# South East Imaging Practice Educator Funding 2025/26

## Information for South East NHS Trusts and Imaging Networks 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**

## This document details the 2025/26 offer for the ongoing development of imaging practice education. The funding offer is designed to afford flexibility in supporting regional and local workforce plans and aims to enable and facilitate the integration of education and training activities within efficient service delivery.

## This funding:

* is available to support new or existing PE roles operating within trusts, or Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs).
* is being offered to specifically support learners within the following groups:
  + Apprentices in receipt of an NHSE training grant: [Level 6 DRad; Level 6 Sonographer; Level 5 Assistant Practitioner [Imaging]; Level 4 Mammography Associate; Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker [Diagnostic Imaging]
  + Reporting Radiography trainees in receipt of an NHSE training grant
  + Learners in receipt of an NHSE ‘Imaging Career Development & Upskilling training grant’.
* can be used to develop new ways to support learners, including alternative models of delivery, focused pastoral support, and coaching and mentoring.
* Can be used to develop regional Practice Education networks.
* Is available to provide further education and training for existing and aspiring Practice Educators within Diagnostic Radiography, Mammography [including screening], and Ultrasound/ Sonography.
* is being offered to Trusts that sit within the South East Imaging Network footprints, including Dorset and Milton Keynes.

**Please note - This funding offer:**

* does not include Therapeutic Radiography Practice Education; Trusts have received separate communications regarding the 2025/26 Practice Education funding;
* does not include Medical Physics Practice Education; instead, there will be regional Practice Education provision to support learners on the Level 6 Medical Physics Technologist Apprenticeship, and STPs and HSSTs in Medical Physics

**Deadline for funding applications**

* To apply for funding, please complete the Imaging Practice Education application form. A link to this application was made available via email.
* The application window will open in **early June and will close at 9am on Friday 11 July 2025**

Funding is required to be spent and fully utilised by 31 March 2026, and chosen courses and formal education must start **before** 31 March 2026.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Response** |
| **Eligibility** | |
| Who can submit an application? | We are unable to accept applications from Practice Educators themselves. All applications must be submitted on behalf of a named or prospective learner, e.g. by a line manager, education lead etc. |
| Can I submit a funding application if I don’t have a confirmed name for my Practice Educator or they have yet to be accepted onto an accredited programme? | Yes, applications can be submitted where details are still to be confirmed. Where an application is approved in principle, funding would not be paid to the organisation until missing details are confirmed. |
| When can I apply for this training grant to support my Practice Educator (s)? | Round 1 will open in early June 2025 and **close at 9am on 11 July 2025**. If funding remains available, a further application round 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 form [link provided via email] |
| Which professional groups can utilise this funding? | * Diagnostic Radiographers * Reporting Radiographers * Sonographers * Mammographers * Radiology Nurses |
| Can this funding be used to support Practice Educators in their Year 2 and Year 3 of a programme [if applicable] | No, this funding is to support the Practice Educators in their first year of programme only, where applicable. |
| When must the Practice Educators 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. Some training programmes last longer than 12 months. The important date to note is that the Practice Educator must have started on programme before 31 March 2026. |
| Can I change the name of the Practice Educator 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 this offer? | 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 offer? | Trusts have received written notification of the amount available for them to apply for. |
| How will this funding be paid? | The funding will be paid to the Practice Educator’s employing organisation by the National NHSE Cancer & Diagnostics Programme . |
| 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 Practice Educator or on the quality of the training and supervision they provide. |
| 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.  **Any funding awarded is non-recurrent and so will not automatically be available in any proceeding years after it is agreed.** |
| **Utilisation of funding** | |
| What is the aim of this funding? | To facilitate high quality and sustainable practice education provision to support the growth in the numbers of learners within the NHS as well as promote and improve key issues such as retention, career development and job satisfaction. |
| What **can** funding be used for? | * Salary support for the Practice Educator * A training grant for an education-related qualification eg PgC |
| What **can’t** the funding be used for? | The funding cannot be used for the following:   * Kit & equipment * Capital expenses |
| **Employer requirements of accepting this funding** | |
| Reporting | All reporting requirements will be met. |
| Financial | All funding will be managed appropriately in line with individual organisation’s financial management and assurance processes. |
| Time to carry out PE role and access to training [if upskilling funding] | That protected time will be provided to support the Practice Educator undertaking the role. Managers will support their staff to access training and release them to attend if funding is used to support upskilling. |

