

To: Chief AHPs/ Director of AHPs and
Chief Nurses

cc. Trust Apprenticeship Leads, ICB
CNO and Regional AHP Councils

NHS England
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1QY

4 June 2026

Dear Colleagues

**RE: 2026/27 Allied Health Professions (AHP) Apprenticeship Funding Opportunities:
Support Workers and Small Professions**

We are pleased to announce that NHS England (NHSE), North East and Yorkshire (NEY) region, will be allocating investment during 2026/27 to support the growth of the AHP workforce through apprenticeship pathways.

This funding aims to create training and development opportunities, strengthen workforce supply, support career progression, and enhance the sustainability of both the AHP support workforce and smaller AHP professions. Organisations are encouraged to align apprenticeship recruitment with their local **strategic workforce priorities** to maximise impact and support delivery of the NHS 10-Year Health Plan. Funding is available for **new apprenticeship starts in the 2026/27 financial year** as follows:

AHP Support Workforce Apprenticeships, £4,360 per apprentice, per year of training (up to 24 months) for:

- AHP Senior Healthcare Support Worker (Level 3)
- AHP Assistant Practitioner (Health) (Level 5)

Small AHP Profession L6 Degree Apprenticeships, £8,441 per apprentice, per year of training (up to 36 months) for:



- Operating Department Practitioner (Level 6)
- Podiatry (Level 6)
- Speech and Language Therapy (Level 6)

This funding is supplementary to the apprenticeship levy and is intended to support employer costs associated with apprenticeship delivery and administration that are not covered through levy funding or government co-investment. Full details regarding eligibility, funding arrangements, governance requirements, and payment schedules are provided in **Appendix 1**. Organisations may submit an **Expression of Interest (EOI) for funding using the relevant application form (see Appendix 2)**. Requests will be reviewed by the regional AHP team, and funding will be allocated fairly across the region.

Key dates:

- **EOI submission deadline:** 3rd August 2026
- **Allocation confirmations:** Issued by 31st August 2026
- **Funding transfer:** Payments will be profiled from September 2026 and made in line with existing payment schedules. The first payment will be issued on the next scheduled payment date following September 2026.

If you would like to discuss this offer further or have any questions, then please contact the NEY AHP team england.ahp.ney@nhs.net. Thank you for your continued support in this key area of work.

Yours sincerely



Victoria Bagshaw

Deputy Director Workforce and Education



Appendix 1:

Aim statement

Since 2024, within Education and Training, a multi-professional programme has been underway aiming to stabilise the pre-registration training programmes for small professions, including AHP.

The development of AHP unregistered and small professions pre-registration apprenticeships is a key aspect in helping to deliver the NHS 10 Year Health Plan. For example, many small professions will support the shift to community for physical and mental healthcare needs which are integral to the prevention agenda (e.g., podiatry, prosthetics and orthotics) and in maintaining access to core healthcare services.

Sustaining and strengthening these professions is critical to ensuring a diverse, resilient, and responsive workforce that meets the full spectrum of current and future population health and NHS service needs, alongside enabling access to education, work and reducing inequalities.

Background

In 2026, NHS England approved a funding model to enable sustaining and strengthening small AHP professions. A model already exists for AHP level 3 and level 5 apprenticeships, and this will continue for 2026/27 activity.

Recurrent funding as part of the multi-professional Education Training Activity Plan (ETAP) means that employers and integrated care boards (ICBs) can confidently and successfully plan their AHP small professions apprenticeship recruitment strategy.

AHP funding offer and objectives for 2026/27

Apprenticeship Level	Funding award available per apprentice, per year of training, via ETAP	Maximum number of training years
Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker (AHP contextualised)	£4,360	Up to 24 months
Level 5 Assistant Practitioner (AHP contextualised)	£4,360	Up to 24 months



Level 6	£8,441.00	Up to 36 months
Operating Department Practitioners		
Podiatry		
Speech and Language Therapy		

- The funding available from NHS England has been calculated based on a typical 2-year for level 3 and level 5) and 3-year (for level 6) apprenticeship programme rates, but actual payments will be paid pro-rata to reflect any accelerated or part-time programmes.
- This funding is supplementary to the apprenticeship levy; employers will continue to use their levy funds to cover course fees.

