

Community Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship Programme 2024

Guidance for contractors



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Aim of the programme

The Community Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship Programme will support the growth and transformation of the community pharmacy workforce by funding a cohort of pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians (PTPTs) employed in a community pharmacy.

The key drivers for developing the pharmacy technician workforce in community pharmacy is supported in the following policies and national initiatives:

- The [NHS Long Term Workforce plan](#).
- The [Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care](#) outlines ambitions to expand the oral contraception and blood pressure services in community pharmacy, coupled with HMRC's confirmation that services provided by pharmacy technicians are exempt from VAT.
- NHS England independent prescribing pathfinder projects: piloting innovative new services and the potential for new roles for the whole pharmacy team.
- Increasing clinical services provided by community pharmacy.
- Recent review of legislation:
 - The consultation on the proposal for the use of patient group directions (PGDs) by pharmacy technicians
 - The consultation on pharmacy supervision as defined in the Medicines Act

Completion of the 24-month apprenticeship programme will enable PTPTs to register as pharmacy technicians with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC).

Funding offer

NHS England is offering a financial training contribution of £15,053 per PTPT per year for 2 years.

This is to support sites in developing an employer-led, work-based training programme that meets GPhC initial education and training (IET) [standards for pharmacy technicians](#) and the Health Education England (HEE) [quality framework](#) (accessed via the National School of Healthcare Science website).

The work-based training programme will be completed alongside the education, training and assessments set by the apprenticeship provider.

This offer is available for new PTPTs only, who are not yet enrolled onto a PTPT training programme. To receive the offer, the PTPT must undertake the [Pharmacy Technician Integrated Apprenticeship](#) (accessed via the Institute for Apprenticeships website).

Payment will be made directly to pharmacy contractors via the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBA) Manage Your Service (MYS) portal to the contractor's account. Other payment methods are not available for this funding offer.

Applications from multiple site community pharmacy chains are welcomed but will be capped at 22 posts nationally. Multiple site community pharmacy chains will need to list where PTPTs will be based when applying for funding.

PTPTs will need to be enrolled onto and have started the apprenticeship training programme by Friday 28 February 2025.

Who can apply for this funding?

This funding offer is only available to community pharmacies in England with an NHSBSA MYS account.

Contractor training responsibilities

The employer is the contractor. By accepting NHS England funding, they agree to support and provide training to an employee as a PTPT through the Pharmacy Technician (integrated) Apprenticeship Training Programme.

It is the responsibility as the contractor to:

- recruit and employ the PTPT, completing all the usual employment checks such as right to work in the UK and DBS checks (further information given on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk))
- provide a training contract that lasts at least 24 months
 - contract length will need to be extended if there is an extended break in learning
 - please note, additional funding is not available to support extended contracts
- choose an apprenticeship provider to deliver a GPhC-accredited pharmacy technician course/qualification through the Pharmacy Technician (integrated) Apprenticeship
 - the chosen apprenticeship provider must include final accuracy checking of items dispensed by others and medicines reconciliation

- confirm with the apprenticeship provider before starting enrolment that the apprentice meets apprenticeship requirements
- provide or delegate supervision in the form of a designated educational supervisor, who must be a registered pharmacist or pharmacy technician
- ensure the designated educational supervisor has capacity to fulfil this role and is released to attend NHS England network meetings
- agree a training plan and learning contract with the PTPT and apprenticeship provider
- provide progress updates, which will be specified by the NHS England WT&E regional pharmacy team on confirmation of funding
- register the PTPT on the NHSBSA MYS portal to access funding
- update the NHSBSA MYS portal if a PTPT has a break in learning or is withdrawn from programme
- notify NHS England WT&E and the apprenticeship provider if the PTPT is withdrawn or has a break in learning due to unsatisfactory progression, dismissal, resignation, or extended absence
- provide a dedicated full day out each week to attend face-to-face or virtual classes, complete learning and assessments; this must be part of their paid employment

Training provided by the contractor in the workplace

Workplace training delivered by the contractor is in addition to the training delivered by the apprenticeship provider. The apprenticeship provider will have their own learning plan which does not cover the training you must deliver in the workplace.

