

East of England

# Advanced Practice Strategy

2024/25 – 2026/27

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## Background/Introduction

The NHS is facing considerable pressures associated with significant waiting times, an aging population with multiple co-morbidities, increasing healthcare costs, and substantial under resourcing ([BMA, 2023](#)). The [2019 NHS Long Term Plan](#) and [NHS People Plan 2020/21](#) signalled how advanced practice roles can significantly help in meeting the short and long-term workforce demands and have the ability to drive the workforce transformation agenda forward.

[The NHS 2023 Long Term Workforce Plan](#) (LTWP) articulates the continued drive to develop the advancing practice workforce as part of the multi-disciplinary team. Recognising the impact these roles can have not only on improving patient care but increasing the number of senior clinical decision makers within the NHS to improve productivity and increase capacity. The plan acknowledges the role advanced practitioners have in supporting and driving service transformation and developing new and innovative ways of working. It also recognises the importance of retaining our experienced senior staff and enabling career development where staff feel valued, entrusted and have the knowledge, skills and capability to provide high quality, safe, effective care for our patients and their families.

The Regional Faculty for Advancing Practice investment is aligned to the NHS England Workforce, Training and Education Delivery Plan, NHS People Plan, NHS Long Term Plan and NHS Long Term Workforce Plan to ensure that across the east of England our development is responsive to system needs and will deliver the right number of staff, with the right skills, values and behaviours, at the right time and in the right place. To grow our advanced practice workforce, we will continue to work in collaboration with our Integrated Care Board partners, organisations, and Higher Educational Institutes to identify workforce demand, enable the transformation of patient care and invest in workforce education and training development.

This strategy has been developed to outline, how as a region, we will work collaboratively to identify known barriers and how best to mitigate against these to enable us to meet the LTWP advanced practice workforce ambitions.

## What is Advanced Practice

Advanced Practice is delivered by experienced, registered health care practitioners. It is a level of practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making in uncertain situations and within a practitioner's own scope of practice. This level of practice must be underpinned by a post graduate master's level award or equivalent that encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education, and research, with demonstration of area specific clinical competence. The [Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England \(2017\)](#) provides a clear definition and consistent approach to the development of advanced practice across England. All health and care

professionals working at an advanced practice level should ensure that their knowledge and skills meet the standards outlined within the framework.

*‘Advanced clinical practice is delivered by accomplished registered health and care professionals. It is a level of practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy and designated responsibility for complex decision making. This is underpinned by a post-registration master’s level award or equivalent undertaken by an experienced practitioner that encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education, and research.*

*Advanced practice embodies the ability to manage care in partnership with individuals, families, and carers. It includes the analysis and synthesis of complex problems, and management of clinical risk and uncertainty across a range of settings, enabling innovative solutions to expedite access to care, optimise people’s experience and improve outcomes’.*

**Definition of advanced level practice, NHS England Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England (2025)**

## Education and training requirements

NHS England minimum standards of education for trainee and qualified advanced practitioners is a post graduate master’s in advanced practice. Full information about the regional faculty’s application and eligibility criteria to access NHS England advanced practice training grants can be found in the [‘East of England advancing practice stakeholder guidance document 2024/25’](#).

NHS England Centre for Advancing Practice ePortfolio (supported) route has also been established to provide recognition of prior education and training equivalence for practitioners already working at an advanced level. Further information regarding the eligibility criteria and application process can be accessed on the [Centre for Advancing Practice website](#)

## Long Term Workforce Plan growth

The 2023 NHS Long-Term Workforce Plan indicates that a significant increase in the advanced practitioner workforce is required to meet the current and future demands of the NHS. The growth outlined is ambitious, and to meet the 39,000 advanced practitioners required by 2031/32, all seven regions will need to support the national ambition of 5,000 new trainees starting on programmes by 2028, increasing to 6,300 each year by 2031/32.

Figure 1, outlines the trainee growth required across the East of England to meet the LTWP ambition, Figure 2 outlines the growth required across the 6 Integrated Care Boards.

Figure 1 East of England trainee advanced practitioner growth required to meet Long-term Workforce Plan ambition.

