NHS England North West

Advanced Practice in the North West Region



A guide to implementing Advanced Practice and funding: 2027-2028



Foreword



This North West guidance is to support organisations in the region to develop advanced practice across services and to help grow and sustain the advanced practice workforce of the future.

Our investment in advanced practice is strategically aligned with the NHS England Business Plan, the NHS People Plan, and the NHS 10-year Health Plan. Across the North West, this ensures our workforce development is responsive to system needs: delivering the right people, with the right skills, values, and behaviours, in the right place and at the right time to provide high-quality care.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with Integrated Care Systems, provider organisations, and NHS England teams to identify workforce demand, support care transformation, and invest wisely in education and training. Central to this is our focus on quality: supporting accredited advanced practice programmes, strengthening supervision, and embedding robust standards across all aspects of training.

The Lord Darzi report reinforces the urgency of adopting multidisciplinary models of care and innovative approaches to meet population health needs sustainably. Advanced Practitioners play a vital role in transforming care delivery. Their continued, quality-assured growth across all scopes of practice will strengthen services in community, primary, and secondary care.

We are grateful to all our internal and external partners for their continued engagement in this important work. We look forward to building the future workforce together making a difference for our region.

Annabella Gloster
Regional Advanced Practice Lead,

NHS England NW Advanced Practice

Advanced Practice across the North West

The North West Faculty for Advancing Practice was established during the latter part of 2020 to drive pioneering workforce transformation for advanced practice at a regional level, recognising the impact that advanced practitioners can have on workforce transformation, providing highly skilled care that can drive service redesign, enhance patient care, and improve outcomes. NHS England continues to lead on advanced practice at a regional level.



North west

1. Lancashire and South Cumbria
2. Greater Manchester
3. Cheshire and Merseyside

Vision

A future where advanced practitioners are integral to the design and delivery of every care pathway and system where they can make a positive contribution to transforming services and improving patient care

Purpose

- To provide system-level leadership for advanced practice workforce development
- To grow and support the development of a multi-professional workforce by funding and assuring high quality education and training
- Support effective advanced practice workforce planning in the short and longer term, at system, regional and national levels, through timely access to accurate advanced practice workforce supply and demand data and intelligence
- Commission high quality education and training in partnership with HEIs and other partners contributing to national targets
- Optimise workplace training, supervision and assessment
- Availability of accurate data and activity monitoring of regional advanced practice activity
- Ensure quality of practice learning is fully understood and assurance of all commissioned programmes, supporting accreditation by the Centre for Advancing Practice

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Annual Funding Timeline

Milestone	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27	Feb-27	Mar-27	Apr-27	May-27	Jun-27	Jul-27	Aug-27	Sep-27	Oct-27	Nov-27	Dec-27	Jan-28
NHSE NW Advanced Practice launch funding															
Funding application closes															
Funding application request being reviewed - Queries sent to organisations															
Offer letter sent from original applications															
Late submission launch - This will be targeted at speciality areas															
Deadline for organisations to accept / decline offer from original applications															
Organisations recruitment process in place															
Late submission funding application closes															
Offer letter sent for late submission															
Request for trainee information (Autumn intake)															
Deadline for trainee information to be submitted (Autumn intake)															
Welcome email including trainee data collection form (Autumn trainees)															
Request for trainee information (Spring intake)															
Deadline for trainee information (Spring intake)															
Welcome email including trainee data collection form (Spring trainees)															

Section 1 Advanced Practitioners in the Workforce

What is an Advanced Practitioner?

NHS England NW Advanced Practice will support the provision of advanced practice education and workforce development which is consistent with the national definition of advanced practice contained in the Multi professional framework for advanced practice in England:

> "Advanced Practice (AP) 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. This is underpinned by a master's level award or equivalent that encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education and research, with demonstration of core capabilities and area specific clinical competence.
>
> Advanced Practice (AP) embodies the ability to manage clinical care in partnership with individuals, families and carers. It includes the analysis and synthesis of complex problems across a range of settings, enabling innovative solutions to enhance people's experience and improved outcomes."

An NHS England recognised Advanced Practitioner is a statutory registered healthcare professional whose role is characterised by a high degree of autonomy, complex decision making, analysis and synthesis of complex problems, and the ability to complete whole episodes of care. They work at level 7 across all 4 pillars of Advanced Practice, meeting the capabilities outlined in the Multi-Professional Framework, in line with their service requirements and local population needs.
The four pillars that underpin practice are:

- Clinical Practice
- Leadership and Management
- Education
- Research

These short animation videos demonstrate the pillars – link.