**Overview**

High quality and sustainable practice education provision is required to support the growth in the numbers of learners within the NHS as well as promote and improve key issues such as retention, career development and job satisfaction. The [NHSE Educator Workforce Strategy](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/educator-workforce-strategy) [published March 2023] highlights the role of education and training in alleviating workforce shortages; specifically, its importance in securing a future workforce, retaining the current workforce, and maximizing the productivity of the workforce by optimizing capacity and confidence. Investing in high quality practice educators is a key enabler.

The 2025/26 NHSE SE funding is to support and enable investment to **develop, increase and improve the quality of practice education provision** for the imaging workforce and other associated professions and/or clinical specialties. The funding offer is designed to **afford flexibility in supporting regional and local workforce plans** going forward and aims to **enable and facilitate the integration of education and training activities within efficient service delivery.**

The funding is aimed at providing practice education opportunities and support for the following staff groups.

* Imaging Apprentices [Level 6 DRad; Level 6 Sonographer; Level 5 Assistant Practitioner [Imaging]; Level 4 Mammography Associate; Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker [Diagnostic Imaging]
* Reporting Radiography trainees
* Learners in receipt of an NHSE ‘Imaging Career Development & Upskilling training grant’.

**The funding offer**

Once agreed, funding will be paid across quarter 3 and quarter 4 of this financial year. Funding must be spent within this financial year, so by 31 March 2026, and chosen courses and formal education [where applicable] must start before 31 March 2026.

Funding can be utilised in a range of ways to support the imaging and radiography workforce including:

1. Supporting new or existing PE roles operating within trusts, Community Diagnostic Centres (CDC’s) or imaging training academies.
2. Developing new ways to support learners - alternative models of delivery, focused pastoral support, coaching/mentoring opportunities etc.
3. Projects which look to improve the quality of practice education provision, linking specifically to one or more of the priorities set out in the NHS England Educator Workforce Strategy e.g., establishing initiatives which provide coordinated educator support and development, emphasizing the importance of educator well-being.
4. Development of regional PE networks - to facilitate collaboration between educators in practice and support the sharing of best practice and resources to promote high quality practice education provision.
5. Providing further education and training for people already working in PE roles and for those who aspire to work as a PE in the future. As suggested in the [SoR Educational and Career Framework (2022),](https://www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/policy-guidance-document-library/education-and-career-framework-fourth) this should ideally be accredited and delivered at level 7 i.e. PGCE or similar where appropriate

Where appropriate, please consider how the investment could support the use of the Allied Health Professionals Educator Career Framework, and the Society of Radiographers Education and Career Framework.

Applications should be for individuals. It is expected that the work of individual Trust/Department based Practice Educators will complement the work of Imaging Network Practice Educators, and South East Medical Physics/Clinical Technologist Practice Educators.

**How to access this funding**

To apply for funding, please complete the Imaging Practice Education application form. A link to this application was made available via email.

The application window will open **on 9 June and** **will close at 9am on Friday 11 July 2025.**

**Please note**: applications must not be submitted by individual Practice Educators themselves; all applications must be submitted on behalf of the named PE e.g. by a line manager/head of department/education lead etc.

All applications will be reviewed by the NHSE SE Cancer and Diagnostics Programme team [WT&E].

**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).

NHSE SE will be undertaking an impact and evaluation report based on this regional PE offer, in 2025/26 and again in 2026/26. The evaluation will consider how the investment has:

* increased the provision of high-quality clinical supervision, education and assessment for all levels and types of learners within the imaging workforce.
* improved and increased the number of PE’s who have attained formal education and training in supporting clinical education.
* increased placement capacity for different types of learners.
* promoted and strengthened education as a career development option and choice.
* provided opportunities to support regional level strategic education and training plans through dedicated higher level PE roles.

