# UK joins global health AI network to lead on safe innovation



The UK has become the first country to join the HealthAI Global Regulatory Network, cementing its leadership in the safe and effective use of artificial intelligence in healthcare. Through the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), the UK will collaborate with international counterparts to share early safety signals, monitor AI performance in real-world settings and help develop global regulatory standards. The network is a pioneering initiative that brings together health regulators to coordinate oversight of AI-powered medical tools. The MHRA’s involvement places the UK at the centre of global efforts to balance AI’s transformative potential with robust patient safeguards.

Domestically, the MHRA has already updated its guidance and launched reforms to medical device regulations to better reflect the rise of adaptive and generative AI systems. It is working closely with researchers, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the NHS to build an evidence base for AI performance in clinical environments.

To support innovation while maintaining safety, the MHRA has introduced the AI Airlock—a regulatory sandbox that allows developers to test AI-driven medical devices in partnership with regulators before wider NHS deployment. The initiative aims to speed up access to promising technologies that can reduce diagnostic delays and cut NHS waiting times. A recent £1 million funding boost has expanded the programme, with a second application round now in preparation.

The MHRA’s approach reflects the UK government’s wider pro-innovation stance, anchored in principles of safety, transparency, fairness and patient empowerment. Its strategic framework extends to 2030 and is focused on embedding AI into regulatory systems in a way that maximises healthcare benefits while managing risks.

By joining the HealthAI Global Regulatory Network and expanding programmes like the AI Airlock, the UK is not only accelerating domestic innovation but also shaping interoperable global standards. This forward-looking model is designed to build public trust in AI, ensuring the country remains a world leader in the responsible development of AI-powered healthcare.

With rigorous oversight and strong support for innovation, the UK offers a blueprint for how governments can embrace AI in medicine without compromising on safety or accountability.

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## Bibliography

1. <https://healthbusinessuk.net/news/25062025/mhra-joins-safe-ai-network> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-mhra-leads-safe-use-of-ai-in-healthcare-as-first-country-in-new-global-network> - The UK has become the first country to join the HealthAI Global Regulatory Network, aiming to ensure the safe and effective use of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) will collaborate with international regulators to share safety warnings, monitor AI tool performance, and develop global standards. This initiative supports faster diagnoses, reduces NHS waiting times, and promotes growth in the UK's health tech sector. The MHRA's AI Airlock programme allows companies to test new AI tools with regulators before wider NHS deployment.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mhras-ai-regulatory-strategy-ensures-patient-safety-and-industry-innovation-into-2030> - The MHRA has outlined its strategic approach to artificial intelligence (AI), aligning with the UK government's white paper 'A pro-innovation approach to AI regulation'. The strategy focuses on safety, transparency, fairness, accountability, and contestability. The MHRA is implementing regulatory reforms for AI-driven medical devices, considering risks while fostering transformative healthcare. The agency aims to integrate AI into its regulatory processes to enhance patient safety and industry innovation by 2030.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ai-breakthroughs-drive-expansion-of-airlock-testing-programme-to-support-ai-powered-healthcare-innovation> - The MHRA has expanded its AI Airlock programme with a £1 million boost, creating a regulatory 'sandbox' for testing AI-powered medical devices. The second round of applications opens from 23 June to 14 July 2025. The programme allows companies to work directly with regulators to safely test new AI tools and streamline their introduction to patients. This initiative supports the government's AI Opportunities Action Plan and aims to enhance the UK's position as a leading environment for medical technology innovators.
5. <https://www.nationalhealthexecutive.com/articles/mhra-leads-way-global-ai-network> - The UK has become the first country to join the HealthAI Global Regulatory Network, positioning the MHRA at the forefront of international efforts to deploy AI tools safely in healthcare. As a founding member, the MHRA will collaborate with global regulators to share safety warnings, monitor AI tool performance, and develop international standards. The MHRA's AI Airlock programme allows developers to test AI medical devices in partnership with regulators before wider NHS rollout, supporting faster diagnoses and reducing NHS waiting times.
6. <https://pmlive.com/pharma_news/mhra-becomes-founding-member-of-healthai-global-regulatory-network/> - The MHRA has become a founding member of the HealthAI Global Regulatory Network, the first country to join this initiative focused on the safe and effective use of AI in healthcare. The network aims to build trust in AI technology and accelerate innovation. The MHRA will collaborate with international regulators to share safety warnings, monitor AI tool performance, and develop global standards. The MHRA's AI Airlock programme allows companies to test new AI tools with regulators before wider NHS deployment.
7. <https://healthcarelifesciences.bakermckenzie.com/2024/05/10/mhra-launches-ai-airlock-to-address-challenges-for-regulating-medical-devices-that-use-artificial-intelligence/> - The MHRA has launched the AI Airlock project, a regulatory sandbox designed to tackle challenges associated with AI as a Medical Device (AIaMD). This initiative ensures the safe and efficient integration of AI technologies into healthcare. The AI Airlock allows companies to test new AI tools with regulators before wider NHS rollout, addressing regulatory challenges specific to AI-powered medical devices and developing solutions in collaboration with stakeholders across healthcare regulation, governance, and assurance organizations.