Principles for the Demand Assessment and Commissioning of Community Specialist Practitioners and Specialist Community Practitioners in the Northwest of England (2024/25)

1. **Introduction**
   1. The Workforce, Training & Education Directorate of NHS England in the Northwest will again be supporting the growth of the Community Specialist Practice (CSP) and Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) workforce with commissioned places with salary support, from a number of Education Providers.
   2. New standards became available from the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) on 1st September 2022 for post registration programmes for:
      1. Specialist Community Public Health Nursing- Health Visiting, School Nursing, Occupational Health.
      2. Community Nursing SPQ- in the fields of Community Children’s Nursing, Community Learning Disabilities Nursing, Community Mental Health Nursing, District Nursing, General Practice Nursing.
   3. A national procurement against the new standards is expected to take place in 23/24 for implementation for 24/25
2. **Funding Pathways Available**

Please see Table 1 for a summary of funding pathways

* 1. **Apprenticeship Pathway**
     1. Tuition fees are paid directly from the organisation to the Apprenticeship Training Provider (from apprenticeship levy or levy transfer where appropriate). If the preferred Apprenticeship Training Provider is stated in appendix 2 no tendering is required.
     2. There are three ways to access funding to pay for apprenticeship training fees (this funding does not cover salary costs – employers must fund the apprentice’s salary):
        + **Apprenticeship Levy.** Employers with a pay bill over £3 million each year, pay the apprenticeship levy. Levy paying employers can spend their apprenticeship levy funding on apprenticeship training.
        + **Reserve government co-investment.** If you do not pay the apprenticeship levy you can reserve funding, where the government pays 95% of the training costs and the employer pays the remaining 5%.
        + **Levy Transfers.** Levy paying employers can transfer some of their annual levy to other employers. These transfers cover 100% of the training costs of the apprenticeship (you still need to cover salary).
     3. For more information on levy transfers please see section 3.1.
     4. The salary contribution listed in Table 1 is for the duration of the programme. This is pro-rated depending on the hours of the programme being undertaken and paid at set times throughout the year. Salary contributions are paid only after Education Providers confirm enrolment and continued attendance on the course.
  2. **Fees Paid Pathway**
     1. Tuition fees are paid by NHSE (NHS England) directly to the Education Provider if the Education Provider and programme is included as part of the national tender Appendix 2.
     2. Please note, due to ongoing processes of procurement the programmes identified as fees funded choices in Appendix 2 may not be available and should be viewed as a guide only. We would advise choosing the apprenticeship pathways if you are not open to potentially changing education provider as following the procurement education providers for fees funded programmes may change.
     3. The salary contribution listed in Table 1 is for the duration of the programme. This is pro-rated depending on the hours of the programme being undertaken and paid at set times throughout the year. Salary contributions are paid only after Education Providers confirm enrolment and continued attendance on the course.

**Table 1 – Summary of funding pathways and payment contribution**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Course Pathway | Tuition fees | Salary contribution | Education Provider |
| Apprenticeship Pathway | Paid by:   * Your organisation’s apprenticeship levy * Government co-investment (95%) and your organisation (5%) * Levy transfer | **£2904 per month regardless of course length (pro rata)**    Paid via the Education Contract Schedule or invoicing (for non-Trust organisations) | Must be on the preferred supplier list Appendix 2 |
| Fees Paid Pathway | Paid by NHSE directly to the Education Provider. | As above | As above |

* 1. **Programme availability**
     1. Some programmes are offered at both level 6 (BSc) and level 7 (Post-Graduate Diploma). Please check with your preferred Education Provider before completing the EOI (Expression of Interest).
     2. Some programmes include V100, and some include V300. Please check with your preferred Education Provider before completing the EOI. This can affect the programme’s duration and therefore size of monthly salary support payments.
  2. **Partnership Agreements**
     1. A partnership agreement may be required between the employer organisation and the Education Provider. If you would like to support a member of staff to undertake a CSP or SCPHN programme (either through the fees route or via an apprenticeship) you must contact the Education Provider at the earliest opportunity to enquire as to whether a partnership agreement is required and what action is needed to implement any necessary agreement. Your member of staff may not be able to start the programme until a partnership agreement is in place so, please do ensure you contact the Education Provider at the earliest opportunity.
  3. **Payment** **Timeframes**
     1. Please see Table 2 for the dates that salary support and tuition payment are processed and what period of activity this covers. Payments will only be processed after validation has taken place. Payment months are February, July, and November for NHS Trusts
     2. Non-NHS Trusts employers will receive invitations to invoice following the same validation process and timeframes will be roughly equitable to those of the trusts.

