

# New to Partnership Payment Scheme: frequently asked questions

February 2021

## **1. What is the scheme?**

The New to Partnership Payment Scheme is a commitment made in *Update to the GP Contract Agreement 2020/21–2023/24*.

It is a nationally managed scheme aimed at supporting registered healthcare professionals to become practice partners\* through creating a learning allowance to develop skills, coupled with a financial payment.

\*As defined in section 86(2) of the National Health Service Act 2006

## **2. What are the anticipated benefits to the scheme?**

The overarching aim is to increase the number of partners and individuals with equivalent status working in primary care, stabilising the partnership model and helping to increase clinicians' participation so that primary care and the patients it serves have access to the workforce they need.

The scheme builds sustainability into the general practice workforce, through expanding the partnership cohort and gaining a commitment from individuals to remain in role for a minimum of five years. We hope that it will help support a diverse range of clinical groups to take up partnerships.

### **3. When does the scheme open and close?**

The application process opened on 1 July 2020, and it is anticipated the scheme will run for two years, ending on 31 March 2022. The scheme will consider applications from individuals who accepted a partnership role on or after 1 April 2020.

### **4. Who is eligible for the scheme?**

Applications are invited from individuals who are eligible to become partners as set out at s86(2) of the NHS Act 2006, working in general practice who are registered with their respective professional body\* and delivering clinical care to patients in their own general practice setting through a GMS contract

The role of 'Partner' (or equivalent) must meet the description as in the Partnership Act of 1890, meaning participants to this scheme cannot be employed on a salaried basis, and individuals must have an equity share partnership arrangement in place

NHSEI may at its absolute discretion consider applications from individuals broadly comparable to partners and otherwise in line with the eligibility criteria but providing services under primary medical services contracts and where the application can provide evidence of the broad comparability to NHSEI

In the instances of APMS, this contract should have a minimum of two years remaining.

\*From 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 applications are welcomed from Physician Associates who meet the wider criteria and are on the Physician Associate Voluntary Register. Registration with their professional body will be required at a later date once this is in place.

#### **Other eligibility criteria:**

The Applicant must be a partner who has signed a legally liable, equity share partnership agreement on or after 1 April 2020 and before the scheme closes. Applications can be made on a retrospective basis where applicant accepted/accepts the partnership role on or after 1 April 2020

Applicants cannot previously have been a partner in England.

The list of eligible professions that can apply to the scheme therefore is: general practitioner, nurse (including ANP), pharmacist, pharmacy technician, physiotherapist, paramedic, midwife, dietitian, podiatrist, occupational therapist, mental health practitioner and physician associate.

In joining the scheme, participants agree to remain in a partnership role for five years (or repay part of the sum), and to deliver two clinical sessions per week in their partnership practice.

#### **5. What is meant by an equity share partnership?**

The scheme applicant must be an equity share partner, meaning that they must hold a share in the profits and liabilities of the partnership. Fixed salary partners are not eligible for the scheme. Where possible, shares should be equal to other partners in the practice, and where this is not the case shares are not expected to be less than 10%.

#### **6. I have previously held a partnership role; would I be eligible for the scheme?**

Individuals who have previously been a partner of any kind in England are not eligible for the scheme. This includes previous probationary partnership periods and fixed salary partnerships.

#### **7. I have recently taken up a partnership role which has commenced with a short period as a fixed salary partner before moving into a share-holding partner role, am I still eligible for the scheme?**

If your probationary or mutual assessment period has commenced after the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 you will be eligible for the scheme once you become a share-holding partner. For example, if your probationary period commenced on the 1 April 2020 and you are receiving a fixed salary for six months before moving into an equity share role, you may be eligible for the scheme on 1 October 2020, and your application should be made at this point.

#### **8. Do I need to be in a partnership before I apply or can I apply before this?**

The signed Partnership Agreement needs to be in place before applying to the scheme. Prospective participants should also ensure they meet the eligibility criteria, and take their own personal financial advice in advance of their application.

## 9. Is the scheme limited to one new partner per practice?

No, the scheme is not limited to one applicant per practice. To be accepted on to the scheme, all applicants must meet the eligibility criteria and provide the necessary evidence to support their application.

## 10. Do I need to conduct all of my sessions in one practice to be eligible for the funds?

The number of sessions included in your application to the New to Partnership Payment Scheme must be conducted in the practice or practice group that are supporting your application and can include extended access. Sessions worked in alternative practices or in a secondary care setting will not be included in the calculation for the sum that you receive. The exceptions to this rule are senior involvement in a Primary Care Network, such as a Clinical Director role. Sessions relating to your application must all be recorded in the National Workforce Reporting System (NWRS) and must be demonstrated in your application through supplying the required supporting evidence. If you are undertaking sessions outside of your supporting practice and you are unsure if these can be included in your application to the New to Partnership Payment Scheme, please contact the team at: [england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net).

