PRACTICE INNOVATION FUND - EXPRESSION OF INTEREST GUIDE

Turning great ideas into better outcomes for patients

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1. Introducing the Practice Innovation Fund

General practice teams often identify opportunities to improve patient care, but lack the time, funding or resources to develop and test new approaches.

The new Pegasus Practice Innovation Fund provides funding and practical support to help practices turn these ideas into action. It gives practices and practice-led partnerships the opportunity to test new approaches that improve access to care, make better use of clinical capacity and strengthen healthcare delivery to improve outcomes for patients and whānau.

Innovation does not necessarily mean creating something entirely new. It might involve adapting an existing model of care, introducing a more efficient way of working, making better use of technology, or developing new approaches to meeting the needs of particular patient populations.

Alongside financial support, practices can access Pegasus expertise in areas such as project design, quality improvement and evaluation. This allows practice teams to build on their clinical knowledge and experience, with support to develop promising ideas into practical, evidence-informed initiatives.

While projects may begin within an individual practice, an important aim of the Fund is to identify approaches that demonstrate measurable improvements and generate learning that can be shared across the network. Where appropriate, successful initiatives may be adapted or expanded to benefit more practices, patients and whānau throughout Waitaha Canterbury.

2. What funding and support are available?

The Practice Innovation Fund offers four funding streams, supporting projects from early idea development through to larger initiatives with the potential for network-wide impact.

Funding streams

Funding stream	Funding available	What it supports
Tier 1: Seed Funding	$3,000–$5,000	Helps practices with approved Expressions of Interest develop a full proposal. Funding could be used to engage a grant writer or external consultant.
Tier 2: Micro Innovation Grants	$5,000–$15,000	Supports rapid testing of ideas, small practice experiments and quality improvement initiatives.
Tier 3: Practice Transformation Grants	$25,000–$75,000	Supports more substantial service redesign, workforce innovation and new models of care with potential for wider adoption.
Network Innovation Grant	$100,000–$250,000	Supports large-scale innovation, multi-practice pilots and solutions with potential to benefit the wider network.

Across all funding streams, projects must demonstrate how the proposed innovation will improve healthcare or deliver meaningful benefits for patients, whānau or communities.

Projects may progress through the funding streams as ideas are developed, tested and evaluated. For example, an approach successfully tested within one practice could be developed into a larger initiative involving several practices. Progression to further funding is not guaranteed, and all funding decisions are at the absolute discretion of Pegasus Health.

Practical support from Pegasus

Funding is only one part of the support available. Pegasus can also work alongside practices to help develop and deliver their projects. This may include:

- **Developing proposals:** Refining ideas, defining objectives and identifying the resources needed.
- **Project design and improvement:** Supporting project planning, service redesign and quality improvement approaches.
- **Data and evaluation:** Helping identify appropriate measures, access relevant data and assess whether an initiative has achieved its intended outcomes.
- **Connecting expertise:** Bringing together practices, clinical expertise and other partners, as appropriate, to develop and share approaches.

The level of support will depend on the nature and scale of each project, with the aim of helping practices develop feasible, well-designed initiatives that maximise the potential for success and deliver measurable benefits for patients and whānau.

3. What kinds of projects are we looking for?

The Practice Innovation Fund supports projects that address challenges in general practice and have the potential to improve access, quality of care, equity and health outcomes for patients and whānau.

The Fund supports innovation across five categories, reflecting key areas where new approaches could improve patient care and strengthen general practice. Applications are welcome for projects aligning with one or more of these categories. The examples below are intended as a guide, not an exhaustive list.

Innovation category	Examples of potential projects
Access and Capacity	New approaches to appointment availability, team-based care, nurse-led services, virtual care, triage and demand management.
Equity and Population Health	Māori and Pacific health initiatives, community outreach, preventive care and culturally responsive approaches to improving access and outcomes for underserved populations.

Long-Term Conditions	New approaches to managing diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, frailty, multimorbidity and care coordination.
Digital Innovation	Digital patient engagement, appointment optimisation, workflow automation, clinical decision support and data-informed approaches to patient care.
Workforce Innovation	New clinical roles, multidisciplinary teams, shared workforce models and approaches to workforce development that improve patient care.

Projects may span more than one innovation category and can involve individual practices or partnerships with other practices, healthcare providers or community organisations. Across all five categories, projects must demonstrate how the proposed changes will improve healthcare delivery, access, patient experience, equity or health outcomes.

What makes a strong project?

Strong proposals identify a clear problem, outline a practical approach to addressing it and demonstrate the potential to deliver measurable improvements for patients and whānau.

