#

# Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

# Funding Guidance for Nursing Associates, Nurses, Midwives and AHPs in NHS Organisations / Primary Care Training Hubs 2025/26

## Funding Process, Guidance on completion of investment plan and Frequently Asked Questions

## Background

This guidance has been written to ensure the continuing professional development (CPD) investment for nursing associates, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals (AHPs) for 2025/26 is managed and available for eligible frontline professionals.

## Purpose

The CPD funding is intended to be used as an individual development fund for frontline clinical professionals to:

* Equip them with new clinical skills to enhance the care they provide to patients and develop their careers.
* Support staff in moving between sectors, for example, by enabling nurses and AHPs in hospitals to move to new roles in primary care and community care, supporting improved primary care access and out of hospital care.
* Support the maintenance of their continuing professional registration by helping them to meet requirements from their professional regulators.

For clarity, this funding is an investment solely for CPD and **cannot be used** for funding backfill or statutory and mandatory training.

## Funding allocation

Each organisation is provided with an allocation for their registered nursing associate, nurse, midwife and AHP workforce headcount. Allocations are calculated via NHS Digital workforce headcount data (January 2025) and will continue on the same basis and criteria as applied in 2024/25.

## Eligibility criteria

CPD funding is available to specific eligible professions, the headcount for which is used to calculate allocations. Nursing associates, registered nurses, midwives and allied health professionals (listed below) in the NHS (in England) are eligible for the CPD funding. **This funding is not available for nursing, midwifery and allied health professionals in social care, local government or in other sectors outside of NHS in England (including CICs and social enterprises).**

Below is the list of 14 professions that are included in the AHP group.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Art Therapist
* Podiatrist
* Dietitian
* Drama Therapist
* Music Therapist
* Paramedic
 | * Occupational Therapist
* Operating Department Practitioner
* Orthoptist
* Osteopath
* Physiotherapist
 | * Prosthetist/Orthotist
* Radiographer (Diagnostic & Therapeutic
* Speech and Language Therapist
 |

## Process and timeframe

The following process is outlined to ensure there is an investment plan in place and a reporting mechanism back to NHS England. Reporting of this work will be through the NHS England Regional Teams and will ensure we are able to capture spend, uptake and benefits of this investment from a regional perspective, and provide assurance required nationally on utilisation of CPD investment.

**Process for oversight of CPD Funding Allocation**

**Timeframe**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **When** | **Activity** |
| May 2025 | NHS England to send confirmation of 2025/26 CPD allocations and share investment planning template with organisations / Training Hubs |
| July 2025 | Organisations will receive 100% of their confirmed allocation in July 2025 as part of the funding transfer for the NHSE Education Funding Agreement finance schedule \* |
| August 2025 | Organisations / Training Hubs to develop CPD investment plans for 2025/26 and return them to NHS England by 22nd August 2025. |
| October/November 2025 | NHS England Regional Teams carry out review/assurance process with organisations to reflect on progress to date, identify risks and gauge confidence in delivery for the remainder of Q3 & Q4. |
| 1st May 2026 | Organisations / Training Hubs to submit their final plan detailing actual activity for 2025/26 FY by 1st May 2026 demonstrating 100% utilisation of the 25/26 CPD investment. |

Key:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Organisation/Training Hub responsibility |
|  | NHSE Responsibility |

\*Payment methods may vary for Training Hubs. NHS England will advise where required.

## Guidance on completing the investment plan

This guidance aims to assist individuals in completing the NHS England CPD investment plan template. It ensures consistency across the region and facilitates the comparison of expenditures between and across various organisations and systems.