How do I know if I need an Advanced Practitioner role in my service?

For successful delivery of high-quality services that are focused on meeting the person or population need, it is important that a structured workforce modelling and planning process is used to identify where advanced practice will have the greatest impact in a person's journey through health and care pathways, and the types of roles that may exist or need to be developed.

Many workforce planning and modelling tools exist which will support understanding of the needs of the population and how to build a workforce to meet those needs.

How do I develop an Advanced Practitioner role?

The Advanced Practice (AP) Lead in the organisation should be aware of staff currently working in advanced practice roles and provide advice of how they may transform services. In order to establish AP roles, a business case will be required for this investment considering the population and system need. Job descriptions should be mapped to the Multi-Professional Framework for AP in England and job plans should support the four pillars of advanced practice.

The South West have developed the Emerging Areas Resource which is deigned to be implemented locally by organisations. It aims to support and standardise the approach to workforce transformation for advanced practice in new and emerging areas. The resource will guide teams through workforce transformation principles that will support the development of advance practice roles, which are planned and designed to address local service needs.

The NHS England Centre for Advancing Practice acknowledges that robust governance is essential to ensuring the safe, effective, and sustainable integration of advanced practitioners within the workforce. To help organisations evaluate and strengthen their governance frameworks, the Centre has developed the Governance Maturity Matrix, while the NW Advanced Practice team has created the Primary Care Readiness Checklist—a self-assessment tool designed to support ongoing improvement. Further details on governance in advanced practice are available in the Governance section of the Centre's website.

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Section 2 Commitments required for AP Training

What commitment is expected of a trainee AP while studying?

Trainees are expected to attend scheduled teaching sessions delivered by their education provider, apply clinical skills within their workplace, and complete workplace-based assessments aligned with the NHS England Multi-Professional Framework for Advanced Practice in England.

They must also engage in regular meetings with their supervisor to plan their individual learning objectives and review their progress. In addition, a significant commitment to independent study is required to successfully achieve the qualification.

Trainees must notify NHS England NW Advanced Practice of any changes to their programme, supervisor, employer, or expected completion date by submitting a Change in Circumstances form. If there is any uncertainty about whether a change should be reported, it is advisable to submit the form as a precaution.

Additionally, trainees are expected to engage in quality assurance activities, such as completing the National Education and Training Survey (NETS) on an annual basis.

How much time will the trainee Advanced Practitioner require for the MSc programme?

The education provider programme lead will provide information on the total amount of university days required, as this varies depending on the education provider chosen and the length of the MSc programme.

What commitment does the trainee require from the employer?

Employers are expected to support the trainee(s) to meet the requirements of the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice programmes as per HEI (Higher Education Institute) requirements. The employer will provide the trainee with sufficient time for attending taught sessions at the HEI, time to meet their supervisor regularly and time for work-based learning each week. The HEI programme lead will provide information on the total amount of study days required. It is important that AP trainees have sufficient work-based learning time to develop their advanced skills.

Advanced Practice trainees must receive a minimum of one hour of supervision each week throughout their training. Supervisors should have this time appropriately reflected in their job plans, with support available through the training grant to facilitate delivery. All supervisors are expected to understand and comply with the standards outlined in the NHS England Advanced Practice Workplace Supervision – Minimum Standards for Supervision document

How many hours does the trainee need to be employed for?

AP Trainees will be contracted to work a minimum number of 30 hours in order to meet the requirements of the programme and to meet apprenticeship requirements.

What supervision is required?

Trainees require a supervisor in practice who will oversee and coordinate their work-based learning which will require time to meet with them regularly to plan their individual educational needs and monitor their progress.

Good supervision is a key factor for successful completion of training and trainees who are not well supervised can struggle and withdraw from the programme. Each trainee AP requires a named supervisor who has completed training in multi-professional supervision and is familiar with the requirements of advanced clinical practice. Supervisors must be willing and have protected time (in their job plan) to support the trainee. Trainees will need time to meet their supervisor regularly to plan their individual educational needs and monitor their progress. The requirements of supervisors are explained in more detail in the Workplace Supervision for Advanced Clinical Practice document, and NHS England supervision resources.

Section 3 NHS England funding

NHS England North West Advanced Practice support the development of Advanced Practice roles for workforce transformation by funding educational routes allocated to employers to address their population/service need. Funding for the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice is **not available** for individual/s' continuing professional development.

