

Mental Health Platform (MHP) Industry Alliance Membership Policy

1. Purpose and Principles

The UKRI Mental Health Platform (MHP) brings together five research Hubs (Brain & Genomics; Complex Emotions, ImmunoMIND, Metabolic Psychiatry, Social Health), an Infrastructure Hub (DATAMIND), people with lived experience (PWLE) of severe mental illness (SMI) and a central Coordinating Centre to accelerate high-quality research and innovation to benefit people with SMI. Industry partnership is essential to achieving this mission.

The MHP Industry Alliance is a partnership between MHP, [DATAMIND](#) and [Medicines Discovery Catapult](#) (MDC). The [MHP Industry Alliance](#) provides a structured, transparent and ethically grounded mechanism for engaging commercial organisations whose work has potential to deliver public benefit in mental health.

This Industry Alliance Membership Policy sets out the expectations, responsibilities and governance standards that apply to all commercial partners engaging with the Platform. It draws on:

- MHP values of rigour, transparency, co-production and public benefit, integrating diverse PWLE perspectives across the research Hubs
- UKRI, NHS and Health Data Research UK (HDR UK) standards for data use, research integrity and responsible innovation
- [Best-practice guidelines and PWLE perspectives](#) from the DATAMIND Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) on commercial or industrial use of mental health data
- [The Medical Research Council \(MRC\) Industry Collaboration Framework \(ICF\)](#), where applicable, to ensure appropriate management of intellectual property, risk, benefit-sharing and public value in academic-industry collaborations

For consistency, this policy uses People With Lived Experience (PWLE) as the umbrella term for individuals with lived experience of severe mental illness. Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) refers to the processes by which PWLE are meaningfully involved in shaping research. The DATAMIND Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) and other lived experience panels (e.g. Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP)) are aligned in purpose and inform MHP governance and industry engagement.

This policy applies to all commercial entities engaging with MHP, including pharmaceutical, biotechnology, digital health, data science, AI/ML, medical device and analytics companies.

2. Aims of the MHP Industry Alliance

Through a range of activities, the Industry Alliance aims to:

1. Support responsible, public-benefit innovation in SMI through collaborative research aligned to unmet clinical, social and service needs.
2. Ensure public trust and transparency in how industry works with MHP and the NHS.
3. Provide clear, consistent governance standards for collaboration, data access and research conduct.
4. Promote PWLE in all stages of research design, governance and evaluation.
5. Enable knowledge exchange, co-development and horizon scanning between academics, clinicians, industry and people with lived experience.
6. Protect privacy by ensuring data is accessed only within approved governance routes and secure environments, in line with PWLE guidelines.

3. Membership Categories

3.1 Industry Alliance Member

For companies actively engaged in SMI research, development or evaluation related to SMI or mental health technologies, treatments or services.

3.2 Strategic Partner (Invitation Only)

For companies providing substantial strategic input, in-kind support or multi-year collaboration across multiple MHP Hubs. This may include (but is not limited to) R&D expertise, regulatory science insight, commercial translation pathways, infrastructure support, policy and implementation expertise, and the development or provision of data, digital, AI, or interoperability platforms that enable mental health research, care delivery, and system improvement. Strategic Partners may not undertake direct research activity with MHP but must demonstrate how their engagement delivers public benefit and advances MHP's mission, including through the generation, management, or analysis of real-world health, social care, or population data relevant to mental health (MH) and SMI.

3.3 Observer / Affiliate Member

For organisations exploring future collaboration or contributing to MHP networks without direct research activities.

Acceptance into membership does not constitute any endorsement of the industry partner by MHP, Hubs or associated organisations; does not guarantee access to resources or opportunities; and does not replace regulatory or legal instruments that govern, for example, relative responsibilities, financial contributions, data/materials/equipment access or intellectual property rights.

4. Industry Alliance Membership Criteria

To ensure responsible, transparent and credible engagement with the MHP, all applicants to the Industry Alliance must meet minimum eligibility criteria before being considered for membership.