Scope of funding

	In scope	Out of scope
Employers	The grant is to support employers that are NHS organisations or NHS commissioned services only within the North East and Yorkshire (NEY) of England	Non-NHS employers (where not NHS commissioned services) NHS employers outside of NEY
Professions	Level 3 & 5 AHP support workers aligned to: • Dietetics • Occupational therapy • Operating department practice • Orthoptics • Paramedics • Physiotherapy • Podiatry • Prosthetics & orthotics	• Arts therapies • Osteopaths • Radiography (diagnostic) • Radiography (therapeutic) • Non-AHP professional groups



	• Speech and language therapy Level 6 AHP professions: • Operating Department Practitioners • Podiatry • Speech and Language Therapy	
Apprenticeship standards	• ST0215 Healthcare Assistant Practitioner (Level 5) • ST0217 Senior Healthcare Support Worker (Level 3) • ST0627 Ambulance support worker (Level 3) • Prosthetic and Orthotic technician (Level 3) Level 6: • ST0582 – Operating Department Practitioner • ST0493 - Podiatrist • ST0618 – Speech and Language Therapist	• Level 6 Enhanced Practice • Apprenticeship standards from the out of scope professions above
Apprenticeship training providers	Tier 1 and tier 2 apprenticeship training providers listed on the Salisbury Managed Procurement Services (SMPS) framework (see Appendix A for full detail) Find an apprenticeship - GOV.UK	Apprenticeship training providers not listed on the SMPS framework



Funding utilisation	In recognition of Apprenticeship funding rules and assessment plan guidance, 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK, (*2026/27 guidance is currently in draft and pending publication on Gov.UK) these funds from NHS England may be used for: Any costs that support apprenticeship training delivery	As per Apprenticeship funding rules and assessment plan guidance, 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK, these funds from NHS England <u>must not</u> be used for: Any costs outside of education, training and assessment. With specific reference to: • Any and all training and on-programme assessment costs eligible to be covered by the employer's apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment. • Typical 'provider' costs. • Support for English and maths training. • Learning support payments. • End-point assessment (EPA) costs. • Financial inducements.
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What are 'typical' employer costs?

In recognition of the Department for Education apprenticeship funding rules 2025/26 (*2026/27 guidance is currently in draft and pending publication on Gov.UK), funds may be used to support specific services / costs not related to the delivery and administration of the apprenticeship (typical 'employer' costs), such as:

- Apprentice wages / backfill costs associated with off-the-job training.
- Apprentice travel and subsistence costs (including travel to off-the-job training).
- All accommodation costs associated with off-the-job training, including outward-bound activities.
- Employer induction activities for the apprentice.
- Student membership fees that are required by professional bodies, even where linked to a mandatory qualification.
- Any fees to awarding bodies for non-mandatory qualifications (qualifications that are not specifically listed in the standard). This includes registration, examination, certification and re-sit costs.
- Additional learning required to re-sit an exam linked to a non-mandatory qualification.
- Re-sit costs for a mandatory qualification, beyond the first re-sit (which is eligible).
- Any training (e.g., optional modules, educational trips, industry visits, expert speakers or trips to professional events), in excess of that required to pass the end-point assessment and achieve the apprenticeship.
- Time spent by employees / managers supporting or mentoring apprentices, where this is not delivering training required as part of the apprenticeship.
- Development of employees / managers supporting or mentoring apprentices.
- The creation of resources for work-based mentors and line managers.

Payment structure & terms

Level 3 and 5 apprenticeships for AHPs

- **For new starters in 2026/27 financial year (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027)**, NHS organisations and NHS commissioned services are offered an education grant award of:



- **£4,360.00 per apprentice per year of training** (subject to regular monitoring) (up to 24 months).
- With a total funding package from NHS England of **£8,720** per level 3 or 5 apprentice, for all programmes within the scope of this funding.