**Table 2 – Salary Support Timeframe for NHS Trusts**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Student Activity | Earliest Payment Dates |
| 1st August – 31st October 2024 | February 2025 |
| 1st November 2024 – 28th February 2025 | July 2025 |
| 1st March – 31st July 2025 | November 2025 |

1. **Additional Information for Apprenticeship Programmes**
   1. **Levy Transfers**
      1. If you require a levy transfer, you must contact the Northwest Widening Participation Team at the earliest opportunity on [england.levytransfer.nw@nhs.net](mailto:england.levytransfer.nw@nhs.net)
      2. Levy transfers **are not guaranteed** and **cannot be implemented retrospectively** – they must be in place before the person begins their apprenticeship.
      3. You must not enrol a member of staff onto an apprenticeship where a levy transfer is required without confirmation that a levy transfer is in place.
      4. Transfers can only be used to pay for training and assessment for apprenticeship standards and only for new apprenticeship starts - this can include existing staff.
   2. **Employer Responsibilities** 
      1. Employers should familiarise themselves with the entry requirements of their preferred Education Provider, for example, applicants hoping to undertake the SCPHN Apprenticeships must have GCSE grade C or above, or Functional Skills level 2 in numeracy and literacy by the end point assessment to complete their apprenticeship.
      2. 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](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules).
   3. **Apprenticeship Resources and Information**
      1. Further information about off-the-job training can be found by following this [link](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training).
      2. [HASO Guides](https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/)
      3. [Apprenticeships in Primary and Social Care Information Pack](https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020.07.08-Apprenticeships-in-Primary-Care-v3.pdf)
      4. [How do I pay for apprenticeship training?](https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020.02.12-How-do-I-pay-for-apprenticeship-training-printable.pdf)
      5. [Apprenticeship Funding Toolkit](https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/funding/)
      6. [How to reserve funding](https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/articles/360011550760-How-to-reserve-funding)
      7. [Apprenticeship funding in England from August 2020](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/900154/Apprenticeship_funding_in_England_from_Aug_2020_Policy_Document_FINAL.pdf)
2. **Expression of Interest (EOI) Process**
   1. Please note that to receive tuition fee and salary support you MUST complete the EOI process as described in these Principles. Applying to an Education Provider and obtaining a place on an academic programme without completing the EOI process will not attract NHSE funding.
   2. For a timeline of the EOI process please refer to appendix 1.
   3. Incomplete EOIs (Expression of Interest) cannot be considered.
   4. EOIs must be completed by the deadline.
   5. EOIs should prioritise the apprenticeship route in the first instance.
   6. NHSE Northwest have established a Preferred Supplier List and support fees paid pathways for providers on the list. For apprenticeship pathways a national provider framework is in place and education providers on the list do not require tendering (please see Appendix 2).
   7. EOIs should be for programmes available in region and NHSE will aim to allocate based on first choice selection for recognised providers. If an agreement is not in place, NHSE will advise and direct to an alternative provider in the Northwest region. There may also be opportunities to attend universities outside the region for providers who are delivering specialist pathways that cannot be accessed within the Northwest.
   8. NHSE requires a single lead contact within each organisation to submit EOIs for service areas and to act as a key liaison for all enquiries. This is to ensure there has been appropriate scrutiny, effective workforce planning and alignment with provider service priorities and/or workforce development needs.
   9. Internal business cases should be completed and approved prior to application where at all possible.
3. **Funding Allocation**

We aim to fund all applications where budget allows. Please do not apply for more places that you require or can support within your organisational infrastructure. This may deny other organisations places.

