



Foundation Training Year (FTY)

2026-2027 TRAINING COHORT

Trainee Pharmacist Employer: Pre-employment Checks Guidance

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Introduction

Recruitment of trainee pharmacists for the 2026-27 FTY training year concluded in December 2025 with the release and acceptance of matching outcomes to employers.

It is the responsibility of the employer to carry out pre-employment checks and to ensure that all checks are satisfactory in accordance with local procedure. Whilst NES HR processes photographic and ID documents as part of the longlisting process, it does not have a remit in carrying out and ensuring pre-employment checks are satisfactory, nor for issuing unconditional offers or contracts of employment.

In order to provide support to employers and to help achieve a consistent training experience for all FTY trainee pharmacists, this guidance document provides information and advice regarding the completion of pre-employment checks ultimately enabling employers to issue an unconditional offer and contract of employment to trainee pharmacist(s) commencing with their organisation.

Links to further sources of information are available throughout the document.

Pre-employment Checks

The following checks should be carried out and fully completed by the employer prior to issuing an unconditional offer and contract of employment. **As per any other employee, trainee pharmacists cannot start in post until all checks are fully complete and an unconditional offer of employment has been issued.** Preferably, the trainee pharmacist will also have signed and returned the employment contract prior to their first day. It is strongly recommended that employers seek advice from local HR support prior to trainee pharmacists commencing post, to ensure all legal requirements have been met, thus minimising risk to the organisation.

1. Verification of Identity

Copies of some forms of ID documents, such as passport, driving licence or proof of address, were processed as part of the longlisting process. Copies of these documents can now be found in the TPI site, in the 'View Incoming Trainees' section. If needed for local process, employers are advised to download these documents and retain a copy. As these documents were not sighted in person by a member of the NES pharmacy recruitment team, it is the responsibility of the employers to check and verify these documents and ask for additional documents as required.

2. Right to work in the UK

Similar to verification of identity, as part of the longlisting process, NES HR processed right to work documents for candidates, it is the responsibility of the employers to check candidates' current status and verify their documents prior to trainee pharmacists starting in post.

In all cases, employers should ensure they are following Home Office guidance on right to work checks and employer responsibilities for sponsored workers.

Important for candidates requiring SPONSORSHIP:

Please review your matched trainees and confirm their right-to-work requirements during FTY as soon as possible. The Home Office operates under strict deadlines and lengthy timeframes, so early action is essential. If any of your trainees will require a Skilled Worker visa while in post, we strongly recommend starting the application process well in advance to avoid delays.

[Employer's Guide to right to work checks](#)

[Sponsorship: Guidance for Employers](#)

In addition to the above Home Office links we would also encourage you to view the below resources for processing times based on the application type.

IMPORTANT: Processing times could take longer in some circumstances as detailed in the Home Office resources linked below, please make sure you factor in this time if you matched to a candidate requiring sponsorship.

[Visa processing times: applications inside the UK - GOV.UK](#)

[Visa processing times: applications outside the UK - GOV.UK](#)

3. Qualifications

At the application stage, based on information supplied by candidates on their application form, NES HR checks that candidates are due to complete an MPharm qualification or equivalent by the post commencement date. However, for the majority of candidates, graduation takes place following the conclusion of the NES FTY recruitment process; the employer must therefore check that trainee pharmacists commencing employment with them, did achieve their qualification.

Recommended practice is that the original degree certificate is sighted, and a copy is obtained and held on file. Please refer to the [Employment checks guide 2025](#) for further guidance on how to verify and complete the qualification check.

Please note that even though qualifications are checked by regulatory and licensing bodies when carrying out pre-registration checks, as detailed below, notification of successful application to the GPhC may not be provided to trainee pharmacists until immediately prior to post commencement and, therefore, is not a suitable means of satisfying this pre-employment check.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure this check is completed prior to issuing contact and trainee pharmacist starting in post.

4. GPhC Application to participate in the Foundation Training Year

Following recruitment to a NES FTY post, all candidates must successfully apply to the GPhC to undertake the Foundation Training Year; applications are submitted to the GPhC in accordance with procedure and timescales stated on the GPhC website. The GPhC contacts all NES FTY recruited trainee pharmacists directly to request completion following notification by NES that they are part of the NES FTY programme. NES also issues correspondence directly to trainee pharmacist applicants, including links to further information and how to access the GPhC application form.

The GPhC foundation training application and approval process can be found here - [Foundation training application and approval process](#)

Upon successful application, a training number is issued by the GPhC directly to the trainee pharmacist. The trainee pharmacist should be able to provide evidence to employers that the GPhC application has been approved and a training number allocated by requesting evidence of the confirmation e-mail from GPhC. Trainee pharmacists cannot start in post without this training number. NES recommend a copy of this is kept on file. Further information is available here:

<https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/pharmacist-foundation-training-scheme/training-placement/applying>

With this in mind, it is recommended that employers encourage candidates to submit their application promptly.

5. PVG Scheme Membership (Disclosure Scotland)

PVG membership is a legal requirement for all regulated roles, including trainee pharmacists. In line with Disclosure Scotland legislation, it is a criminal offence for: individuals to carry out a regulated role if they have not received a PVG application outcome from Disclosure Scotland, and for organisations to offer a regulated role to an individual who has not received a PVG scheme outcome. The requirement for individuals to evidence the PVG membership is similar to the requirement of providing evidence for right to work in the UK and being unable to commence employment until this is in place. Limiting or removing patient contact, or amending tasks or duties, does not prevent the offence being committed.

