

Pharmacy workforce training and education update - May 2026

Pharmacy News

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In this issue:

A message from the Pharmacy Deans

1. 2025/26 Foundation Trainee Pharmacist programme final sign off
2. Preparing for the 2026/27 Foundation Trainee Pharmacist programme
3. Help shape the new pilot training pathway for Early Career Pharmacist prescribers 2026/27
4. Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey (CPWS) 2025 results released
5. Pharmacist independent prescribing
6. Survey on independent prescribing in foundation pharmacist training
7. Teach and Treat programme 2025/26
8. Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technician funding
9. Community Pharmacy Technician training
10. Foundation Trainee Pharmacist recruitment update

A message from the Deans

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the Spring edition of the NHS England Pharmacy Newsletter.

As we approach the middle of 2026, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to all employers and training providers for your continued dedication to pharmacy education during a period of significant change and competing pressures.

It was a pleasure to see so many of you at this year's Clinical Pharmacy Congress. As David Webb reflected, this period marks a significant transition within the profession.

This point in the year has brought both challenge and opportunity, with important progress in harmonising funding for Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians (PTPTs) and in shaping the Pharmacist Enhanced Practice Pathway.

Regional teams continue to provide vital support to our first cohort of Foundation Trainee Pharmacists, many of whom will sit their registration assessment in the coming weeks prior to joining the General Pharmaceutical Council register as pharmacists and independent prescribers.

We are grateful for your continued support in delivering this major educational reform as the NHS undergoes profound transformation.

Throughout this period of change, we have also maintained access to key training opportunities, including funded places for pharmacist independent prescribing training, currently available until the end of March 2027. Further information can be found below.

We look forward to ongoing collaboration with you and all stakeholders through the rest of 2026 and beyond.

With best wishes,

Paul Duell – Pharmacy Dean, East of England

On behalf of all the Pharmacy Deans: Jane Brown, Leanne Clews, David Gibson, Nick Haddington, Kat Hall and Atif Shamim

1. 2025/26 Foundation Trainee Pharmacist programme final sign off

As Foundation Trainee Pharmacists approach the end of the 2025/26 programme, preparations for final sign off via the e-portfolio are now underway. This mandatory activity is vital for successful trainee registration with the General Pharmaceutical Council, provided all requirements, including the common registration assessment, have been met.

A [Final Sign Off Quick Guide](#) is available on the Learning Hub to support trainees and supervisors. Following completion, NHS England will undertake assurance checks and report outcomes to the GPhC in line with the published timetable.

Further details, including the reporting schedule, can be found on the [NHS England website](#).

2. Preparing for the 2026/27 Foundation Trainee Pharmacist programme

Organisations across England are preparing to welcome the 2026/27 Foundation Trainee Pharmacist cohort, with key actions now underway to support a smooth start to the training programme.

A confirmed Designated Supervisor is required for every trainee before they can begin the programme. For those starting in summer, supervisors must be registered by midday on Monday 15 June 2026. Trainees without a confirmed supervisor by this deadline will be deferred to the autumn intake.

Trainees are permitted to start only after all programme requirements are met. These include completion of their MPharm or OSPAP qualification, submission of their GPhC registration application, confirmation of a Designated Supervisor, and a signed employment contract with an agreed training plan.

The 2026/27 programme offers two start windows:

- Summer: 13 July to 3 August 2026
- Autumn: 19 October to 9 November 2026

Employers and supervisors are encouraged to complete all onboarding steps promptly to ensure trainees can begin their training as planned.

More information can be found on the [NHS England website](#).

3. Help shape the new pilot training pathway for Early Career Pharmacist prescribers 2026/27

NHS England, with the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) and the Royal College of Pharmacy, is launching the Pharmacist Enhanced Practice Pathway pilot in Autumn 2026. The pilot will develop and test a consistent, equitable, and high-quality training offer for up to 1200 newly qualified Early Career Pharmacist prescribers across all sectors.