What are the conditions of receiving funding?

An application for funding must meet the criteria below:

- Substantive organisational funding arrangements must be in place to ensure that an appropriate Advanced Practice post will be available with the employer once the trainees have successfully completed their training.
- A named trainee with an identified educational coordinating supervisor (both must be supplied prior to the start of programme) of which neither are under investigation or subject to restrictions on their practice.
- Employing organisations are required to complete the Centre for Advancing Practice Governance Maturity Matrix (before submitting an application or if previously submitted provide an annually updated version) or the Primary Care Readiness Checklist (for primary care) to ensure the trainee can be fully supported.
- Once funding has been approved, organisations must not alter start dates, funding route, change education providers or change the service area without prior authorisation from NHS England. Any changes made without approval will result in the employer being responsible for any associated financial consequences.
- Any changes in a trainee's circumstances must be reported to NHS England at the earliest opportunity to ensure continuity of funding through the change in circumstance process.
- Trainees are required to engage with and complete NHS England forms which include: Trainee Data Collection form; Trainee annual progress monitoring form, Supervisor annual progress monitoring form, NETS, and Trainee Completion of Advanced Practice Training form. The provider must confirm status of trainees on request.

What is the NW funding offer for Autumn 27 - Spring 28?

NHS England is supporting the development of Advanced Practitioner roles in 27/28 with the following different funding models. For all options below the individual trainee must meet the academic requirements set by each HEI in addition to the requirements for a training role.

Please note: If an individual has previously completed part of the required training, and the remaining training is reduced through Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), please refer to the section below.

1. **ACP Apprenticeship programmes –** Following the withdrawal of funding for Level 7 apprenticeship programmes, NHS England has secured alternative funding that enables employers to directly cover the cost of apprenticeship programmes with HEIs. Please note that this funding is part of a nationally secured mitigation fund specifically for ACP. In addition to covering HEI apprenticeship fees, NHS England will also provide employers with an education and training grant to support the trainee's development, as outlined in the table below.

   There is a nationally set allocation for these places. If the number of requests exceeds the regional allocation, applications will be offered a place on the ACP MSc (fees-paying) route instead.

2. **ACP MSc – Funding for tuition fees** for a period of up to three years for an Advanced Clinical Practice MSc. NHS England will pay the full tuition costs plus an education training grant. The education and training grant is paid directly to the employer, as outlined in the table below.

3. **ACP Area Specific Frameworks** – There are a number of Centre endorsed area-specific frameworks in development that meet workforce development needs in high-priority areas. NHS England will consider funding these as an addition to the ACP MSc to meet the specialised training needs of your workforce as these become available.

Accreditation of Prior Learning / Recognition of Prior Learning (APL / RPL)

Some education providers may permit trainees to Accredit Prior Learning (APL) by awarding credits for previously completed modules. As this is determined at the discretion of the individual provider, trainees must discuss and obtain agreement from their chosen education provider before commencing the programme.

If a trainee's programme duration is shortened due to **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)** meaning they've already completed relevant learning or experience, the following will typically happen:

1. **NHSE Training Grant**: The financial support provided by NHS England may be reviewed and adjusted to reflect the shorter training period.
2. **HEI Tuition Fees**: The fees charged by the HEI may also be reassessed individually and normally reduced to match the revised end date of the programme.

This ensures that funding aligns fairly with the actual length of training required.

What is the Education Training Grant?

The educational training grant is to ensure there is infrastructure around the trainee which enables their supported learning in practice. Examples include to:

- enable regular clinical supervision between trainee and supervisor
- develop robust governance structures for the training, supervision, and development of advanced practitioner's posts
- develop in-house educational resources to support advanced practitioners' development
- enable trainees to attend and present at local/national conferences
- provide sufficient study leave to attend university taught sessions and protected time for work-based learning per week
- trainees have a minimum of one hour supervision per week by an appropriately trained supervisor and a minimum of £2,600 per year of the educational training grant used to support the funding for supervisory support.

