

Level 7 Apprenticeship Funding Briefing

Background

NHS England (NHSE) and the Department of Health and Social Care have secured a commitment for the **continued funding of Level 7 apprenticeships in five professions** in health and social care until 2029.

These five apprenticeships have been identified as being vital for the delivery of the Government's 10 Year Health Plan and will support the continued professional development of staff to better care for patients and the public. The funding will be delivered through a Level 7 Apprenticeship Mitigation Fund that employers will be able to apply for.

Funding distribution will be across the country and based on workforce need, training provider capacity and the priorities set out in the 10 Year Health Plan. There is a finite amount of money available, and places will therefore be capped.

Available funding

The fund is available to a range of employers including:

- National organisations
- Integrated care boards
- NHS trusts
- Providers of NHS and public health services including:
 - primary care organisations
 - independent providers of NHS or Local Authority commissioned services
 - integrated health and social care organisations
 - third sector charitable providers of NHS or Local Authority commissioned services
 - any other organisation with which the NHS or Local Authority public health has a contract to deliver services.

Eligible apprenticeships

Funding is available for the following Level 7 apprenticeships

- Advanced clinical practitioner
- Specialist community public health nurse
- District nurse (Community Specialist Practice Qualification)
- Clinical associate in psychology (CAP)
- Population health intelligence specialists (PHIS)

Strategic objectives

Through this funding, NHSE and Department of Health and Social Care aims to:

- Support the wider apprenticeship agenda in health and care
- Ensure workforce capacity to support the priorities set out in the 10 Year Health Plan and to align with the future workforce plan, including the move from acute to community
- Contribute to government social mobility and widening access goals including ensuring health and care employers recruit from the communities it serves and particularly considering the needs of working class, coastal and rural communities
- Sustain the opportunities for health and care staff to progress their clinical careers

Eligibility criteria

To receive funding, employers must confirm:

- Sufficient placement and education provider capacity exists in the system
- Apprenticeships complement wider clinical expansion plans for the local system
- Apprentices are aged 22 years and over
- If apprentices are care leavers, they are not under 25
- They can accept payment through the Education Funding Agreement
- They will share start data with NHSE in financial monitoring returns.

Apprentices aged 16-21, care leavers up to age 25, and those with Education, Health and Care Plans will be ineligible as they can still access standard levy funding.

Funding distribution

Funding will be distributed through the Education and Training Activity Programme (ETAP) as a 'Training Grant'.

The expression of interest process will be based on workforce priorities nationally and locally, aligned across Integrated Care Boards and Local Authorities.

How to apply

Timescales and further process details will be provided through NHSE professional and regional leads ASAP on the expressions of interest/application process.

If you have any questions about this, please contact
england.nhsapprenticeships@nhs.net

Further information

For queries about the Level 7 Apprenticeship Mitigation Fund, please contact
england.nhsapprenticeships@nhs.net

Appendix 1 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): Level 7 Apprenticeship Mitigation Fund

General Questions

Q: Why is this funding being made available?

A: The funding will be used to support the continued professional development of staff to better care for patients and the public. Allocations will be targeted to ensure the workforce reflects the communities it serves with more equal distribution of opportunities across e.g. working class, coastal and rural communities to support the delivery of the 10-Year Health Plan for England and its three shifts.

Advanced Clinical Practitioners and specialist community public health nurses and district nurses for example will be important to the move from acute to community and treatment to prevention. They will also form part of the flagship Neighbourhood Health Service outlined in the 10 Year Health Plan.

Q: How long will this funding be available?

A: The funding is currently secured until 2028/29, providing a multi-year commitment to support these important health and care apprenticeships.

Q: Who is eligible to receive this funding?

A: The funding is available to health and care employers, including NHS trusts, primary care organisations, independent providers of NHS and local authority commissioned services, integrated health and social care organisations, local authorities, and third sector charitable providers of NHS and local authority commissioned services.

Funding and application process

Q: How much funding is available per apprentice?

A: Funding is designed to replace what would have been covered by the apprenticeship levy. For example, a Level 7 Advanced Clinical Practitioner apprenticeship typically costs £12,000 delivered over 36 months, equating to approximately £4,000 per year.

Q: Is there a cap on the number of apprenticeships that can be funded?

A: Yes, there is a cap on the total funding allocated by DHSC to NHSE for these five professions. The Expression of Interest process will be based on workforce priorities

nationally and locally aligned across Integrated Care Boards and incorporating Local Authorities.

Q: When is the deadline for applying for funding?

A: Specific timescales will be communicated through NHSE's professional and regional leads. To stay informed, employers and education providers should speak to their regional NHSE lead.

Q: What information do employers need to provide in their application?

A: You'll need to provide details of the number of apprentices for whom funding is requested and their expected start dates. You'll also need to confirm that you meet all eligibility criteria. More details of the EOI process will be published as soon as they are available.

Apprentice eligibility

Q: Are there age restrictions for apprentices under this scheme?

A: This funding is specifically for apprentices aged 22 and over who are not eligible for regular apprenticeship levy funding. Apprentices aged 16-21, care leavers up to age 25, and those with Education, Health and Care Plans can still access standard levy funding.

Q: Can the funding be used for existing apprentices or only new starts?

A: The funding is designed for new apprenticeship starts. Existing apprenticeships will continue to be funded through the Growth and Skills Levy.

Q: Can the funding be used for apprenticeships not listed in the eligible professions?

A: Currently, only the five listed apprenticeships are eligible for funding. In future years, NHSE might set out some limited flexibility to reflect new standards within similar thematic areas. This will be set out in future EOI documentation,

Q. Is there any other eligibility criteria?

A: This fund will be used to support the delivery of the 10-Year Health Plan for England and its three shifts. As such, it will support workforce growth amongst under-represented groups including, but not limited to, those in rural, remote, coastal and working-class areas. To ensure apprentices reflect the communities they serve, regional NHS teams will determine local priorities, details of which will be shared in the application process.

Unfunded apprenticeships

Q. Why are other level 7 apprenticeships not being funded through the mitigation fund?

A. The level 7 apprenticeships in five professions eligible for funding have been identified as those required to support the delivery of the 10-Year Health Plan for England, especially the shift from acute to community, and treatment to prevention.

Q. What are you doing to mitigate the defunding of the senior leader apprenticeship which has had over 8,000 starts in the last five years?

A. The NHS Leadership Academy's Elizabeth Garrett Anderson programme is currently being delivered by academic training providers as a level 7 senior leader apprenticeship. We are working closely with our delivery partners to explore alternative options that allow us to continue to offer the programme.

Implementation

Q: How will the funding be paid to employers?

A: Funding will be paid as a 'Training Grant' through the Education and Training Activity Programme (ETAP) via the Education Funding Agreement held between NHSE and employing organisations.

Q: What reporting requirements will there be for employers receiving this funding?

A: Employers will need to complete financial returns confirming the funding has been spent on eligible apprenticeships. They'll need to report start and end dates, training provider information, and planned versus actual starts.

Support and guidance

Q: Who should I contact if I have questions about the funding or application process?

A: Please contact your regional NHSE apprenticeship lead or email england.nhsapprenticeships@nhs.net for specific guidance and support.

Q: Will there be any support provided to help employers through the application process?

A: Yes, NHSE's National Apprenticeship Team and Regional Leads will provide advice, guidance, and support throughout the Expression of Interest process.