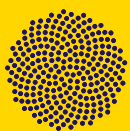


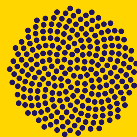
Ireland Where Digital Health Thrives



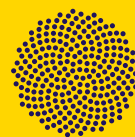
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Industry-led training for digital health leaders

Jennifer McCormack, Network Manager of the Connected Health Skillnet, talks about supporting innovation and encouraging collaboration between the medtech, pharma and technology sectors.



“Delivering cross-sectoral, enterprise-led training is essential for the digital health industry in Ireland to achieve its potential as we need a strong talent pipeline to stay ahead of the latest trends.” says Jennifer McCormack. She adds, “Not only do companies need access to niche training which the Connected Health Skillnet delivers, the networking opportunities we provide also help them identify new partners to drive innovation and business development.”

The Connected Health Skillnet is a multi-sector learning network, which was established to address the current and future skills needs in the field of digital health. The network is promoted by Ibec and operates in collaboration with the Irish Medtech Association, BioPharmaChem Ireland and Technology Ireland.

Capitalising on opportunities

“The Connected Health Skillnet is a very flexible, industry-driven model,” says Jennifer. “The convergence of medical technologies, pharmaceuticals and the technology sector is transforming healthcare by offering better patient outcomes, as well as creating new ways for patients to access and manage their health.”

When the Irish Medtech Association 2020 strategy, ‘The Global Medtech Hub’, put a focus on facilitating engagement between sectors to improve innovation and collaboration. “We saw an opportunity to support this ambition by addressing the skills needs where there was digital health convergence. With new technologies and business models evolving in digital health it was clear there was an unmet demand for new training programmes.”

Niche skills for major growth sector

The Connected Health Skillnet was launched in 2017 to sustain the talent pipeline and help the sector remain competitive. The Skillnet has already engaged with 175 companies from across the medtech, tech, pharma and digital health sectors to upskill over 700 trainees in critical areas to equip the ecosystem.

Jennifer notes that one of its most successful programmes is the Medical Technology Leadership Programme, which was developed to enhance the capabilities of the sector’s current and future leaders. “This course provides knowledge of all aspects of the medical device and diagnostics business required for strategic leadership. We’ve incorporated customised lessons for digital health leaders to help them better understand and make the most of opportunities.”

The Level 8 Medical Software Quality Assurance programme has also played a huge role in helping to upskill both medical device quality professionals and software engineering professionals to take up software quality roles. This programme focuses on critical areas such as, software testing, medical device software standards, and regulatory requirements for the industry.

Jennifer adds that another important area for training is data science, “Understanding data and identifying actionable insights is an essential element of developing digital health solutions. We need to ensure that we have a workforce that is equipped to interpret healthcare data to understand trends and to leverage that data to develop new solutions, new therapies or generate real-world evidence.”

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Building relationships to thrive

According to Jennifer, upskilling and reskilling with the Connected Health Skillnet can help to make Ireland a location where digital health thrives. The Connected Health Skillnet works with companies of all sizes and their programmes are part-funded by Skillnet Ireland through the National Training Fund from the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. Jennifer explains that, “This allows us to provide significant grant subsidies to companies on the cost of training. We can also work with companies to fulfil their development needs and identify suitable programmes to address skills shortages on a company level, or the sector as a whole.”

Jennifer highlights that one of the most important aspects of the Skillnet is that all of the training is developed with industry input and brings together the unique perspectives of all the key sectors. “We get valuable insight and strategic direction from our steering group which is made up of senior leaders from the medtech, tech, biopharma and digital health industries.”

By hosting events such as the Digital Health Masterclasses the Skillnet facilitates interaction and showcases innovation, which is important for developing a shared language and understanding of what digital health means to each sector.

A really unique aspect of, not only the Connected Health Skillnet and Ibec’s network of companies, but of the industry here in Ireland as a whole, is the willingness of professionals at all levels to come together to build relationships and share best practice with each other to help the wider community compete in the international arena. That willingness to collaborate is what makes Ireland a location where digital health will be able to thrive.”



📍 **Ibec Head Office**
84/86 Lower Baggot Street,
Dublin 2.
T: + 353 1 605 1500
E: membership@lbec.ie
www.lbec.ie/membership

📍 **Galway**
Ross House,
Victoria Place,
Galway.
T: + 353 91 561109
E: galway@lbec.ie
www.lbec.ie/west

📍 **Cork**
Knockrea House,
Douglas Road,
Cork.
T: + 353 21 4295511
E: cork@lbec.ie
www.lbec.ie/cork

📍 **Limerick**
Gardner House Bank Place,
Charlotte Quay,
Limerick.
T: + 353 61 410411
E: midwest@lbec.ie
www.lbec.ie/midwest

📍 **Donegal**
3rd Floor,
Pier One Quay Street,
Donegal Town, Donegal.
T: + 353 74 9722474
E: northwest@lbec.ie
www.lbec.ie/northwest

📍 **Waterford**
Waterford Business Park
Cork Road
Waterford
T: + 353 51 331260
E: southeast@lbec.ie
www.lbec.ie/southeast

📍 **Brussels**
Avenue de Cortenberg, 89,
Box 2,
B-1000 Brussels,
Belgium.
T: + 32 (0)2 512.33.33
E: europe@lbec.ie
www.lbec.ie/europe