# South East Cancer Nurse Specialists Training Grant Funding 2025/26

## 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

**Key messages**

**2025/26 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 Cancer Nurse Specialists will be available and we are therefore progressing with applications, which will be reviewed and provisionally approved subject to **funding criteria and funding confirmation** from the National Team.

This document details the 2025/26 funding offer for **Cancer Nurse Specialists training grants** and is aimed at supporting the growth and transformation of the Cancer Nursing workforce.

**This funding**

* to support Cancer Nurses Specialists new in post to access training and development opportunities identified at the point of their appointment.
* to support experienced nurses on the journey to becoming CNS to undertake training and development to support them in their career progression.
* to support nurses to access Level 7/ master’s level / advanced training and education to develop specialist clinical, leadership, education and / or research capabilities as identified for their development.
* to support Cancer Alliances and cancer services to develop the nursing workforce and develop a sustainable pipeline of nurses ready to move into CNS roles.
* 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]

**Deadline for funding applications**

* The application window will open on 17 March 2025 and will close at **9am on 25 April 2025**
* Applications will only be accepted via the spreadsheet provided.

**Please note:**

* If approved, funding will be paid directly to employer organisations via the NHSE Education Funding Agreement Schedule.
* Funding must be spent and fully utilised by 31 March 2026. All chosen courses and education must start by 31 March 2026 also. If funding is available, further application rounds will be held in June/July and October 2025. This is to be confirmed and may subject to change.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| **Eligibility** |
| Who can submit an application? | We are unable to accept applications from learners or prospective learners themselves. All applications must be submitted on behalf of a named or prospective learner, by the Cancer Alliance |
| Can I submit a funding application if I don’t have a confirmed name for my learner or they have yet to be accepted onto an accredited programme? | Yes, applications can be submitted details are still to be confirmed. If the application approved in principle, funding would not be paid to the organisation until these details are confirmed. |
| When can I apply for this training grant to support my learner(s)? | Funding or specific criteria is not yet confirmed for these training grants. However, we are opening applications based on 2024/25 funding/criteria so that we are able to progress applications at pace if funding is confirmed. Applications will open on 17 March 2025 and close on 25 April 2025. If funding remains available, further application rounds will be held in June/ July 2025 and in October 2025.We are unable to accept applications outside of these application rounds. All applications must be submitted via the spreadsheet provided [link provided below].  |
| Which professional groups can utilise this funding? | Employers can apply on behalf of the following professional groups: * New in post’ Cancer CNS who have had training and development needs identified at the point of their appointment
* Experienced nurses, who are aspiring Cancer CNS and have already undertaken some development, but wish to participate in further development that supports their progression
* Aspiring and existing Cancer CNS who wish to access Masters level / advanced training and education to develop specialist clinical, leadership, education and / or research capabilities as identified for their development
* Cancer CNS [aspiring or existing] with areas of professional development as identified by their respective Cancer Alliances and cancer services which will in turn provide a workforce pipeline
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| Can this funding be used to support learners in their Year 2 and Year 3 of a programme [if applicable]  | No, this funding is to support the learner in their first year of programme only.  |
| When must the learner have started on their programme? | Between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 |
| Can this funding be used for courses which don’t finish in 2025/26? | Yes. A large number of upskilling programmes last longer than 12 months. The important date to note is that the learner must have started on programme before 31 March 2026.  |
| Can the funding be used to support learners who have already received funding from NHSE via an earlier training grant? | No, this training grant is to support learners who start the first year of their upskilling programme between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. |
| Can I use the funding to support more than one learner? | No, the training grant is a nationally agreed amount that to support an individual learner only |
| Can I change the name of the funded learner who will be benefitting from the funding once this application has been approved? | No, if the original learner is no longer able to take up the place on programme, the application will be withdrawn and closed. You will be able to apply for a new grant in the next application round if funding is available.  |
| **Funding and financial management** |
| What do I need consider? | Before any funding can be formally paid, assurance will be required that the organisation is happy to receive the funding and that this can be fully spent and utilised by 31 March 2026. Please link with your relevant finance lead to discuss and agree this, ideally before an application is submitted.  |
| Has funding been formally confirmed for these training grants? | **No, formal national confirmation of funding for this training grant is still to be confirmed, and is not guaranteed at this time.** Applications are being invited but funding will not be confirmed until national funding is in place. |
| What is the funding period? | 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 |
| What is the funding available for this training grant? | A training grant totalling £5200 [**Please note: this amount is based on 2024/25 funding model and therefore may be subject to change for 2025/26**].  |
| How will this funding be paid? | Cancer Alliances will have the opportunity to confirm whether they prefer to receive and manage the funding or request this is paid directly to the relevant organisation listed within the application reporting form.  |
| Can this funding be used to support ‘overhead’ costs  | No, in line with other NHSE education payments we are unable to provide funding for any overhead additional costs. This position should not have a negative impact on the salary of the learner or on the quality of the training and supervision they receive. |
| Can funding be used next financial year if we cannot spend it this year? | No, all funding provided by NHSE needs to be managed in the year of issue, no deferral will be agreed. NHSE is not able to carry forward any commitments into the next financial year and any remaining balances would have to be withdrawn and lost to your organisation. There are no exceptions allowable and no agreements to defer can be made by anyone representing NHSE.  |
| **Utilisation of funding** |
| What is the aim of this funding? | These training grants are to support employers in meeting challenges in the Cancer nursing workforce by offering additional funded support to facilitate upskilling working with the NHS. |
| What **can** funding be used for? | Training grants should be used by employers to support and facilitate their learners completing an upskilling programme. The funding can be used flexibly and is intended to help the department with further training costs associated with hosting and supervising learners. This could include:* Course fees (postgraduate or advanced development programmes for example), advanced communication skills, master’s level postgraduate study, specialist postgraduate study. Plans should be for a single activity
* or programme. Where the application is for a modular programme, details should be provided of each module.
* 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
* Grants can be used to fund salary or backfill costs as part of facilitating the individual to attend the course; Full details should be provided on the application
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| What **can’t** the funding be used for? | The funding cannot be used for the following:* Funding for study days and conferences should in the first instance be sought from employer access to CPD funding available for nurses.
* purchasing purchase kit & equipment
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| **Employer requirements of accepting this funding** |
| Reporting  | All reporting requirements, including updates against learner status, will be met. |
| Financial | All funding will be managed appropriately in line with individual organisation’s financial management and assurance processes. |
| Access to training | Managers will support their staff to access training and release them to attend  |