Level 6 AHP small professions

- **For new starters in 2026/27 financial year (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027),** commencing a **Level 6 Degree Apprenticeships** for Podiatry, Speech and Language Therapy, Operating Department Practitioners (ODP), NHS provider organisations and NHS commissioned services are offered an award of:
 - **£8,441.00 per apprentice per year of training** (subject to confirmation) (up to 36 months),
 - With a total funding package from NHS England of **£25,323** per level 6 apprentice, for all programmes within the scope of this funding.
- Payments will be aligned to Education Funding Agreement scheduled payments. The first payment will be issued on the next scheduled payment date following September 2026.
- To receive funds the apprentice must be a new enrolment as of **1st April 2026 and start on an approved programme before 31st March 2027.**
- Funding is only payable for the time that the learner is active. All funding ceases if a learner withdraws from the programme. Therefore, organisations are responsible for promptly notifying NHSE of any changes to a learner's status **within 28 days**. Funding payments will be adjusted accordingly.
- Organisations must ensure that the acceptance of this funding is not reliant on further allocations beyond this period to support the continuation of apprentices. Failure to utilise the allocation in full may negatively impact future funding allocations. Organisations are therefore strongly encouraged to plan and implement promptly to ensure maximum use of the investment.

Governance and Reporting

- The governance arrangements for this investment will remain the overall responsibility of the NHSE Deputy Director Workforce and Education.



- Delivery will be monitored and reviewed by the NEY Multiprofessional Workforce & Education Team.
- Organisations must confirm their ability to comply with NHS England reporting requirements, including the provision of regular data returns evidencing apprentice enrolment, progression, and completion. This includes reporting apprentice details, training provider, programme dates, and any changes in status such as programme pauses, withdrawals, or early completion.

Equality impact

For all apprenticeship training roles supported via this funding offer, NHS England expects NHS employers to:

- enact an inclusive, transparent, and fair recruitment process, regardless of whether internal or external, and in line with the [NHS equality, diversity, and inclusion improvement plan](#).
- ensure appropriate terms and conditions of employment in line with the [NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook](#) and [Department for Education apprenticeship funding rules](#).

Further information and resources

- [Skills England](#)
- [Apprenticeship funding rules and assessment plan guidance, 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK, \[draft pending May 26 publication\]](#)
- [Apprenticeship funding rules 2024 to 2025 | Department for Education](#)
- [Salisbury Apprenticeship & Education Frameworks - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)
- [The NHS Education Funding Agreement 2024-2027 | NHS England](#)
- [NHS Employers](#)

Appendix 2: Application process

Proposed timeline for application, approval, and transfer of funding



- **June 2026:** Offer letter issued to the Chief AHPs (or equivalent) and Chief nurses in NEY region. Trust invited to complete an EOI via the
 - [AHP SW Apprenticeship Funding - Expression of Interest Form](#) . Organisation may request allocations for up to:
 - x5 L3 apprenticeships
 - x5 L5 apprenticeships
 - [AHP Small Professions Apprenticeship Funding - Expression of Interest Form](#) . Organisation may request allocations for up to five apprenticeship grants per profession
- **3rd August 2026:** Deadline for expressions of interest / receipt of returns from all organisations.
- Expression of interest forms to be reviewed by the AHP programme team – the regional AHP team will look to allocate fairly across the region. Outcome to be issued by the **31st August 2026**.
- Payments will be profiled from September 2026 and made in line with existing payment schedules. The first payment will be issued on the next scheduled payment date following September 2026.

Guidance for completion

- Please submit one return per organisation using the:
 - [AHP SW Apprenticeship Funding - Expression of Interest Form](#)
 - [AHP Small Professions Apprenticeship Funding - Expression of Interest Form](#)
- Only completed forms will be accepted and must include the details of the Chief AHP (or equivalent) as they will be accountable for this investment.