Interested parties are invited to join the [NHS Futures Early Career Pharmacist Workspace](#) for updates and to help develop the pilot pathway.

Your input will ensure the pathway reflects real-world practice, supports workforce development, and is delivered consistently across all sectors and regions. Register your interest [here](#) to receive email updates.

4. Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey (CPWS) 2025 results released

The CPWS provides a snapshot of the people who keep community pharmacy running day in, day out. NHS England will use this data to inform future investment in education and training and support effective pharmacy workforce planning. These surveys are used each year to provide data to support planning and delivery of clinical services, for the benefit of our workforce and the public.

Key findings from the 2025 survey are available via [CPWS webpage](#) or [Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey – data.gov.uk](#)

5. Pharmacist independent prescribing

Applications for NHS England funded independent prescribing courses are now open. Pharmacists from all sectors, including community pharmacy and locums, are invited to take advantage of this opportunity. Courses are available up to March 2027, with several universities offering multiple dates for cohort intakes. Start dates will depend on the provider. More information and the list of approved suppliers is available on the [NHS England website](#).

6. Survey on independent prescribing in foundation pharmacist training

Foundation Trainee Pharmacists in the 2025/26 cohort will soon be invited, from the 22 June 2026, to participate in a short survey regarding the impact of independent prescribing within the Initial Education and Training Standards of Pharmacists.

This survey forms part of an evaluation led by King's College London and is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The broader evaluation aims to assess the impact of training reforms on the pharmacist role and stakeholders involved.

The online, anonymous survey is expected to take only 12-15 minutes to complete, and a similar survey will be conducted the following year to track any changes in experiences. The findings will help inform future development of NHS workforce training, pharmacy education, and service provision. Support from participants in completing the survey will be greatly appreciated.

7. Teach and Treat programme 2025/26

The Teach and Treat programme has now been rolled out across all seven NHS England regions for 2025/26 to support community pharmacists in completing independent prescribing training within supervised clinical environments.

Delivered through a range of regional partners, the programme is building more sustainable supervision models and giving community pharmacists better access to designated prescribing practitioners.

Find out more about the programme on the [NHS England website](#) and on the [NHS Futures](#) page.

8. Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technician funding

Starting from April 2027, NHS England will introduce a consistent annual funding rate of £15,505 per learner for Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians (PTPTs) across all regions.

The phased transition began in April 2026:

- Regions receiving increased funding moved to the full rate immediately.
- Regions facing a reduction will transition over two years, with a mid-point adjustment from April 2026 and the full harmonised rate (£15,505 p.a.) from April 2027.

This aims to promote equity, workforce sustainability, and national consistency in line with NHS strategic priorities and to enable more PTPTs to be trained.

NHS England commissioned PTPTs enrolled onto an apprenticeship programme before April 2026 will remain on the current funding amount.

For further information on the impact for your organisation, contact your regional pharmacy team or check the [NHS England website FAQs](#).

9. Community Pharmacy Technician training

NHS England has launched the third Community Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship Programme (CPTAP) round, to further strengthen the pharmacy technician workforce in community pharmacy.

Applications for funding closed on 18 May 2026; thank you to all employers who applied. Assessments are underway, with awarded places to be confirmed in June 2026. Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians (PTPTs) are expected to start by September 2026.

This programme plays a key role in supporting workforce growth, sustainability and career development within community pharmacy. For more details, visit the [NHS England website](#).

10. Foundation Trainee Pharmacist recruitment update

NHS England regional teams are preparing to welcome over 3,000 Foundation Trainee Pharmacists in Summer and Autumn windows in 2026. Recruitment for the 2027 cohort is underway, with around 5,000 places available across multiple practice sectors. The final list of programmes will be published in June, offering a wide range of options. A huge thank you to all employers for their continued support of the next generation of pharmacists.

Foundation Pharmacist training posts are managed exclusively via The National Recruitment Scheme (also known as Oriel). For further information including updates on 2026/27 recruitment, visit the dedicated [Foundation Trainee Pharmacist recruitment website](#).

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