National Sector Support Group (NSSG)

Frequently Asked Questions

Why has TSA established the NSSG?

The National Sector Support Group has been established as a market shaping and development group. It will address a number of long standing challenges that affect the growth in investment technology enabled care (TEC) sector. These include improving the evidence base for TEC, supporting better commissioning, developing practical guidance and accelerating the adoption of good practice. The purpose of this investment is to increase confidence in technology enabled care amongst Government, commissioners and providers, leading to greater investment in the sector.

These are programmes of work that require sustained investment over several years and cannot be delivered through membership fees or one off sponsorship alone.

What is the role of the NSSG?

The role of the NSSG is not to promote individual companies. Its role is to build the evidence, guidance, relationships and sector infrastructure that no individual organisation can create on its own.

Why are suppliers investing in this programme?

The organisations funding the NSSG are investing because they believe the technology enabled care sector has a significant opportunity to grow over the coming decade. They recognise that this growth depends on increasing confidence amongst commissioners, providers and Government through stronger evidence, clearer guidance and more consistent national leadership.

While individual suppliers can invest in their own products, services and marketing, there are important activities that no single organisation can undertake on behalf of the sector.

These include:

- Developing independent evidence on the impact of TEC.
- Producing nationally recognised guidance and good practice.
- Collecting and interpreting sector wide data.
- Convening suppliers, commissioners, providers and policy makers.
- Working with Government and national organisations to improve policy and remove barriers to adoption.
- Building shared resources that benefit the sector as a whole.

These activities require an independent organisation capable of acting in the interests of the whole sector rather than any individual company.

The NSSG provides the investment needed for TSA to undertake that work.

Why doesn't the NSSG include representatives from every part of the sector?

The NSSG was created to help the sector respond to a significant opportunity presented by the Government's 10 Year Health Plan rather than to act as a representative forum for every part of the sector. TSA believes that the 10 Year Health Plan presents a significant opportunity for technology enabled care. Delivering that opportunity will require the sector to tell a much more compelling story about the value of TEC, supported by robust evidence, practical guidance and real world examples of successful implementation.

Developing that evidence and infrastructure requires investment beyond what can reasonably be funded through membership fees alone.

Suppliers have a strong commercial incentive to see greater investment in technology enabled care. They also recognise that many of the barriers to growth, such as limited evidence, inconsistent commissioning, fragmented guidance and a lack of national coordination, cannot be addressed as effectively by individual organisations acting alone. They require collective action through an independent trade association acting on behalf of the wider sector.

The role of the NSSG is therefore to provide the investment needed to deliver this programme of work. It is not intended to act as a representative forum for every part of the membership.

TSA's responsibility is to ensure that the outputs remain independent, evidence led and beneficial to the whole sector. Representation of the wider membership continues through TSA's existing governance arrangements, consultation and engagement activities.

How much is each funding partner investing?

Each funding partner has committed to invest **£30,000 per year for three years**, representing a total commitment of **£90,000 per organisation** over the life of the programme. With seven funding partners, this provides approximately **£630,000** of investment to support the delivery of the National Sector Support Group programme.

This funding enables TSA to undertake work that would not be possible through membership subscriptions alone, including the development of independent evidence, commissioning guidance, market intelligence and practical resources designed to benefit the whole technology enabled care sector.

The funding supports the delivery of the programme. It does not provide funding partners with control over TSA policy, standards or public positions. TSA remains responsible for the governance of the programme and for ensuring that its outputs are independent, evidence based and focused on the interests of the wider sector.

Has TSA used this funding model before?

Yes. The NSSG builds on an approach that TSA has successfully used on previous sector-wide programmes. For example:

- The analogue to digital transition programme was supported by VMO2. The guidance, tools and resources developed through that work were made available for the benefit of the wider sector rather than the sponsor alone.
- The TSA–ADASS Blueprint for Proactive and Preventative Care was jointly funded by four organisations. Despite being sponsor-funded, the Blueprint has been recognised across the sector as an independent and vendor-neutral piece of work that has informed strategy and service development in many organisations.

These programmes demonstrate an important principle. Sponsorship enables TSA to undertake work that would not otherwise be possible through membership income alone. The role of TSA is to ensure that the outputs remain independent, evidence based and focused on improving outcomes for the whole sector rather than creating advantage for individual organisations.

The NSSG follows the same principle.

Why were only a small number of companies invited to become funding partners?

The NSSG is funded by organisations willing and able to make a significant long term financial commitment to delivering the programme. When establishing the group, TSA approached a limited number of organisations prepared to make a significant multi-year commitment. The objective was to secure sufficient funding to launch the programme rather than create a representative body of the entire membership base.

This approach reflects the practical reality of funding substantial sector wide initiatives. It was not intended to suggest that larger organisations are more important than other members or that their views carry greater weight within TSA.

Does becoming a funding partner give companies greater influence over TSA?

No. Funding partners contribute financial support, practical experience and expertise to help shape and deliver the programme of work. However, they do not determine TSA output, policy, standards, public positions or membership policy. These remain the responsibility of TSA's governance and decision making processes.

