# NHSE funding to support the development of Care Pathway Navigators in Cancer & Diagnostic 2024/25

## Information for South East Cancer Alliances and Community Diagnostic Centres on how to access this funding, including the application process.

For any queries about this funding or details within this document, please contact the **NHS England South East Cancer and Diagnostic Programme,** part of the **Workforce, Training & Education directorate**, [england.canceranddiagnostics.se@nhs.net](mailto:england.canceranddiagnostics.se@nhs.net)

**Key Messages**

## 2024/25 funding for the NHS England South East Cancer & Diagnostics (C&D) Programme, part of the Workforce, Training & Education Directorate (WT&E) has not yet been confirmed.

## We are hopeful that the 2024/25 C&D Programme budget will include funding to support the *development of Pathway Navigators working in NHS Trusts & Community Diagnostic Centres,* and we are therefore progressing with the application stage; applications will be reviewed and provisionally approved, subject to funding confirmation from the National Cancer & Diagnostics Programme.

This document details the 2024/25 offer for the development and upskilling of Care Pathway Navigators via an **NHSE** **training grant**. Care Pathway Navigators may be identified under a range of other job titles including Cancer Support Worker, Cancer Care Coordinator, Cancer Navigator, Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Coordinator; this funding grant is open to all of the above roles.

The selected development and upskilling must be chosen on the basis that it will support progression of the Care Pathway Navigator against a competency framework and must be relevant to the development journey and role of the Care Pathway Navigator.

The funding is being offered:

* To all NHS Trusts within SE Cancer Alliance geographies. This includes Trusts within Dorset ICS [Wessex CA] and Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust [Thames Valley CA].
* To all South East Community Diagnostic Centres [CDCs].

**Deadline for funding applications**

* **The application window will open early March 2024 and will close at 9am on Tuesday 2 April 2024** to support funding being transferred in June 2024 via the NHSE Education Contract schedule, if possible. It is possible that a second application round will run later in the year, subject to available funding but at this stage we aren’t able to confirm this.

Funding is required to be spent and fully utilised by 31 March 2025, and chosen courses and formal education must start **before** 31 March 2025.

For any queries please email [england.canceranddiagnostics.se@nhs.net](mailto:england.canceranddiagnostics.se@nhs.net)

**Overview**

Effective navigation is important to providing coordinated person-centred care and support. Care navigators can occupy many roles and play a crucial part in helping people get the right support, at the right time, to help manage a wide range of needs. This may include support with long term conditions, help with finances and signposting to a range of statutory and voluntary sector services[[1]](#footnote-2).

The selected development and upskilling must be chosen on the basis that it will support progression of the Care Pathway Navigator against a competency framework and must be relevant to the development journey and role of the Care Pathway Navigator [we do not expect this funding to result in progression in terms of pay band or salary point]. There are two competency frameworks we suggest you review when considering upskilling /development courses:

1. The ACCEND Framework

The ACCEND programme[[2]](#footnote-3). is a cancer career and education development programme that supports individuals towards increasing their knowledge, skills and capability.The programme and *Framework*[[3]](#footnote-4) provides guidance on the knowledge, skills and capabilities required by all cancer support workerswho care for people living with cancer in generalist and specialist cancer services and roles as part of multi-professional teams. The framework identifies levels of practice and capabilities for each one.

Capabilities for supportive and assistive levels are relevant to those who provide care to people affected by cancer in generalist and specialist services. These capabilities focus on the foundations of cancer care knowledge, skills and behaviours recommended for supportive and assistive levels of practice aligned to higher education/qualification levels. A [User implementation guide for supportive and assistive levels including self-assessment](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Supportive-Assistive%20ACCEND%20Framework%20User%20Implementation%20Guide.pdf) tool has been developed and can be accessed using the link, and details of each of the competency domains can be found in Appendix A.

1. The HEE Care Navigation Competency Framework

The [HEE Care Navigation Competency Framework](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Care%20Navigation%20Competency%20Framework_Final.pdf) contains details of the nine identified competency domains for Care Navigators; within each domain, there are three recognised levels of practice that an individual may be at: essential; enhanced; expert. A summary of these can be found in Appendix B.

The selected development and upskilling may align to any of the competencies set out in the [ACCEND](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/cancer-diagnostics/aspirant-cancer-career-education-development-programme/accend-framework) framework or the [HEE Care Navigation Competency Framework](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Care%20Navigation%20Competency%20Framework_Final.pdf), or may be ringfenced to just one.

**The funding offer**

The funding being made available is **training grants of up to £10,404 per individual**. These can be used to cover:

* course fees (only applicable if the upskilling is **not** an Apprenticeship Programme, as in this instance, course fees are covered by the levy).
* travel, subsistence and associated training costs.
* training grant to support the individual’s development which could for example include provision for salary support and supervision/mentorship.

