

**North Central London Training Hub – Faculty and Quality**  
**New Educator & Learning Environment Approvals**  
**FAQ document for at scale PCN approvals – August 2023**

**Introduction:**

NHS England Workforce, Training and Education (WTE) (formally HEE) has a [quality framework](#) for learners on accredited training pathways for all primary care environments in which they are placed. This includes responsibility for the approval of educators and learning environments in primary care.

Since September 2022, environment approvals have shifted to a PCN footprint to support the expansion of learning opportunities to support new roles working in primary care. The goal is for PCNs to develop educational capacity; increasing both the number of student and trainee placements, and the locations used as educational sites.

This FAQ document is designed to support primary care educators and practices as NCL transitions to PCN at scale approvals.

**1. What does ‘PCN’ approval mean?**

An application for PCN approval must cover two parts:

- i. The assessment of multiple sites as appropriate hosts for learners and how these sites work together at scale to support quality placements in primary care as a single learning environment

The approval process supports multiple locations as learning environments across one Primary Care Network (PCN). This may include general practice, care homes and any other clinical educational environment deemed appropriate to host accredited training placements in primary care.

Not all practices in a PCN are required to be part of an at scale approval. An application should only include the learning environments that have already been approved by NHS England WTE to host primary care trainee placements. If there are practices in the PCN who want to be approved to undertake training and placements, they must submit a separate application form in addition to be adding to the PCN approval form (Form 2 Primary Care Network Recognition of Previously Approved Educational Environments and Educators).

- ii. Evidence to demonstrate the quality of education in the PCN, how this supports a mix of learners, and a commitment to developing educators.

A PCN approval will also support the application of multiple learner types under a single application. The application form must include all currently approved educators and training locations in the PCN and detail the types of learners each educator and practice hosted for training and placements. For example, one application could request approval to host learners from GP, nursing associate and First Contact Practitioner (FCP) pathways across five of the seven practices of a PCN. An application can include the learner types that practices already host and any learner types they would like to accommodate in future within that PCN.

## **2. I am already approved as an educator. Do I need to re-apply?**

No. There is no requirement to re-apply as an educator under a PCN application if the educator has already been approved by NHS England WTE to supervise learners in primary care.

Those who have completed a supervisor training course prior to 01 April 2023 for learners of AHP, physician associates, clinical pharmacy and nursing on accredited training pathways will not be required to complete an educator assessment with NCL Training Hub. Non-GP educators who have completed a recognised training course after the 01 April 2023 will need to follow the NCL Training Hub Quality approval process for new educators.

Any new educators in the PCN who wish to support training and placements of learners on an accredited training pathway must complete the relevant educator course and NCL Training Hub quality assessment prior to being added to a PCN application.

For more information about the process to apply as a new educator in NCL please refer to the [NCL Training Hub Approved Educator and Learning Environment educators](#) webpage.

## **2. Our practice is already approved by NHS England WTE as a learning environment. Does this mean we will need to re-apply as part of a PCN application?**

If your practice has been approved to host learners on an accredited training pathway by NHS England WTE already you do not need to re-apply.

The PCN application form must list all training locations in the PCN, and list of learner types the approved learning environments (practices) in that PCN host and/or want to host in future.

For practices approved to host pre-registration nurse trainees, the PCN is advised to contact their Higher Education Institute (HEI) providers to ensure they continue to meet the audit requirements to host nurses for placements.

## **3. Our practice is currently not accredited as an approved learning environment by NHS England WTE but we want to become one. What is the application process?**

To support learners on accredited NHS England WTE training pathways in primary care, the practice must be approved as a learning environment before training or placements can commence. The practice will need to complete an application form and NCL Training Hub Quality assessment. The NCL Training Hub Faculty and Quality team manage the process to support new learning environments be approved across NCL. To find out more information about the application form and assessment, please visit the [NCL Training Hub Approved Educator and Learning Environment Practices](#) webpage.

If there are practices in the PCN that want to support training and placements, they can be added to a PCN application and submit a separate application form to have the practice approved as a learning environment.

New learning environments will need to work with approved practices in the PCN to coordinate the at scale application. It is recommended this is done with the PCN application lead/s and local Training Hub.

#### **4. I am not approved as an educator for accredited training pathways in primary care by NHS England WTE. How do I approach this under the new process?**

All educators of learners on are on accredited NHS England WTE training pathways must complete an educator course and NCL Training Hub Quality application form and assessment.

The NCL Training Hub Quality team manages the registration and application process for new educators for NCL. To find out more about the application process and to register your interest, please visit the [NCL Training Hub Approved Educator and Learning Environment educators](#) webpage.