Course Pathway	Tuition fees	Education Training Grant	HEI preference
Apprenticeship Pathway	Paid by NHS England to the employer via the EFA. The employer will need to pay the HEI for the apprenticeship tuition costs	**A total of £24K*** • Monthly amount calculated pro rata according to programme duration • NHS Trusts are paid via the Education Funding Agreement (EFA) • Non NHS Trusts are paid through invoicing NHS England. More details in Section 7 • NB: £2,600 is used per year from the educational training grant for supervisory support	Must be on the preferred supplier list Section 6
Fees Paid Pathway	Paid by NHS England directly to the Education Provider		
Specialist one year programme: Neonatal Advanced Practice	Paid by NHS England directly to the Education Provider	**A total of £15k** • Monthly amount calculated pro rata according to programme duration • NHS Trusts are paid via the Education Funding Agreement (EFA) • Non NHS Trusts are paid through invoicing NHS England. More details in Section 7 • NB: £2,600 is used per year from the educational training grant for supervisory support	
Area specific frameworks	To be determined per area-specific framework	To be determined per area-specific framework	Supplier list to be determined by the Centre Area-specific frameworks

* To be confirmed

What are the employers' responsibilities for the apprenticeship route?

There are various apprenticeship rules that must be adhered to by the employer and the apprenticeship training provider. These include:

- The apprentice must be employed with you.
- The apprentice must be able to complete the apprenticeship within the time they have available.
- Apprentices should not be asked to contribute financially to the cost of training, on programme or end-point assessment (this includes where the individual has completed the programme successfully or left the programme early).
- Apprentices must not use a student loan to pay for their apprenticeship.
- Apprentices must spend at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship.
- Apprentices must have the right to work in England and have an eligible residency status.
- The job the apprentice is doing must have a productive purpose and should provide the apprentice with the opportunity to embed and consolidate the knowledge, skills and behaviours gained through the apprenticeship.
- As an employer you must allow the apprentice time to complete their programme of study and allow them access to opportunities to enable them to develop through their job role.
- As an employer you must ensure the apprentice has a suitable contract that covers the duration of their apprenticeship (including end point assessment).
- The cost of the apprentice's wages must be met by the employer.
- Apprentices must complete their apprenticeship (including any training) during paid working hours.
- Apprentices must spend at least 20% of their working hours doing OTJ training.
- The apprentice must work enough hours each week so that they can undertake sufficient regular training and on-the-job activity - this is to ensure the apprentice is likely to successfully complete their apprenticeship.
- The apprentice must have appropriate support and supervision on the job, by the employer, to carry out their job role and their apprenticeship.
- Further information about employer and apprenticeship training provider responsibilities can be found on the Government Website: ESFA Funding Rules.
- Further information about apprenticeships can be found at the HASO Website.

Section 5 NHSE funding request process

Below is the table of key dates of the annual funding request application process:

Stage	Launch date	Closing date for submission	Funding offers	Applications to Higher Education Institutions	Trainee and Supervisor names provided
Funding request	Mid November 2026	26 February 2027	Early April 2027	**Cohort September 2027** April 2027 – End of June 2027	**Cohort September 2027** August 2027
Late Submissions (by invitation only to align to identified priority areas)	Mid-late April 2027	4 June 2027	Mid June 2027	**Cohort January and March 2028** April 2027 – onwards	**Cohort January and March 2028** December 2027

NB: The late submission list is not guaranteed if all funding has been allocated. There is no wait list process for 27/28

Prior to submission you need to ensure the following is in place:

- there has been an identified service/local population need for the development of an Advanced Practitioner
- the role on qualification, links directly to the key principles in NHS England Multi-professional Framework for Advanced Practice in England (2025)
- a business case or equivalent has been approved for the funding of a substantive Advanced Practice Level role on qualification
- a positive learning environment with a named identified supervisor and agreed supervision plan (providing at least one hour supervision per week)
- a unified learning environment (ULE) agreement must be in place for primary care (at least 3 months prior to trainee starting)
- the employer has an identified Lead for Advanced Practice or an accountable person for the workforce

NHS England NW Advanced Practice can guide your organisation in embedding the appropriate governance required to receive NHS England funding for ACP MSc programme for further information please contact england.acp.nw@nhs.net

Where do I go to submit my funding request:

Primary Care (not including NHS Trusts), Private and Independent, Voluntary Organisations

- please access all our information and application form on our webpage

Primary Care services can contact their local Primary Care Training Hub. You can access their websites below:

  - Cheshire and Merseyside Training Hub
  - Greater Manchester Training Hub
  - Lancashire and South Cumbria Training Hub

NHS Trusts

- This must be submitted by the designated Advanced Practice Lead for the organisation. Please contact your AP Lead. If you are unaware of who this is, please contact us at: england.acp.nw@nhs.net

Section 6 Higher Education Institutes (HEI) and their application process

Which HEIs can individuals study at?

