

Shaping the Future of the West Midlands Health Tech Cluster

Overview

The North Star Workshops, held between February and March 2026, brought together industry, academia, the NHS and government partners to define a shared direction for the West Midlands Health Tech Cluster (WMHTC).

This collaborative programme is helping to shape a clear vision, mission and set of strategic action lines to strengthen the region's health and life sciences ecosystem.

The aim is to build a more connected, coordinated and effective cluster - one that supports businesses to navigate the system, scale, and accelerate the translation of health technologies into real-world impact.

Why this work matters

The West Midlands has a strong and growing health and life sciences base, with world-class research, clinical capability and a diverse innovation ecosystem. However, businesses and innovators often face challenges navigating a complex system of support, infrastructure and partners.

This can limit the region's ability to fully convert innovation into:

- Clinical adoption
- Commercial scale-up
- Investment attraction
- Inclusive economic growth

The North Star process responds directly to this challenge by aligning partners around a shared purpose and clearer system-wide coordination.

What we heard from partners

Across three workshops, partners identified a clear need to:

- Improve navigation across the ecosystem for businesses and innovators
- Strengthen collaboration between industry, academia and the NHS
- Reduce duplication and improve coordination across support organisations
- Develop a clearer regional identity and proposition for health tech
- Ensure activity is focused, realistic and delivers tangible value

There was strong agreement that the region has significant capability, but needs greater clarity, alignment and connectivity to maximise impact.

North Star Vision

The West Midlands is a leading UK health and medtech cluster with growing international relevance, where clear pathways enable innovators and businesses to start, scale and stay - driving growth, investment and improved health outcomes.

North Star Mission

WMHTC convenes, coordinates and advocates across the ecosystem, enabling innovators and businesses to connect with the partners, expertise and support they need to navigate the system and translate health technologies into market adoption at scale.

Strategic priorities

The North Star Workshops identified four core strategic objectives for WMHTC:

1. Clear navigation for innovators and businesses

Improving visibility, access and understanding of the regional ecosystem.

2. Stronger collaboration across the system

Connecting industry, academia and the NHS to unlock shared opportunities.

3. A stronger regional voice and identity

Positioning the West Midlands as a leading UK health technology cluster with growing international relevance.

4. Supporting business growth and scaling

Helping companies access the expertise, infrastructure and networks needed to grow.

How WMHTC will operate

To ensure focus and avoid duplication, WMHTC will:

- Act as a neutral convenor across the ecosystem
- Focus on coordination, navigation and connection
- Build on existing regional strengths rather than duplicating activity
- Avoid becoming a funding body or service provider
- Stay focused, practical and outcome-driven

What success looks like

Success will be measured through:

- Improved navigation and reduced complexity for businesses
- Increased collaboration across organisations and sectors
- Stronger alignment of regional activity and assets
- Greater investment, adoption and scaling of innovation
- A clearer, more recognisable West Midlands health tech identity

Next steps

The North Star framework will be tested and refined over the next 12 months, with continued engagement across partners to ensure it reflects the needs of the full ecosystem.

This is a living strategy, designed to evolve as the Cluster strengthens its role as a connector, convener and catalyst for regional growth.

Upcoming Engagement Opportunities

BMet Learners Engagement Event - 18 June, 4:00–6:00pm | BMet College, Birmingham

This event will connect industry directly with learners and academic partners exploring careers in medtech, including the new HNC qualification.

We are looking to bring together a diverse group of organisations to:

- Engage with learners through informal networking
- Share insight into career pathways and roles within your organisation
- Support future activity (e.g. mentoring, workshops or ongoing engagement)

We are aiming to involve 15–20 organisations to ensure strong representation across the sector.

Workforce Strategy Roundtable - 23 June, 9:30am–1:00pm | PHTA/BHIC, Birmingham

This session will focus on the key workforce challenges facing the sector, including recruitment, retention, skills gaps and early careers pipelines.

Designed as a focused, discussion-led session, it will bring together perspectives from across the ecosystem to explore what is working, where the gaps remain, and where greater alignment between industry, the NHS and education could unlock more effective solutions.

This is an opportunity to contribute directly to shaping future activity and ensuring that support is aligned with real-world business and workforce needs.

Places are limited to ensure a focused and high-value discussion. Further details on the event can be found [here](#).

This is a key opportunity to contribute to a growing, region-wide effort to better connect industry with education and ensure the Midlands has the skills and talent needed to support future innovation and growth.

If you would like to discuss how to get involved or support needed from the Cluster, please contact Dr Ben Roberts, Cluster Manager at ben@medilinkmidlands.com or enquiries@wmhtc.co.uk.