

Pharmacy Technician Workforce Expansion Programme 2023/24

Guidance for Employers



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1. Introduction

NHS England, Workforce Training and Education (WT&E) Directorate (formerly Health Education England) provides national leadership around workforce, training and education for the NHS. Through the NHS Long Term Plan¹, we promote high quality health and care for all, ensuring the NHS in England has a sufficient and inclusive workforce with the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours to deliver compassionate high-quality health and care to the people it serves.

2. Background

The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan² published June 2023 highlights the need to grow the pharmacy technician workforce to meet the increasing demand of patient-facing clinical pharmacy roles across care settings. It is anticipated that legislative changes will enable better use of the available skills mix in pharmacy and wider multi-disciplinary teams, ensuring that pharmacy technicians can work most effectively across all sectors of the health service. In addition, the plan reported, “Through proportionate regulatory reform, it is anticipated that pharmacy technicians will be able to supply medicines and services through Patient Group Directions

NHS England WT&E are looking to work with employers to implement a 24-month training programme for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians across North East and Yorkshire Training programmes will be either single sector in community pharmacy or multi-sector (across a minimum of two different sectors) and deliver work-based training and assessment for trainees that meets the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Initial Education and Training (IET) Standards for pharmacy technicians³. The knowledge component of the training will be delivered by an education provider, ideally through the apprenticeship route.

Note: Individuals undergoing education and training to become a registered pharmacy technician are known as a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician (PTPT) and will be referred to as ‘PTPT’ in this document.

3. Funding Offer

NHS England WT&E is offering a training contribution of £46,099, per trainee, to support sites in developing a PTPT programme that meets the GPhC IET standards for pharmacy technicians and the Health Education England (HEE) quality framework⁴. Payment will be

¹ NHS Long Term Plan

² NHS Long Term Workforce Plan

³ General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) 2017 Initial Education and Training (IET) Standards

⁴ Health Education England Quality Framework

made incrementally, over a 24-month training period whilst the PTPT is on the training programme.

The offer aims to be flexible and allow employers to develop training programmes in line with their service models. However, our expectation is that the following key principles will inform the programme development.:

1. Having robust workplace training plans in place that meet the requirements of the GPhC Initial Education Standards (IET) for pharmacy technicians.
2. Provision of adequate supervision in every placement.
3. Provision of good experiential learning opportunities.
4. Meeting the Health Education England [quality framework](#).

4. Funding Criteria

- Depending on the lead employer, funding will be allocated by one of a potential range of routes, including but not limited to;
 - Through the NHS Education contract finance schedule, where the lead employer has an existing NHS education contract in place.
 - Through partnership arrangements where a contracting mechanism already exists, for example, with integrated care system teams or training hubs.
 - Where partnership arrangements are not in place and the lead employer does not have an NHS education contract, the NHS terms and conditions for services will apply and employers will be required to invoice NHS England for this activity.
 - Payments to community pharmacy lead employers will be paid through the NHS Business Services Authority (BSA).
- NHS England WT&E does not offer additional funding to cover on costs. Payment of any additional costs to training should be covered by the employing organisation.
- Training programmes must ensure the PTPT is working under the direction of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician to whom the trainee is directly accountable for not less than 14 hours per week.
- Training programmes must ensure that appropriate educational supervision capacity is identified for 24-month period (a GPhC-registered professional with appropriate experience and knowledge).
- Training programmes must ensure that appropriate practice/clinical supervision capacity is identified for 24-month period.

- Organisations are expected to demonstrate how work-based training in each sector will meet the GPhC IET standards for pharmacy technicians.
- Organisations are expected to provide an outline of the 24-month training plan (it is understood that this will be developed in further detail if application is successful).
- Organisations are expected to demonstrate how their training programmes include accuracy in the assembly of medicines, the final accuracy checking of items dispensed by others and medicines reconciliation and supply.
- PTPTs must be provided a dedicated day each week, throughout the duration of the training programme, to complete learning set by the apprenticeship/knowledge provider. This can contribute towards off-the-job training⁵ for apprentices.
- Where the apprenticeship route is utilised, training must meet the pharmacy technician (integrated) apprenticeship standard requirements, including off the job training requirements.
- Successful applicants are required to submit progress updates, which will be specified by the NHS England WT&E regional pharmacy team on confirmation of funding. Funding will be discontinued if a PTPT is withdrawn or has a break in their training programme due to unsatisfactory progression, dismissal, resignation, or extended absence.

Additional criteria for multi-sector programmes only

Training programmes must.