NHS England funds Centre for Advancing Practice accredited MSc ACP programmes. A full list of those accredited can be found here. NHS England is currently going through a procurement exercise which will result in a definitive framework of Universities with whom we can commission education programmes.

If the employer/service is offered NHSE funding what are the next steps:

NHS England will provide you with the next steps within the funding offer email. This will include steps of contacting the Programme Lead of the HEI to agree tri-partite recruitment. The HEI will advise of their admissions process requirements.

NHS England supplier list

The information provided below is as accurate as when written but may change due to the procurement exercise:

HEI	Pathway Apprenticeship/ Fees Funded	ACP Course Programme Title and link to course	Autumn or Spring	Cohort Start date	Cohort Duration (months)
Edge Hill University	Apprenticeship & Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Clinical Practice	Autumn	Sep 27	36
Liverpool John Moores University	Apprenticeship Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Clinical Practice MSc Advanced Clinical Practice	Autumn	Sep 27	24
Manchester Metropolitan University	Apprenticeship	MSc Advanced Clinical Practitioner	Autumn & Spring	Sep 27 Jan 28	24 36

HEI	Pathway Apprenticeship/ Fees Funded	ACP Course Programme Title and link to course	Autumn or Spring	Cohort Start date	Cohort Duration (months)
University of Greater Manchester	Apprenticeship & Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Pathways in: (Acute) (Geriatric) (Mental Health) (Oncology) (Primary Care) (Respiratory)	Autumn & Spring	Sep 27 Jan 28	24 24
University of Lancashire	Apprenticeship & Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Clinical Practitioner	Autumn & Spring	Sep 27 Jan 28	24 24
University of Chester	Apprenticeship & Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Clinical Practice	Autumn & Spring	Sep 27 March 28	36 36
University of Cumbria	Apprenticeship & Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Clinical Practice	Autumn Autumn	Sep 27 Sep 27	36 36
University of Manchester	Fees Funded	Advanced Clinical Practice (Paediatrics) MSc	Autumn	Sep 27	36

HEI	Pathway Apprenticeship/ Fees Funded	ACP Course Programme Title and link to course	Autumn or Spring	Cohort Start date	Cohort Duration (months)
University of Salford	Apprenticeship	Advanced Clinical Practitioner degree apprenticeship Pathways in (Mental Health) (Critical Care) – ACCP (FICM accredited) (Primary Care)	Autumn	Sep 27	24 plus end point assessment
	Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Pathways in (Mental Health) (Critical Care) (Primary Care)	Autumn	Sep 27	24
	Fees funded (full-time)	MSc Advanced Practice (Neonates)	Autumn	Sept 27	12

Specialist

HEI	Pathway Apprenticeship/ Fees Funded	ACP Course Programme Title	Autumn or Spring	Cohort Start date	Cohort Duration (months)
Sheffield Hallam University	Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Practice in Non-Surgical Oncology Distance Learning	Autumn	Sep 27	36
University of Bradford	Fees Funded	MSc in Advanced Clinical Practice (Radiography)	Spring	Jan 28	36
University of Huddersfield	Fees Funded	Master of Podiatric Surgery (Advanced Clinical Practice)	Autumn	Sep 27	36
University of Sheffield	Fees Funded	Ophthalmology Advanced Clinical Practice (Paediatrics)	Autumn	Sep 27	36

How NHS England Education Training Grant will be paid

NHS England pay in **arrears** and payment is based on a validation process to confirm the individual has enrolled onto the programme and has been training. Payment is completed differently depending on the employer

- NHS Trusts – this will be paid directly to the Trust from NHS England through the Education Funding Agreement (EFA) with the agreed yearly finance schedule. Please contact your Advanced Practice Lead to understand how this is transferred to your service budget.

- Non NHS Trusts – the organisation will be contacted directly with an invite to invoice. This may be by your local Primary Care Training Hub. The total education training grant will be split by the programme duration (in months) and will be paid for the number of months linked to each payment schedule below:

Earliest Payment Dates	The months the payment aligns to:	For example, total number of months that will be paid for September 26 start
Mid February 2028	August - October 2027	2 months (due to commencement being September 26)
Mid July 2028	November 2027 - February 2028	4 months
Mid November 2028	March – July 2028	5 months

Note - This timeline is the same each academic year until the completion of the programme. This may be subject to change. Any changes will be communicated to all parties involved.

NHS England
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Please use england.acp.nw@nhs.net
For all enquiries relating to advanced practice