



Cornwall's Healthtech Opportunity:

Discover why healthtech innovators are flocking to Cornwall – and how they're thriving here





Around the world, the UK's NHS is seen as the gold standard for delivering national healthcare. In recent years, that's contributed to the UK becoming a major destination for healthtech companies looking to expand their operations and improve their solutions in a wide-ranging, world-class healthcare environment.

Cornwall: the ideal starting point in your NHS journey

Selling a solution into the NHS is the ultimate seal of approval, making it both a lucrative business opportunity and a sure-fire way of proving the value of a product or service.

However, the NHS is a complex organisation – and the way it operates can vary hugely between the UK's constituent countries, its counties, and even within individual cities. In London

alone there are over 90 bodies involved in the city's NHS provisions, including separate trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups. This can make it difficult for companies to get their solutions in front of the right decision-makers, and to get the widespread adoption and engagement required to truly prove a solution's value.

There is a more streamlined way.

In Cornwall, over 550,000 citizens are served by 59 primary health practices. But unlike other areas of the UK, it's all managed under one trust, with one Clinical Commissioning Group and one local authority.





One Acute Care Trust. One Clinical Commissioning Group. One Local Authority.

When companies think of expanding to the UK, London is often their first thought. But it's not the most streamlined way to approach the NHS.

London

30+

Acute Care
Trusts

32

Clinical
Commissioning
Groups

30+

Local
Authorities

Cornwall

1

Acute Care
Trust

1

Clinical
Commissioning
Group

1

Local
Authority

An ideal testbed for healthtech innovation

This rare environment isn't the only factor that makes Cornwall an ideal testbed for healthtech innovation. The county is also a unique microcosm of the challenges faced by top-level healthcare providers across the UK. It has diverse demographics, from students to the elderly – many of whom live in rural areas with limited access to primary care – with concentrated populations in urban centres. No matter which patient or practice types your solution is built to serve – you'll find them in Cornwall.

There's also the added factor of a hugely variable population. Each summer, there's a massive influx of tourists, which puts increased pressure on healthcare services.

All these conditions come together to make Cornwall the perfect environment to test and develop healthtech solutions – whether they're completely new or already proven elsewhere. And to make the whole process easier and more effective, there's a purpose-built structure in place to help innovators take advantage of this unique environment.



In this pack, you'll discover the support and funding opportunities in place to help eHealth innovators make a streamlined entry into the NHS through Cornwall, and some of the success stories from companies that have already made the journey.



The support network:

EPIC →

Kernow Health CIC →

Smartline →

SW AHSN →

EPIC

Led by the University of Plymouth's Centre for Health Technology (CHT), eHealth Productivity and Innovation in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (EPIC) aims to transform primary and social care with innovative eHealth technologies, building a thriving healthtech ecosystem across the region.

EPIC gives innovators the opportunity to tap into its extensive partner network – one that's full of specialists in tech, healthcare, and research and development. The network includes academics, patient groups, charities, technology companies and more – all working to support the development, validation, and market journey of innovative eHealth solutions.



UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH





Backed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), EPIC will provide funding and support for innovators through to 2023. In its first round alone, EPIC directly funded 37 healthtech businesses in Cornwall, helping launch a total of 42 eHealth innovations, including:

- Elephant Kiosks: self-service eHealth kiosks that save valuable clinician time by digitising routine diagnostics within primary care.
- Robotriks: an affordable, customisable version of a companion robot, intended for use with the lonely and isolated to provide companionship.
- Kernow Health Solutions: an app-based prep tool for patient-doctor consultations, making assessment and diagnosis faster.

Funding is just one of EPIC's support streams designed to help healthtech innovators on their journey to market. Its offering also includes funded 12-week student internships, access to a dedicated centre for bespoke usability testing and evaluation, and research collaboration with the University of Plymouth.

The fifth and final support stream within EPIC is the eHealth and Digital Health Testbed (EDHT) run by its delivery partner, Kernow Health CIC.

EPIC support

1

Free use of the EPICentre, a dedicated facility in Truro for hot desk and meeting space, as well as a space to showcase innovations or conduct bespoke usability testing and end-user focus groups.

