PAST | FUTURE | REFLECT
A landscape overview of NHS workforce development

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
The topic of developing the NHS workforce is a complex combination of emerging policy, innovative practice and new opportunities. As the service begins to implement the NHS Long Term Plan, the development of staff skills to support our future care models becomes a leading priority.

This briefing takes stock of the recent policy developments and future strategic direction for the shape and education of the NHS workforce, against three areas: alternative training routes, new and/or extended roles, and nursing education.

In this short document, we also try to stimulate further thinking on these new and emerging options, such as apprenticeships or new roles, as enablers to the establishment of our future workforce.

**About NHS Employers**

We are the **employers’ organisation** for the NHS in England. We help employers to develop a sustainable workforce, improve staff experience and be the best employers they can be.

Our practical resources and expert insights help make sense of current and emerging healthcare issues, to keep employers up to date with the latest thinking and ensure they are informed and equipped to support the **NHS workforce**. We generate opportunities to network and share knowledge and we actively seek the views of workforce leaders to make sure their voice is front and centre of health policy and practice.

We also lead the national collective relationships with trade unions on behalf of the NHS and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.
Levy introduced in 2017 for organisations with a pay bill of over £3m to fund apprenticeships. A total of £200m per year for the NHS.

Levy payers can transfer up to 25 per cent of their fund to pay for apprenticeships in other organisations.

In March 2019, the National Audit Office published a report on the projected use of levy funds, highlighting the likelihood of funds being fully used, therefore limiting availability of funds for SMEs to draw down.

**125 clinical and non-clinical apprenticeships standards** are available in a range of professions, including:
- Nursing
- Occupational therapy
- Midwifery
- Advanced clinical practice
- Healthcare Science
- Radiography
- Senior leadership
- Clinical coding
- Facilities management
- Digital and technology solutions
- Business administration

Health and science T Levels have been developed, with pilot schemes testing different models and approaches to delivering T Level placements. T Levels are two-year, technical programmes which combine classroom education with an industry placement for post-16s.

In February 2018, NHS Employers made the case to the Department for Education for employer funding to manage industry placements for T Levels.

NHS Employers presented the case for flexibilities in the use of the levy for the NHS as the largest contributor.

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**Nurse Degree Apprenticeship (NDA)** standard introduced in May 2017 and updated to reflect new Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards in October 2018.

NHS Employers presented the case for flexibility for nursing apprenticeships to the Education Select Committee in June 2018.

NHS bursary removed in August 2017.

Increased proportion of learners in the workplace due to introduction of apprenticeship and a national drive to scale up new roles such as nursing associates.

The NHS Long Term Plan announced a target to increase the number of student nurses by 5,000 for September 2019.

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**New and Extended Roles**

In January 2017 the nursing associate (NA) apprenticeship launched.

The NA register opened in January 2019 and more than 1,000 NAs registered in the system.

In September 2018 the NMC approved an alternative approach to supernumerary status for trainee NAs, protecting education quality but embracing work-based learning principles.

NHS Employers published its Employer guide to nursing associates in January 2019, receiving over 20,000 web views.


The NHS Long Term Plan set out the essential role advanced practice will play in priority areas of the NHS, particularly in reducing locum spend and transforming primary care, community care, A&E, cancer care and elective services.

**Four new roles** (specifically to support the medical workforce) have been introduced in the NHS over the last 15 years, known collectively as medical associate professions (MAPs).
Have you cultivated a quality work-based learning environment across the organisation to enable apprentices to thrive and ensure long-term return on investment through the retention of staff?

Could your trust develop new apprenticeship standards to address specific skills gaps not met by existing apprenticeships?

How will T Levels align with your apprenticeships approach and your wider workforce development strategy and pathways?

Could you transfer your apprenticeship levy to fund community and primary care nursing roles to support care in the community?

Can you pool funds across organisations, awarded as part of the HEE Workforce development funding, to provide a system-wide approach to placements?

Are you using the NDA to maximise the potential of your talented support workforce, build nursing supply and aid retention?

How might you use the standards currently in development to strategically align your workforce plan to the NHS Long Term Plan?

What five year return on investment does the NDA offer your service?

Could you consider using your levy for higher and degree level apprenticeships such as nursing associates or allied health professionals?

Can you work with your local schools and colleges to discuss the opportunities for T Level placements?

How can you make best use of new NMC standards to take different approaches to the supervision of students?

How are other trusts using new and extended roles to develop their workforce? What has been the impact on key workforce metrics and service delivery?

Have you considered using NAs as a development and retention tool to carve return to work pathways and alternative routes towards becoming a registered nurse?

What are the benefits of introducing or scaling up advanced roles to provide progression opportunities and support to services with limited advanced skills?

Have you considered using NAs as a development and retention tool to carve return to work pathways and alternative routes towards becoming a registered nurse?

Do you have a regional strategy to develop MAP and advanced practice roles? Are there ways in which collaboration between trusts and education providers can improve efficiency in training?
## FUTURE

### Non Traditional Training Routes

An additional **£50m funding** will be committed by Health Education England to develop existing workforce.

NHS Employers will continue to lobby the Department of Education to ensure any future changes to apprenticeship levy policy meet the needs of the NHS as the largest contributor to the apprenticeship levy.

**Over 20** clinical and non-clinical standards currently in development.

A range of standards are currently being explored by trailblazer groups. Standards aligned to the core priorities of the NHS Long Term Plan include:

- district nurse
- specialist community public health nurse
- accessibility and digital inclusion
- quality leader.

T Levels for health and science routes will launch **from 2021**.

Future work will be required to set out ‘destinations’ to show how T Level qualifications can lead to progression into skilled employment or higher education.

### Nursing Education

Employers will continue to design supply routes for registered nursing in conjunction with assistant practitioner and nursing associate programmes, to use the nurse degree apprenticeship to build supply.

Additional funding of **£50k** will be available from NHS England and NHS Improvement to support scaling up of placement capacity.

Employers will need to adopt innovative strategies to improve placement capacity in their services.

NHS Employers is working in partnership with NHS Improvement/England and current nursing students to develop guidance and mythbusting on student finance.

### New and Extended Roles

**HEE has set a target for 7,500 NAs** to start training in **2019**.

HEE is exploring the development of a National Academy for Advanced Practice to help standardise training programmes to develop ACPs.

Following consultation on all four roles, the Department of Health and Social Care announced it will proceed with the statutory regulation of anaesthesia associates and physician associates. Development of a legislative framework will help to open up the opportunity for new groups to be recognised as MAPs in future.