

Return to Practice programme for Allied Health Professionals and Healthcare Scientists

Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

Health Education England (HEE) is running a programme to support Allied Health Professionals (AHP), and Healthcare Scientist (HCS) to return to practice by supporting them to return to the [Health Care Professions Council](#) (HCPC) register.

The programme follows the HCPC guidance on return to practice (RtP) and supports accordingly. The programme will support AHP / HCS with a professional healthcare qualification gained in the UK or from overseas whose qualification is recognised by the HCPC.

Inclusion

- The program will support qualified AHPs and healthcare scientists living and working for service delivering NHS and or Social Care in England looking to return to the HCPC register
- Previously registered with the HCPC or qualified in the UK, but have not registered with the HCPC in the last five years.

Exclusion

- Currently the program is not open to AHPs and healthcare scientists who have qualified abroad and have not been registered with the HCPC. They will need to follow the guidance for overseas registrants.
- The programme does not cover Social Workers this is covered by a Local Government Programme (LGA)
- Returnees looking to work outside England when returned to the HCPC register
- Excludes any individual that has a fitness to practice issue cited against them on the HCPC register.

The national return to practice programme has been designed to provide the opportunity for returnees to update skills and knowledge in their chosen profession and within their scope of practice. With clinical, financial and academic support (where applicable) the programme will support the returnee to meet the minimum criteria to return to practice and the HCPC register.

The programme will not arrange clinical placements or recommend specific organisations but has been set up to support and assist returnees as they follow the HCPC return to practice guidance.

Why should I consider returning now?

You already have the skills and experience that can make a big difference to patients, clients, carers and their families. Healthcare and Social Care providers are looking at developing and growing their workforce with skilled AHPs and healthcare scientists. This includes AHP's and healthcare scientists whose HCPC registration has lapsed or who have not registered with the HCPC since they qualified and are required to undertake defined period of updating.

Do I need to re-train?

No; you do not need to retrain.

You hold a qualification in your chosen profession. Returning to practice is about gaining registration with the HCPC for you to be able to use a protected title and work for an approved health or social care organisation. The amount of updating of skills and knowledge required is stipulated by the time you have been off the HCPC register.

The period of updating is set by the HCPC, see their [website](#) for more details. RtP is a outcome based programme of updating driven by you.

The NHS trust will work with you on an induction back in to health or social care. The route you take is chosen by you, but a variety of self-directed study, formal study and clinical days are advised.

Some universities in England are running profession specific RtP courses and programmes, although they are limited. They are not validated or endorsed by HEE or the HCPC. Search for courses on the individual universities' websites. It is advised before embarking on your RtP process you need to sit down and draw up a plan of what and where you need to update your skills, but more importantly how you intend to achieve this.

The supporting organisations can only support you to do this if you have a clear structured plan. Remember the organisation is not obliged to provide a placement in the area you request, therefore some flexibility may be required.

Will I need to take any exams?

No. You need to show through evidence you have updated your skills and knowledge by a variety of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). However, some universities may ask you to complete an assignment as part of their course. It is about you providing evidence to the HCPC that you are competent through outcome based learning. For more information visit: [HCPC CPD](#).

Who assess I am component to practice?

The HCPC will assess competency to practice through the evidence you provide. When submitting your evidence, you will self-declare you are fit and competent to practice and have updated your skills and knowledge with your scope of practice. You are advised to read the HCPC return to practice guidance and Standards of Proficiency. [HCPC Standards of Proficiency](#)

****RECENTLY UPDATED**

Will my return phase be funded?

Funding is available to support your return.

Academic support

Up to £1000.00 can be claimed by local universities to cover any specific approved Return to Practice course you the returnee undertakes or to provide funding for accredited profession

specific courses, ad hoc university support or modules suitable to support a return to practice candidate. This is claimed by the university.

It may be possible to claim funding for ad hoc courses, but they will need to relate to your profession and be relevant to returning to practice. The course needs to be accredited and or recognised by your professional body as essential to carry out your role. The programme will not fund courses to provide advance skills in specific areas. Return to practice is not about up skilling.

The HEE RtP programme has been designed for you to provide evidence to the HCPC that you are competent to practice at level to be re-registered. It is essential the programme is aware of any course you wish to undertake to agree funding and inform of the process for funding.