2

Research collaboration with the University of Plymouth academic team, to support the development of innovations using sector-specific research tools and knowledge.

3

Exclusive partnership with Kernow Health CIC offering five hours of funded support for real-world testing and evaluation of Primary Care ideas through the eHealth and Digital Health Testbed (EDHT).

4

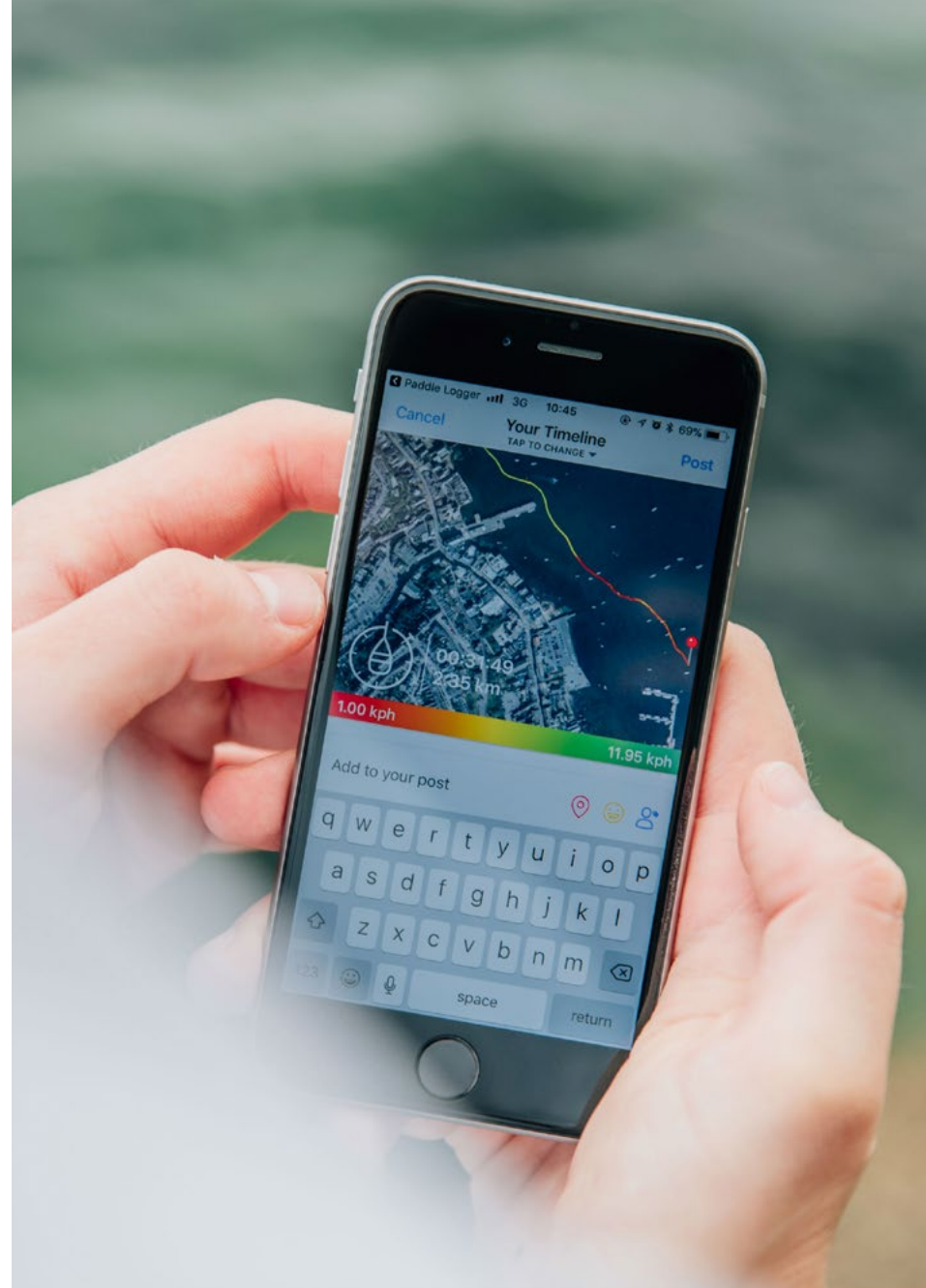
Part-funded university internships, for students to gain practical work experience whilst helping businesses develop, refine or deliver their eHealth products or services.