A requirement of this funding is that you develop an independent training plan of work-based activity. This must include operational and patient-facing experiences that cover the GPhC IET standards for pharmacy technicians. The training plan should detail all training delivered in the workplace, who is delivering the training and when.

The GPhC 2017 IET standards also 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. This opportunity should also be included within the training plan.

Training should only begin after a workplace induction has been completed.

Training plans

The training plan should be tailored to align with the apprenticeship provider's learning plan while covering local operational experience.

They must be based on the GPhC IET learning outcomes, reflecting modern pharmacy practice and:

- cover the full training period and meet GPhC work experience requirements
- include training objectives for all areas of practice including the final accuracy checking of items dispensed by others and medicines reconciliation
- be current and fit for purpose
 - if you are using or adapting an existing training plan, it must be reviewed to follow funding requirements, and include the date of the review
- specify the area(s) of practice in which the PTPT will be working throughout the training period
- include the name and address of all placement locations where training takes place, even if these are short placements such as half a day
- set out the supervision arrangements for all training
- explain how the PTPT's progress will be monitored, and how they will be assessed
- be laid out chronologically (for example, either weekly or monthly)
- include references to resources, for example NHS England Quality Framework, NHS England [Safe Learning Environment charter](#)

You will be required to take part in local monitoring processes as part of the contractual requirements with NHS England. If there are concerns, you may have to provide additional evidence or agree a remedial action plan with NHS England.

PTPT support

The contractor must ensure:

- PTPTs are given a dedicated day each week, throughout the duration of the training programme, to complete learning set by the apprenticeship provider
 - this can contribute towards off-the-job training
- they support the PTPT where there is an extended break in learning
 - this may require an extension to the employment contract to follow apprenticeship funding rules
- health and wellbeing of PTPTs is secured and protected by signposting for advice and support

Facilities

The contractor must ensure that there are sufficient facilities for the PTPT to complete their training, and for the designated educational supervisor to support their PTPT. This includes adequate space, access to electronic hardware, software and appropriate internet access.

Supervision

To ensure the practice of a PTPT does not jeopardise patient safety, the GPhC states that supervision must be in place. Supervision responsibilities are stated in the [GPhC's Guidance on tutoring and supervising pharmacy professionals in training](#) (downloads PDF document).

The PTPT must work under the direction of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician to whom the PTPT is directly accountable for not less than 14 hours per week.

Designated educational supervisor

The contractor must ensure that one person is assigned overall responsibility for the supervision and management of the PTPT's educational progress, workplace training and assessments during their entire 2-year training programme – known as the designated educational supervisor (DES).

They must be a registered pharmacy professional with appropriate experience, knowledge, and capacity to support the PTPT throughout the duration of their training programme.

The DES should work collaboratively with other members of the team delivering training to ensure the overall training programme meets the GPhC's standards, to monitor the PTPT's progress throughout the training programme, and seek feedback for review meetings and appraisals, and final-sign-off.

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

Other responsibilities include:

- creating a 2-year training plan with set quarterly objectives
- supporting the PTPT to ensure an optimal learning experience
- supervising the PTPT's practice
- providing regular feedback based on own observations and feedback from others
- providing support and guidance to members of the team delivering training
- completing regular progress reviews and associated documentation in line with apprenticeship providers' requirements

- attendance at NHS England WT&E network meetings to engage, develop resources, learn from experience and share good practice
- review and countersign the PTPT's application for registration as a pharmacy technician with the GPhC (through the [myGPhC system](#))

Practice supervisor

During the PTPT's training, they may be overseen and trained by other members of the team, known as practice supervisors (PSs). PTPTs may have more than one PS but will only have one DES.

PSs should be appropriately trained as they will oversee the PTPT's work and provide developmental feedback. They should help the PTPT to identify opportunities for learning within the workplace and will provide supervision on a day-to-day basis.

