

How to Access NHS Patient Data to Train AI.

If Your AI Startup Depends On NHS Data, Read This First.



An Expert Guide by:
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(2 decades of experience working with NHS data.)

The Harsh Reality

AI needs data. No data, no AI.

But NHS patient data is difficult to access.

Even if you're:

- An **NHS doctor**
- A **well-funded startup**
- A **team with the latest AI tech**

Raising money won't get you NHS data.

Solving a real NHS problem will.

Why Is NHS Data So Hard to Access?

Remember, The NHS isn't a **tech incubator** — it exists to care for patients.

4 key barriers:



Privacy & Safety

Patient data is highly sensitive.



Risk Aversion

Data misuse can lead to scandals.



Competing Priorities

Staff are busy with urgent issues.



Decentralization

The NHS isn't one system; it's thousands.

Who Do You Talk To?

There's **no single process** for NHS data access.
But there are the right people to engage.

There are 3 key stakeholders:



Problem Owner

The NHS staff
struggling with the
issue.



Decision Makers

The execs who
approve projects.



IG Teams

The people who
manage
compliance.

Approach:

- 1 Work with the **problem owner** first.
- 2 Get them to champion your idea internally.
- 3 Let NHS **IG teams guide compliance.**

What Doesn't Work?

"We raised £X million, now give us data."

"We are a world class team, trust us."

"We need the data urgently."

This approach will get you **ignored**.

Instead, you need a **compelling reason** for NHS teams to say YES.

The 3 Keys to Getting NHS Data



Be Compelling

Solve a real NHS problem.



Be Easy to Work With

Reduce friction & risk.



Be Diligent

Build trust and keep it.

Miss any of these, and you won't get NHS data.

Let's break them down.





Be Compelling

Solve a real NHS problem.

Data owners won't give you data unless they see real value.

- Find a **problem owner**—the NHS staff most affected by the issue.
- Understand their pain points: **What keeps them up at night?**
- Show how your AI can **improve patient care, reduce costs, or save time.**



Bad Pitch:

"We need data
just to train our
AI model."



Good Pitch:

Nurses spend 2 hours
a day on manual admin.
Our AI automates this,
freeing up time for
patient care.



Be Easy to Work With

Reduce friction & risk.

Even if the NHS loves your idea, **they won't work with you if it's difficult.**

Minimum compliance requirements:

- **ICO registration** (Data Protection)
- **DSPT (Data Security Protection Toolkit)**
- **Cyber Essentials** (Basic cybersecurity standard)

Pro Tip: Work **inside NHS-hosted environments** instead of asking for external data transfers.

✗ Bad Pitch:

"We need full patient data access in our system."

✓ Good Pitch:

"Can we work inside your NHS-secure environment? We'll follow your data protocols."



Be Diligent

Build trust and keep it.

NHS data is a privilege, not a right.

Treat it with care.

- Follow IG (Information Governance) rules carefully
 - **always ask what they require, never assume.**
- Be **transparent** about how you'll use patient data.
- Build **long-term trust**—this is not a one-time transaction.



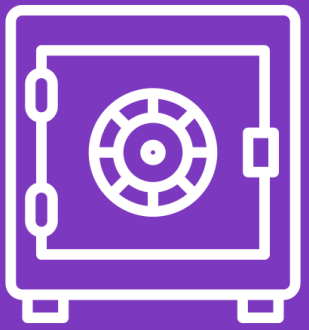
Bad Pitch:

"We just need
quick data access
to test an idea."



Good Pitch:

"We have clear data
security policies and
will follow NHS IG
guidance step by step."



What About Secure Data Environments (SDEs)?

- SDEs store NHS data for **research & innovation**.
- But they **don't always have the data** you need.
- Better for **academic research** than startups.

If an NHS partner uses an SDE, they'll help you access it.

But don't rely on SDEs alone —
Engage directly with NHS teams.

Practical Steps to Take Today.

Find a problem owner

Who in the NHS benefits most from your AI?

Ask them for data access support

If they care, they'll help.

Understand NHS IG requirements

Ask, don't assume.

Work inside NHS systems

Avoid external data requests early on.

Build trust

NHS data access is a long-term partnership.



AI in healthcare isn't a **technical problem**—it's a **human problem**.

NHS teams will help you **if your AI solves a real, urgent issue**.

If they don't care, **you're solving the wrong problem**.

Data access follows engagement—not the other way around.

Want to Go Deeper?

Watch the Full LinkedIn Live!

How To Access NHS Patient Data To Train AI.

A guide for HealthTech Innovators

📅 06/03/2025 | 🕒 1500–1600 (GMT)

LinkedIn LIVE!



Sunny Dosanjh



Dr. Derrick Khor

Available on my
LinkedIn events page.

Hope you all found this helpful!



This is part of a series to help
HealthTech founders access better
resources for their projects.

For more resources, visit:
<https://adoptadoc.com/resources/>