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Pharmacy News

NHS Workforce, Training & Education #9



Monday 8th December 2025

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A message from the Deans

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to our ninth update from NHS England.

As we draw to the end of 2025, we wanted to recognise the dedication of all the employers and training providers who have helped shape the last year of pharmacy education and training in England.

Together we have celebrated some key milestones this year, including enrolling the first cohort of Foundation Trainee Pharmacists who will register with the General Pharmaceutical Council as a pharmacist and as an independent prescriber, the second cohort of our Community Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship Programme (CPTAP), and the second national Teach and Treat Programme.

We have also supported the [Inclusive Pharmacy Practice Week](#) to explore ways to create more inclusive workplaces and learning environments.

Whilst there has been change and transformation, we have also maintained access to key training opportunities. We have continued to support pharmacist independent prescribing training, and [funded places are currently available until the end of March 2026](#). Likewise, the [Adult Critical Care training for Pharmacy Professionals](#) has seen the first cohorts of pharmacist and pharmacy technicians complete their pathways – congratulations to all the learners, and their supervisors, who have studied so diligently on these programmes for the past year.

As we enter 2026, we will be engaging with stakeholders to pilot a training pathway for newly qualified early careers pharmacist prescribers, as well as developing our resources and support for supervisors and educators. You can find out more about these below.

We have enjoyed speaking to so many of you at online events, and more recently face-to-face at CPC North and the annual RPS conference. We look forward to continuing to work with all our stakeholders to develop our work in 2026 and beyond.

With best wishes,

Jane Brown, Shane Costigan, Paul Duell,
David Gibson, Nick Haddington and Atif Shamim

1. Join us in shaping the new pilot training pathway for Early Career Pharmacist prescribers 2026-27



From 2026, NHS England will pilot a new education and training pathway for newly qualified Early Career Pharmacist (ECP) prescribers. This initiative aims to tackle longstanding inconsistencies around supervision, funding, and training quality across sectors and regions.

We are inviting employers, supervisors, learners, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and other partners to be part of this exciting journey.

We will be developing the pathway offer to meet the needs of early career pharmacists and employers, enabling the delivery of high-quality care to patients. Participation will help shape an equitable pathway aligned with service priorities. Feedback will contribute to developing a unified training offer that supports prescribing competence in any practice setting.

If you are interested in being involved in the conversation, please complete [your form](#) by Friday 8 January 2026.

2. New Early Career Pharmacist Supervisor Resource Library

We are excited to announce the launch of the Early Career Pharmacist (ECP) supervisor resource library, created to support supervisors of newly qualified and early career pharmacists.

This curated collection offers flexible, high-quality resources, including:

- Short courses,
- Training materials,
- Practical tools aligned with current education and training standards.

Please note that this library does not include content related to designated prescribing practitioner (DPP) supervision or clinical supervision assurance.

Explore the library now via our [ECP Supervisor Resource Library Futures page](#) and share it with colleagues. You will need to create a free account to access the NHS Futures Platform, but you do not need an NHS email to do this.

3. Accuracy Checking Pharmacy Technician programme – final opportunity to enrol



The post-registration Accuracy Checking Pharmacy Technician (ACPT) programme is now live and accepting applications.

The funding is available to pharmacy technicians in all sectors, provided they meet the [entry criteria](#) and are eligible to apply. This is the final time NHS England will provide funded places on this programme, so don't miss out! Limited places are available until March 2026.

Unlike previous rounds, there are:

- No sector restrictions – open to pharmacy technicians working in community pharmacy, NHS hospitals or Health and Justice settings,
- Rolling open applications – no restricted windows to apply, making it easier than ever to apply.

Visit [CPPE's website](#) for full details of the programme, entry criteria, and how to apply.

4. Pharmacy technician development pathway: preparing for the future



The Pharmacy technician development programme is a new funded course in 2025-26. This flexible programme brings together existing CPPE resources under one umbrella, supported by one-to-one education supervision. Pharmacy technicians from all sectors can join this pathway, at any time, between now and March 2026.

How it works:

- Start with a Learning Needs Review,
- Access tailored face-to-face and online workshops based on your needs,
- Track progress through an online learning record.

Learn more about the programme and how to apply on the [CPPE pharmacy technician development programme webpages](#).

