

News story: UK Space Agency launches multi-million pound drive to improve patient care with NHS England

A search for hi-tech solutions to the major health and care challenges facing the NHS in its 70th anniversary year is underway with up to £4 million from the UK Space Agency.

In the joint initiative with NHS England, Innovators will bid for money to turn technology originally designed for space, from exploration to satellite communications, into medical applications that improve NHS treatment and care.

NHS England's chief executive Simon Stevens outlined four challenges in his speech to the NHS Confederation conference earlier this month:

- Managing long term conditions including joining up health and care services
- Earlier diagnosis of cancer
- Transforming GP services and other primary care
- Meeting mental health needs.

Up to four applications will receive UK Space Agency funding to develop their ideas along with support and advice from NHS England and the European Space Agency.

Emily Gravestock, UK Space Agency head of applications, said:

Britain's world-leading space sector continues to grow and support vital public services like the NHS with innovative applications.

We encourage all businesses and public bodies to consider the role that satellite data can play in tackling some of the biggest challenges we face, as part of the government's Industrial Strategy.

Previous examples of space tech being adapted for NHS use include a pill camera that can be swallowed by patients, dementia tracking slippers, breast screening vans that beam images back to assessment centres, wearable monitors to help prevent falls among the elderly, and apps that help prevent skin cancer.

Professor Tony Young, NHS England's national clinical director for innovation, said:

Throughout its 70 year history the NHS has been at the forefront of healthcare innovation.

Through this competition we are seeking the latest greatest, ideas and technical solutions to help address the modern challenges facing our health and care services.

The UK's space industry builds 40% of the world's small satellites and 25% of the world's telecommunications satellites. It supports 40,000 jobs and generates £14 billion in revenue across the country.

Space technology that has already been adapted for NHS use include:

- Dementia tracking slippers: GPS soles are being trialled in Dorset for people who are affected by dementia in order to help reduce hospital admissions. They are a discreet, non-invasive tracking tool that sits inside everyday footwear and can alert the carer if the person using them wanders outside given parameters or 'geo-fence'. Alerts are received over an app which runs on any internet enabled device and give the location of the wearer so they can be found quickly – reducing the chance for them to come to any harm. The benefits to the wearer are increased independence, while carers receive additional peace of mind.
- A pill cam to diagnose gut problems: A video capsule endoscopy or pill cam is a device approximately 2cm long used to examine the lining of the small intestine. It helps investigate iron deficiency anaemia; unexplained bleeding; suspected coeliac disease, and abnormalities such as polyps. The capsule is equipped with a miniature video camera and light source. It travels painlessly capturing images and sends them to a recording device for analysis by a clinician.
- NHS breast cancer screening vans: Mobile breast screening vans typically store digital scan images on hard drives, which are then taken by courier, taxi or mammography staff themselves to a hospital. Technology funded by the UK Space Agency's Space for Smarter Government Programme is behind 16 NHS breast screening vans across the country beaming scans of patients directly back to assessment centres to be double reviewed by radiologists. This reduces the time it takes to diagnose cancer or given the all-clear.
- NASA inspired tech helping to prevent falls: A wearable monitor is being used to help elderly and vulnerable people avoid falls by using microelectromechanical (MEMS) gyroscope equipment, partly based on technological breakthroughs made as part of America's space programme to monitor how people walk. Following a short 10-minute assessment, physiotherapists can prescribe a personalised exercise programme to reduce the risk of a fall.

- Skin cancer app: One in 54 people will be diagnosed with malignant melanoma during their lifetime. Apps which use satellite technology to give personalised risk assessment of sun exposure, like the Happy Sun App, could form part of a patients package of care in the near future.

For more details of how to get involved in this initiative, please contact emily.gravestock@ukspaceagency.gov.uk

News story: New measures announced to halve childhood obesity by 2030

Building on the [first chapter of the childhood obesity plan](#), the new measures include proposals to counter ‘pester power’ by preventing stores from displaying unhealthy food at checkouts or including it in buy-one-get-one-free deals.

The Department of Health and Social Care will consult on introducing clear, consistent calorie labelling on menus in restaurants, cafés and takeaways, so parents can make an informed choice about what their families are eating. The department will also consult on banning the sale of harmful, caffeine-laden energy drinks to children – a quarter of 6- to 9-year-olds consume these energy drinks, which can have as much caffeine as a cup of coffee or more.

