# South East Pathology Practice Education 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](mailto:england.canceranddiagnostics.se@nhs.net)

**Key Messages**

This document details a 2025/26 offer for Pathology Practice Education funding.

The funding offer is designed to support the growth and transformation of the pathology workforce, providing support and clinical education to staff and student learners to improve their professional practice alongside academic colleagues.

The funding offer is designed to afford flexibility in supporting local workforce plans and aims to enable and facilitate the integration of education and training activities within efficient service delivery.

**This funding**

* Is to support Practice Educator roles (salary and upskilling) across pathology
* Is being offered to specifically support learners within the following groups:
  + Practitioner Training Programme (PTP)
  + Scientific Training Programme (STP)
  + Higher Scientific Training Programme (HSST)
  + A pathology or life science apprenticeship programme at Level 2, 4 or 6
* Can be used to develop new ways to support learners, including alternative models of delivery, focused pastoral support, and coaching and mentoring.

**Deadline for funding applications**

* The application window will close at **9am on Friday 11 July 2025**
* Applications will only be accepted via the online application form (link available below).

**Please note:**

* If approved, funding will be paid directly to employer organisations by NHSE.
* 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 is subject to change.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| **Eligibility** | |
| Who can submit application | We are unable to accept applications from practice educators directly. All applications must be submitted on behalf of a named or prospective practice educator, e.g. by a line manager, education lead, apprenticeship 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 if details are still to be confirmed. If the application is approved in principle, funding would not be paid to the organisation until these details are confirmed. |
| When can I apply for this funding to support Practice Educator(s)? | Applications will open w/c 9th June 2025 and close at 9am on 11th July. If funding remains available, a further application round may 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 below). |
| Which professional groups can utilise this funding? | Practice educators [Healthcare scientists] supporting those on a formal scientific training programme [PTP, STP, HSST or apprenticeship] |
| Can this funding be used to support apprentices in their Year 1, 2 & 3 Year of programme [if applicable] | It depends;   * if an apprentice starting in their Year one is already in receipt of an NHSE SE training grant this year [2025/26], we would expect part of that to be used for their supervision and practice education support. * If they are not in receipt of this training grant in 2025 and/or are in a Year 2 or 3 of their apprenticeship programme, then yes this funding could be used to support a Practice Educator providing hands on support to these learners. |
| When must the practice educator have started on an upskilling programme [if applicable]? | 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 training programmes last longer than 12 months. The important date to note is that the Practice Educator must have started on their upskilling programme before 31 March 2026. |
| Can I use the funding to support more than one practice educator? | Yes, however, funding is very limited in 2025/26 so a prioritisation exercise will be undertaken to inform funding allocation if needed. |
| Can I change the name of the funded Practice Educator who will be benefitting from the funding once this application has been approved? | No, if the original named Practice Educator is no longer able to take up the place on programme or time in the role, 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? | Trusts & departments can apply for a maximum £10,000 as part of this funding offer. A breakdown of how this will be utilised will be required as part of the application. |
| How will this funding be paid? | The funding will be paid to the employing organisation of the Practice Educator by the NHSE national Cancer and 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? | These training grants are to support employers in meeting challenges in the pathology workforce by offering additional funded support to learners on formal scientific training programmes through practice education provision. |
| What **can** funding be used for? | * Salary support for the Practice Educator * A training grant for an education-related qualification eg PgC. Examples include:   + Bucks New University – [Practice Education PG Cert](https://www.bucks.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/pgcert-practice-education)   + University of Surrey – [Education for Health Professionals PG Cert](https://www.surrey.ac.uk/postgraduate/education-health-professionals-pgcert)   + University of Brighton – [Leading Practice Education PG Cert](https://www.brighton.ac.uk/courses/study/leading-practice-education-pgcert.aspx?utm_source=prospects&utm_medium=course_listing&utm_content=leading-practice-education-pgcert&utm_campaign=annual_pg)   + University of Winchester – [Practice Education (distance) PG Cert](https://www.winchester.ac.uk/study/Postgraduate/Courses/2025/PgCert-Practice-Education-2025/)   + University of Reading – [Healthcare Education – PG Cert](https://www.reading.ac.uk/education/cpd/pgcert-healthcare) |
| What **can’t** the funding be used for? | The funding cannot be used for the following:   * Kit and equipment * Capital expenses * Salary costs for locum staffing |
| **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. |
| 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**

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 pathology [scientific] workforce. This funding is envisaged to support Trusts and NHS Diagnostic services in developing their healthcare science workforce, particularly within pathology.

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 maximising the productivity of the workforce by optimising capacity and confidence. Investing in high quality practice educators is a key enabler.

## Aim of the funding

* To provide alignment with healthcare science training expansion across formal training programmes [PTP, STP, HSST, and apprenticeships].
* To provide support and clinical education to staff and student learners to improve their professional practice alongside academic colleagues.

It could be used to support practice educators to:

* Provide direct 1:1 training, supervision and assessment of trainees on work-based placements
* Support being a supportive role model, a coach, a teacher, mentor, and assessor of clinical competence, having responsibility for identifying individual learner styles and adapting these to accommodate individual trainee needs
* Ensure appropriate and effective development of a learner within the work-based based education and training environment.
* Prepare training materials alongside academic colleagues
* Undertake necessary learning and development of education and training skills e.g., PG Cert Ed or support to achieve a recognised fellowship in healthcare education.

Other areas to support may include:

* On-going development of educational and training systems.
* Developing new ways to support learners, including alternative models of delivery, focused pastoral support, and coaching and mentoring.

## The funding offer

To help grow and transform the pathology [scientific] workforce, funding of up to £10,000 can be applied for. This funding can be used to support achieving the aims outlined above through either:

* Salary support of a named practice educator
* Training grants to support upskilling of a named practice educator via education-related qualification eg PgC

Applications are invited from Trusts and departments where learners on a formal scientific training programme are based.

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.

**How to apply for this funding**

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 Practice Education Application Form](https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/healtheducationyh/round-1-practice-education-nhse-se-cancer-diagnostic-funding-ap)
* **Deadline:** All applications must be through this online application form and must be submitted by 9am on Friday 11 July 2025.

Please note that applications must not be submitted by individual practice educators themselves; all applications must be submitted on behalf of the named practice educator 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 [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.

If you are unable to meet the 9am 11 July 2025 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).

Departments receiving this funding will be required to provide updates on this investment as well as an end of year impact assessment which will inform a regional evaluation. We will provide more details on this once funding is confirmed to applicants. This will include considering 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.

Organisations receiving this funding to support upskilling for practice educators will be required to provide twice-yearly updates relating to the status of each individual learner; guidance and templates will be provided later in the year.

**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

## 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)