The programme will not cover additional travel and subsistence cost to undertake any formal study any expenditure for this will come from your out of pocket expenses of £500.00

Out of pocket expenses

Each returnee will be able to claim £500.00 Out of Pocket Expenses. This is paid to provide financial support for any out of pocket expenses incurred, please see the list below. In recognition of this payment you, the returnee are required to provide when requested information to either HEE or the placement provider in a timely manner. Failure to provide the information will result in the payment being delayed or withheld. We will ask you for feedback at various points within the programme and your support is appreciated.

The payment **is claimed by the organisation providing your clinical placement and claimed in two parts.** Organisations are requested to ensure they have processes in place to ensure you are reimbursed. Our understanding is the monies are not taxable and are being used to support you the returnee in an education capacity. Returnees receiving additional income support are advised to seek advice and understand the impact any additional payment may have.

First payment of £250.00 to be paid 4 weeks in to commencement of the clinical placement. This will be claimed by the supporting organisation. The second payment is to be made once proof of HCPC registration and any employment offer has been provided by the supporting organisation, this information will be forwarded to HEE. Should the returnee undertake a clinical placement at more than one organisation the payment can only be claimed the once. It will be the responsibility of the returnee to inform each organisation providing clinical placements if they intend to undertake more than one clinical placement with more than one provider.

Out of Pocket expenses are to be used to cover the following areas of return to practice but this list is not exhaustive.

- Travel: To cover transport costs to and from location whilst undertaking placement. Out of pocket monies should not be used to cover cost incurred by the returnee as part of any role they undertake, this should be paid by the provider as part of travel cost and claimed accordingly.
- Child care: It has been acknowledged costs may be incurred to cover additional child care to allow the returnee to undertake placements. This cannot be claimed separately and the out of pocket expenses are designed to support this.
- Disclosure Baring System: All returnees will be required to provide a Disclosure Baring System (DBS). Should this not be covered by the provider of the placement the out of

pocket expenses with cover this. DBS payments are dictated by individual's organisational policy and HEE supports these current individual organisation policies. We have advised all participating organisations where possible this cost should not be passed on to you but HEE cannot enforce this.

- **Parking:** this will cover parking cost at the site of clinical placements. HEE cannot be held responsible for any parking fines.
- **Support re-registration fee:** HEE is unable to pay re-registration fees but the funding provided and be used to support the returnee to pay any HCPC re-registration fees. The payment process does not allow for payment to be released prior to re-applying for HCPC registration.
- **Ad hoc non-accredited courses fees:** Returnees are encouraged to undertake a variety of experiences to update their skill and knowledge and although it is acknowledged additional ad hoc courses can support this sufficient support is available the £500 out of pocket expenses will not cover courses not agreed in advance of the programme. Additional funding for specific courses will be made available, but only if agreed and approved by HEE. Returnees will have access to a closed [Facebook](#) page which will offer access to free on-line courses
- **Meals:** To cover the buying of food and beverages when on clinical placements or university courses.
- **Books:** Any text books related to your RtP and professional support
- **Uniform:** cost towards purchase of uniform if required.

The list is not exhaustive of how the funding can be used but provides guidance. Should the returnee leave the programme part way through the process and funding has been paid it will be at the discretion of the programme lead should part or full repayment be made.

Do I require a DBS and who funds this?

Yes. You will be required to have a Disclosure Baring Service (DBS) completed prior to any clinical placement or prior to commencement of some university programmes. Funding of this will depend on organisational policy. HEE has asked any cost for DBS are not to be passed onto the returnee, but HEE is unable to enforce this. Should you be charged for a DBS your out of pocket expenses will cover this.

Do I need indemnity insurance?

The HCPC requires all registrants to have adequate indemnity insurance at registration. All providers of health and social care have indemnity insurance so if employed to support your clinical placement or provided with an honorary contract this should provide cover. Indemnity insurance in most cases is provided by professions bodies if you join or register with them. Please discuss this with the placement provider or your professional body. HEE will not provide indemnity and cannot be held responsible for your practice and adequate cover.

Will the AHP and healthcare scientists return to practice programme lead directly in to employment?

The programme cannot guarantee you will be able to seek employment. The programme has been designed to support you to return to the HCPC register and get you into a position where you can seek employment. Some placement providers may provide or offer opportunities of employment post re-registration.

I have retired and received an NHS pension, but I am interested in returning part time is this possible?

