

## NES Non-funded FTY 2025-26 Communication One – Circulated 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025

Dear Colleague,

Please see below some further information which has been collated to explain the steps that had been followed by NES and our partners in reaching the outcome that non-NES funded posts could not be supported in training cohort 2025-26. We are sending this to hopefully answer any questions that you may have.

It is important for the future provision of Pharmacy in Scotland that we plan for and recruit an appropriate number of Foundation Training Year (FTY) places each year. While we want to ensure as many graduates as possible are able to get a funded FTY place, we also need to work within the resources available to us. During the recently completed recruitment cycle we filled the maximum 220 funded places for 2025-26 training cohort, with some candidates unfortunately remaining unmatched at present. As a result, partners across the profession have been working together to explore possible remedies and contingencies.

This letter sets out progress to date.

NHS Education for Scotland wrote to unmatched candidates and training providers in the 2024 recruitment cycle on 14th January 2025, 'Non funded communications - Foundation Training Year (FTY) in Scotland 2025-26'. This advised that it was not possible to develop an alternative process for employers to offer Foundation Training Year (FTY) posts in Scotland utilising their own funding, while also meeting the GPhC Standards for the Initial Education and Training (IET) of Pharmacists for selection and admission. The only route into undertaking FTY in 2025-26 in Scotland is via one of the 220 funded posts.

Options to provide additional FTY places in 2025-26 have been explored, including securing additional funding or a direct appointment process. A decision has been agreed across our partners that a direct appointment process is not possible, and communications have been provided to candidates still seeking an FTY post on options available to them.

A review of the FTY funding and allocation model has been agreed as an urgent priority commission from the National Pharmacy Workforce Forum.

Further detail explaining this position is outlined below.

- The recruitment process adopted by NES was [accredited by the General Pharmaceutical Council in April 2024](#). This required all candidates to participate in the ORIEL national recruitment process. Training providers wishing to host a trainee pharmacist were required to agree to terms of participation and be a part of this national recruitment scheme.
- A Direct Appointment process which would allow training providers to directly employ and fund a trainee pharmacist was considered in line with processes that had been in place against the 2011 Standards for the Initial Education and Training of Pharmacists. These considerations included the financial commitment that a training provider would be required to make to meet the standardised terms and conditions (including salary) of the FTY training year and the programme costs associated with delivery of the national programme.
- Discussions with the GPhC highlighted that an additional process of aligning candidates to employer funded training posts would require a centralised matching process to ensure the relevant Standards from the 2021 Standards for Initial Education

and Training of Pharmacists for selection and admission were met. This would require additional central funding to provide the necessary infrastructure support to deliver.

- Discussions with the GPhC highlighted that the proposed Direct Appointments process which stipulated that employers would cover the costs of any extensions to training required by trainee pharmacists (i.e. learning outcomes are not all achieved within the 52 week training programme) could not be approved as it could create a potential conflict of interest for training providers between the financing of training and making the final decision to sign off training.
- Any Direct Appointment process would therefore require additional resource to support trainee pharmacists requiring extensions beyond 52 weeks of training. Discussions with Scottish Government indicated there is no additional funding available to support this beyond that which is provided for the recruitment numbers agreed.
- The Directors of Pharmacy Scotland group reviewed available options in December 2024. A Direct Appointments process was not supported due to the requirement for additional funding.
- Discussions with Community Pharmacy Scotland outlined the considerations in reaching the final decision.
- The unmatched candidate status in Scotland was discussed with NHS England and it has been agreed that any candidate wishing to apply for a 2025-26 FTY post in their programme could do so. Advice regards next steps for candidates wishing to pursue this course was provided in the 'Non funded communications' previously mentioned. Once contact has been made with their helpdesk the next step is for candidates to contact the regional pharmacy team in the area they wish to train for further guidance and support. They ask that candidates please only contact one region to avoid a delay in response. The regional contact list is in the helpdesk response and the following link gives more information on which areas are in each region - <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/in-your-area>

Concerns surrounding the disparity in numbers of candidates wishing to train in Scotland following their undergraduate studies and the number of funded FTY posts available have been raised through PIET (Pharmacy Initial Education and Training) Group and the FTY Stakeholder Group and have been identified on our FTY risk register.

Partners involved are continuing to work on this issue.

We hope this answers questions you may have. However please do not hesitate to contact us via the FTY mailbox [nes.ftypharmacy@nhs.scot](mailto:nes.ftypharmacy@nhs.scot) to discuss further, if required.