- include a minimum of two multi-sector placements in both year 1 and year 2 of the training programme. One of which must be either a community or hospital pharmacy.
- have a partnership identified with a nominated lead employer & at least one other multi-sector partner. Employers are responsible for formalising agreements and expectations of the partnership.
- have placement/sector rotations including durations and locations clearly identified for the 24-month period.
- a model identified for the 24-month period (e.g., split week or 13-week blocks).
- ensure that the PTPT will undertake a minimum of 13 weeks training in each sector placement in both year 1 and year 2 of the 24-month training programme.
- Include varied experiential learning across the different sectors, supporting an understanding of integrated ways of working to improve patient outcomes.

⁵ Off the Job Training Guidance

5. Application for Funding Process

Application for funding is via expression of interest (EoI) submitted via an [online application form](#)⁶. Before completing the application form it is advised that the employer/system lead complete the relevant application template (Appendix 1). The application template should be completed in collaboration with the other partner/s and retained by the employer/system lead.

The online application form will be used to evaluate your expression of interest against set evaluation criteria to determine if/where funding will be allocated. Please refer to the evaluation scoring criteria to assist completion of your EoI. During the evaluation period, a member of the evaluation panel may contact the employer/system lead where any points of clarification are required. It is therefore essential that a copy of the completed application template is available to them.

We expect to receive a high number of applications for funding this year. It is essential that you include as much detail in your application form as possible to enable us to fully assess your bid against the criteria detailed in section 6.

Applications must be submitted via the [online application form](#)

by 17th September 2023

6. Evaluation Scoring

Criteria with a Pass/Fail weighting must achieve a pass to be considered. Criteria receiving a No response will fail, resulting in that application being rejected.

There are five criteria that will be used to identify the strength of the applications to provide a comparative score. See the table below for the weighting of these questions.

Evaluation Criteria		Weighting
1	Does the application include a pharmacy setting with dispensing services? (E.g. a community pharmacy as a single sector programme, or a multi-sector programme including either a community pharmacy or hospital pharmacy setting).	Pass / Fail
2	Employer agreement to pay any additional costs incurred and not covered by the training contribution (e.g. on costs, including pension, salary etc.)?	Pass / Fail

⁶ EoI Online Application Form

3	Agreement to provide the PTPT with a dedicated day each week, throughout the year, to attend college and complete learning set by the apprenticeship/knowledge provider?	Pass / Fail
4	Is additional time given out on top of minimum 1 day per week?	Maximum of 5%
5	PTPT will have access to adequate IT and appropriate protected space to complete knowledge learning and assignments for duration of training programme.	Pass / Fail
6	Designated educational supervisor identified, who is a registered pharmacist or pharmacy technician with appropriate experience, knowledge and capacity to support the PTPT for duration of the training programme.	Pass / Fail
7	Practice supervision capacity identified for 24-month period for each placement/area of work ?	Pass / Fail
8	Overview of your 24-month programme. What training will be completed in the workplace as per GPhC IET standards for pharmacy technicians, when and where within the 24-month training period?	25%
9	Overview of how your 24-month programme demonstrates training activities to be undertaken within the workplace for final accuracy checking of items dispensed by others, person centred medicines optimisation (including medicines reconciliation), professionalism and leadership.	25%
10	Trainee progression and support. Demonstrate how your training programme will meet the HEE Quality Framework	30%
11	Overview of the planned educational infrastructure including details of relevant education and training experience and additional information that may support learning experiences for the PTPT.	15%
12	For multi-sector training programmes only Does the application clearly state the partnership organisations involved, and provide contact details for each partner?	Pass / Fail

7. Timeline

07 August 2023	Application opens for expressions of interests
17th September 2023	Closing date for expressions of interests
18th – 29th September 2023	Evaluation of applications
2nd October 2023	Successful applicants informed

To be confirmed	Programme initiation meeting to provide advice and support regarding recruitment, training plans and supervision requirements
As soon as possible	Employers finalise 2-year training plan with placement partners and agree learning objectives for each sector
As soon as possible	Recruitment of PTPTs
As soon as possible post recruitment	PTPT data collection and privacy declarations completed by designated educational supervisors and PTPTs
October 2023 to February 2024	PTPT begins employment, local induction
By 29 February 2024	All PTPTs must be employed, enrolled with and have started their designated learning programme

8. Community Pharmacy Single Sector

To support the accelerated transformation of clinical services within community pharmacy, we are offering funding for single sector training programmes within this sector. Trainees will be employed and complete their full 24-month training within the community pharmacy setting.

Community pharmacy employers are not excluded from developing multi-sector programmes if this is their preference.

