Three winners of the Mayor’s big ideas challenge named to tackle health inequalities

Tuesday 10 March, 2026

- Three winners of the Mayor’s big ideas challenge have been announced, each securing a £100,000 grant to support the commercialisation of their solutions alongside a bespoke package of future support from Innovate UK.
- The challenge sought entries from West Yorkshire-based SMEs that could innovate to combat health inequalities among communities across the region.
- The challenge has been led by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and delivered by global challenge expert, Challenge Works.
- Support for each of the three winners also includes access to world-class research expertise, specialist facilities and a dedicated community of innovators to help these businesses navigate and scale their ideas for use.

10 March 2026 (Leeds, UK): Following seven months of development and testing, three local businesses have today been announced as the winners of the Mayor’s big ideas challenge.

The challenge was launched by Mayor Tracy Brabin in February 2025 to accelerate innovative solutions, products or services to overcome health inequalities among communities in West Yorkshire.

In July 2025, 19 finalists of the Mayor’s big ideas challenge were selected and awarded £20,000 each as well as a package of support to accelerate the development of their solutions. Today, the three winning teams have each been awarded £100,000 to support the commercialisation of their products:

- Asclepius MedTech Ltd developed Surgfit: a remote monitoring system to help hospitals deliver safer and more effective surgical care.
- Harmonai Hub created an AI-powered wellbeing platform for carers, offering personalised support and empowering mental health, resilience and connection.
- Mind Body Goals developed Luma³ Editions, that offers breathwork and mindfulness techniques, providing accessible, preventative mental wellbeing support.

West Yorkshire is a hotbed of innovation and is recognised for developing an open, inclusive, thriving ecosystem, where SMEs, budding entrepreneurs and individuals are inspired to innovate. For this reason, the challenge was aimed at SMEs across the region, empowering those closest to the issue to drive change.

Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire, said:

“Our region is home to endless talent, creativity and ambition, and today I’m thrilled to announce the three winners of our Big Ideas Challenge.

“Each team will now receive £100,000 to accelerate the development of their lifechanging technologies – boosting health and wellbeing throughout West Yorkshire, and creating good skilled jobs in our region.

“By investing in innovation and backing the entrepreneurs who are determined to make a difference, we’re building a stronger, brighter West Yorkshire that works for all.”

By innovating to overcome regional health inequalities, the Mayor’s big ideas challenge is actively supporting the UK Government’s 10 Year Health Plan*, which will see the NHS move from treatment to prevention to alleviate pressure on frontline services.

While all winners have developed different products, they share the common goal of combatting health inequalities across West Yorkshire.

Led by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the initiative has been delivered by global challenge expert, Challenge Works.

Kathy Nothstine, Director of Cities and Societies, Challenge Works, said:

“We received over 100 eligible entries, whittled these down to 19 incredible prospects, and today

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celebrate three winning solutions that have been designed with the community's best interests at heart. The diverse range of solutions highlights the incredible drive of regional SMEs to solve local challenges, and the extent of what is possible through innovation and ingenuity.

"They also illustrate the power of open innovation challenges. By levelling the playing field for innovators, through an open competition, seed funding and expert capacity building support, challenge prizes enable diverse approaches to a problem.

"These winning innovations have the power to change West Yorkshire's trajectory – and demonstrate the power of SMEs to deliver a more accessible and resilient health ecosystem."

With £21 spent per person on health innovation and research in the North, compared to a £62 average in the golden triangle of London, Oxford and Cambridge, health outcomes vary widely. Those living in the North of England are 20% more likely to die early; life expectancy in Yorkshire and the Humber stands at one year and ten months lower than the average in England; and 4.7% of working age people are economically inactive due to ill health – 0.6% above the average.

With the wider region trailing the UK's productivity levels by 16.8% due in part to poor health, tackling health inequalities through the Mayor's big ideas challenge is designed to have a ripple effect on the region, accelerating social and economic change, and supporting West Yorkshire to flourish.

The three winning solutions are those that demonstrated the most, and potential for, future impact. The other 16 solutions that reached finalist stage will continue to develop, thanks to the grant funding and package of support provided to the innovators in July 2025. These solutions ranged from an AI wellbeing companion designed by and for neurodivergent women, a digital training service for pharmacists to improve primary care, and a language platform to improve children's speaking skills.

To find out more about the three winning solutions, visit:
https://challengeworks.org/challenge-prizes/tackling-health-inequalities/

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Notes to Editors
For media enquiries, please contact Sophia Houston and Bella Weetch at
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To download an image of all 19 finalists at the winners' event, follow this link. Photo to be attributed to Challenge Works.

* https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future

Quotes from the winners

Michael Morgan-Curran, CEO, Asclepius MedTech, said: "The Mayor's big ideas challenge has been an invaluable catalyst for our work. It has deepened our understanding of the scale of health inequalities across West Yorkshire and allowed us to further develop Surgfit: a practical solution capable of addressing this challenge in a measurable way. This is not the end of the journey - it is the beginning of implementation at pace. Our long-term ambition is to improve surgical readiness and outcomes, reduce avoidable complications and hospital readmissions, and deliver meaningful cost savings for the NHS. We are committed to empowering every patient - regardless of background, ethnicity, or postcode – to achieve the best possible medical outcome."