Please note that if selecting to use this for an Apprenticeship Programme this should be the *Level 3 Business Administrator Apprenticeship, bespoke to Pathway Navigation*, which is provided by PMA[[4]](#footnote-5), education provider recognized by the Institute of Apprenticeships.

The grants can be used by Cancer Alliances and Community Diagnostic Centres to:

* Fund an individual training grant; whereby an individual meeting the criteria applies to undertake learning and development courses or study;

and/or

* Fund training for a group of professionals; whereby the CA/CDC commissions bespoke

training for a group of individuals to meet an identified need/priority.

Grants can be provided for courses that run for longer than one year, up to the funding limit of £10,400 per person, but the funding is for 2024/25 only, and must be fully spent by 31 March 2025. The only exception to this funding model is when an apprenticeship programme has been selected as the development course. In this instance, the training grant will be paid on a pro-rata basis, with £6104 being paid in 2024/25 and the remaining £4300 being paid in 2025/26.

**How to access this funding**

1. Cancer Alliances are responsible for submitting applications for this funding on behalf of their partner NHS Trusts. Please use the online application form which was shared in the covering email. Please note that applications from individual Trusts and/or learners will not be considered. Please submit only one return for your Cancer Alliance.
2. Community Diagnostic Centres are responsible for submitting applications for their staff. Please use the online application form which was shared in the covering email. Please submit only one return for your CDC.

The application window will close at **9am on Tuesday 2 April 2024.**

All applications will be reviewed by the NHSE SE Cancer and Diagnostics Programme team [WT&E]. It is possible that a second application round will run later in the year, subject to available funding but at this stage we aren’t able to confirm this.

Payments will be made via the NHSE Education Contract schedule to the employing organisation and will not be made until learner name and further details relating to their programme is provided.

**Expectations of organisations upon application of funding**

* If approved, all investment will be subject to reporting requirements (outlined below).
* If approved, that all funding is managed appropriately in line with individual organisation’s financial management and assurance processes.

**Reporting and monitoring investment**

NHSE SE are required to provide full details of the use of this funding to the national NHSE Cancer and Diagnostics programme so that investment can be appropriately reported. Where funding has been used to support an individual, the national Programme team may keep a database of participant details (to include role, Trust, HEI/training provider).

Organisations receiving this funding will be required to provide twice-yearly updates [Sept 2024 and Feb/March 2025] relating to the status of each individual learner. Templates and guidance will be provided closer to the time.

**Key Documents**

**NHS Long Term Workforce Plan**

The long-awaited [NHS England Long Term Workforce Plan](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/nhs-long-term-workforce-plan-v1.2.pdf) was published in 2023, outlining the case for change for all NHS workforce to deliver more patient care than ever before. This plan focuses on three priority areas of Train, Retain and Reform, which aims to make sustainable progress on core priorities for patients.

**Who to contact if you have any queries on this offer?**

The NHSE SE Cancer and Diagnostics Programme - [england.canceranddiagnostics.se@nhs.net](mailto:england.canceranddiagnostics.se@nhs.net)

**Appendix A** ACCEND Competency Domains

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| Domain | Capability |
| Domain A: Person-centred collaborative working | 1.0 Professional values and behaviours |
| 2.0 Maintaining an Ethical approach and Fitness to Practice/ Law, Ethics and Safeguarding |
| 3.0 Person-centred care |
| 4.0 Communication and Consultation Skills |
| 5.0 Personalising the pathway for people living with and affected by cancer |
| 6.0 Helping people make informed choices as they live with or are affected by cancer |
| 7.0 Providing information to support self-management and enable independence for people living with and affected by cancer |
| 8.0 Multi-Disciplinary, interagency and partnership working |
| 9.0 Referrals and integrated working to support transitional care for people living with and affected by cancer |
| Domain B: Assessment, investigations and diagnosis | 10.0 History taking |
| 11.0 Clinical physical and mental health assessment |
| 12.0 Investigations, diagnosis and care planning |
| Domain C: Condition management, treatment and planning | 13.0 Clinical management |
| 14.0 Managing medical and clinical complexity and risk. |
| 15.0 Independent prescribing and pharmacotherapy |
| 16.0 Prehabilitation and rehabilitation interventions |
| 17.0 Promoting self-management and behaviour change |
| 18.0 Symptom management |
| 19.0 Late effects |
| 20.0 Palliative and end of life care |
| Domain D: Leadership and collaborative practice | 21.0 Leadership, management and organisation |
| Domain E: Developing evidence-based practice and improving quality | 22.0 Research and evidence-based practice |
| Domain F: Developing evidence-based practice and improving quality | 23.0 Service evaluation and quality improvement |
| Domain G: Educating and developing self and other | 23.0 Education |