9. Multi-sector Partnerships

Employers are responsible for forming their own partnerships which must be in place in order to bid for funding. Although, a minimum of two partners are required, larger partnerships may provide additional experiential learning opportunities for the PTPT. Your local NHS England WT&E pharmacy team, training hub or ICS workforce team can support conversations and partnership building.

Healthcare settings eligible for multi-sector programmes include:

Ambulance service

Care homes

Community pharmacy

Community services

General practice

Health and justice

Integrated care systems

Primary care networks

Secondary care

Within the partnership; one partner will be the employer, with responsibility for:

- Employing the PTPT(s)
- Receipt and subsequent management locally of funding
- Agreeing and formalising the partnership, including management of funding procedures for agreeing annual leave, changes in working patterns, supervision arrangements.
- Working with the other partners to agree a learning plan for the PTPT(s) that meets the GPhC IET standards for pharmacy technicians.

The employer will identify a suitable partner or partners and agree an overview of which of the programme standards and objectives the PTPT will undertake during their placement with each partner.

Partnerships must consider what the placement model will be for instance, this may consist of block rotations in one placement/sector at a time, or a split week, e.g. 2 days a week rotating between placements, or whether a mixed model be adapted.

The following table provides three examples of what a placement model could look like. Partnerships have the freedom to deliver a different model to those suggested, as long as the PTPT spends a minimum of 13 weeks per year in each sector.

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 day a week college or distance learning • 2 x 13 weeks in hospital pharmacy • 2 x 13 weeks in General Practice • 2 x 13 weeks in hospital pharmacy • 2 x 13 weeks in community pharmacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 day a week college/distance learning • 2 days a week in community or hospital pharmacy • 2 days a week in General Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 day a week college/distance learning • 4 x 13-week rotation in community or hospital pharmacy • 4 x 13-week split rotations consisting of 2 days a week in General Practice and 2 days in care home

Evidence of quality placements exposing the PTPT to a breadth of experiential learning opportunities will be reflective of a strong application.

Please note: The lead employer is responsible for organising and co-ordinating access to placements with the partner organisations over the 24-month training period including ensuring provision of all appropriate DBS/reference checks and vaccinations required for patient facing activities in that area. This is to ensure that the PTPT can meet all learning requirements. Where a PTPT is unable to access the appropriate placements, there is a risk of the individual failing the programme and not being able to register as a pharmacy technician.

10. Programme Delivery

A 2-year training plan must be in place before the PTPT starts. Objectives should be set for 13-week training periods and in place before the PTPT starts that training period. All trainees must be enrolled and have started their training programme by 29 February 2024.

10.1 Choosing an education provider

Your local NHS England WT&E pharmacy team can support identification of an appropriate GPhC accredited education or apprenticeship provider. If utilising the apprenticeship route, employers may utilise the National Framework for Pharmacy Apprenticeships managed by Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust or undertake their own procurement exercise.

It is a programme requirement that PTPTs are provided a dedicated day each week, throughout the year, to attend college and complete learning set by the apprenticeship/knowledge provider. This should be part of their paid employment and may contribute towards their 20% off-the-job training requirement if completing an apprenticeship.

10.2 How much are the training fees?

To reduce or eliminate education costs, it is recommended that education provision is procured via the apprenticeship route, the following costs may apply:

- If you are classed as a 'levy payer' 100% of course fees will be funded by the levy
- If you are classed as a 'non-levy payer' you will pay 5% of the course fees (up to £400 for the entire 2-year programme), the remaining 95% will be paid by the government. A Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) account⁷ will need to be set up to reserve these funds
- Non-levy payer organisations can utilise levy transfer to cover 100% of course fees

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure, where relevant, levy funds are available. Your local NHS England regional Talent for Care Managers can provide further advice if required, including signposting for guidance on provision of levy-transfer. If you do not know who your regional Talent for Care Manager is, then your NHS England WT&E pharmacy team can advise you.

Further information regarding the apprenticeship levy can be found on the Gov UK website.⁸

10.3 PTPT recruitment

The employer is responsible for recruitment of the PTPT, in collaboration with their programme partner(s) and in line with the employer's Terms and Conditions. The employer should ensure all pre-employment and right to work checks are completed prior to employment and that all

⁷ Create an account to manage apprenticeships

⁸ Apprenticeship funding rules and guidance for employers

appropriate vaccinations required for patient facing activities have been provided prior to the PTPT commencing training within that setting.