Dani Deane, Founder & CEO, Harmonai Hub, said: "I became a carer at a young age. Like many others in that position, I never saw myself as someone who needed support; I was simply focused on caring for someone else. Over time, the responsibility took a significant toll on my mental health and made me realise how little accessible support exists for carers before they reach crisis point. Winning the Mayor's big ideas challenge is an incredibly meaningful moment for Harmonai, and the funding will allow us to accelerate our work. For too long, carers have faced some of the highest levels of stress and burnout, with very little support. We're changing that, so that those who spend their lives caring for others no longer have to suffer in silence."

Michael Crinnion, Founder, Mind Body Goals, said: "In my 20s, I navigated a very difficult period with my own mental health. Discovering the power of breathwork was a fundamental part of my journey back to wellbeing. My experience as a teacher and senior leader has also shown me the long-term impact that a lack of emotional self-regulation skills has on young people as they grow into adulthood – which is where the idea for Mind Body Goals came from. Standing here today as a winner of the challenge, I am

committed to using the funds to ensure that Luma³ becomes a tool that is accessible for all those in West Yorkshire, so that preventative mental health skills become a normalised and accepted part of everyday healthcare."

About the Mayor's big ideas challenge
The Mayor's big ideas challenge is a £1 million initiative designed to accelerate innovative solutions, products, or services that address health inequalities among communities in West Yorkshire. Launched by West Yorkshire Mayor, Tracy Brabin, as a key part of her plan for growth, the challenge aims to spur innovation and support the growth and success of small and medium-sized businesses. Through development grants of up to £100,000 for successful firms, this challenge will help bring new technologies to life, create skilled jobs, and put more money in people's pockets. This project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

About The West Yorkshire Combined Authority
The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) is a strategic authority that unites local councils and businesses across West Yorkshire. Our core mission is to build a strong, successful economy and deliver policies, programmes, and services that have a direct, positive impact on the people of our region. Deeply committed to fostering a healthier and happier West Yorkshire, the Mayor champions initiatives like the "big ideas challenge," to nurture groundbreaking ideas that directly contribute to making West Yorkshire a healthier and happier place for everyone. Complementing these broader strategies, local initiatives such as "Happy, Healthy at Home" in the Bradford District and Craven Health and Care Partnership provide targeted support to help residents stay active, connected, safe, and well within their own communities.

About Challenge Works: Challenge Works designs and runs challenge prizes to spark innovation in science, technology and society. We are part of Nesta, the research and innovation foundation. In the last decade, we have run over 100 challenge prizes awarding over £260m, on behalf of public, private and philanthropic funders around the world.

About the Mayor's big ideas challenge winners:

Asclepius MedTech Ltd

Leeds-based Asclepius MedTech has developed Surgfit to help hospitals deliver safer and more effective surgical care. Built by clinicians, Surgifit uses wearable biosensors to assess patients before their surgery, in the comfort of their own home, providing a more convenient and patient friendly alternative that reduces hospital visits.

Harmonai Hub

Harmonai is an AI-powered wellbeing platform for carers, offering personalised support, guided journaling and a safe, understanding peer community. Blending self-help tools with therapeutic techniques, it empowers mental health, resilience and connection anytime, anywhere.

Mind Body Goals Ltd

Luma³ Editions, created by Mind Body Goals, has been integrated into existing NHS patient pathways. It offers proven breathwork and mindfulness techniques, providing accessible, preventative mental wellbeing skills. This innovative solution democratises vital self-management for all socioeconomic groups, enhancing patient experience and proactive health outcomes across West Yorkshire.

About the Mayor's big ideas challenge 16 finalists:

Community access: These finalists are enabling care at home in communities, to make services faster and fairer for vulnerable people.

Lead organisation: Antidote Medical

Solution name: DPP Support

DPP support is a new digital platform offering the region's pharmacists training, mentorship and peer support. This empowers pharmacists to improve patient access, deliver safer prescribing, and directly tackle local health inequalities, strengthening primary care for everyone across West Yorkshire.

Lead organisation: Health Innovation Ventures LTD

Solution name: GP Pathways

Created by Health Innovation Ventures, GP Pathways is an intelligent care navigating platform that empowers GP reception teams to safely signpost patients to Pharmacy First, Self Care, a more appropriate clinician or community-based health and care teams – easing GP pressure and tackling health inequalities through faster, fairer and more appropriate access to care.

Specialist care: These finalists are delivering targeted support to vulnerable groups, such as older adults, those with chronic conditions or those with disabilities.

Lead organisation: Humant Group Limited

Solution name: Humant Revisit

Humant enables occupational therapists to conduct remote home assessments using 3D scans, images, and videos captured via smartphone. It supports clinical decision-making, reduces delays and improves patient safety by streamlining adaptive equipment planning, cutting costs and increasing capacity across NHS and social care services.