**Appendix B** HEECare Navigation Competency Domains

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| Domain Number | Domain | Descriptor |
| 1 | Effective Communication | Excellent communication underpins person-centred care and helps build lasting, trusting relationships. Care navigation requires people to be able to communicate effectively, in verbal and written form, with a wide range of people from different cultural and organisational backgrounds, including health, social and voluntary sectors. |
| 2 | Enabling access to services | Care navigation involves signposting and enabling people to access appropriate services, based on their needs and preferences, from a wide range of organisations and sectors. This may not necessarily be best met by traditional health or social service professionals. The ‘local wisdom’ of available services should be built up by those in navigation roles and teams, with a spirit of ‘persistent and positive curiosity’ |
| 3 | Personalisation | Personalisation is a term more commonly used in social care, and is applicable to all service sectors. Personalisation is about taking an approach which supports a person’s choice, wishes and needs as far as possible, enabling them to be in control of their own life. Care navigation seeks to provide support and care, defined by a person’s holistic needs, not simply standardized to their condition or diagnosis. Support is tailored to the needs and aspirations of the individual. |
| 4 | Coordination and integration | Care navigation will involve coordination of care and support, to ensure a person’s experience across health, social and voluntary services is as ‘seamless’ as possible. All people involved in support, including patient/carer should know who is a key point of contact for help and who is responsible for their care. This is especially important and must be timely, when there are significant changes in a person’s needs e.g. sudden deterioration in health or transition of care between providers. |
| 5. | Building and sustaining professional relationships | Care navigation is a person-centred approach, therefore if care and support truly wraps around a person’s needs, integrated support must cut across boundaries and reach out to wider agencies within health, social and voluntary sectors. Relationships underpin effective inter-boundary working and are skills people in navigation roles need to develop. The ability to engage and sustain key working relationships is fundamental to work with patients, their family and with multidisciplinary team members |
| 6 | Knowledge for Practice | Care navigation is a person-centred approach, therefore if care and support truly wraps around a person’s needs, integrated support must cut across boundaries and reach out to wider agencies within health, social and voluntary sectors. Relationships underpin effective inter-boundary working and are skills people in navigation roles need to develop. The ability to engage and sustain key working relationships is fundamental to work with patients, their family and with multidisciplinary team members. |
| 7 | Personal development and learning | Individuals need to be committed to lifelong learning and enthusiastic to apply new knowledge and skills. People who are in care navigation roles learn significantly through experience and working within local contexts – therefore reflection on practice, for the individual and as teams are of core importance to personal as well as service development. |
| 8 | Handling data and information | Accurate and accessible information and data underpins effective care navigation. Failures in communication between organisations, sectors and patients/carers can lead to disjointed and poor care. Individuals who work to provide effective care navigation need to be able to appropriately use relevant electronic records, databases to access, input, store and retrieve information. Data is also important for service evaluation improvement |
| 9 | Professionalism | Professionalism can be challenging to describe or define. For care navigation, core competencies which attempt to capture some essence of professional behaviour, attitudes and attributes are summarized here. These are rooted in the ethical, moral and legal aspects of care and support, grounded in the principles of patient-centred care (see Figure 7: Principles of person-centred care). Commitment to develop expertise, self-awareness, limitations of scope of practice and working with integrity are some important features. This domain features cross cutting competencies at all levels (essential, enhanced and expert) for care navigation. |

**Frequently Asked Questions**

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| **Question** | | **Response** |
| **What is the funding period?** | All grants must be utilised within the 2024/24 financial year, so by 31 March 2025 | |
| **What is the aim of the funding?** | The aim of this funding is to support the development and upskilling of Care Pathway Navigators. | |
| **How can this funding be utilised?** | Fund an individual training grant; whereby an individual meeting the criteria applies to undertake learning and development courses or study; | |
| and/or  Fund training for a group of professionals; whereby the CA/CDC commissions bespoke training for a group of individuals to meet an identified need/priority | |
| **What can this funding be used for?** | Course fees (only applicable if the upskilling is not an Apprenticeship Programme, as in this instance, course fees are covered by the levy). | |
| Travel, subsistence and associated training costs. | |
| Training grant to support the individual’s development which could for example include provision for salary support and supervision/mentorship | |
| **What can’t this funding be used for?** | Funding for study days and conferences should in the first instance be sought from employer access to CPD funding available for nurses.  The funding cannot be used to purchase kit & equipment. | |
| **What are the requirements of accepting this funding** | By submitting an application, managers are agreeing to  release this person for training. | |
| Saving for extenuating circumstances, non-completion of any training may incur NHSE seeking return of some or all of funding given | |

1. www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Care%20Navigation%20Competency%20Framework\_Final.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/cancer-diagnostics/aspirant-cancer-career-education-development-programme [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/ACCEND%20Career%20Pathway%2C%20Core%20Cancer%20Capabilities%20and%20Education%20Framework.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. https://pma-uk.org/pma-apprenticeships/ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)