The government is calling on industry to recognise the harm that adverts for foods high in fat, sugar and salt can cause. It will consult on introducing new TV and online advertising restrictions to prevent children from being targeted by these unhealthy products, and to incentivise companies to reduce the sugar and calories in the products they sell. This could include extending the current advertising watershed and considering limiting the number of unhealthy food adverts shown during children’s programmes up to 9pm.

The second chapter of the plan also promotes a new national ambition for every primary school to adopt a daily ‘active mile’ initiative, such as the Daily Mile. This is supported by £620,000 funding for Living Street’s Walk to School project, as well as £1 million to support the Department for Transport’s Bikeability cycling training programme, expected to fund an additional 25,000 training places.

Government will launch a 3-year programme to work closely with local authority partners to show what can be achieved within existing powers with a particular focus on inequalities, finding solutions to barriers and sharing best practice with others.

Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health, said:

Parents want what is best for their children, but keeping them healthy and active can be difficult.

It is near impossible to shield children from exposure to unhealthy foods. Parents are asking for help – we know that over three-quarters of parents find offers for sugary sweets and snacks at checkouts annoying. It's our job to give power to parents to make healthier choices, and to make their life easier in doing so.

The cost of obesity – both on individual lives and our NHS – is too great to ignore. Today we are taking steps to ensure that by 2030, children from all backgrounds have the help they need for a healthier, more active start in life.

Steve Brine, Public Health Minister, said:

One in three children are now overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school. Dangerous overconsumption, combined with reduced activity, is having a catastrophic effect on our children's health, limiting their potential and putting them at risk of a shorter life.

We all have a responsibility to act before we lose a generation of young people to this entirely avoidable epidemic. We can't afford to waste time, which is why we're committing to halve obesity in the next 12 years with bold new action.

[News story: David Mundell visits the scene of the Glasgow School of Art fire](#)

Mr Mundell met with staff from the GSA who have been working round the clock to ensure that the academic work of the institution can continue despite the devastating fire. He then went up to the site to see the Mackintosh Building. Mr Mundell had previously visited the building three weeks ago, when he saw the restoration of the building after the fire in 2014.

Speaking after his visit, Mr Mundell said:

Today I visited the site of the Glasgow School of Art fire. It's a scene of devastation, utterly shocking to behold. Having seen the splendour of the painstakingly refurbished building just two weeks

ago, it is an absolutely heartbreaking sight.

My sincere thanks go to the fire service personnel who fought so hard to ensure no lives were lost and the damage was not even worse.

“Today I also met the School Director, Professor Inns, and several of his team. Their love of this architectural masterpiece is clear, and their resilience and optimism in the face of this terrible tragedy is impressive.

I share their conviction that the Mack will one day rise again in all its glory. It is still early stages in properly assessing the damage, but we all hope the building can be saved, and the UK Government stands ready to help.

Professor Tom Inns, Director of The Glasgow School of Art said:

The Glasgow School of Art is hugely appreciative of the support that we have received from the Secretary of State since the fire and for his visit today.

Only three weeks ago I was able to show Mr Mundell round the interiors of the Mackintosh Building to see the tremendous work which was being undertaken by our teams of skilled craftsmen, so it is particularly poignant to return with him to the site with him today.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have now handed the site over to Glasgow City Council. The team from GCC Building control is working with the Glasgow School of Art, expert structural engineers, David Narro Associates, and Historic Environment Scotland to assess the structural integrity of the building.

Press release: UK responds to reports of regime incursions in southern Syria

Minister Burt said:

I am deeply concerned by the reports of air and artillery attacks by the Assad regime against the de-escalation area in south-west Syria, leading to civilian deaths and displacements in recent days.

A military offensive by the regime in this area would constitute a flagrant violation of the ceasefire and de-escalation agreement reached by Russia, the United States and Jordan last November and which the UK has supported.

We urge Russia to uphold its commitments under this agreement and ensure the Syrian regime abides by the ceasefire. Failure to do so would undermine regional stability and risk a humanitarian crisis.

Further information

- Follow Minister Burt on Twitter [@AlistairBurtUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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