## 11. How do I apply?

Applications are to be made through the [online application portal](#). Interested colleagues and their practice should review the New to partnership Payment Scheme guidance, complete the online application form and provide supporting supplementary evidence. The required evidence is:

- a) **For all applicants:** a signed Partnership Agreement to demonstrate you have an equity share in the partnership. Where a Partnership Agreement is not available, we will accept a headed letter from the practice confirming that the applicant is an equity share partner
- b) **For applicants with an APMS contract or Standard Contract with a 2L bolt on:** a copy of the APMS contract or the 2L bolt on demonstrating contract length. (Where your partnership has a GMS or PMS contract there is no need to share).

The scheme guidance is available on the NHS England and NHS Improvement website at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/gp/the-best-place-to-work/>

Once the application form is submitted on the portal and approved by the practice, it will be reviewed by the New to Partnership Payment Scheme team.

If you experience any issues logging in to or using the online portal, guidance is available on the [Future NHS Collaboration Portal](#) or contact the team: [england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net).

## **12. I am an international recruit. Can I apply?**

The scheme accepts applications from those who are recent returners to their profession and have been through an induction and refreshers scheme (or similar), and international recruits. Both groups must meet the other scheme criteria.

## **13. Is this scheme only open to people who work full time?**

No, the scheme is open to all eligible participants working a minimum of two clinical sessions a week, with the sum calculated on a pro-rata basis.

## **14. I have commenced in my partnership role however, due to the coronavirus pandemic there has been a delay in obtaining my partnership paperwork.**

The scheme requires applications and evidence to be submitted within six months of becoming a partner. Due to the coronavirus outbreak causing delays in individuals obtaining their required signed Partnership Agreements we have temporarily extended this to nine months. This extension is on a temporary basis and NHS England will revert back to the standard six month time period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Please refer to question 11 regarding alternative evidence if a Partnership Agreement is not available.

## **15. How do I maintain eligibility?**

The scheme requirements are:

- individuals need to have successfully gained a fair-shares, legally-liable partnership position after 31 March 2020, and cannot previously have been a partner in England

- individuals must commit to delivering two clinical sessions a week (4 hours 10 minutes each) in their general practice partnership setting (other than when on parental/ paternity/ maternity/ adoption leave, annual leave or sickness leave) throughout the subsequent five-year period
- individuals can only participate once in the scheme
- in joining the scheme, the participant agrees to an annual eligibility check and reconciliation process.

## **16. If I am successful in applying to the scheme, what can I expect to receive?**

Successful applicants are able to access two benefits of the scheme:

1. a sum of up to £20,000 for an FTE clinician to support establishment as a new partner (FTE is 9 sessions of a minimum of 4 hours 10 minutes a session). Participants working less than full-time will receive a pro-rata payment. Successful applicants will receive an extra 20% to support tax and National Insurance contributions
2. a training allowance of up to £3,000 to support partnership skills development. This sum is available to every successful applicant, regardless of the number of hours worked.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have developed a 'ready reckoner' that allows participants to work out the sum that they might expect to receive. This can be found on [FutureNHS](#). However, all prospective participants should take personal financial advice before applying to the scheme.

Where the participant either increases or decreases their agreed sessions – or leaves the partnership altogether – within the five year period, the sum will be adjusted proportionate to the variation to agreed sessions or years worked, subject to a cap.

## **17. Will I need to make tax and pension contributions to the sum?**

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the sum is intended to be non-superannuable income, meaning it is not subject to pension contributions, but you should expect it to be subject to tax and National Insurance, as for any other item of income. This means the 'take home

sum' will be smaller than the payment made. The scheme has sought to mitigate this in part by attaching a 20% on-cost supplement.

Calculations for new partners should be considered on an individual basis, as each person will have different personal circumstances. Prospective participants are advised to take financial advice before applying to the scheme.

#### **18. How does a scheme participant receive their financial sum?**

Funding is held by the national team in NHS England and NHS Improvement. Payment is made to the primary medical services provider which holds the contract with NHSE and in which the individual becomes a partner. The practice is obliged to pass the payment in full to the programme participant. This arrangement will be governed by the s96 agreement.

Payment for successful GMS and PMS applicants will be made in one lump sum. Payment for successful APMS participants will be calculated and paid in line with the length of the APMS contract, which must have a minimum of two years remaining.

#### **19. What if I am not successful in applying to the scheme? Is there an appeals process?**

If an applicant is not successful, they will be notified why and how to either:

- update their application appropriately
- appeal to NHS England and NHS Improvement.