Projects should also generate useful evidence or learning that could be shared with other practices. This doesn't necessarily mean an approach must be replicated exactly elsewhere. The lessons from a locally developed initiative may help other practices adapt their own services to better meet the needs of their patients and communities.

4. Who can apply, and what is eligible?

The Practice Innovation Fund is open to Pegasus general practices, individually or in partnership with other organisations.

Eligible applicants include:

- Individual Pegasus general practices.
- Groups of Pegasus practices working together.
- Practice-led partnerships with other healthcare providers, community organisations, technology suppliers or other partners.

All Pegasus practices are eligible to apply, including those with ownership or other connections to Pegasus directors, clinical leads or staff. Applicants must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. All applications will be assessed against the same published criteria, with conflicts managed through the Fund's independent governance process.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for funding, projects must meet all five core requirements:

1. **Deliver patient benefit:** Demonstrate a clear and direct link between the proposed innovation and improvements in healthcare, health outcomes,

patient experience, access to care, equity or quality and safety for patients and whānau.

2. **Align with programme priorities:** Address at least one of the five innovation categories outlined in Section 3.
3. **Be innovative:** Introduce a new or significantly improved approach within the Pegasus network.
4. **Be measurable:** Identify the expected outcomes and how success will be assessed and measured.
5. **Have potential for wider application:** Demonstrate how the approach, or the learning generated, could benefit other practices or communities.

What won't be funded?

The Fund is intended to support new initiatives that would not otherwise proceed without additional funding. It is not designed to cover routine practice operating costs or existing financial commitments.

Examples of activities that are not eligible include:

- Business-as-usual operating costs, routine staffing and deficit funding.
- Debt repayment, building maintenance and general capital expenditure.
- Routine IT equipment replacement or practice fit-outs.
- Projects that primarily benefit individual practitioners or commercial interests.
- Projects already completed.
- Projects without a clear and measurable benefit for patients, whānau or communities.
- Projects that create ongoing operating costs without a credible sustainability plan.

Full eligibility requirements and exclusions are provided in Appendix 2.

5. How does the application process work?

The Practice Innovation Fund has a two-stage application process, beginning with an Expression of Interest (EOI). This allows practices to put forward an idea without needing to develop a detailed project plan or funding proposal at the outset.

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

Practices submit a brief EOI outlining the problem they want to address, their proposed approach, expected benefits for patients and whānau, and indicative funding requirements.

Pegasus can provide guidance and practical support to help practices develop their EOI.

Applications will be assessed against the Fund's eligibility and assessment criteria. Practices will be notified of the outcome within one calendar month of the EOI closing date.

Successful applicants may be invited to develop a full proposal and may be eligible for **Seed Funding of $3,000–$5,000** to support this work.

Stage 2: Full application

Shortlisted practices will be invited to submit a more detailed proposal, including a project plan, budget, risk assessment, evaluation approach and sustainability plan.

Pegasus can provide guidance and practical support during this stage to help practices develop their proposals.

Full applications will be considered by the independent Practice Innovation Fund Governance Group, which is responsible for assessing proposals and making funding decisions within its approved authority.

Successful applicants will enter into a funding agreement setting out the project's objectives, funding, milestones and reporting requirements.

Key dates

Milestone	**Date**
Expressions of Interest open	11 November 2026
Expressions of Interest close	**28 February 2027**
EOI outcomes communicated	By 31 March 2027
Full applications open	1 April 2027
Full applications close	30 June 2027

Applications will be assessed as they are received. Applicants will be notified of the outcome within one month of Pegasus receiving their completed application.

Please note: An invitation to submit a full proposal, or approval of Seed Funding, does not guarantee project funding. All full applications will be assessed against the Fund's criteria and available funding at our absolute discretion.

6. Preparing and submitting your Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest (EOI) is an opportunity to outline your idea and the difference it could make for your patients and practice. You don't need a fully developed project plan at this stage, but your application should clearly explain the problem you're seeking to address and your proposed approach.

What to include in your EOI

Your application will need to cover:

- **The problem or opportunity:** What challenge are you trying to address, who is affected and why is it important?
- **Your proposed solution:** What would you like to introduce, test or improve, and how might it address the problem?
- **Expected benefits:** How will your proposed innovation improve healthcare or outcomes for patients and whānau? This might include improving access, equity, quality of care, patient experience or the capacity of your practice to deliver care.
- **Innovation category:** Which of the five innovation categories outlined in Section 3 does your idea address?
- **Indicative budget:** Approximately how much funding would be required and what would it be used for?
- **Measuring success:** What changes would you expect to see, and how might you assess whether your approach has worked?
- **Seed funding**: Are you applying for Seed Funding to help develop your full proposal? If so, how much are you requesting ($3,000–$5,000)?