**Overview**

**Please note:** this is based on 2024/25 National CAD guidance and may therefore be subject to change.

## NHS England South East Cancer & Diagnostics Programme is offering 2025/26 training grants to support the development of Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists [CNS]; the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan sets out the commitment to continue investing in training opportunities and ‘…*the development of career pathways for nurses who wish to become clinical nurse specialists, working with people with cancer supporting the NHS Long Term Plan commitment of ensuring that all cancer patients, including those with secondary cancers, have access to specialist care and support.’ [[1]](#footnote-2)*

## As in previous years, the grants are aimed at existing and aspiring CNSs to enable them to undertake master’s level /advanced training and education to develop specialist clinical, leadership, education, and /or research capabilities.

## The project has four overarching aims:

## 1. To support CNSs new in post to access training and development opportunities identified at the point of their appointment.

## 2. To support experienced nurses on the journey to becoming CNS to undertake training and development to support them in their career progression.

## 3. To support nurses to access master’s level / advanced training and education to develop specialist clinical, leadership, education and / or research capabilities as identified for their development.

## 4. To support Cancer Alliances and cancer services to develop the nursing workforce and develop a sustainable pipeline of nurses ready to move into CNS roles.

**The funding offer**

The funding being made available is **training grants of up to £5200 per individual**. These can be used to cover:

* course fees (postgraduate or advanced development programmes for example: advanced communication skills, psychological skills, leadership programmes, masters level postgraduate study, specialist postgraduate study).
* 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

The grants can be used by Cancer Alliances 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 Alliance commissions bespoke

training for a group of professionals 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 £5200 per person, but the funding is for 2025/26 only and must be fully spent by 31 March 2026.

We ask that Alliances work with their Trust CNS leads and networks to decide on how best to utilise this funding based on the options and further information details listed in Appendix A.

Examples of appropriate training and development include (but are not limited to):

* Learning/development/non-accredited short courses on specialist areas of practice
* Postgraduate study in specialist area: e.g., PGCert, PGDip, Master’s degree

Areas of study would be expected to be relevant to the development journey and role of the CNS and will likely fall within cancer care, clinical research, education or clinical leadership. This may also include specialist areas relating to specific cancer pathways and patient groups. Other areas may be supported at the discretion of the Cancer Alliance if there is an

understanding of the contribution the development will have on the individual/s/team/service.

Some examples of types of courses and subject matter:

* Specialist areas of learning/development relating to specific aspects of the cancer

pathway.

* Specialist knowledge of the treatment and the management of specific tumour sites.
* Enhanced understanding of personalised care and support planning.
* Advances in cancer treatment e.g.: genomics
* Advanced communication skills training and managing difficult conversations.
* Psychological skills training and support people in distress
* Supporting themselves and their teams with emotional resilience and wellbeing
* Project management and leadership opportunities that support the development of an

innovation or improvement to patient services.

Funding for study days and conferences should in the first instance be sought from employer

access to CPD funding available for nurses.

It is worth noting that many charities, professional bodies and other organizations offer free

workshops, training and development. Exploring these may widen and add to the opportunities to broaden the knowledge, skills and subsequent care across the cancer alliance footprint.

**How to access this funding**

As a reminder, **funding is yet to be confirmed for 2025/26.**

Cancer Alliances are responsible for submitting applications for this funding on behalf of their partner NHS Trusts. Please use the **provided spreadsheet**. Please note that applications from individual Trusts and learners will not be considered. Please submit only one return for your Cancer Alliance.

* **Deadline** All applications must be submitted by **9am on 25 April 2025.**

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 where required. Cancer Alliances will have the opportunity to confirm whether they prefer to receive and manage the funding or request this is paid directly to the relevant organisation listed within the application reporting form.

If you are unable to meet the 25 April 2025 deadline, there may be further application rounds in June – July 2025 and October 2025 if funding allows; 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 2025 and Feb/March 2026) relating to the status of each individual learner; As per 2024/25, we will manage this with Cancer Alliances, and provide specific folders on SharePoint for your updates.

**Further Information**

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

The [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

1. https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/nhs-long-term-workforce-plan-v1.2.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)