In addition to the perceived and potential impact, it is essential that deeper understanding is gained through further evaluation. Whilst reporting on the performance delivery of this funding stream focuses on the number of PE roles that have been supported, other metrics can be utilised to demonstrate both quantitative and qualitative impact. Examples of this include the following.

* Learner feedback – National Education Training Survey [NETS] or focused feedback for different groups of the workforce
* Increase in placement capacity for undergraduate and post graduate learners
* Reduced learner attrition
* An increased number of radiographers undertaking training and further education enabling them to practice at an enhanced, advanced and consultant level and which has a direct impact on patient care and service delivery.
* Retention of staff – international recruits, legacy mentor and Return to Practice opportunities.

**Further Information**

**The NHSE Educator Workforce Strategy 2023**

NHS England (NHSE) published the [Educator Workforce Strategy](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/educator-workforce-strategy) (2023) which sets out actions to support the provision of educators which will enable growth in the healthcare workforce that is required to deliver care, now and in the future. The strategy has seven strategic priorities that underpins future PE planning and provision.

The Educator Workforce Strategy complements the [NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (2023)](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.england.nhs.uk%2Fpublication%2Fnhs-long-term-workforce-plan%2F&data=05%7C02%7Ctessa.candy%40nhs.net%7Cb4ab2f6706fd4e37d9e508dc3a0d15a0%7C37c354b285b047f5b22207b48d774ee3%7C0%7C0%7C638449075067178696%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=uDkCnCboQdVe%2BId4TgzOtYu1vWpnKQsymlpgrGXADT0%3D&reserved=0) and presents an opportunity to rethink the approach to enabling and sustaining high quality healthcare education and training. It calls for a re-evaluation of the roles of educators across healthcare professions to ensure that we maximise evidence-based benefits and efficiencies in opportunities to both learn inter-professionally and learn from one another.

**Allied Health Professionals [AHP] Educator Career Framework 2023**

The Council of Deans of Health published their [AHP Educator Career Framework](https://www.councilofdeans.org.uk/ahp-framework/) which is outcome based and describes the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be an effective teacher, learning facilitator, supervisor and role model in AHP education both within practice and formal education settings.

This framework sets out a set of expectations for all AHPs who have responsibility for education, described through six domains, associated capabilities, education, and training standards. It seeks to be inclusive, empowering for all those involved in AHP education irrespective of job role, workplace setting and career stage.

**Society of Radiographers Education and Career Framework**

The Society of Radiographers published their [Education and Career Framework](https://www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/policy-guidance-document-library/education-and-career-framework-fourth) in 2022. The Framework outlines the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of a radiographer practice educator alongside the suggested educational standards also associated with this role.

**Challenges**

A growing ageing population that has an increasing prevalence of chronic health problems, continuous improvements in our ability to diagnose and treat ill health and changing societal expectations, means that there are increasing workforce shortages, both in the UK and globally, despite associated staffing increases. Issues around prolonged workforce deficit and ongoing service delivery challenges are affecting multiple professions working across the diagnostic sector.

High quality and sustainable practice education provision is required to support the growth in the numbers of learners within the NHS as well as promote and improve key issues such as retention, career development and job satisfaction.

There are several roles and titles that are currently captured by the term practice educator, these include Clinical Educator, Student Co-ordinator, Training Co-ordinator, Placement learning tutor and Mentor. All provide a form of clinical support, education, training, and assessment through different levels of interaction with the learner and each role may have a slightly different remit.

Whilst traditionally Practice Educator roles have focused primarily on supporting the undergraduate and professionally qualified workforce, there is now an increasing demand for additional resource to be directed towards supporting a multi-level, multi-disciplinary workforce within imaging and radiography to include the supportive and assistive workforce**,** nurses and those learners who are undertaking alternative education routes such as apprenticeships.

Consideration should also be given to the non-clinical elements of practice education such as pastoral care which is required to support and maintain the mental health and wellbeing of the learners working in today’s healthcare environment.

**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)