# South East Cancer Care Pathway Navigator training grant Funding 2025/26 Round 2

## 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**

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

**This funding**

* must be used to support development and upskilling where it will support progression of the Care Pathway Navigator against the ACCEND framework and must be relevant to the development journey and role of the Care Pathway Navigator.
* Can be used to support a learner on the Business Administration Level 3 Apprenticeship [PMA provided, bespoke to Cancer Care] **OR** an identified upskilling opportunity.
* 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 **9th June and will close by 9am on 11th July 2025**
* Applications for **NHS Trusts within Kent and Medway Cancer Alliance** footprint must be submitted via the online application form.
* Applications for NHS Trusts within the geographies **for Surrey, Sussex & Frimley Cancer Alliance, Thames Valley Cancer Alliance, and Wessex Cancer Alliance** will only be accepted via the spreadsheet provided. Please see page 6 for further details.

**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, a further application round will be held in October 2025. This is to be confirmed and may subject to change.
* Outcomes for applications submitted in Round 1 (March/April) have been communicated. There is no need to resubmit earlier applications

**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 or their employing Trust |
| 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)? | Applications will open on 9th June and close on 11th July 2025. If funding remains available, further application rounds will be held in October 2025.We are unable to accept applications outside of these application rounds. All applications must be submitted via the online application [link provided below].  |
| Which professional groups can utilise this funding? | Employers can apply on behalf of the following staffing groups: * Cancer Support Worker, Cancer Care Coordinator, Cancer Navigator, Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Coordinator
 |
| 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? | **Yes,** formal national confirmation of funding for this training grant has been received**.** |
| 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 £10,612 [please note: this amount relates to the Apprenticeship option only, and may be flexed for other upskilling requests].  |
| 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.For Kent and Medway Trusts applying directly, funding will be paid to the Trust via the NHSE Education Funding Agreement Schedule.  |
| 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? | The aim of this funding is to support the development and upskilling of Care Pathway Navigators. |
| What **can** funding be used for?  | 1. **Level 3 Business Admin apprenticeship [bespoke to Cancer Care Pathway Navigators].**

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. This could include:* Training expenses
* Clinical supervision and mentorship
* Travel and subsistence expenses
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| 1. **Upskilling programme**

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
 |
| What **can’t** the funding be used for? | 1. **Level 3 Business Admin apprenticeship [bespoke to Cancer Care Pathway Navigators].**

The funding cannot be used for the following:* Course fees: course fees are covered by employer access to 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.
* purchasing purchase kit & equipment
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| 1. **Upskilling programme**

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**

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].

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.

This project supports the development of care pathway navigators through extending the provision of training grants in 2025-26. As in previous years, the grants are aimed at existing and aspiring care pathway navigators to enable them to undertake initial training and/or upskilling ideally via an apprenticeship to attain a level 3 Business Administration Apprenticeship which has been contextualized for cancer, or other suitable means.

The funding aims to increase numbers of individuals being trained to enter into the care pathway navigator role, or equivalent roles, and to support existing care pathway navigators with additional training to enhance their capabilities. These roles can be unique in the administrative workforce and therefore a bespoke apprenticeship training pathway has been developed which we are prioritising.

**The funding offer**

The funding being made available is **training grants of up to £10,612 per individual**. These can be used to cover:

* Education costs
* 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 NHS Trusts 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 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 £10,612 per person, but the funding is for 2025/26 only and must be fully spent by 31 March 2026.

**How to access this funding**

* Applications for **NHS Trusts within Kent and Medway Cancer Alliance** footprint must be submitted via the [online application form.](https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/healtheducationyh/2025-26-round-2-nhse-se-cancer-diagnostic-funding-application-c)
* Applications for NHS Trusts within the geographies **for Surrey, Sussex & Frimley Cancer Alliance, Thames Valley Cancer Alliance, and Wessex Cancer Alliance** will only be accepted via the spreadsheet provided. Please note that applications from individual Trusts and learners will not be considered. Please submit only **one return** for your Cancer Alliance.
* If you are an NHS Trust within Surrey, Sussex & Frimley, Thames Valley, or Wessex Cancer Alliance footprints wishing to submit an application, please do contact application coordinators in the first instance:
	+ SSCA: rsch.sscacancereducationteam@nhs.net
	+ TV: england.tvcaadmin@nhs.net
	+ Wx: kathy.cooke@wca.uhs.nhs.uk

**Deadline** All applications must be submitted by **9am on** **11th July 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 11th July deadline, there may be a further application round in 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 learners.

* For applications submitted by Cancer Alliances, as per 2024/25, we will manage this with e specific reporting folders on SharePoint for your updates.
* For applications submitted by NHS Trusts: this will be managed by central Trust education teams.

**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. 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)