## Development in / out of scope

This list is not exhaustive but gives some guidance around what the funding can or cannot be used to support.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In scope** | **Out of scope** |
| Professional development of individuals  | Statutory & Mandatory training |
| Support for career development  | Training supported via alternative funding e.g Non-Medical Prescribing |
| Upskilling  | Salary support or backfill |
| Course fees  | Administrative support  |
| Conference attendance  | CPD >£1k per person  |
| CPD <£1k per person | Capital expenditure including equipment  |
|  | Travel or subsistence  |

## Principles of Utilisation of funding

* **Value for money**: Collaborate across organisations and systems to access development opportunities and consider offering in-house training to other NHS organisations for economies of scale.
* **Return on Investment:** Evaluate potential and actual impacts at every stage, integrating these evaluations into organisational processes.
* **Alignment with priorities**: Ensure funding aligns with national, regional, system, and organisational priorities.
* Alignment with the Government’s three key shifts outlined in the 10-year plan for health and care:
	+ From hospital to community
	+ From treatment to prevention
	+ From analogue to digital

## Completion of Tab 2: Contact details

This section asks for the details of the main contact and the details of the Senior Responsible Officer who has overall accountability for the CPD funding on behalf of the organisation.

## Completion of Tab 3: Assurance

### Governance:

This section is to allow you to describe the governance arrangements in place to assure the appropriate and timely deployment of the CPD investment.

Within this section you should include information regarding:

* Internal governance arrangements:
	+ Do you have an organisational policy around access to CPD funding?
	+ Is there a process for individuals to use to access CPD?
	+ Is there an overarching group who oversees this process?
	+ Do you undertake a Training Needs Analysis to inform spend?
* Quality assurance of provision:
	+ How do you ensure that the training that is delivered is of a high quality?
* Risk management:
	+ How do you identify risks/ issues to delivery?
	+ What systems are in place to mitigate and manage risks?
	+ How are risks / issues recorded and escalated?
* Evaluation of impact:
	+ How do you know that the training you are delivering / commissioning is making a difference in terms of service development / improvement, patient outcomes, staff satisfaction, personal development, career development etc?

### Equality Impact Assessment:

This section is to allow you to describe the processes in place to ensure equitable access to CPD funding across the professions in scope.

Within this section you should include information regarding:

* How do you ensure that all professions in scope are aware of funding and can access funding as appropriate?
* Do you monitor take up of CPD funding by those with protected characteristics?
* How do you ensure that there is a fair and equitable process for reviewing CPD requests?

### Impact & Value:

This section details the benefits and outcomes of CPD funding within your organisation. While some information may be covered in the Governance section, this is your chance to elaborate on the measurable differences made by the investment. Include both qualitative evidence and measurable outcomes.

For example:

* **Staff outcomes**: Satisfaction (e.g., Staff Survey results), retention, career development.
* **Patient outcomes**: Incident reduction, shorter stays, lower re-admission rates, admission avoidance.
* **Service improvements**: New roles and their impact, new services, and benefits for patients.

## Completion of Tab 4: CPD Investment plan detail

This tab is password protected so input into some cells is from a drop-down menu only and some cells will auto-populate. The information inputted onto this tab is more detailed and should outline **all expenditure,** so more detailed guidance regarding each column is included below:

1. **Education Provider**

*The name of the provider who is delivering the training should be inputted in this column. If this is being provided internally within the organisation, the name of the organisation needs to be inputted rather than ‘internal’.*

1. **Provider Type**

*Drop down menu giving the below options:*

* In-region HEI:

*This should be used to indicate Higher Education Institutes, even if outside the ICB area.*

Out-of-region HEI:

*This should be used to indicate Higher Education Institutes which are outside your region.*

* Private provider:

*This should be used to indicate private education providers e.g. private conference providers, M&K, Baby Lifeline, Brain Tree Training etc.*

* NHS Organisation:

*This should be used to indicate all NHS Organisations e.g. NHS Trusts, NHS Leadership Academy, NHS Blood Transfusion.*

* Voluntary Organisation:

*This should be used to indicate voluntary organisations and charities, e.g. hospices, NSPCC, UNICEF, MENCAP.*

* Professional body:

*This should be used to indicate professional bodies e.g. RCN*

* Other:

*This should be used to indicate other providers of training and education who are not included in the above categories, including national associations, societies or agencies, e.g. Stroke Association, The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy etc.*

1. **Description of activity**

*This column is free text and needs to include the title of the training to be delivered and needs to be in enough detail to inform the nature of the training, for example, instead of just clinical skills, there needs to be some identification of what clinical skills are being addressed / developed; instead of saying ‘professional conference’ there should be an indication of which profession or the focus of the conference; and instead of just saying ‘level 6 modules’ it should stipulate the name of the module.*

