

From Idea to Impact: An Innovation Journey

Wales offers a supportive and connected environment for health and social care innovation. From early ideas to system-wide adoption, innovators can access funding, research partnerships, and NHS engagement at every stage. The Innovation Journey sets out the typical path an idea might take, from the initial concept, through stages of research and development, to commercialisation and ultimately, adoption in real-world settings. This guide aims to help innovators understand what's involved at each step, who to engage with, and how Life Sciences Hub Wales (LSHW) can help accelerate your ideas towards meaningful, real-world impact.

Idea	Research	Development	Commercialisation	Scale & Adoption
<p>Every innovation starts with someone asking: “<i>Could this be better?</i>”</p> <p>Clearly define the clinical need and explain how your idea addresses it. Support your case with early-stage evidence, such as market analysis, concept development, feasibility assessments, and user or stakeholder surveys. Who to engage with: Patients, carers, clinicians, academic and industry partners, innovation leads, LSHW Market Intelligence team.</p>	<p>Understanding the issue and exploring early solutions</p> <p>Confirm the problem, understand user needs, and generate initial evidence to support and validate development. Outputs include user research, literature reviews, technology landscaping, proof of concept and safety research, and preclinical testing (e.g. simulations or in vitro, TRL 2-3). Who to engage with: University research teams, clinical researchers, end users, patient focus groups, innovation networks, LSHW funding team.</p>	<p>Moving from prototype to real-life product</p> <p>The innovation is evaluated and refined through user feedback and tested in clinical settings to ensure safety, usability, and effectiveness (TRL 4-6). Outputs include a functional product, regulatory approval where appropriate, intellectual property (IP) protection and early health economics. Who to engage with: Design and development teams, regulatory experts, NHS testbeds or pilots, procurement leads and LSHW economics team.</p>	<p>Building the pathway to market</p> <p>This stage (TRL 7-8) focuses on finalising the business model, and the go-to-market strategy. Ensuring that all evidence demonstrates value vs standard care. Outputs include finalising IP and regulatory licensing, clinician engagement, marketing and training, and procurement readiness. Who to engage with: Business development advisors, integrated care systems or primary care teams, health innovation networks, marketing a procurement teams and LSHW project delivery team.</p>	<p>Proving real-world value and impact</p> <p>The focus shifts to scaling across systems, building trust with users, and demonstrating real-world value (TRL9), through case studies and published results. Growth is supported by ongoing data collection, evaluation, strategic partnerships, and adapting the innovation for broader use and new settings. Who to engage with: Health boards, strategic partners, policy and transformation leads, real-world evaluation teams and LSHW partnerships team.</p>

LSHW plays a central role in the innovation journey. Whether you're at the start of an idea or ready to scale your solution, LSHW helps you progress with confidence, collaborate smarter, and deliver impact where it matters most. We provide:

- **Expert advice** to help shape your idea and identify next steps
- **Strategic input** to align your innovation with system needs and priorities
- **Market intelligence** such as horizon scanning and rapid scan reports
- **Guidance on funding opportunities** such as signposting and bid review

- **Connections to NHS and care partners** for co-development and testing
- **Support navigating adoption pathways** within NHS Wales
- **Access to innovation networks**, academic collaborators, and commercialisation resources
- **Economic support** to demonstrate value and inform decision-making