Lead organisation: JGME Consulting UK Ltd

Solution name: EquiCare™

Created by JGME Consulting UK, EqualCare Assess is an AI-powered platform that automates Care Act assessments. Automating this process provides faster and fairer access to adult social care. By reducing delays, overcoming language barriers, and promoting equity, it empowers vulnerable communities in West Yorkshire to receive timely support, improving health outcomes and inequalities.

Lead organisation: KayHector Consulting Ltd

Solution name: DiaHype Lifestyle Solutions

Created by KayHector Consulting, DiaHype Lifestyle Solutions is an AI-powered platform helping South Asian and African Caribbean communities in West Yorkshire to prevent and manage chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. The platform delivers culturally-tailored lifestyle education, self-care tools, and virtual support – boosting health literacy, reducing hospital visits, and promoting lasting, family-focused behavioural change.

Lead organisation: Third Age Therapeutics Limited

Solution name: ThirdAgeTx

Loneliness can deeply affect the lives of older people and is an often overlooked health issue. Third Age Therapeutics is tackling the epidemic of loneliness by empowering people to make meaningful changes in their lives through an evidence-based telehealth solution that prevents poor mental health and loneliness in aging populations – harnessing the power of local communities, in partnership with the region's best science.

Mental health, resilience and recovery: These finalists are providing immediate, lived-experience-led psychological support and building deep emotional resilience.

Lead organisation: Body Image Coach CIC

Solution name: Body Image Coaching Programme

Built to challenge unrealistic beauty standards and help teens reduce comparison and build a positive relationship with their bodies. Through guided coaching sessions, psycho-education, and peer support groups, Body Image Coach helps to develop self-acceptance, confidence, and body appreciation – tackling the root causes of body image struggle that impact mental and physical health.

Lead organisation: Carly Walter Coaching and Consultancy Ltd

Solution name: MAGI

Created by Carly Walter Coaching and Consultancy, MAGI is an AI-powered wellbeing companion designed by, and for, neurodivergent women or any women navigating burnout, overwhelm, or hormonal

shifts. From emotional regulation to daily decision support, it's accessible, non-judgmental and personalised.

Lead organisation: HEROES Programme Ltd

Solution name: HEROES Programme.

A mental health recovery programme that is redefining healthcare. Through lived-experience, leadership, digital innovation, unique educational approaches, and inclusive group support, HEROES embeds a new standard of compassionate, whole-person healing into mainstream systems. It is driving a shift in how mental health is understood and worked with, and is designed to reach those often excluded from care.

Lead organisation: Safe Space Labs

Solution name: Sensoria

Empowers neurodiverse individuals by giving them the tools to regulate their emotions, and express their needs. The product improves mental health outcomes and is co-designed with educators and clinicians and the app helps build social communication and executive functioning skills, enabling users to thrive across real-world settings.

Lead organisation: UKind Therapy CIC

Solution name: UKind XR

UKind Therapy CIC delivers trauma-informed virtual reality (VR) therapy, co-designed with survivors of domestic abuse. Combining immersive VR with AI-guided support, UKind XR empowers users to heal from trauma, build confidence, and reconnect with purpose. The solution increases access to safe, self-led mental health support across diverse communities.

Inclusion and education. These finalists are building key skills, scaling critical services, and creating a more inclusive health workforce.

Lead organisation: Confidence with SJ Ltd

Solution name: HerPathway™

An innovative app that supports professional women in West Yorkshire to strengthen their confidence, resilience and wellbeing during key life and career transitions. By addressing the root causes of burnout and progression barriers, it will shape healthier, more inclusive workplaces where women can thrive, lead, and drive lasting change.

Lead organisation: Featherstone Rovers Foundation with Spectrum People

Solution name: Creative Health Facilitator Training Pathway

The Creative Health Learning Pathway is an apprenticeship programme led by Featherstone Rovers Foundation with Spectrum People combining accredited training, mentorship, and hands-on experience to equip underserved individuals with skills to deliver arts and wellbeing activities, tackling health inequalities and building a new creative workforce across West Yorkshire.

Lead organisation: International Mixed Ability Sports (IMAS) with Nifty Sustainability

Solution name: Mixed Ability Experiential Training for Health and Care Students.

This innovation aims to harness the lived experience of disabled people and other groups that are disproportionately affected by health equalities to co-produce and co-deliver educational training and learning resources to health and social care practitioners. This will create long-term positive solutions that are needs-based, person-centred and led by those with lived experience.

Lead organisation: Key Engineering Solutions Limited

Solution name: Polly - A Platform Helping Every Child Be Heard

Polly, created by Key Engineering Solutions, is an AI-powered speech and language platform helping young children in disadvantaged communities develop core communication skills. Co-designed with

therapists, Polly delivers personalised, playful therapy sessions in schools and homes, making early intervention for those children who require support with their communication accessible, scalable, and effective.

Lead organisation: Kids Speech Labs

Solution name: SHARE

This solution supports NHS speech and language therapy teams to identify the needs of children accessing their service. By improving referral and screening processes, only children with genuine clinical needs are directed into therapy pathways – helping to ease the backlog for speech and language therapy services. The SHARE platform's Waiting-Well initiative boosts parental engagement through targeted home-based strategies for treatment response.

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