On this basis, trainees cannot begin employment as a trainee pharmacist or commence the NES FTY programme until their PVG outcome is received. Additionally, the trainee cannot attend any NES-run events or meetings, such as the Induction, without this clearance, with these events being integrated with the training programme.

The PVG application for new or existing members must be initiated by employers. Once the employer starts the process, this generates an email to the candidate, and they are then required to complete their actions before the link in the email expires. It is therefore important that employers and candidates communicate throughout the process.

As an employer, if you have not done so already, you may wish to seek support from Disclosure Scotland, further details can be found here [Implementing the Disclosure \(Scotland\) Act 2020 - Disclosure Scotland](#)

Community Pharmacy employers may wish to use the Community Pharmacy Scotland (CPS) PVG scheme to support them with this pre-employment check - [PVG Scheme | Community Pharmacy Scotland](#). CPS can initiate the application on the employer's behalf, see the link provided for further information on CPS website.

It is encouraged to review your pre-employment timeline now to ensure all trainees have PVG in place in advance of the planned start date. NES would recommend a minimum of eight weeks to allow time for processing the PVG application and obtaining the outcome in time for the planned start date.

Please note that on the 1st April 2026, the PVG scheme will move to a five-year membership. Disclosure Scotland is expecting this to happen in phases and is currently working with stakeholders to understand the requirements for this transition. For more information, please refer to the link below.

[Disclosure Act update - October 2025 - Disclosure Scotland](#)

6. References

In accordance with the [Employment checks guide 2025](#), at least two references should be taken covering a period of three years. As the majority of candidates will have very recently graduated with minimal work experience, it is anticipated that at least one referee will be a lecturer/tutor from the School of Pharmacy.

Employers should ask candidates for their referee contact details and seek their permission to take up references. Employers should use their standard reference template, however bearing in mind that many organisations might have a policy which only permits the completion of their own template.

7. Occupational Health Check

Please ensure you thoroughly check candidate application forms provided in the TPI system and make sure the required support is provided during the training year for candidates who have provided additional information under the 'Disability & Special Arrangements' section. It is recommended that a pre-employment health assessment is carried out, thus ensuring good occupational health practice and the opportunity to identify any support or reasonable adjustments which might be required to be made for the trainee pharmacist. Employers should follow their local procedure when doing so; this might include providing a copy of the Job Description to an Occupational Health Provider – a sample Job Description for the trainee pharmacist role is available within the NES FTY Recruitment Training Provider Handbook.

8. Fitness to Practice Checks

Please ensure you thoroughly check candidate application forms provided in the TPI system for information provided under the Fitness to practise declarations section. This information is gathered during the application process on behalf of employers. Candidates have also signed a declaration as part of the application process to take on a continuing responsibility to inform employers of any new criminal convictions, police investigations or fitness to practise proceedings that arise in the future. Employers should utilise any information provided through both methods as part of the pre-employment check process prior to issuing a contract of employment.

Terms & Conditions

The terms and conditions detailed below are applicable to all FTY trainee pharmacists. To ensure a consistent training experience for all trainee pharmacists, the following terms and conditions must be included in the contract of employment between the employing organisation and the trainee pharmacist.

All other terms and conditions applicable to the trainee pharmacist's employment are as per the employer's local arrangements and policy. This should be made clear to the trainee pharmacist.

Start date

The start dates for training posts in the 2026-27 training year are the window of Monday 27th July - Friday 31st July 2026. Having all trainee pharmacists start on the same date enables continuity of service and a consistent training experience for all trainee pharmacists. However, NES is aware not all trainee pharmacists will be able to commence on the above dates, therefore has added an additional cohort starting date to be used for trainee pharmacists with university resits or exceptional circumstances only, which is the window of Monday 2nd November - Friday 6th November 2025.

There is no capacity within the NES FTY programme to offer flexibility on these start dates for the 2026-27 cohort due to a failure to complete pre-employment checks in adequate time. The November cohort start window would be the only option to start training.

Salary

The salary payable to each trainee pharmacist is currently £33,247 per annum. This rate is in accordance with Agenda for Change Band 5, a copy of the salary scale is available [here](#). This is the rate from the 1st April 2025. According to the circular, the scheduled uplift from 1 April 2026 will increase the trainee pharmacist salary to £34,494.

Hours

Trainee pharmacists employed after the 1st April 2026 must be contracted for 36 hours per week due to the agreed reduction in the working week under [NHS Circular PCS\(AFC\)2025/1](#). These hours will be worked as part of the normal weekly opening hours of the training base. 'Out of Hours' placements are defined as work undertaken between 18:30 and 08:00, all day at weekends and on Public Holidays.

Annual Leave and Study Days

Trainee pharmacists will receive 27 days annual leave and 8 days public holidays. It may be advisable to use an annual leave allowance set in hours rather than working days to assist employers to manage trainee pharmacist annual leave. Trainee pharmacists should also be allocated one half-day per week (or equivalent) protected time for study time.