10.4 Eligibility to train as a PTPT

Existing staff can be upskilled, or you can recruit new staff to the PTPT post. However, all applicants for the post must meet the following criteria:

- Enrolment onto a GPhC Recognised Qualification/ GPhC Accredited Course. The entry requirements will vary depending on the course provider. However, as a guide, your PTPT might be expected to have the equivalent of four GCSEs at Grade 4 and above (formerly C and above), including mathematics, English language, science and one other subject.
- Must be working in a pharmacy, under the supervision of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician as per the GPhC criteria for registration as a pharmacy technician in Great Britain – January 2021.
- Meet apprenticeship funding rules including minimum residency and visa requirements.
- Be 16 years of age or older (there is no maximum age limit).
- Have appropriate DBS check and references as per the employing organisation's recruitment policies.

Your local NHS England WT&E pharmacy team will be available to provide advice on creating recruitment adverts and job descriptions if required. Apprenticeship providers also support employers with recruitment of PTPTs.

10.5 How many hours will a PTPT work per week?

Due to the requirements of this intensive training programme, PTPTs should be employed on a full-time contract (minimum of 30 hours a week, and a maximum of 40). Time out of their working hours must be given to complete the required off the job training (for apprentices), attend college/complete distance learning and tasks related to their development as a PTPT.

Part-time employment (fewer than 30 hours a week) will be considered on a case-by-case basis, if the GPhC Initial Education and Training Standards can be met and there is no impact on programme attainment. Please note, to comply with apprenticeship funding rules PTPTs employed on a part-time basis will be by exception.

11. Supervision Requirements

11.1 Supervisors

All PTPTs must have a designated educational supervisor who will oversee the training programme and practice supervisors in each placement/rotation. Further information regarding supervision can be found in the GPhC's guidance on supervising pharmacy professionals in training.⁹

Designated educational supervisor

PTPTs must be assigned **ONE** named registered pharmacy professional to act as a designated educational supervisor who has appropriate experience, knowledge and capacity to support the PTPT for duration of the training programme.

To become a pharmacy designated educational supervisor, you must:

- be a registered pharmacy professional with appropriate experience, knowledge and capacity to support the PTPT throughout the duration of their training programme
- meet the GPhC guidance on tutoring and supervising pharmacy professionals in training
- meet the education provider's requirement

The designated educational supervisor should work collaboratively with the practice/clinical supervisors to ensure the overall training programme meets the GPhC's IET standards, monitor the PTPTs progress throughout the training programme and seek feedback for review meetings and appraisals, and final-sign-off for PTPTs.

It is expected that the PTPT will meet their designated educational supervisor at least once a month to ensure holistic care, review progress and provide support to the PTPT.

Can a designated educational supervisor also be a practice/clinical supervisor?

Yes, they can. Although, when they meet with the PTPT they must make it clear what role they are carrying out.

Practice supervisors

A practice supervisor in pharmacy is someone selected, appropriately trained and responsible for overseeing a specified PTPT's work and providing developmental feedback day to day during a period of training. This role requires appropriate assessment skills. Practice supervisors will support PTPTs to identify opportunities for learning in the workplace and

⁹ GPhC Guidance on tutoring and supervising pharmacy professionals in training

provide supervision of PTPTs on a day-to-day basis – identifying PTPTs requiring additional support. Practice supervisors are involved in and contribute to a work-based learning culture.

The GPhC 2017 IET standards require PTPTs to have the opportunity to work with the wider multi-professional team, to reflect the necessary knowledge and skills required of the role. We recognise that on occasion, specific periods of practice supervision may be best placed with others outside of the pharmacy profession, for example, a practice nurse supervising a PTPT counselling on inhaler technique or an experienced prescription clerk supervising a PTPT handling repeat prescription requests. Practice supervisors should ensure that any such activities are planned, and that supervision is undertaken by a suitably trained and experienced individual under the instruction of the designated educational supervisor.

The practice supervisor should meet with the PTPT at the start of a placement/rotation to agree learning outcomes, training and support. They should then meet with the PTPT mid-rotation to provide interim feedback and support and then again at the end of the rotation to give summative feedback.

11.2 Supervision training

Educational frameworks

NHS England WT&E Pharmacy London and Southeast have developed designated educational supervisor¹⁰ and practice supervisor¹¹ frameworks. These can be used as a tool for supervisors to identify the competencies relevant to their role and to demonstrate competence against criteria by mapping their experience to them and identifying learning needs for their role as a designated educational supervisor or practice supervisor.

Supervisor training programmes

Contact your local NHS England WT&E pharmacy team for advice regarding available supervision training. Contact details can be found on page 13.