TSA remains independent of any individual member or commercial organisation.

Funding Partners can...	Funding Partners cannot...
Suggest topics	Approve TSA policy
Share evidence	Veto publications
Review drafts for factual accuracy	Influence certification
Participate in workshops	Determine procurement guidance
Fund workstreams	Approve recommendations

How were funding partners selected?

A number of factors were considered, including:

- The ability to make a significant multi-year financial commitment and a history of investing in TSA led initiatives.
- A willingness to invest in projects that benefit the wider sector rather than individual commercial interests.
- A demonstrated commitment to supporting the development of the TEC sector.
- The ability to contribute expertise and practical experience to programme delivery.

The distinguishing characteristic of the funding partners is not that they were selected by TSA, but that they chose to make a substantial three-year commitment to the programme. The initial funding group comprises the organisations that agreed to make that commitment. TSA spoke with a wider group of organisations during the development of the programme. Not all chose to participate as funding partners in year one.

Why would suppliers fund something that benefits their competitors?

Funding partners recognise that many of the barriers to wider adoption, such as limited evidence, inconsistent commissioning and fragmented guidance, cannot be addressed as effectively by individual organisations acting alone. While all suppliers will benefit from a stronger market, those organisations have chosen to invest in creating infrastructure that benefits the whole sector.

It is also worth recognising that funding partners are investing in the development of the sector rather than purchasing a commercial service from TSA. They acknowledge that there is no guarantee that individual organisations will benefit commercially from every output. Their investment reflects a belief that a stronger evidence base, better commissioning and greater confidence in technology enabled care will create a healthier market that benefits the sector as a whole.

Can other members join the NSSG?

The initial funding group has now been established. As the programme develops, TSA will keep its governance and funding arrangements under review. There will be an open invitation to all members to join the programme at the same funding commitment levels of the existing sponsors in years 2 and 3 before the end of year one.

Regardless of funding arrangements, the outputs of the programme are intended to benefit the wider membership and sector.

How will the work benefit members who are not funding partners?

The purpose of the NSSG is to create resources and infrastructure that support the whole sector.

The year one of the programme will focus on four connected workstreams:

- Stronger messaging around the value of TEC
- A stronger evidence base to support investment decisions
- An updated Blueprint for Proactive & Preventative Services
- A new TEC commissioning guide

These are intended to raise investment levels in TEC across the sector rather than create commercial advantage for individual organisations.

Can organisations that are not funding partners contribute?

Yes. In fact, their contribution is essential to the programme. Many of the programme's outputs will require input from commissioners, service providers, housing organisations, NHS partners, academics, people with lived experience and suppliers who are not funding partners. TSA will actively seek wider participation where this will improve the quality and relevance of the work.

While suppliers are funding the programme, many of its outputs will only be credible if they are informed by commissioners, service providers, housing providers and people with lived experience

How does TSA ensure funding does not influence policy?

TSA recognises that confidence in its independence is essential. Funding supports delivery of the programme but does not determine TSA's policy positions or public guidance.

Where appropriate, governance arrangements, conflict of interest processes and Board oversight are used to ensure that decisions continue to be taken in the interests of the sector as a whole.

How are conflicts of interest managed?

TSA operates governance arrangements that require actual or potential conflicts of interest to be identified and managed through established Board procedures. Where conflicts arise, appropriate steps are taken to ensure that decisions remain objective and are made in the interests of the organisation and its members.

Funding partners may challenge evidence or recommendations, but they do not have the ability to prevent publication where TSA concludes the work is evidence-based and in the interests of the wider sector.

How can members influence the programme?

The NSSG is one part of TSA's wider engagement with members. Members continue to contribute through consultation, working groups such as SRIG, events, surveys, committees, direct engagement with TSA staff and feedback on publications and guidance.

TSA welcomes constructive challenge and will continue to seek input from members across the sector as the programme develops.

Who approves programme outputs?

All publications remain TSA publications. Funding partners may contribute evidence, practical experience and factual review, but editorial responsibility and final approval rests solely with TSA.

Where appropriate, TSA may also seek external peer review or input from commissioners, providers and subject matter experts to ensure outputs are balanced and evidence based.

How will TSA demonstrate that the programme is independent?

Ultimately, independence is demonstrated through the quality and openness of the work produced.

Programme outputs will be evidence based, developed transparently and intended to benefit the wider sector. Members will be able to judge the programme by its outputs, their quality and their usefulness rather than by the identity of the organisations that helped fund the work.

How will TSA report progress?

TSA will keep members updated and informed about the progress of the NSSG programme through a number of routes including:

- publication of the annual work programme
- regular progress updates at membership events and on the dedicated NSSG section on the TSA website
- published outputs such as Blueprint 2
- impact measures where available.

Who should members contact if they have questions or concerns?

TSA welcomes feedback from all members.

Questions regarding the NSSG or any aspect of the programme can be raised directly with the TSA team through the normal member communication channels. Concerns will be considered in line with TSA's governance and complaints procedures where appropriate.