

# Innovation strategy for Wales

Q1. Which stakeholder group would you consider yourself to represent:

third sector

Q15. The new Innovation Strategy wants to achieve a healthier Wales through a more coherent and aligned innovation ecosystem that targets new and different ways of working, supports recovery strategies from the pandemic and enables greater adoption of innovation.

This will be underpinned by a health and social care system that collaborates across industry, academia and the third sector to deliver improved healthcare value by developing, sharing, procuring and adopting innovative practice and technology.

Do you believe the strategy will support this ambition? If not, what additional activities need to be included?

The breadth of the innovation strategy can make it difficult to equate with delivery in a complex and changing context. For example, the biggest single innovation to improve general practice would be to train, recruit and retain more GPs and their Multidisciplinary team colleagues. This would require an element of strategy but something rather different in scale to what is proposed here.

There would be a concern that such a high level strategy could risk the commoditisation of health care viewing patients as statistics which would neglect the value of the relationship based care model which has been demonstrated to provide excellent health outcomes and in the long-term a more sustainable primary care structure.

Technological advancement in the health sector is to be welcomed, yet it is impossible to ignore the fact that Wales in introducing measures such as e-prescribing and an NHS app years after they were launched in England. There will require considerable technological innovation to ensure in future Wales is the innovator rather than the late adopter.

While welcoming technological innovation in health, we would also call for as much data as possible to be published publicly. This open data approach will ensure that scope for future innovation is not limited to existing government bodies but can instead create an eco-system for pioneering health research.

The pandemic demonstrated the need to build resilience into the system, a particular example being prompt availability of PPE. It should be central to any robust strategy that resilience be a key consideration.

There is simply no getting away from the fact that the single most effective measure to improve the performance of general practice in Wales is for there to be more GPs, more multi-disciplinary working and a sustainable workload. We are well short of this ideal at present.