Applicants must demonstrate that they are a legitimate commercial entity engaged in work relevant to mental health, data science, digital health, life sciences or related innovation.

4.1 Organisational Verification and Transparency

Applicants must provide verifiable evidence of legitimate business activity. This can include:

1. Official company details, including:
 - a. Registered company number (e.g., Companies House, or equivalent international registry)
 - b. Registered business address
2. Company email address associated with the registered business (e.g., not Gmail, Hotmail, ProtonMail or equivalent unless fully justified).
3. Public-facing company website, demonstrating relevance to mental health or health data.

Applications lacking evidence cannot proceed.

4.2 Relevance to MHP and Mental Health Research

Applicants must demonstrate:

- A clear alignment to mental health (e.g., severe mental illness, data science, digital health, life sciences, AI, pharmacology and/or an adjacent field.)
- Interest in actively collaborating with MHP Hubs or research themes.
- Commitment to responsible innovation, public benefit and ethical research practices.

4.3. Entry Process

Step 1: Formal Application Submission

Applicants must submit a short [application form](#) providing corporate, governance, and relevance information. Applicants must indicate their commitment to the [Health Research](#)

Authority Shared Commitment to Public Involvement, or equivalent principles of meaningful public involvement in research, as part of their application.

Step 2: Organisational Verification Check

The MHP Co-ordinating Team will verify:

- Company registration status
- Online presence
- Appropriate contact details

Applications failing at this stage are declined, with an explanation offered.

Step 3: Internal Assessment

For applicants passing verification, applications will be reviewed for their relevance to MHP purpose, goals and values.

The MHP Coordinating Team will aim to complete the application process within approximately 4–6 weeks of submission, depending on the complexity of the application and the need for additional information or consultation.

Assessment may include input from relevant expert members from MDC, relevant Hub members and additionally may include input from PWLE, to inform judgement of anticipated public benefit, potential risks, and acceptability of the proposed collaboration from a service-user perspective.

Step 4: Approval by MHP Director

Decisions recorded in a transparent log for internal use.

Step 5: Membership Confirmation

If approved, members receive:

- Welcome materials
- Expectations and conduct statement
- [Branding guidance](#)

4.4. Grounds for Refusal

Applications may be refused if:

- The organisation cannot be verified as a real or active commercial entity.
- There is no website, no professional email domain, or no publicly available corporate information.
- The organisation's aims or activities do not align with MHP priorities.
- Application review reveals reputational, ethical or governance risks.

These grounds are non-exhaustive but ensure consistency and transparency.

4.5. Comparison with HDR UK Alliance Criteria

Where appropriate, alignment with HDR UK Alliance expectations may be used as an external benchmark to ensure consistency with national health data research infrastructure standards.

5. Membership Benefits

Members of the MHP Industry Alliance may:

- Participate in Industry Alliance meetings, workshops and horizon-scanning events.
- Access expertise across the six Hubs, including methodology, data science, ethics, and clinical insight.
- Engage with PWLE through MHP-governed PPIE routes .
- Access guidance on data governance, secure data environments and appropriate use of routinely collected mental health data, aligned with LEAG recommendations.
- Explore opportunities for collaborative research, co-funding, or innovation pilots.
- Gain early visibility of emerging research priorities, calls and collaboration pathways.

Membership of the MHP Industry Alliance does not:

- Confer endorsement of any product, service or commercial claim;
- Provide privileged access to NHS, academic or administrative data;
- Guarantee collaboration, funding, procurement opportunities or publication;
- Replace formal contractual, governance, ethical or regulatory approvals required for specific projects.

6. Expectations of Industry Members

Industry members agree to uphold the following commitments:

6.1 Public Benefit

All collaborative activities must demonstrate clear, credible public benefit. Commercial objectives must never supersede patient/public welfare. Proposed activities must clearly demonstrate:

- Who benefits (patients, carers, services, communities)
- How benefit is realised in practice (not just theoretical future benefit)
- Why MHP involvement is necessary to achieve this benefit
- How potential harms, risks or misuse are mitigated

6.2 Transparency

Members must commit to transparent communication about:

- Research aims, methods and intended outputs
- Use of health data
- Potential risks and mitigation measures
- Conflicts of interest

Public-facing summaries must be provided for all collaborative projects.