What makes a strong EOI?

A strong EOI demonstrates a clear understanding of the problem, a considered approach to addressing it and a credible link to improved patient outcomes.

At this stage, the focus is on the potential of your idea, why it matters and what you hope to achieve. Detailed project planning, budgeting and evaluation will be required only if you're invited to develop a full proposal.

How to apply

Expressions of Interest must be submitted through the online application form.

Applications for the first round close on 28 February 2027.

A further funding round is planned for June 2027, providing another opportunity for practices to submit an Expression of Interest.

- **Online application:** [Insert application link]
- **Questions or support:** [Insert contact details]

If you're unsure whether your idea is suitable, or would like to discuss it before applying, contact the Pegasus team using the details above.

7. What happens if your idea is shortlisted?

If your Expression of Interest is successful, you'll be invited to develop a full proposal. This is an opportunity to build on your initial idea and demonstrate how it could be delivered, evaluated and potentially adopted more widely.

Developing your full proposal

Your full application will need to provide more detail about:

- **Project plan:** What you intend to deliver, how it will work and the key milestones.
- **Budget and resources:** The funding required, how it will be used and any additional resources or contributions.
- **Risk assessment:** Potential challenges and how these will be managed.
- **Evaluation:** How you'll measure the project's impact on patients, whānau and your practice.
- **Sustainability and wider application:** How the benefits could be maintained and whether the approach could be adapted or adopted by other practices.

Pegasus can provide guidance and access to relevant expertise to support the development of your proposal.

Seed Funding

Practices with approved EOIs may be eligible for **Seed Funding of $3,000–$5,000** to help develop their full applications.

This funding could be used to engage a grant writer or external consultant to assist with project planning, evaluation design or preparing the proposal.

Seed Funding is intended to reduce the time and resource pressures associated with developing a full application. It does not guarantee approval of subsequent project funding.

If your project is approved

Successful applicants will enter into a funding agreement with Pegasus, setting out the approved funding and payment milestones, project objectives, timeframes, deliverables and reporting requirements. The agreement may also include provisions relating to the ownership, use and sharing of intellectual property developed through the project.

During delivery, practices will be expected to monitor progress, evaluate outcomes and share relevant findings and learning with the wider Pegasus network.

Where a project demonstrates positive results, there may be opportunities to seek further funding to develop or expand the approach.

8. Ready to get started?

If your practice has an idea for improving patient care, increasing capacity or developing a new approach to delivering services, we encourage you to submit an Expression of Interest.

You don't need to have a fully developed proposal. The EOI is an opportunity to outline your idea, the problem it addresses and the benefits you hope to achieve.

Pegasus can provide guidance to help you explore its potential and understand the next steps.

Submit your Expression of Interest

Applications close on 28 February 2027.

- **Apply online:** Practice Innovation Fund – Expression of Interest
- **Questions or support:** Email innovation@pegasus.health.nz

If you'd like to discuss your idea or check whether it meets the Fund's eligibility criteria before applying, please contact us using the details above.

Appendix 1: Examples of Eligible Projects

The following examples illustrate the types of initiatives that could be supported within each of the five innovation categories. They are intended as a guide rather than an exhaustive list, and projects may align with more than one category.

1. Access and Capacity

Projects that improve timely access to care, make better use of clinical capacity or help practices respond to increasing patient demand.

Examples include:

- Same-day appointment and access models.
- Team-based approaches to patient care.
- Nurse-led services and clinics.
- Virtual care and remote consultation models.
- Advanced triage and demand management approaches.

2. Equity and Population Health

Projects that address barriers to care, reduce inequities and improve health outcomes for Māori and other priority populations.

Examples include:

- Māori and Pacific health initiatives.
- Outreach services for underserved populations.
- New approaches to preventive care and early intervention.
- Culturally responsive models of care.
- Initiatives that improve access for patients experiencing geographic, financial or other barriers.
- Community-led health education and initiatives developed with patients and whānau.

3. Long-Term Conditions

Projects that improve the prevention, management and coordination of care for people living with long-term or complex health conditions.

Examples include:

- New approaches to diabetes management.
- Cardiovascular disease prevention and management.
- Respiratory care initiatives.
- Frailty and healthy ageing programmes.
- Improved care coordination for patients with multiple long-term conditions.

- Patient and whānau education and supported self-management

4. Digital Innovation

Projects that use technology or data to improve patient care, clinical workflows or the delivery of services.