#### **20. What are the criteria for business training?**

To support all new partners, the full £3,000 is available to every successful applicant, regardless of number of sessions worked.

This budget is to be used in garnering non-clinical skills that are support working effectively in a partnership role. The scheme participant can select the training they wish to undertake and should note there will be no learning needs assessment. Where the participant is also on the General Practice Fellowship programme, this business training should be over and above the learning opportunities available through the Fellowship.

The training must meet the following criteria:

- training must start within the first year of accepting a partnership role\*
- training must support skills relevant to the delivery of a partnership role
- participants should ensure they are getting good value for money when selecting training, to ensure they are making good use of public funds.

Participants should personally assess what training they need to develop their non-clinical skills, to successfully deliver in a partnership role. This may cover, for example, practice management, financial management, HR and developing staff, IT. To check the training you want to undertake meets the criteria, you can email:

[england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net) for advice.

\*please see question 21.

## **21. How do I access the training fund?**

The scheme participant should initially pay for the training they select, and then claim reimbursement from NHS England and NHS Improvement. Participants will need to complete the training claims section of the [New to Partnership Payment online portal](#) and upload copies of their receipts. Further detail on this process will be included in the welcome letter sent to all successful applicants.

Participants must maintain their partnership for a minimum of one year, otherwise costs paid for training cannot be reimbursed. Reimbursement of training receipts will be made soon after the first anniversary of the Grant Beneficiary executing the partnership agreement.

There is a slightly extended timeline for those colleagues who were accepted onto the scheme between July 2020 – January 2021. The colleagues that this impacts will understand the detail of this from their welcome letter.

## **22. What happens if I leave a partnership role before my five-year time period is up?**

Individuals may port their participation from one partnership role to another partnership role. However, where individuals leave a partnership role altogether, the sum is repayable on a



weighted scale. If the individual leaves their partnership role before their 12 month anniversary the training fund cannot be claimed.

**23. What happens if I increase or decrease my agreed sessions while on the scheme?**

Where there is an increase or decrease in your agreed sessions during the five year term of the arrangements, there may be a full or partial clawback of funding or an additional payments (subject to a cap) which will be identified through an annual reconciliation process.

**24. How is time calculated?**

Number of hours worked is measured in sessions. One session is 4 hours and ten minutes. This table demonstrates how this is calculated:

Hours worked	No of sessions
8 hours 20 mins	2
12 hours 30 mins	3
16 hours 40 mins	4
20 hours 50 mins	5
25 hours	6
29 hours 10 mins	7
33 hours 20 mins	8
37 hours 30 mins +	9

**25. How do I let you know if my circumstances change?**

All participants will be subject to an annual reconciliation process as standard. Where changes occur part way through a year, such as change in personal details, a period of absence from work or change in surname, you can notify NHS England and NHS Improvement using the change form on the [online portal](#).

**26. What happens if I need/want to pause my time on the scheme?**

In the limited instances of (1) maternity/paternity/parental/adoption leave or (2) long-term sickness, where you maintain your partnership for this period, you can continue with the

scheme and receive payment for participating in it. You are not required to notify NHS England and NHS Improvement in these circumstances.

However, if you want to take time out from practice for another reason, eg a sabbatical, then you will need to notify the NHS England and NHS Improvement of this using the change form on the [online portal](#). We will work with you to agree a position on the impact of the pause.

## **27. When should I let you know about my absence?**

For **planned** absences, as soon as you know/have confirmation of the absence.

For **unplanned** absences, as soon as possible.

Notification of planned and unplanned absences can be made through the change form on the [online portal](#).

## **28. Do I need to tell you when I return to work?**

Yes. For planned leave (leave that is longer than usual annual leave) you should let NHS England and NHS Improvement know how long you are planning to be absent when notifying us that you intend to be absent. We will ask you to confirm that you are back at work on your return.

If your absence is shorter or longer than expected, then please contact NHS England and Improvement as soon as you are aware of any changes to your planned absence and then confirm this with us.

## **29. How do I contact NHS England and NHS Improvement about this scheme?**

- the formal guidance for the scheme can be found on the [NHS England website](#). Any updates to the scheme will be published on the website
- An example S96 agreement and the ready reckoner can be found on the FutureNHS web page: [New to Partnership Payment scheme](#). If you don't already hold an account you can register via the FutureNHS login page. If you have any issues logging in to the Futures site please email: [england.primarycareworkforce@nhs.net](mailto:england.primarycareworkforce@nhs.net)

- applications, changes to personal details, yearly reconciliation and training claims are to be made on the [online portal](#). If you experience any issues with the portal a user guide can be found on the Future NHS Webpage or you can contact [england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net)
- any queries relating to the scheme not covered in this FAQ document should be sent to: [england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:england.newtopartnershipenquiries@nhs.net).