*To note, this activity should be in scope as described previously.*

*It should be noted that training and development with alternative funding available should not be supported with CPD funding, for example:*

* *Specialist Community Public Health Nursing programmes*
* *Community Specialist Practitioner programmes*
* *Non-Medical Prescribing*
* *Apprenticeships*
1. **Activity Category**

*Drop Down menu giving the below options:*

* **Supply:**

*Identifying current and future workforce availability in terms of skills, capabilities and numbers in order to identify the appropriate workforce interventions.*

* **New Roles:**

*Roles designed to meet a defined workforce requirement, warranting a new job title.*

* **New Ways of Working:**

*Emphasis on delivering an integrated workforce culture that empowers it to work across traditional system / organisational barriers and deliver holistic person-centred care.*

* **Leadership:**

*The support of individuals, organisations and systems in their leadership development, including individual skills and behaviours as well as organisational approaches and system level development through partnership working.*

* **Upskilling:**

*Focused on role enhancement, increasing the depth of a job role by extending the skills and responsibilities of an existing role to enable practice at the top of one’s license.*

1. **Activity Type**

Drop Down menu giving the below options:

* Courses – accredited
* Course – not accredited
* Conferences / Seminars – accredited
* Conferences / Seminars – not accredited
* Online learning – accredited
* Online learning - not accredited
* Other
1. **Planned Delivery**

Drop Down menu giving the below options:

* **Q1 2025/26**

*Training planned for delivery in April, May or June 2025.*

* **Q2 2025/26**

*Training planned for delivery in July, August or September 2025.*

* **Q3 2025/26**

*Training planned for delivery in October, November or December 2025.*

* **Q4 2025/26**

*Training planned for delivery in January, February or March 2026.*

*To note, planned delivery must be within the current financial year.*

1. **Unit Cost £**

*This column must be populated with a cost in £. The maximum amount allowed per individual is £1k. If an organisation is supporting an individual to undertake a programme that has a cost of >£1k, then only £1k should be indicated on the investment plan to demonstrate utilisation of CPD funding, and the additional funding required should be sourced elsewhere.*

*If a training programme is to be delivered to a large group of staff (who should all be in scope for receipt of CPD funding), the total cost of the training should be divided by the number of staff accessing to give the unit cost, and that cost included in this column rather than the overall cost.*

1. **Number of places for Nurses/Midwives**

*Please input a number in this column, i.e. 10 rather than ten.*

1. **Nursing & Midwifery Staff Group**

*Drop Down menu giving the below options*:

* Adult
* Mental Health
* Learning Disabilities
* Child
* Midwife
* GPN / Primary Care Nurse
* Community Nurse
* Nursing Associate
* Multiple Nursing & Midwifery Groups

*To note, if only 1 professional group is undertaking the training / development, then multiple nursing groups* ***must not*** *be chosen. To allow for more robust and accurate analysis of spend, please be as accurate as possible with the detail inputted regarding professions accessing.*

*It is particularly challenging to provide any detailed analysis regarding spend for the smaller professions, so any additional detail is appreciated.*

1. **Nursing & Midwifery Cost £**

*This column will auto-populate.*

1. **Number of places for AHPs**

*Please input a number in this column, i.e. 10 rather than ten.*

1. **AHP Staff Group**

*Drop Down menu giving the below options:*

* Art Therapist
* Drama Therapist
* Music Therapist
* Chiropodist / Podiatrist
* Dietitian
* Occupational Therapist
* Operating Department Practitioner
* Orthoptist
* Osteopath
* Paramedic
* Physiotherapist
* Prosthetist & Orthotist
* Radiographers

*Therapeutic & Diagnostic*

* Speech & Language Therapist
* Multiple AHP groups

*To note, if only 1 professional group is undertaking the training / development, then multiple AHP groups* ***must not*** *be chosen. To allow for more robust and accurate analysis of spend, please be as accurate as possible with the detail inputted regarding professions accessing.*

*It is particularly challenging to provide any detailed analysis regarding spend for the smaller professions, so any additional detail is appreciated.*