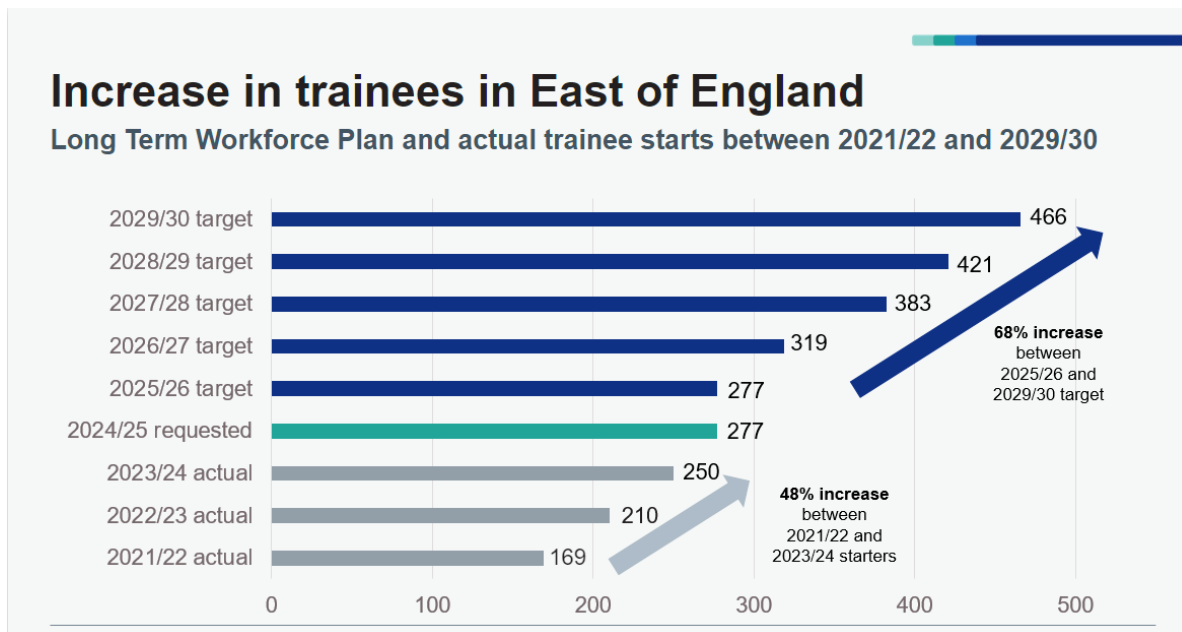
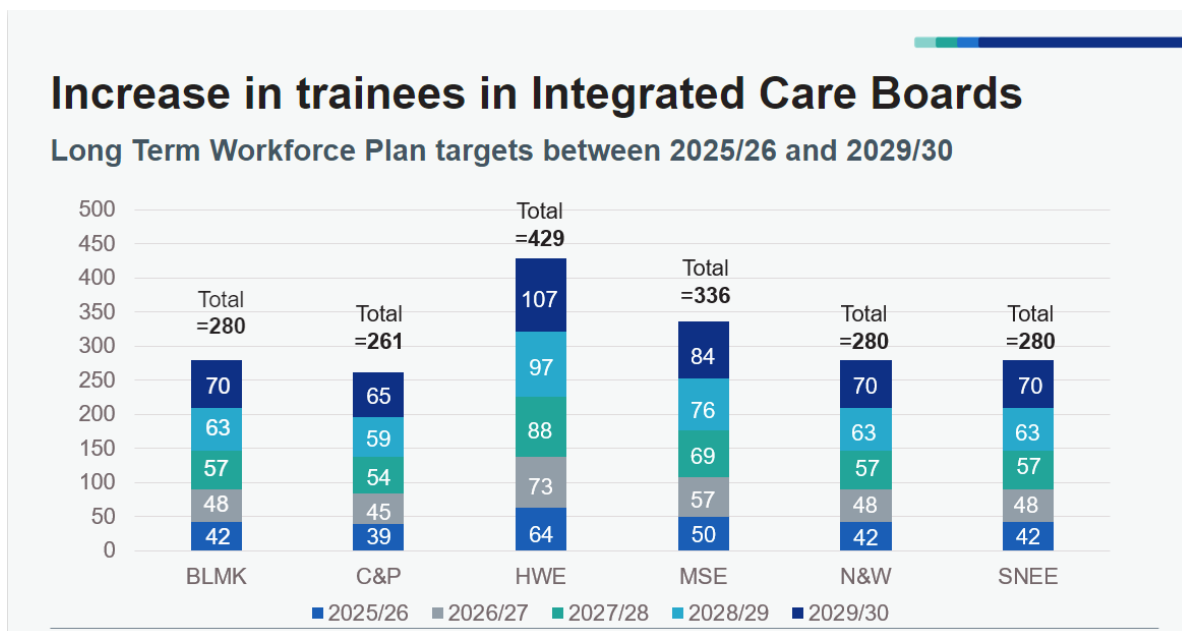