If requests are higher than the budget allocated, we will look at previous history of filling required places as a guide to where funding will be agreed as well as fair share allocation according to service need and size of organisation.

The funding if awarded is allocated to the applying organisation and not the student and therefore where a student moves employment, the current employer must inform NHSE immediately. The new employer will need to directly assure NHSE that there is support for the student and that there will be an appropriate role upon qualification.

**Appendix 1 – Expression of Interest Process Time Plan**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Activity** | **Responsible** |
| **Jan 24** | Expression of Interest Process launched. | ICB (Integrated Care Board) Workforce & Education Team /Nursing & Midwifery Team |
| **Jan to Feb** | Expressions of Interest submitted. | Provider Organisations |
| **Feb 24** | Expression of Interest deadline midday Monday 26th February 2024. |  |
| **March 24** | Expressions of Interest reviewed, and funding allocated. | Nursing & Midwifery Team and ICB Workforce & Education Team |
| **March 24** | Places allocated to Education Providers. | Education Management Team / Nursing & Midwifery Team |
| **March 24** | Education Providers informed of commissioned numbers. | Education Management Team / Nursing & Midwifery Team |
| **April 24** | Organisations informed of outcome of funding allocation | Nursing & Midwifery Team |
| **April 24** | Recruitment processes commence. | Provider Organisations and Education Providers |
| **July 24** | Student details provided to NHSE. | Provider Organisations |
| **September 24** | New students commence autumn programmes. | Education Providers |
| **February 25** | Salary support and tuition payments processed for Autumn starts. | Education Management Team |

**Appendix 2 – Preferred Supplier List (Education Providers)**

All programmes are provisionally expected to start in September 2025

Please note, due to ongoing processes of procurement the programmes identified as fees funded choices in this list may not be available and please see below as a historic guide only. We would advise choosing the apprenticeship pathways if you are not open to potentially changing education provider as following the procurement education providers for fees funded programmes may change.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Education Provider** | **Apprenticeship** | **Fees funded** | **Course Duration** |
| Community Children’s Nursing | | | |
| University of Cumbria | Yes | Yes | 54 weeks |
| University of Salford | Yes |  | 54 weeks |
| University of Central Lancashire | Yes | Yes | 24 months |
| Liverpool John Moore’s University |  | Yes | 12.5 months |
| Community Learning Disability Nursing | | | |
| University of Cumbria | Yes | Yes | 54 weeks |
| University of Salford | Yes |  | 12 months |
| Occupational Health Nursing | | | |
| University of Chester | Yes | Yes | 12 months |
| University of Bolton | Yes | Yes | 12 months |
| General Practice Nursing | | | |
| University of Salford | Yes |  | 12 months |
| University of Central Lancashire | Yes | Yes | 24 months |
| University of Bolton | Yes | Yes | 12 months |
| District Nursing | | | |
| University of Cumbria | Yes | Yes | 54 weeks |
| Manchester Metropolitan University | Yes |  | 13 months |
| University of Salford | Yes |  | 12 months |
| University of Central Lancashire | Yes | Yes | 24 months |
| University of Chester | Yes | Yes | 16 months |
| Liverpool John Moore’s University | Yes | Yes | 12.5 months |
| University of Bolton | Yes | Yes | 12 months |
| Health Visiting | | | |
| Manchester Metropolitan University | Yes |  | 13 months |
| University of Salford | Yes |  | 12 months |
| University of Central Lancashire | Yes | Yes | 24 months |
| University of Chester | Yes | Yes | 12 months |
| Liverpool John Moore’s University | Yes | Yes | 12.5 months |
| University of Bolton | Yes | Yes | 12 months |
| School Nursing | | | |
| Manchester Metropolitan University | Yes |  | 13 months |
| University of Salford | Yes |  | 12 months |
| University of Central Lancashire | Yes | Yes | 24 months |
| University of Chester | Yes | Yes | 12 months |
| Liverpool John Moore’s University | Yes | Yes | 12.5 months |
| University of Bolton | Yes | Yes | 12 months |