

[News story: Accurate prescriptions for people in custody: apply for funding](#)

The process for collecting prescriptions for people entering police custody is complicated.

The police need consent from the individual to access their information from healthcare providers. Consent is typically given when individuals enter prison, with medication verified electronically.

However, this frequently clashes with the time people are transported between court and prison – from 5pm to 7pm – when medical and pharmacy services are closed, delaying the prescribing process.

Working with Innovate UK, the [Department of Health in Northern Ireland](#) has up to £1.25 million for projects that can ensure medication continuity for people entering custody.

This is a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition with funding provided by the GovTech Catalyst, which helps the public sector identify innovate technologies to improve public services.

Improving medication pathways

The competition is looking for ways to improve the time it takes to identify and get necessary medication to people entering custody.

It aims to improve the wellbeing of the person in custody and reduce the number of incidents on prison arrivals. This could include:

- earlier means of obtaining consent for treatment
- improving real-time communication sharing between the criminal justice system and healthcare providers
- transferring information to healthcare services earlier, giving them more time to prepare

A 2-part competition

The competition will potentially run in 2 phases.

Phase 1 will award research and development (R&D) contracts to projects that can demonstrate the technical feasibility of an idea. Up to £250,000 including VAT is allocated to fund up to 5 projects.

Projects in phase 1 will get to work with potential end users at the following organisations:

Successful projects will be invited to apply in phase 2 to develop a prototype for field testing.

Up to £500,000 including VAT will be available for each contract. Phase 2 field tests will work with [Maghaberry Prison](#) and [Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison](#).

Competition information

- the competition opens on 4 February 2019 and the deadline for registration is at midday on 13 February 2018
- organisations of any size are eligible to apply
- up to £250,000 including VAT is available in phase 1
- projects must start on 17 June 2019 and can last up to 5 months
- a [briefing event will be held in Belfast on 11 February 2019](#) where organisations can find out more about the competition and applying