Figure 2 East of England trainee advanced practitioner growth required per Integrated Care Board to meet long-term Workforce Plan ambition.



Detailed reports on the current East of England trainee and Advanced Practice workforce can be accessed below.

- [Overview of the advanced practice workforce in the East of England 2023/24](#)
- [Equality, diversity and inclusion in advanced practice training in the East of England](#)

## Known benefits of advance practice roles

- Ability to retain valued, experienced staff and realise the full scope of practice within and across each profession.
- Support teams to increase multi-disciplinary team senior clinical decision-making capability and capacity.
- Release time for more experienced clinical professionals to provide training and care delivery only they can do.
- Increase person centred care, focusing on self-care, pre and rehabilitation with the aim of maintaining independence and supporting people to remain at home.
- Support workforce and service redesign and transformation.
- Reduce spend on bank / agency to increase continuity of staff with organisational knowledge which has shown to increase patient safety and productivity.
- Demonstrates organisational investment in the career development of own staff
- Increase capacity to supervise and develop multiprofessional workforce.

## Current barriers to advanced practice workforce growth

- Significant financial constraints that limit organisational and ICB funding for advanced practitioner roles upon qualification.
- Organisational and workforce structure (Traditional Vs Agile)
- Challenge to train, retain and reform our workforce as per [NHS Long Term Workforce Plan \(2023\)](#) including prioritisation of Apprenticeship pathways and minimum standards of supervision.

### Culture of:

- Siloed workforce planning based on profession, place & pathway
  - Near horizon short term plans
  - Insufficient resources within ICBs and organisations to review and **Reform** workforce with a view to build blended teams that optimise skills & embed new roles including Advanced Level Practitioners
- Regional multiprofessional supervision capacity to support and train LTWP advanced practitioner growth.
  - National education capacity, (Regionally this is not a known risk, regional HEI MSc Advanced Practice programme leads have all indicated that they can support the LTWP trainee growth).

The barriers outlined are not East of England specific, all seven regions are reporting similar issues and barriers and are seeing a reduction in organisational demand and utilisation of NHS England advanced practice training grants.

# Advancing Practice Strategy for the East of England

We will promote and support the development of a multi-professional advanced practice workforce that meets the needs of the people that we serve across our region. We will continue to showcase the significant impact trainee, advanced and consultant level practitioners have on the delivery of high quality patient care as well as ensuring we develop a culture where our advanced practitioners' experience, expertise and professionalism is recognised and valued.

The key priorities identified as part of the East of England strategy concentrate on developing and implementing system wide collaborative workforce planning and effective business case development, recognising that any additional funding to support the LTWP will not be available until 2025/26.