#### **5. Our practice is not approved for GP trainees, but we do host other learners on student placement in primary care. How will approval changes impact our practice to host student placements?**

Practices that host any learner in primary care on a recognised training pathway will be expected to support the at scale PCN application process for their PCN. The at scale PCN application should include any learning environment hosting learners across the PCN footprint.

At scale applications should list all learner types currently hosted by educational environments within that PCN, plus any future learner type the PCN would like to host in future.

NHS England WTE changed guidance in September 2022 and now requires practices hosting training and placements of accredited training pathways to be approved as learning environments. This must occur before or at the same time as the PCN applying for approval. Please refer to question 4 for information about how to accredit a practice as a learning environment with NHS England WTE.

The NCL Training Hub Quality team can help you to identify if your practice is recognised by NHS England WTE as an approved learning environment.

#### **6. Who is responsible for managing a PCN application?**

It is recommended that the at scale application is led by a nominated managerial lead and educational lead from the PCN. For example, this could be a representative of a PCN operational team, PCN ambassadors or a practice manager and an approved senior educator/s of any clinical profession from one or more of the educational environments of the PCN.

#### **7. What information does each practice need to provide as part of an at scale PCN approval?**

Each practice supporting the PCN application must work with the nominated application lead/s and provide the following information for the form:

- i. Name, professional registration number and educator qualification of every approved educator.
- ii. Self-reflective statement of a peer-review teaching session and date for every approved educator.
- iii. Type and number of learners they host and/or want to host in future for training and placement.

- iv. How the practice will work with other educational sites in the PCN to support learners and supervisors: examples of rotational placements between practices, educational events, supporting peer-learning and feedback.
- v. How the practice contributes to a culture in the PCN to support working at scale: evidence of standard operating procedures to support care delivery, patient feedback and other examples of quality improvement activities across the PCN.
- vi. Evidence about the learning environment: the educational site has sufficient space to host proposed number of learners, consultation/tutorial facilities, the organisational culture is one which all staff, including learners, are treated with respect and there is a culture of continuous learning.
- vii. Educational governance and leadership: visible and inclusive senior educational leadership relevant to all learner types, promotion of team working and multi- and inter-professional approaches to education and training.
- viii. Supporting and empowering learners: parity of access to learning opportunities for all learner types, supervision can be adapted to support the needs of the learner, appropriate supervision models are in place for every learner.
- ix. Commitment to delivering a sustainable workforce: promote local opportunities for employment, engagement with local workforce planning to support development of learners with skills and knowledge to meet the changing needs of patient care.

The PCN will need to nominate a managerial and clinical lead to act on behalf of the PCN for the at scale approval.

Further information on how to complete the PCN application form is available in the [NCL guidance for completing the Form 2](#) document.

## **8. What is the process once a form is completed?**

The completed form should be submitted to the NCL Training Hub Faculty and Quality team ([nclpcb.approvedlearningenvironments@nhs.net](mailto:nclpcb.approvedlearningenvironments@nhs.net)) with the PCN's local borough Training Hub team copied. The NCL Training Hub Quality team will review the information and provide feedback if there are gaps or clarifications are needed.

There is no assessment for a PCN application, but the NCL Training Hub Quality team may ask to speak to the nominated application leads about the form before it is submitted to NHS England WTE for approval.

The nominated educational leads for the PCN will be informed of the outcome and responsible for informing all educational sites listed in the application if they have been successful/given recommendations for action.

## **9. Where can I find more information about educator, environment and PCN approvals?**

The NCL Training Hub Faculty and Quality website includes helpful resources, links and information relating to new educator and environment approvals.

Additionally, educators and PCNs are advised to contact their local borough Training Hubs for support on preparing their application under the new guidance:

Barnet Training Hub: [barnet.cepn@nhs.net](mailto:barnet.cepn@nhs.net)

Camden Training Hub: [training@communitymatters.co.uk](mailto:training@communitymatters.co.uk)

Enfield Training Hub: [kerree.ahern@nhs.net](mailto:kerree.ahern@nhs.net)

Haringey Training Hub: [NCLICB.haringeyth@nhs.net](mailto:NCLICB.haringeyth@nhs.net)

Islington Training Hub: [islington.traininghub@nhs.net](mailto:islington.traininghub@nhs.net)

**10. I am new to supervising learners in primary care. What resources are available to support my development as an educator?**

The PCN will be responsible for ensuring the quality of the learning environment is maintained to support the needs of students and provide developmental opportunities for its educators.

Additionally, local Training Hubs will be able to support all educators and supervisors in primary care with the relevant development and training programmes. Borough Training Hubs support multi-professional educators' groups to support educators. Please refer to useful contacts listed under question 9 for further information and find out how you can get involved.