5

Support to identify and apply to relevant funding opportunities, including its own Challenge Fund, which supports no-risk feasibility studies, as well as larger grants up to £27k.

6

Events to gain skills, provide insight into the eHealth sector, and meet new connections.



Kernow Health CIC

The Digital and eHealth Testbed from Kernow Health helps innovators put new technologies and processes directly into the hands of the people that need them.

Practical, real-life testing for eHealth solutions has always been difficult. But it's vital for building solutions that actually make a difference. Often, products and services that seem perfect on paper simply don't work in practice – making real, impartial, efficacy testing essential.

Through the Digital and eHealth Testbed, Kernow Health provides a unique low-risk environment that is

a cost-effective way to evaluate and trial healthtech solutions, without sacrificing the real-world conditions necessary for proving value. They work with innovators to align, improve and verify their benefits to the NHS in both simulated and real-world environments.

The Digital and eHealth Testbed works with a network of GPs, clinicians and care providers throughout Cornwall. With access to doctors, nurses, allied healthcare and frontline staff, and to patients, the Testbed covers everything from prototyping to large-scale implementation encompassing clinical performance and health economics.



Validating a solution for the NHS relies on a number of key questions being answered:

Can it work? Is this product, service or process safe, can it be implemented in care pathways, what is the use case...

Does it work? Does the innovation improve patient outcomes, deliver results, solve a real issue, is it complementary to current methodologies...

Is it worth it? How does it save time, save money, improve efficiencies, what are the health economics...

To answer these questions the testbed service can help to ensure that care pathways are understood, tech works effectively, and clinicians want to engage with it – only then can it be shown that it'll make a difference.

KHCIC's testbed ensures new solutions address current and future challenges whilst providing connections with the people that matter most.



Smartline

Led by the University of Exeter, Smartline is a collaborative research project. The team partners with Coastline Housing, Cornwall Council, Volunteer Cornwall and the South West Academic Science Health Network to explore how innovators can introduce new digital products, processes or services to improve health and happiness throughout communities.

Since 2017, the project has been collecting data from regular surveys and digital sensors installed across around 300 participating households,

including care homes. It's a wide-ranging project, with research covering attitudes to technology and digital communication, volunteering and communities and the healthiness of our homes.

Smartline is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund with additional funding from Cornwall Council and match funding from all partners. All of this enables Smartline to work with businesses and innovators to make a difference on a local, national and even international scale.

Support available to businesses

1

Knowledge Exchange Reports – a detailed assessment document that helps organisations identify their support needs.

4

Up to £20k in follow-up grants, for further research or tech development.

2

Idea generation grants – a cash boost to help innovators get new ideas off the ground by funding initial expenses such as equipment.

5

A range of events, including two-day evaluation workshops that help businesses understand the real-world social impact of their solutions.

3

The In-Residence Scheme – fully funded three-month research projects that connect businesses with academics from the University of Exeter.

6

Access to the dataset – any organisation can apply for free access to Smartline's anonymised, open-source data from the project, including its seven participant archetypes.





SW AHSN

The South West Academic Health Science Network (SW AHSN) supports the development and adoption of healthtech across the South West.

The SW AHSN is one of 15 networks of its kind across England, all collaborating for the health and wellbeing of the country's citizens. Bringing together clinicians, businesses, researchers, local authorities and social enterprises, the network operates to spread innovation through projects such as the Institute for Social Prescribing, rapid cycle learning projects, and the Spread Academy training initiative.

The network's Innovation Exchange works as an 'innovation broker', helping innovators understand the needs of the UK's health and care system and supporting them to build partnerships to improve patient care.

Funded by the UK Office for Life Sciences, the SW AHSN's Innovation Exchange is part of an AHSN Network coordinated approach to identify, select and support the adoption of innovations that improve our economy and patients' lives. Nationally, AHSNs support the regional 'import and export' of healthcare innovation to increase its impact.