## **1. We will support systems with workforce planning and transformation.**

This will include:

- challenging and supporting for the inclusion of advanced practitioner roles in the regional annual round of system workforce planning
- support organisations to identify key priority areas where advanced practitioners could impact service delivery and patient care and facilitate business case development. The faculty will continue to disseminate the ['Advancing Practice in Emerging Areas Workforce Transformation Resource'](#) to support this
- support systems to ensure ESR / NWRS data accurately records practitioners working at an advanced level, to support effective workforce planning. This will involve the faculty sharing national data entry requirements and providing reports to organisations / ICBs from the NHS England quality tool
- supporting the multi-year system education planning managed at a regional level, working with systems and organisations to understand educational demand and actual utilisation to inform future submissions. The faculty will continue to undertake its current application processes to ensure robust eligibility criteria and governance remains in place to monitor appropriate return on investment
- supporting organisations to understand the level of advanced practice and the impact the roles have on service and workforce transformation. This will include continuing to update and develop relevant guidance documents, supporting stakeholder system and regional network and strategy meetings , continue to support practitioner recognition through funding advanced practice MSc training and supporting uptake of the ePortfolio (supported) Route

## **2. We will support organisations and ICBs to ensure that robust governance is developed and implemented.** This will include:

- working with the Advanced Practice ICB Faculties to ensure all organisations have, or are developing, robust governance frameworks utilising the Centre



for Advancing Practice 'Governance maturity matrix'. Confirming clear lines of accountability and responsibility from trainee to Trust Board to ensure safe effective care for patients and their families.

- continuing to advocate for the need of named ICB and organisational Advanced Practice Leads, recognising the significant impact they have on governance and supporting NHS England and systems to achieve all other priorities outlined in this strategy document
  - continue to support programme accreditation and undertake annual quality monitoring reviews and exception reporting in line with the Centre for Advancing practice governance processes. We will also work with services and HEIs to ensure area specific capabilities are embedded within programmes to ensure that we have the educational provision that meets the needs of the systems.
  - continue to review and provide support and clarity to organisations on the impact of advanced practice regulation on workforce development. The faculty will continue to provide feedback and be part of the NMC stakeholder engagement events relating to advanced practice regulation
3. **We will work with systems and organisations to ensure a fair representation of trainee advanced practitioners from an EDI background.** The faculty will provide annual reports that outline trainee advanced practitioner EDI, profession and speciality data. We will continue to advocate for fair recruitment processes and continue to develop case studies and work with the national advanced practice inclusivity group to identify and reduce barriers for practitioners from an EDI background progressing into advanced practice roles.
4. **We will continue to promote NETS.** The faculty will continue to encourage increased uptake from trainee advanced practitioners. We will review the results and work with organisations where quality improvements are required, as well as showcasing and sharing best practice when identified.
5. **We will continue to support ICB / organisation to build multi-professional supervision capacity across the region.** The faculty will continue to support consistent and high-quality protected supervision time via the advanced practice training grant and continue to disseminate the Centre for Advancing Practice supervision guidance documents. We will develop regional supervisor training documents to support supervisor development, thus increasing capacity of a multiprofessional workforce who understand and support the specific requirements of advanced practice.

## Measurement of success through quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The faculty will collate and report on the following:



What is being measured	Measurement of success
Number of trainee advanced practitioners starting on accredited MSc Advanced Practice programmes, (quarterly reports)	The number of advanced practitioners starting on programmes increases each finance year
Annual analysis of the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) data of trainees to review if the diversity of the workforce is representative of the talent available and the community being served, (yearly report)	Protected characteristics of current advanced practice trainees approximately reflect the demographics of the general population at a system and regional level.
Number of Advanced Practitioners in post across the region, (yearly report)	The number of advanced practitioners in post increases each finance year
Number of ICB and Organisational Advanced Practice leads in post, (quarterly reports)	Each ICB and organisation having an advanced practice lead in post
Number of organisations that have robust governance frameworks that include advanced level practice, (quarterly reports)	Each organisation has an advanced practice governance framework
Organisational and ICB workforce plans that include Advanced Practice roles, (yearly report)	All ICBs submit workforce plans that include the consideration of advanced practice roles
NETS, % uptake and survey feedback, (yearly report)	Survey uptake increases each finance year. Number of low-scoring outliers is 0
Number of accredited MSc Advanced Practice programmes and area specific capability programmes available across the regional HEIs, (quarterly reports)	Each regional advanced practice programme has been accredited. Number of HEIs offering specific capability programmes increases each finance year, in line with provider demand and HEI speciality

Support ICB / Organisation to build multi-professional supervision capacity across the region, (quarterly reports)

Number of experienced advanced practitioners who are supervising trainees increasing each finance year