6.3 Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)

All proposed collaborative activity with MHP must demonstrate meaningful PPIE, informed by LEAG guidance and aligned with UK standards for public involvement. PPIE must be integrated into study design, governance, delivery and evaluation, and proportionate to the risks and sensitivities of the proposed work.

6.4 Ethics, Safeguarding and Data Governance

Industry members must demonstrate robust ethical and safeguarding practices when working with people with SMI, including:

- Safeguarding policies and escalation routes
- Trauma-informed and inclusive engagement practices
- Appropriate training and support for staff engaging with vulnerable groups
- Mechanisms to identify and mitigate potential harms arising from research participation or downstream use of outputs

Additionally, Industry members must comply with:

- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- NHS information governance and local approval processes
- Compliance with the DATAMIND TRE governance and procedures, as applicable
- Where applicable, compliance with clinical safety standards must be demonstrated for digital health tools interacting with NHS systems.
- Statistical disclosure control requirements
- Prohibitions on exporting unconsented patient-level data outside NHS-controlled secure environments

Prohibitions on access to unconsented free-text mental health data, including clinician notes, therapy notes or narrative content.

These requirements reflect LEAG guidelines and are non-negotiable.

6.5 Responsible Innovation

Members must demonstrate a holistic commitment to responsible innovation, governance and ethical practice, including:

- Avoidance of harm or discriminatory practice
- Fair and equitable use of data
- Ongoing monitoring for bias in algorithms or decision-support tools
- Attention to potential adverse impacts on service users, carers and communities.

This section sets the overarching expectations for ethical governance and responsible innovation, of which data governance (Section 6.4) forms one component.

6.6 Industry Collaboration Framework

Where collaborative activities involve co-funded research, shared intellectual property, or joint development of technologies or methods with academic partners, members must comply with the MRC ICF. MHP reserves the right to require formal alignment with ICF templates or principles as a condition of collaboration approval.

6.7 Conflicts of Interest

Companies must declare:

- All commercial interests
- Any product-development intentions
- Relationships that may influence research design or interpretation.

6.8 Complaints

Concerns about member conduct, data use or PWLE engagement may be raised confidentially with the MHP Coordinating Centre using mhp@ed.ac.uk. Concerns will be reviewed through MHP governance routes and, where appropriate, escalated to the MHP Leadership Team, PPIE Steering Group and Oversight Board.

7. Conduct, Communication and Branding

Members may describe themselves as part of the MHP Industry Alliance, but:

- Must not imply endorsement of products
- Must not use MHP branding without approval
- Must communicate responsibly, accurately and in good faith
- Must not directly solicit, recruit, or approach PWLE. Engagement must be mediated through MHP governance processes and linked to approved MHP-associated activities.

8. Termination of Membership

Membership may be suspended or revoked if a member:

- Breaches data governance or confidentiality
- Misrepresents the partnership
- Fails to meet ethical or conduct standards
- Engages in activities contrary to public benefit
- Fails to uphold PWLE commitments

In cases of serious governance or data breaches, MHP reserves the right to suspend membership with immediate effect pending investigation. Decisions regarding termination will be documented and, where appropriate, reported to relevant governance bodies.

9. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually, incorporating:

- Updates to UK legislation and NHS data governance
- Emerging best practice (including LEAG recommendations)
- Learning from MHP–industry collaborations
- Evolving public expectations

Material revisions to this policy will be approved through MHP governance structures and may be communicated publicly to maintain transparency and trust.

Summary

This Industry Alliance Membership Policy establishes a robust, transparent and ethical framework for industry engagement with the Mental Health Platform. It integrates state-of-the-art lived-experience guidance, prioritises public trust and benefit, and sets clear expectations for responsible innovation in severe mental illness.