SW AHSN support

- Feedback from South West patient-led Quality Improvement Partner Panels.
- Advice on spread and adoption of innovations.
- Information on navigating the health and social care system.
- Guidance from the learning and evaluation team on understanding the benefits to the wider health and social care system.
- Connections to contacts and partners with relevant experience.





The success stories:

LIVI →

KLINIK →



LIVI

Video consultations

Part of the NHS Long Term Plan is to offer digital-first primary care to every patient by the end of 2024. In line with this, the GP Contract aims to make video consultations available to all patients by April 2021.

LIVI is a mobile app for phones and tablets that provides secure video calls between GPs and patients for referrals, prescriptions and medical advice. Originating in Sweden, the app was created in 2015 and was already widely used in Germany and France before its launch in the UK.

In 2019, LIVI partnered with Kernow Health CIC to join the EDHT. Through workshops with decision-makers from three Cornish Primary Care Networks – groups of practices working together – the LIVI team gained a rare opportunity to engage directly with a large group of stakeholders. As well as identifying the networks' core challenges and ways to adapt the solution to overcome them, LIVI was able to raise awareness of its solution and ensure it was easily adopted by practices in the region.

Now fully live in 11 regions across the UK, LIVI has facilitated almost two million appointments for patients, with strong potential for further growth.



KLINIK

Self-service primary care triage

Klinik was already present in 300 clinics in its home country of Finland when it made its first steps into international expansion in Cornwall.

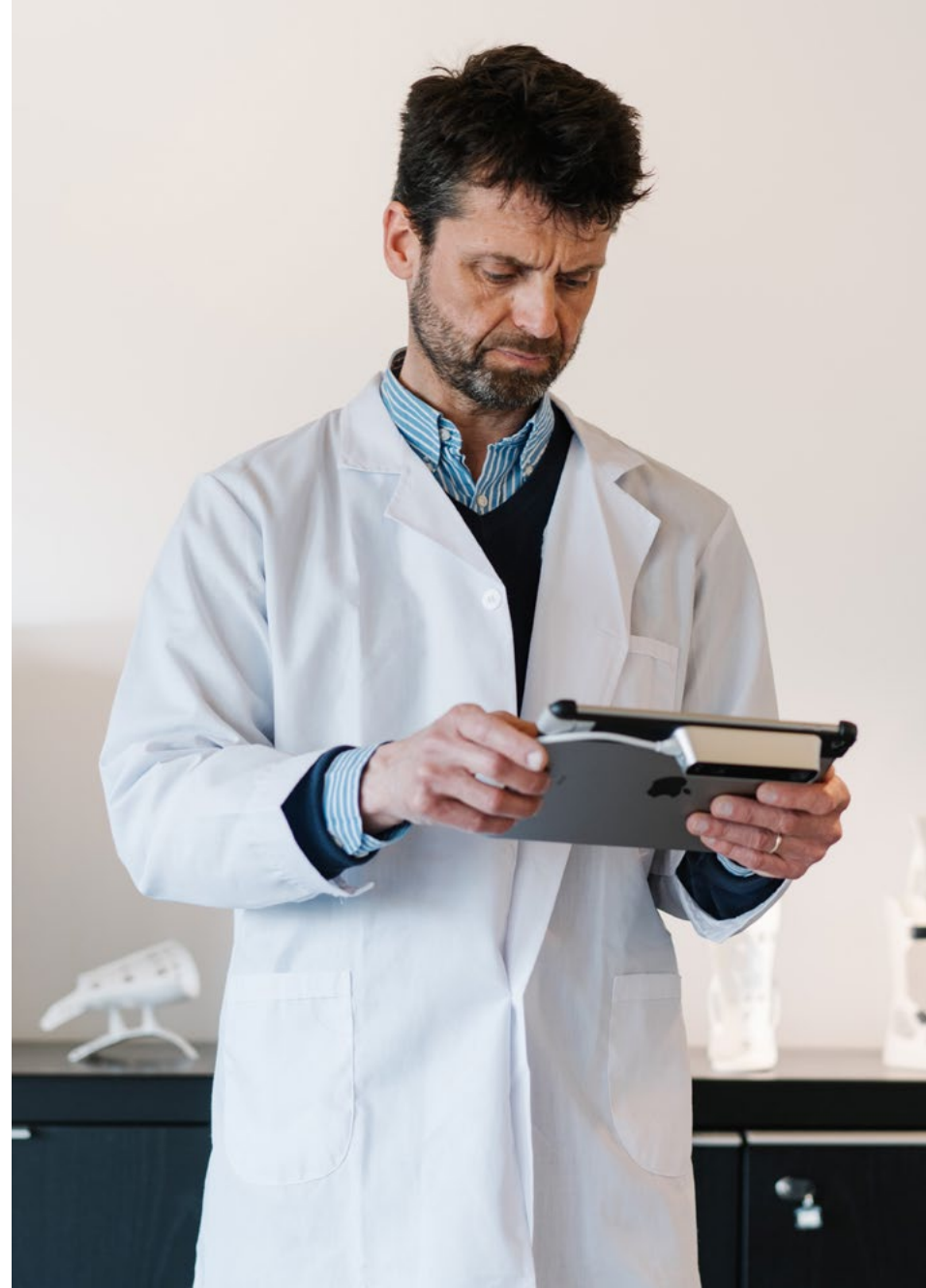
The company offers AI-powered solutions designed to make triage simpler and faster in GP surgeries. Patients can use self-service tools to identify their care needs, helping frontline practice staff allocate time with nurses and doctors more effectively.

