help answer an important health question
2. Clinical trials – showing how health data can make clinical trials quicker, safer, and easier to take part in. For example, using health data to develop an easy way for patients to find out about clinical trial opportunities.
3. Innovation development – showing how health data can support the development and testing of new healthcare technologies. For example, using health data to show if a new test for a disease is effective.
4. Evaluation and evidence generation – showing how health data can be used as evidence of how effective new medicines or technologies are. This could help new treatments reach patients faster.



A selection panel will review applications, selecting projects that bring lasting value to patients, researchers and the NHS. The selection panel will be made up of HDRS representatives and independent external members, including Patient and Public representation. All applicants will have to explain how they are involving the public and patients within the design and running of their projects, and what benefits the projects will deliver to the public and patients.

This competition is open to health organisations across the UK, including the NHS, health charities, academic organisations, pharmaceutical companies and health technology companies. To access patient data, all applicants will have to satisfy several criteria to ensure that data is used responsibly with the necessary safeguarding in place. More information about how UK health data is protected can be found here: [How is patient data used? | Understanding patient data](#)

The Data Driver Projects are a first step for HDRS, allowing us to demonstrate our commitment to improving the health data landscape and its benefits for patients. We will build upon the work done by the Data Driver Projects with our long-term strategy, which we are currently developing. More information about our plans can be found at [Health Data Service Roadmap & Strategic Plan | HDRS](#).