Examples include:

- Digital tools to improve patient engagement.
- Appointment scheduling and optimisation.
- Workflow automation that releases clinical capacity.
- Clinical decision-support tools.
- Data-informed approaches to identifying and responding to patient needs.

5. Workforce Innovation

Projects that explore new workforce approaches to strengthen practice capacity, improve service delivery and support better patient outcomes.

Examples include:

- Introducing or testing new clinical roles.
- Multidisciplinary models of care.
- Shared workforce arrangements between practices.
- New approaches to workforce training and capability development.
- Innovative ways to make better use of existing clinical skills and expertise.

Considering your own idea

Projects do not need to be entirely new or fit neatly within a single innovation category. An initiative might combine changes to workforce roles, digital tools and service delivery to improve access to care or address the needs of a particular patient population.

What matters is that the proposed approach has a clear purpose, the potential to deliver measurable benefits for patients and whānau, and the opportunity to generate learning that could be useful to other practices.

Appendix 2: Detailed Eligibility Criteria

The Practice Innovation Fund supports initiatives that improve patient and whānau outcomes, strengthen general practice and generate learning that may benefit the wider Pegasus network.

All applications must meet the Fund's eligibility requirements.

1. Eligible applicants

Applications are welcome from:

- Individual Pegasus general practices.
- Groups of Pegasus practices working collaboratively.
- Practice-led partnerships involving other healthcare providers, community organisations, technology suppliers or other partners.

Partnership applications must identify a lead practice or organisation responsible for the project and its delivery.

Conflicts of interest

All Pegasus practices are eligible to apply for funding, including those with ownership or other connections to Pegasus directors, clinical leads, staff or their close associates.

Applicants must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest as part of their application. All applications will be assessed against the same published criteria, without preferential treatment.

The independent Practice Innovation Fund Governance Group is responsible for funding decisions. Members with a conflict of interest in relation to an application will not participate in its assessment or funding decision.

During the assessment period, applicants must direct all communication about their application through the Practice Innovation Fund Advisor rather than contacting Governance Group members directly.

2. Project eligibility requirements

To be eligible, projects must meet all five criteria below.

Deliver patient benefit

All projects must demonstrate a clear and direct link to improving healthcare or health outcomes for patients, whānau or communities, including one or more of the following:

- Health outcomes for patients and whānau.
- Patient experience.
- Access to care.
- Equity of outcomes.
- Quality and safety of care.

Projects focused on practice efficiency, workforce development, capacity or sustainability must demonstrate how these improvements will translate into benefits for patients and whānau.

Align with programme priorities

Projects must address at least one of the five innovation categories:

- Access and Capacity.
- Equity and Population Health.
- Long-Term Conditions.
- Digital Innovation.
- Workforce Innovation.

Be innovative

Projects must introduce a new or significantly improved approach within the Pegasus context.

Innovation may include new models of care, workforce approaches, service delivery methods, partnerships, uses of technology or ways of reaching underserved populations.

An approach does not need to be entirely new to New Zealand to be eligible.

Be measurable

Projects must identify:

- The outcomes they expect to achieve.
- How success will be measured.
- What information or data will be needed.
- How the project's effectiveness will be evaluated.

The level of detail required will depend on the stage of application, with more comprehensive evaluation planning expected at the full proposal stage.

Demonstrate potential for wider application

Projects should demonstrate how the proposed approach, or the learning it generates, could benefit other practices or communities.

Applicants should consider:

- Whether the approach could be adopted or adapted by other practices.
- What would be required to implement it elsewhere.
- What resources might be needed to support wider adoption.

Projects with broader potential benefit will be prioritised, although approaches developed for particular populations or communities do not need to be replicated unchanged to provide valuable learning.

3. What the Fund will not support

The Fund is intended to support initiatives that would not otherwise proceed without additional funding and that provide a clear benefit for patients, whānau or the wider practice network.

Funding will not be provided for:

- Business-as-usual operating costs or routine staffing.
- Existing operating deficits or debt repayment.
- Building maintenance or general practice fit-outs.
- General capital expenditure or routine IT equipment replacement.
- Projects that primarily benefit individual practitioners without a clear patient benefit.
- Commercial activities without a demonstrable patient benefit.
- Administrative efficiency projects without a clear link to improved patient outcomes.
- Projects that have already been completed.
- Projects without a clear and measurable benefit for patients, whānau or communities.
- Projects that create ongoing operating costs without a credible sustainability plan.

4. Funding conditions

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Pegasus.