5. Foundation Trainee Pharmacist support, materials and e-portfolio

If you are a Foundation Trainee Pharmacist who began in the 2025 Summer start window, you will be part way through your training programme now and, hopefully, you have a good understanding of what you need to do including how the [NHS England Assessment Strategy](#) and [e-portfolio](#) work.

If you began in the 2025 Autumn start window, you will just be starting to get to grips with these. Make sure you have a look at the resources on our website, and on the [NHS England Foundation Trainee Pharmacist Programme Learning Hub Catalogue](#). You will need to create a free account to access the Learning Hub, but you do not need an NHS email to do this.

All Foundation Trainee Pharmacists must use the Foundation Trainee Pharmacist Programme e-portfolio. If you need help you can join our drop-in support sessions or access step-by-step guides. Details are available on the [Learning Hub](#).

If you need support during training, the [trainee support guide](#) on our website explains available support and NHS England's role in providing it.

6. Foundation Trainee Pharmacist recruitment update



The Autumn window for recruitment of Foundation Trainee Pharmacists into training posts for the 2025-26 training cohort has now closed. This means that almost 3,000 Foundation Trainee Pharmacists are now on programme in England. The majority of these trainees will join the register as independent prescribers in 2026, ready to support the ambitions of the [10 Year Health Plan](#).

Recruitment to foundation pharmacist training posts is managed exclusively via The National Recruitment Scheme (also known as Oriol). Further information on recruitment, including an update on recruitment for the 2026-27 cohort, can be found on our [dedicated Foundation Trainee Pharmacist recruitment website](#).

7. Pharmacy Technician training - CPTAP cohort 2 enrolled

Building on the successful first year of the Community Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship Programme (CPTAP) Cohort 1, NHS England has funded a second wave of Pre-Registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians (PTPTs) in community pharmacy: CPTAP Cohort 2.

Cohort 1 was the first focused community pharmacy funding offer for the pharmacy technician workforce. The initiative has so far facilitated access to apprenticeship funding for education programmes and supported preparing the workforce for the future.

Following significant interest from employers, a total of 718 PTPTs have been funded by NHS England in Cohort 2. Employers have completed recruitment, and trainees are now enrolled on the Pharmacy Technician (Integrated) Apprenticeship.

These trainees are expected to qualify and register from Winter 2026 (Cohort 1) and Autumn 2027 (Cohort 2), helping to address the current workforce demand gap.

8. GPhC consultation on pharmacy technician education standards – have your say!



The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is currently consulting on new [draft standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians](#).

The key changes proposed include:

- Raising the qualification level to minimum RQF Level 4,
- Replacing Accuracy Checking with Final Accuracy Checking,
- Introducing a level 2 science entry requirement (or equivalent),

- Retaining hourly practise-based supervision requirements and clarify education supervisor and course provider responsibilities,
- Adding new learning outcomes, such as digital technology, sustainability, and pharmacogenomics,
- Making all pharmacy technician qualifications credit-bearing,
- Updating standards and criteria for course providers,
- Retaining the 2-year study duration,
- Encouraging multisector training.

The consultation closes on 24 December 2025. NHS England is preparing its response to the consultation, but it is vital that everyone shares their views. [Have your say today!](#)

9. Teach and Treat programme 2025-26 - driving pharmacy transformation

Following the recent Expressions of Interest for the 2025-26 Teach and Treat programme we were encouraged to see so many innovative and exciting models that will help strengthen pharmacy workforce capacity.

This year's programme is designed to tackle pharmacy workforce challenges by delivering supervised, hands-on clinical training for community pharmacists, aligned with local service needs.

By supporting independent prescriber training and developing a sustainable supervisor pipeline in community pharmacy, the Teach and Treat programme aims to equip pharmacists with the skills and confidence to provide safe and effective care in patient-facing settings.

These developments will expand clinical roles, improve patient access, and reduce pressure on other NHS services - key steps in transforming pharmacy for the future.

Find out more about the Teach and Treat programme on [our website](#).

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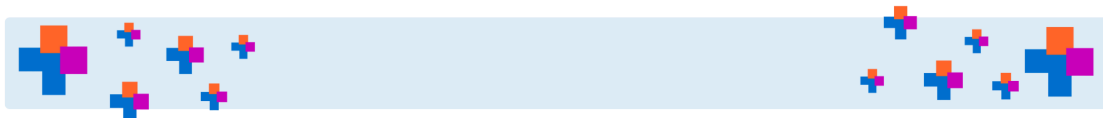
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