# South East Pathology Apprenticeship Training Grant Funding 2024/25

## Information for NHS organisations 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 Programme [part of the Workforce, Training & Education Directorate] has not yet been confirmed. We are hopeful that funding to support Pathology apprenticeship training grants will be available and we are therefore progressing with applications, which will be reviewed and provisionally approved subject to funding confirmation from the National Team.

This document details the 2024/25 offer for Pathology Apprenticeship training grants.

The funding offer is designed to support the growth and transformation of the pathology workforce**.**

**This funding**

* Is available to support apprentices in the first year of their programme
* Is to support healthcare science learners on an apprenticeship programme in Pathology and Life Sciences at Levels, 2, 4 and 6.
* Should be used by employers to support and facilitate their learners completing a recognised apprenticeship training programme. Grants are intended to help the department with further training costs associated with hosting and supervising apprentices.
* Is offered to Trusts within the South East NHSE geography. Trusts based within the South West (Dorset and Salisbury) and East of England (Milton Keynes) can access this funding offer through their equivalent NHSE Cancer and Diagnostics WT&E team.

**Deadline for funding applications**

* **The application window will in early March and will close at 9am on Tuesday 2 April 2024** to support funding being transferred in June 2024 via the NHSE Education Contract schedule where 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.

**Please note:** 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.

**Overview**

## To support meeting challenges in the pathology workforce and to promote the tangible benefits apprenticeships bring to the NHS, NHS England have previously offered training grants for employers to develop apprenticeships in pathology and life sciences. We hope to be able to offer this funding in 2024/25; at this stage this is still to be confirmed.

## Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes which are designed to help employers train people for specific job roles. At the same time, apprentices get a paying job with valuable training while they work towards a nationally recognised apprenticeship qualification. Apprenticeships can create skilled, motivated and qualified employees and, if used properly, can help to address skills shortages across the workforce.

The overarching aims of this pathology apprenticeship training grant funding offer is to:

* Support Trusts in developing the pathology workforce, particularly within healthcare science, and develop the pipeline of individuals along the career pathway
* Support existing staff to develop in their roles and along the career pathway
* Increase access to and provide new routes into pathology through supporting the apprenticeship pathways

**The funding offer**

To help grow and transform the pathology workforce, NHS England is offering a number of training support grants to NHS Trusts of £10,404 (per student) for those starting an apprenticeship programme in 2024/25. Apprenticeship programmes must be in Pathology and Life Sciences at Levels, 2, 4 or 6. This can include apprenticeships in Life Science, Blood Science, Cellular Sciences, Infection Sciences, Point of Care Testing, Embryology as well as other relevant disciplines.

Training grants, once agreed, would be available as a pro-rata payment in the 2024/25 financial year and the 2025/26 financial year. If for any reason the apprentice needs to withdraw from or is unable to complete their programme, funding will need to be returned. Payments will be made via the NHSE Education Contract schedule to the employing Trust and will not be made until an apprentice name and further details relating to their programme is provided.

Training grants should be used by employers to support and facilitate their learners completing a recognised apprenticeship training programme. The funding can be used flexibly and is intended to help the department with further training costs associated with hosting and supervising apprentices.

Training grants are not intended to cover salary costs of the apprentice which would need to be met by the employer. Course fees are covered by employer access to the apprenticeship levy.

This offer is open to NHS Trusts within the South East. Whilst a number of South East Pathology Networks work across geographical boundaries, Trusts based within the South West (Dorset and Salisbury) and East of England (Milton Keynes) can access this funding offer through their equivalent NHSE Cancer and Diagnostics Workforce Training and Education team.

To ensure that employers and apprentices can maximise the benefit of this training grant and the wider apprenticeship opportunity, please note the following:

* Apprentices must start their training programme between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025
* The chosen apprenticeship programme must be recognised by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education at level 2,4 or 6
* All funding received must be spent and fully utilised within the 2024/25, with appropriate financial assurance being required before any funding is transferred.

**How to access this funding**

As a reminder, **funding is yet to be confirmed for 2024/25.**

Trust pathology and healthcare science departments are asked to link with their relevant education and development teams to review this offer and to work up plans. Pathology Network Workforce Leads may also link with their Trust colleagues as part of this work to ensure they are best placed to support uptake.

Please note that applications must not be submitted by individual learners themselves; all applications must be submitted on behalf of the named learner e.g., by a line manager / head of department / education lead etc.

If interested in applying for this funding offer:

* **Completion of online application** – Please complete an online application which can be accessed through this link – [Pathology apprenticeships application form](https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/healtheducationyh/application-form-4)
* **Deadline** All applications must be through this online application form and must be submitted by **9am on Tuesday 2 April 2024.**

All applications will be reviewed by the NHSE SE Cancer and Diagnostics Programme team [Workforce, Training and Education]. Depending on the number of applications, not all may be able to be supported. A review and prioritisation exercise will take place by the Cancer and Diagnostic programme team including other colleagues and Pathology Networks where required.

If you are unable to meet the 2 April 2024 deadline, there may be a second funding round in June 2024; details will be shared closer to the time.

**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 South East are required to provide full details of the use of this funding to the national NHSE Cancer and Diagnostics programme, part of the Workforce Training and Education Directorate 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 (September 2024 and Feb/March 2025) relating to the status of each individual learner; guidance will be provided later in the year.

**Further Information**

The following websites provide in-depth apprenticeship information that may be useful to employers when considering apprenticeships in pathology and life sciences:

* Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education – <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/>
* Skills for Health – <https://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/>
* Healthcare Apprenticeship Standards Online <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/>

**NHS England – NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (2023)**

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)

**Frequently Asked Questions**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| **Which professional groups can utilise this funding?** | Healthcare Science |
| **What is the aim of the funding?** | The purpose of this funding is to: |
| * support meeting challenges in the pathology workforce |
| * promote the tangible benefits apprenticeships bring to the NHS |
| **How can this funding be utilised?** | * training and supervision expenses |
| * clinical supervision/mentorship |
| * travel and subsistence expenses |
| **What can’t this funding be used for?** | * Course fees; course fees are covered by the apprenticeship levy |
| * Apprentice salary: Training grants are not intended to cover salary costs of the apprentice which would need to be met by the employer. Course fees are covered by employer access to the apprenticeship levy. |
| **What is the funding period?** | The funding period is 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 |
| **Can this funding be used for courses which don’t finish in 2024/25?** | Yes. A large number of apprenticeship programmes last longer than 12 months. The important date to note is that the learner must have started on programme before 31 March 2025. |
| **Is there funding for Year 2 and Year 3 [if applicable]** | No; NHSE training grant is to support the apprentice in their first year on programme. |
| **Can the funding be used to support apprentices who have already received funding from NHSE via a 23/24 training grant?** | No, this training grant is to support apprentices who start the first year of their apprenticeship programme between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. |
| **Can we use the training grant to support more than one apprentice?** | No, the training grant total unit cost of £10,404 is nationally agreed and for use to support one individual apprentice only. |
| **What are the requirements of accepting this funding** | * all investment will be subject to reporting requirement |
| * all funding must be managed appropriately in line with individual organisation’s financial management and assurance processes. |
| * Managers must support their staff to access training |