Education training provision

The contractor must choose an [apprenticeship provider](#) (gov.uk website) that delivers the Level 3 Pharmacy Technician (integrated) Apprenticeship.

Each apprenticeship provider will have their own enrolment process, including entry requirements, assessments, and documentation.

The contractor should confirm with the apprenticeship provider, before beginning enrolment, that the potential PTPT meets the enrolment requirements, including funding requirements such as residency and VISA requirements.

The chosen apprenticeship provider must include final accuracy checking of items dispensed by others and medicines reconciliation within the 2-year training period. It is the responsibility of the contractor to confirm this.

NHS England WT&E Pharmacy regional teams can support identification of an appropriate apprenticeship provider. Contractors may use the National Framework for Pharmacy Apprenticeships managed by Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust or undertake their own procurement exercise.

Apprenticeships

An apprentice is an employed member of staff, with all the benefits of being employed, but who is also given time to study and train in a particular occupation/profession.

The government will fund employers to take on apprentices, paying for their education costs. In return, it is expected that the employer meets the wages, costs, provides practical on-the-job training, time off to study (minimum of 20% off-the-job training) and support to achieve the apprenticeship standards.

Any employer can access apprenticeship funds for education costs via their apprenticeship levy fund, or by reserving government co-investment funds, or by other organisations transferring some of their levy funds (further information is given on the [skills for health website](#)).

Some apprenticeship providers will help employers navigate the apprenticeship funding process. NHS England WT&E can also guide employers through this process.

To employ a PTPT apprentice, an employer must:

- create a digital apprenticeship account.
 - guidance on this can be accessed via the [Skills for Health website](#)
- choose an apprenticeship provider
- recruit the apprentice, ensuring they meet the apprenticeship funding rules

Several useful resources, including infographics and guides, can be accessed via the [Skills for Health website](#).

Apprenticeship funding rules

To access government funds for apprenticeships, apprentices must meet several funding criteria. It is essential you familiarise yourself with the funding requirements before recruiting the PTPT.

Further information on funding rules can be found on the [gov.uk website](#).

Application process

Application for funding is through submission of an expression of interest (EoI). This will be independently evaluated and scored by an evaluation panel consisting of 3 NHS England WT&E Pharmacy team members.

Each region's evaluation marking will also be sampled by one member of the NHS England WT&E national team to ensure consistency of marking.

To be considered, Eols must score above 40% of the total weighting. Funding contributions will be awarded to the highest scoring Eol per region, with those achieving the next highest score (but still above the minimum) being placed in reserve.

If a successful contractor is unable to recruit against their awarded funding contribution, this will be re-allocated to the next highest scorer on the reserve list.

Please be aware that you may not receive funding if other applications achieve a higher overall score, and all available places are taken despite your application meeting an evaluation score of 40% or higher.

Completing the Eol

Only applications submitted through this [online Eol Form](#) will be accepted (the full URL is given below).

<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/healtheducationyh/nhs-england-community-pharmacy-technician-apprenticeship>

The deadline for submission is Sunday 13 October 2024.

Applications from multiple site community pharmacy chains are welcomed but will be capped at 22 posts nationally. One Eol form should be completed per organisation and must list each site where a PTPT is based.

Please refer to appendix A at the end of this document to find a template listing the Eol questions. It is recommended that the template is used to prepare your responses before starting your submission on the online form.

Scoring

There are 7 weighted questions that will be used to identify the strength of the Eol to provide a comparative score.

Please consider how the response given proves how the workplace training programme you have created meets the requirement of the GPhC IET standards for pharmacy technicians and what the programme offers to enhance the learning experience.

The answers provided will be scored from a range of 0-5 across the 7 questions, as below. A weighting of either 10% or 20% is applied to each question for the final score.