Depending on the nature and scale of the project, conditions may include:

- Using funding for the approved project and agreed purposes.
- Meeting agreed milestones and reporting requirements.
- Monitoring expenditure, progress and project risks.
- Participating in evaluation activities.
- Sharing relevant findings, outcomes and learning across the Pegasus network.
- Obtaining approval for material changes to the project's scope or budget.
- Rights to use or share intellectual property developed through the funded project, including shared ownership where appropriate.

Funding is provided for an agreed period and does not create an automatic entitlement to ongoing financial support.

5. Application requirements

At the Expression of Interest stage, applicants must provide enough information to demonstrate that their idea meets the Fund's core eligibility requirements.

Practices invited to submit a full proposal will be required to provide more detailed information about project delivery, budgets, risks, evaluation and sustainability.

Pegasus can provide guidance to help shortlisted applicants develop their proposals.

Appendix 3: Assessment Criteria

Applications to the Practice Innovation Fund will be assessed against six criteria. These consider the potential benefits for patients and whānau, the feasibility of the proposed approach and its potential to generate learning that can benefit other practices.

Criteria	What will be assessed	Weight
Patient & Population Impact	Will the initiative improve health, access, experience or outcomes for patients and whānau?	**30%**
Equity Impact	Will the initiative contribute to reducing inequities, particularly for Māori and other priority populations?	**20%**
Strategic Alignment	Does the proposal align with one or more of the five innovation categories?	**20%**
Scalability & Transferability	Could the initiative be adopted by other practices?	**10%**
Feasibility & Capability	Can the project be successfully delivered?	**10%**
Evaluation Approach	Is there a credible plan to measure outcomes and learn from the pilot?	**10%**
Total		**100%**

Assessment will be undertaken by the independent Practice Innovation Fund Governance Group, with funding decisions subject to the Fund's eligibility requirements and available funding.

At the Expression of Interest stage, practices should provide sufficient information to demonstrate the potential of their idea. More detailed project planning and evaluation requirements will apply to applicants invited to submit a full proposal.

Appendix 4: Evaluation Guidance

Evaluation is an important part of the Practice Innovation Fund. It helps practices understand whether an initiative has achieved its intended outcomes, what has worked well and what could be improved.

A clear evaluation approach also helps identify innovations that could be adapted or adopted by other practices across the Pegasus network.

At the Expression of Interest stage, practices are not expected to develop a detailed evaluation framework. However, this will form part of your full proposal, so it is useful to consider what success would look like and how it might be measured.

1. What are you trying to achieve?

Start by clearly defining the problem your project will address and the improvements you hope to achieve.

Consider:

- What is the current problem or gap in care?
- Who is affected?
- What would you like to improve?
- What difference would this make for patients and whānau?

Where possible, identify a specific and achievable goal.

2. How will your proposed approach address the problem?

Consider why your proposed solution is likely to be effective and whether there is existing evidence or experience to support it.

This might involve:

- Reviewing evidence from similar initiatives.
- Drawing on clinical experience and existing practice data.
- Seeking input from patients, whānau and other stakeholders.
- Testing a new approach through a small pilot before wider implementation.

3. What will success look like?

Identify the changes you would expect to see if your project is successful.

Depending on the initiative, these might include:

- Improved appointment availability or reduced waiting times.
- Better clinical outcomes or management of long-term conditions.
- Increased access to care for underserved populations.
- Improved patient and whānau experience.

- More effective use of clinical time and practice capacity.
- Improved coordination or continuity of care.

Where possible, establish a baseline so that outcomes can be compared with the situation before the project began.

4. How will you measure the results?

Consider what information will demonstrate whether your project has achieved its objectives.

Evaluation may use:

- **Quantitative measures:** Numerical information such as appointment availability, service utilisation, clinical indicators or patient participation rates.
- **Qualitative measures:** Feedback from patients, whānau and practice teams about their experiences and the impact of the initiative.

Existing practice or Pegasus data may provide useful information, reducing the need for additional data collection.

Measures should be relevant to the project's objectives and proportionate to its size and complexity.

5. What can be learned from the project?

Evaluation is not simply about demonstrating success. It should also identify what worked, what didn't and why.

Consider:

- Did the initiative achieve its intended outcomes?
- Were there unexpected benefits or challenges?
- Did the approach work equally well for different patient groups?
- What changes would improve the initiative?
- Could the approach, or elements of it, be useful to other practices?

These findings can inform decisions about whether an initiative should continue, be adapted or expanded.

Evaluation support from Pegasus

Practices invited to submit a full proposal can access guidance from Pegasus to help develop an evaluation approach appropriate to their project.

This may include support with identifying measures, establishing baseline information, accessing relevant data and interpreting results.