1. **AHP Cost £**

*This column will auto-populate.*

1. **Total Amount**

*This column will auto-populate.*

1. **Spend Status**

*Drop Down menu giving the below options:*

* *Planned*
* *Actual*

*Please note that this column is related to spend rather than to delivery of activity. The activity may not take place until later in the period, but Actual should be chosen if the spend has occurred.*

1. **Intended Impact of Activity**

*Drop Down menu giving the below options*

* **To maintain/refresh existing skills**

*Activity that supports the maintenance of existing skills used within current role (e.g. an update or refresher course)*

* **To develop new skills/techniques**

*Activity that provides learning a new skill that will be used within existing role (e.g. expanding breadth of an individual’s knowledge)*

* **To support career progression**

*Activity that supports readiness for progression to next step*

* **To respond to a new service need**

*Activity that supports delivery of a service in a new way (e.g. system / strategic / national priorities)*

1. **Additional Info**

*This column is optional but can be used for any additional information to support as appropriate or to support you in tracking utilisation of spend, monitoring etc in your organisation.*

1. **Linked to a priority area**

*This column is optional but is useful to understand if the development is linked to an organisational /regional/ national priority – please choose the appropriate drop down.*

## Completion of Tab 5: CPD investment plan summary

The majority of this tab will auto-populate with data from tab 4.

**However, employers do need to input :-**

* Trust allocation (line 10)
* Trust head count nursing and midwifery staff group (line 11)
* Trust head count AHP staff group (line 12)

## Investment plan submission process

Organisations are required to submit an investment plan to NHS England by 22nd August 2025 setting out their intentions for full CPD utilisation for the year. The final plan detailing actual activity for 2025/26 FY should be submitted to NHS England by 1st May 2026 demonstrating 100% utilisation of the 25/26 CPD investment.

## Review of investment plan

The NHS England Regional Office will gather and compile information from NHS Trusts /THs in the region. They will summarise key CPD themes, such as common requests for courses, workshops, and e-learning as well as highlight distinct differences like bespoke specialist courses.

Before Trusts / TH submit their final actual plan in May 2026, a review and assurance exercise will be conducted by regional offices in October/November 2025 to assess the confidence in delivery plans for the remainder of the year and to review actual activities to date.

## Monitoring and reporting

The initial submission is required to be returned by 22nd August 2025. Each region will monitor organisational plans throughout the year and a final plan detailing actual activity for 2025/26 FY should be submitted to NHS England by 1st May 2026 demonstrating 100% utilisation of the 25/26 CPD investment. Any underspends identified in the final plan submitted may be subject to reclaim by NHS England.

Aggregated returns and a thematic analysis will be sent to the national team and NHS England Regional Directors to enable a collective understanding of the benefits of the additional investment.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The following questions are intended to support organisations.

1. **How will organisations know how much they will receive and how will they receive it?**

Allocations have been set against January 25 NHS Digital’s workforce data and will be issued as part of the funding transfer for the NHSE Education Funding Agreement finance schedules which will be paid via the IPF (or via invoice if the EFA is not in place for your organisation as per the previous arrangements).

1. **What happens if a member of staff moves out of area / into a new area?**

This fund is to support the NHS as a whole, and the skills and expertise of our workforce is vital to services and communities. Staff will move between organisations and take those skills to new roles in the NHS. We expect Trusts to work to this principle and avoid the introduction of any processes or policies that place any restrictions on staff (practical or financial).

1. **Is the allocation pro-rata for part timers?**

No, all eligible staff groups are entitled to the same amount of funding, regardless of the hours they work.

1. **Should a portfolio be provided for staff groups to record their CPD on?**

No. As part of the reporting we need assurance of completion of CPD programmes funded, not the detail of learning a portfolio would be used for. Any decision on use of portfolios is for the individual and the organisation.

1. **How will the system and local population health priorities feed into this process?**

Completed investment plans should align to the local systems transformation strategy and we would therefore expect system wide discussions across NHS sectors to take place to identify efficiencies wherever possible with education providers. In addition, part of the investment could be used for costs to enable the development of cost-effective courses to be run at scale within organisations or across systems.

## Further questions

If you have any further questions that have not been answered within this document, please send these to england.nursing.north@nhs.net