In respect of employment, we recommend reading the factsheet on the [NHS pension's website](#).

Will I be able to work flexibly if I return?

Flexible working for AHP's and HCS is an option, but we suggest you discuss this with local health and social care providers on an individual basis.

Is there anything I can do to prepare for before I return to practice?

Do not underestimate the time and effort it will take to return to practice. The NHS and social care settings have changed and therefore you will be required to show to the HCPC you're learning and understanding meets with the needs of the present health and social care settings/system.

Health and Social care are under a lot more scrutiny now days and the health and social care professional employed in today's health and social care environment must show they are competent and provide care in a safe and caring way.

Some universities can offer a reading list of key documents that you might be interested in studying to help you update your knowledge of current policy. Some local trusts and universities may offer open days so that you can visit and look around.

You are encouraged to read key policy documents that can be found on the Department of Health website. Sit down and create plan of how you intend to undertake your updating, but be clear what you consider the areas you need to update are. [The HCPC has produced information on RTP that you should read](#).

How do I confirm how long I have been out of practice?

The HCPC hold a record of all current and past AHP and healthcare scientists previously registered with them. You can contact the HCPC by telephone or email and ask them to provide you with documentation in the form of a letter of all the information you require. The letter should state the date you left the register and if you have any 'fitness to practice issues'. A copy of this letter can be handed to any organisation offering a placement as evidence.

In some circumstance you may have not been added to the register or your profession joined the HCPC registration since you left, therefore you may not have a HCPC number. Please contact the HCPC for further advice.

What other documents will I need?

All organisations will require you to undertake a DBS (Disclosure and Baring Service) and provide a certificate. Other useful documents to have at hand are your birth certificate, national insurance number, qualification certificates, passport and if required to use your car please ensure your car insurance covers you for business use. You may be asked to complete a health check questionnaire or medical.

How long does it take to return to practice?

This will depend on the requirements stipulated by the HCPC and how you intend to proceed using the areas of private study, formal study and clinical placement. Once completing the relevant days, you will be required to get a fellow AHP from your profession and on the HCPC register to sign you have completed the hours you are stating. They are not signing to say you

are competent or safe to practice, that it is your responsibility to justify your competency to the HCPC. You need to be aware some organisation may request you understand and adhere to any national or local competencies if they provide clinical experience for you. The signatory is only signing to confirm to the best their knowledge that the evidence you have provide is correct and to confirm any days clinical you have completed. You have a year to complete the RtP process as set out by the HCPC guidance.

How long does it take to be placed back on the HCPC register once I apply?

In most cases it can take up to 10 working days for your name to be added to the relevant profession HCPC register. On some occasions it may take longer if verification of the information is required. The most common reason for delay is that the form has not been completed and therefore returned to the applicant. The HCPC advice you read all the information correctly and check before submitting. You will appear on the on-line register before receiving your certificate and paperwork. If you already have been issued with a HCPC this is the number you will use when registered.

I haven't practiced as an AHP/ HCS for a long time. Does this matter?

The return to practice programme is open to all, regardless of how long you have been out of practice. It is important you understand that the delivery of health and social care has moved forward. It is also important you gain the correct support and meet the minimum requirements stipulated by the HCPC.

The programme has a closed [Facebook](#) page supported by programme team. Its members are past and present returnees. It has access to post and conversations about the RtP process and free on-line courses. You are welcome to join but will need to be invited by answering questions.

These are just a selection of the question you may have during your return to practice process. As the programme develops we may add or amend the advice. Should you have any further questions please email R2PAHP-HCS@hee.nhs.uk and the team will endeavour to answer or sign post accordingly.

Do HEE and the HCPC provide paperwork for me to record my RtP evidence?

No. RtP for AHP's and HCS is an outcome-based process and how you collate, and the quantity of the information is dependent on how you learn and record information. The HCPC guidance has forms you need to complete. There are some examples of how returnees have recorded and presented their data in the closed Facebook page. Remember this is a portfolio of evidence of the CPD you have undertaken.

How will HEE ensure my data remains protected?

Throughout the program any data you provide will be held securely by HEE and used for the purposes of the program only. To see further details of HEE's policy and how we will keep your data safe please visit the link below

<https://hee.nhs.uk/about/privacy-notice>

Good luck

National Return to Practice AHPs and healthcare scientists team
Health Education England