0 – Unacceptable

- Bidder fails to provide a response; or the response is of such a poor standard that the question is not answered, or omitted; or the response cannot satisfactorily provide confidence that the bidder can meet the standards required.
- Evidence is unacceptable or non-existent.
- Does not meet the minimum requirements.

1 – Well below expectations

- Poor response, which only partially answers requirement; with major deficiencies or concerns in certain areas with lack of detail or relevant evidence.
- Little relevant data included.
- Does not meet minimum requirements.

2 – Below expectations

- Bidder provides a response that partially satisfies requirement, with useful evidence provided, but response falls short of minimum expectations; with minor deficiencies or concerns in the information provided.
- Does not meet minimum requirements.

3 – Meets expectations

- Bidder provides a response that is acceptable and meets minimum criteria.
- But the response remains basic and could have been expanded upon.

4 – Exceeds expectations

- Bidder provides a response that is comprehensive.
- Response is of a mid-to-high standard that satisfies requirements and exceeds minimum expectations, including extra levels of detail.

5 – Exceeds expectations to the highest level

- Bidder provides an excellent response that is a comprehensive and useful.
- Response is of a high standard which exceeds expectations
- Included is a full description of techniques and measurements employed that, where appropriate, provides a high level of detail.

Criteria, weighting and scoring guidance

Please refer to pages 9-12 of the [GPhC IET standards for pharmacy technicians 2017](#) for the learning outcomes linked to the questions.

Evaluation criteria	Weighting	Eol guidance – question response should demonstrate:
Please provide details of how the PTPT will be supported by your organisation to successfully complete their training.	10%	Demonstration of a culture of continuous learning, where giving and receiving constructive feedback is encouraged and routine. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What health and wellbeing support do you offer? • Does this include progress reviews? • If so, the frequency? • What other methods will you be using to meet the Quality Framework?
What does your organisation have in place to ensure all staff, including PTPTs, are treated fairly, with equity, consistency, dignity and respect?	10%	There is a clear governance process to ensure concerns are raised and actions taken where necessary without fear of negative consequence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is this made available to all staff?
Please provide an explanation of the planned educational and practice supervision that will be in place. If you or the pharmacy are new to training, what steps will be taken to equip you or the pharmacy for the role as a training site?	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will be supervising the PTPT at different times within their training programme? • What experience or training have they had?
Person-centred care	20%	List the workplace activities the PTPT will undertake to achieve the GPhC
Professionalism	20%	IET learning outcomes at 'Knows How' or 'Does' level for each domain. Consider when this will occur within the 2-year training programme.
Professional knowledge and skills	20%	
Collaboration	10%	

What next

We will be holding a series of webinars to provide more information on the programme including the application process and how to access apprenticeship funding.

If you have any questions, please email your regional NHE England WT&E pharmacy team:

- North East and Yorkshire: england.WTEpharmacy.ney@nhs.net
- North West: england.WTEpharmacy.nw@nhs.net
- Midlands: england.wtepharmacy.mids@nhs.net
- East of England: england.wtepharmacy.eoe@nhs.net
- South West: england.WTEpharmacy.sw@nhs.net
- South East: england.wtepharmacyse@nhs.net
- London: england.wtepharmacy.london@nhs.net

Timeline

Monday 23 September 2024	EoI window opens to receive submissions
Sunday 13 October 2024	EoI window closes
Tuesday 15 to Friday 01 November 2024	Evaluation of EoI submissions
Monday 4 November 2024	Notification of outcome emailed to pharmacy contractors
w/c 11 November 2024	Regional programme webinar for successful pharmacy contractors
November 2024 to February 2025	PTPT recruited and enrolled onto apprenticeship programme

Appendix A: Template for expressions of interest

This template lists all the questions in the EoI. We recommend you use this template to prepare your responses for your submission.

Some questions are dependent on whether you are submitting a regional or national bid. National bids are where PTPTs will be placed in more than one NHS England region.

Please note, that the questions in sections 4 and 5 have a maximum word limit.