After meeting the Cornwall Trade and Investment (CTI) team at Scandinavia's largest eHealth event, Klinik discussed the potential of selecting Cornwall as its route into the UK healthcare sector. With similar population demographics and a mix of rural and urban environments, Cornwall made the ideal staging ground for Klinik to validate its solution for the NHS.

With support from CTI and the University of Plymouth's CHT, Klinik joined the Kernow Health CIC EDHT, holding engagement workshops with GPs, practice managers, frontline staff, and patients from across the county.

Using readiness assessments from CHT and Kernow Health CIC, and feedback gathered from these workshops, the Klinik team made iterative changes to its solutions to make them more suitable for the Cornish environment. Once the new version was ready, Kernow Health CIC coordinated live testing in three GP surgeries, which gave Klinik the real-world insight it needed to localise its tools effectively.

KLINIK
HEALTHCARE
SOLUTIONS





Cornwall and the Nordics

The similarities between Cornwall and Nordic countries makes the county an ideal place to transition an innovative product or solution into the NHS ecosystem.

Both regions have extensive rural areas with small, more densely populated urban centres; they also share similar demographics, with ageing populations.

By choosing to expand into Cornwall first, Nordic companies can focus on getting their solution aligned with the requirements of the NHS, rather than worrying about a dramatic shift in the demographics they're targeting.





Work with Cornwall Trade and Investment

Cornwall is home to a diverse, thriving healthtech community that's driving the UK into the future of healthcare delivery. Cornwall Trade and Investment exists to showcase the growing community and support resources available in the region, and help healthtech innovators seize the incredible, unique opportunities that exist here.



“Through Cornwall Trade and Investment and Kernow Health CIC, we’ve been able to validate our product and prove its value for primary care. And we’ve established ongoing partnerships with these practices.”

Ben Wood

Director of Sales and Operations, Klinik

Our support

Local knowledge and advice

We know everything there is to know about business in Cornwall. Our experts can answer questions about everything from the local business environment, to what it's like to live and work here.

Support with first steps

Hit the ground running by making sure your first trip to the county includes all the right meetings and location visits.

Help finding the perfect location

We'll help you get set up in Cornwall by finding the perfect place to work – whether it's your main premises or a satellite office.

Introductions to the community

Start building your network in Cornwall with introductions to your like-minded peers in the healthcare and technology sectors.

Assistance with funding and growth

With our support, you can find and apply for the support and funding you need to make your mark on eHealth in the UK.

Recruitment guidance and support

If you need to expand your team, we'll help you tap into the ever-growing breadth of Cornish talent.





Whatever you need, we're here to help. Talk to our team today.

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