12. Support for programme development

As well as the financial support offered for being involved in the project, a range of additional support is available. NHS England WT&E will appoint a regional programme facilitator to provide dedicated support. Additionally, partnerships can expect their local NHS England WT&E Pharmacy team to support with:

- Development of a stakeholder network
 - Quarterly group partnerships meetings to share/develop resources, identify potential issues and identify solutions together

¹⁰ Educational Frameworks - Educational Supervisors (ES) Framework

¹¹ Educational Frameworks - Practice Supervisors (PS) Framework

- Resources and templates, e.g. examples of job descriptions, learning plans and placement objectives
- Support/signposting for partnership formation
- Advice for levy transfer (if/where applicable)
- Provide support and feedback, to ensure robust educational infrastructure, quality processes and governance in place
- Tools to support training needs analysis of supervisors

13. Contact Details

Please email your local NHSE England WT&E pharmacy team if you have any questions regarding this programme or the application process.

Regional Office	
East of England	pharmacy.eoe@hee.nhs.uk
London	pharmacy.london@hee.nhs.uk
Midlands	pharmacy.me@hee.nhs.uk
Northeast and Yorkshire	medicinesoptimisation.north@hee.nhs.uk
Northwest	medicinesoptimisation.north@hee.nhs.uk
Southeast	pharmacy.se@hee.nhs.uk
Southwest	Pharmacy.SW@hee.nhs.uk

Appendix 1 Application Question Template

Eol Question	Response
What type of bid are you submitting?	Multi-sector Community pharmacy (single sector)
Number of trainees	
We are anticipating a high volume of submissions for funding which is limited. If you have requested funding for more than one trainee, would you be prepared to accept funding contributions for less trainees?	Yes / No
Employer / System Lead Details If completing this form as part of a system-wide bid, please provide the systems lead's details here and include the employer's details with their partners within the Multi-sector Partnership Details section later on.	
Name of employing/system lead's organisation	
Address	
Contact's forename	
Contact's surname	
Contact's email	
Contact's telephone	
Demonstration of minimum criteria	
Does the application include a pharmacy setting with dispensing services? (E.g. a community pharmacy as a single sector programme, or a multi-sector programme including either a community pharmacy or hospital pharmacy setting).	Yes / No
Can you/the employer support payment of additional costs not covered by the training contribution (e.g. on costs, including pension, salary etc.)?	Yes / No
How much protected time will the trainee be given out each week to attend college and complete activities or learning set by the apprenticeship / knowledge provider?	1 day per week 1 day per week plus 1 hour 1 day per week plus 2 hours 1 day per week plus 3 hours or more
Will the trainee have access to adequate IT and protected space to complete knowledge learning and assessments for duration of the training programme?	Yes / No Provide details
Has a designated educational supervisor been identified, who is a registered pharmacist or pharmacy technician with appropriate experience, knowledge and capacity to support the PTPT for the duration of the training programme? (The name of this individual must be confirmed before the trainee starts, via a data collection form)	Yes / No

Can you confirm you have practice supervision capacity identified for the full 24-month period for each area of work ?	Yes / No
Supporting Information	
Give an overview of your 24-month programme. What training will be completed in the workplace , when and where within the 24-month training period?	(Maximum of 3000 characters)
Give an overview of how your 24-month programme demonstrates training activities to be undertaken within the workplace for final accuracy checking of items dispensed by others, person centred medicines optimisation (including medicines reconciliation), professionalism and leadership.	(Maximum of 3000 characters)
Describe how the PTPT will be supported, and their progress reviewed throughout the training programme.	(Maximum 3000 characters)
Provide a brief overview of the planned educational infrastructure including details of your team's relevant education and training experience and additional information that may support learning experiences for the PTPT.	(Maximum of 3000 characters)
Multi-sector Programme Details (For Multi-sector applications only)	
Multi-sector bids only Please list each of your partner organisations where the PTPT will spend a minimum of 13 weeks per year on a training placement.	For system-wide bids, please clearly identify the employer and their associated partners for each separate partnership below
Multi-sector bids only Does the employer or system lead have an NHS Education Contract in place?	Yes/No
Multi-sector bids only Who will pay the additional costs not covered by the training contribution (e.g. on costs, including pension, salary etc.)?	Employer / Partner organisation / If Other, please specify
Multi-sector bids only Does each placement have a registered pharmacy professional within their organisation?	Yes / No
Multi-sector bids only Select the different sectors in which the trainee will be placed	Ambulance service Care homes Community pharmacy Community services General Practice Health and justice Integrated care system Primary care networks Secondary care

*Characters include spaces. 3000 characters equate to approximately 430 to 700 words.