<p>Introduction</p> <p>You will have to confirm you have read the Contractor Guidance before proceeding with your submission. You will also be asked to confirm if you attended one of the virtual meetings delivered by NHS England to launch the programme. If you did not attend, we ask that you share why to help us improve future events.</p>	
<p>Section 1 – Type of bid</p>	
<p>Are you applying for placements across more than one NHS England region?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, I am applying for PTPT placements across multiple regions • No, I am applying for funding in one region only
<p>Section 2 – Community pharmacy/head office details</p>	
<p>For regional bids only: Please select the region where the PTPT(s) will be based</p> <p>For national bids only: Please select the region in which the head office is based in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North East and Yorkshire • North West • Midlands • East of England • South West • South East • London
<p>Lead contact’s name (regional bid only)</p> <p>Organisation name (national bid only)</p>	
<p>Head office address (national bids only)</p>	

Name of lead contact for head office/organisation (national bids only)	
Lead contact's email address	
Lead contact's telephone number	
Section 3 – Regional bid community pharmacy details	
How many different base sites (community pharmacy branches) will you have PTPTs working at? (Each PTPT should have just ONE base site even if they will be rotating/working in more than pharmacy)	Select from drop down
The following questions in section 3 will be repeated for the number of base sites stated above	
Please select the region the community pharmacy is based in (national bids only)	
Community pharmacy name and address including post code	
ODS code	
How many PTPTs are you requesting funding for this pharmacy branch/site?	
Section 4 – Training plan overview	
Describe how the work-based training you deliver will cover each of the 4 domains of the GPhC IET standards and offer a range of learning opportunities for the PTPT	
Person centred care	Max word count 500
Professionalism	Max word count 500
Professional knowledge and skills	Max word count 500

Collaboration	Max word count 500
Section 5 – Trainee support	
Please provide details of how the PTPT(s) will be supported by your organisation to successfully complete their training	Max word count 250
What does your organisation have in place to ensure all staff, including PTPT(s), are treated fairly, with equity, consistency, dignity and respect?	Max word count 250
<p>Please provide an explanation of the planned educational and practice supervision in place</p> <p>Include details of relevant education and training experience and additional information that may support learning experiences for the PTPT(s)</p> <p>If you or the pharmacy are new to training, what steps will be taken to equip you or the pharmacy for the role as a training site</p>	Max word count 250
<p>Declarations</p> <p>I declare that:</p> <p>the information I have provided is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I consent to NHS England Workforce, Training and Education Pharmacy Team contacting me to verify the information I have provided • each designated educational supervisor will be directly responsible for the PTPT(s) for not less than 14 hours per week and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will be based at the same site as the PTPT(s) • have the appropriate skills, qualifications and competencies for their role • understand how to meet the needs of the individual PTPT(s) • be aware of the guidance for supervising pharmacy professionals in training from the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) • the PTPT(s) will be provided with a dedicated full day out per week to attend college/ lessons and complete learning and assessments set by the training provider that is part of their paid employment throughout the 24-month training period 	

- the PTPT(s) and their designated educational supervisor will both have access to adequate IT (Information Technology) and access to a protected space to complete knowledge learning, reviews and assessments for duration of the training programme
- if any significant changes to the training arrangements are planned, I will notify NHS England Workforce, Training and Education Pharmacy teams. This could include a break in learning (maternity/paternity or long-term sickness over 4 weeks), or change to base training site or change of educational supervisor)
- if there is a lack of capacity to deliver training (because of long-term absence of a designated educational supervisor for example), I will develop and agree an action plan to enable the PTPT(s) to meet the learning outcomes and registration requirements
- I will pay for any additional training costs incurred
- the PTPT(s), and their designated educational supervisor, will be supported in their learning and to manage their own health and wellbeing
- designated educational supervisors are familiar with, understand and are up to date with the curricula of the PTPT(s) they are supporting. They also understand their role in the context of PTPT programmes and career pathways, enhancing their ability to support PTPT progression
- practice supervisors are supported to understand the education, training and any other support needs of their PTPT(s)