Foundation Training Year Scotland

National Recruitment Outcomes Report 2025 – 26 Training Year

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Executive Summary

In 2024 NHS Education for Scotland coordinated a national scheme for recruitment to foundation pharmacist training programmes in Scotland for the 2025-26 training year.

There were 576 training places available to preference across all training providers (TPs), continuing the trend of number of places being higher than number of applicants.

A total of 554 applicants applied on Oriel, 453 of whom attended assessment. At the end of the process, 63.4% (n=287) of successful applicants had received an offer through Oriel and 220 of these final offers were accepted by applicants. In Scotland the number of offers is capped by the number of Scottish Government posts available for that training year.

The 2024 recruitment process had a fill rate of 100% where all 220 NES funded posts were filled. Out of all training provider places available, 38.2% were filled, and 39.7% of all applicants were matched.

Overview

Since 2006, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) has facilitated the organisation, administration, quality management and funding of foundation training year (FTY) placements across all sectors of pharmacy practice. During this time the numbers of FTY trainee pharmacists in Scotland have increased. All candidates recruited into the FTY programme will receive the same basic salary, some stipulated core terms and conditions and follow the NES FTY curriculum.

This report provides information on applicants, applications and outcomes of the 2024 NES National Foundation Training Year Recruitment in Scotland.

Independent analysis undertaken by the Work Psychology Group examines fairness issues surrounding use of the SJT and Numeracy test and reports on any group differences in performance.

If you would like further information on the process of foundation pharmacy recruitment, please refer to the pharmacy recruitment web pages: Pharmacy Foundation Training Year (FTY) – Scotland recruitment

Programme availability

1. Employing organisations, programmes, and training places

1.1.   The 2024 foundation training year recruitment scheme listed 143 training providers for applicants to choose from, an 18.2% increase from 2023 recruitment. In total, 576 training places were available across all training providers, which was slightly higher than the number of scheme applicants.

1.2.   82.5% (n=118) of training providers were community pharmacies, representing the majority of all available training places. 7% (n=10) of training providers were within the NHS hospital sector, 4.2% (n=6) of the training providers were offering modular programmes, 2.8% (n=4) of training providers were offering split programmes and 3.5% (n=5) of training providers nominated their posts as located in remote and rural areas using the Scottish Government urban rural classification categories 4-6 (which allows matching at post level).

1.3.   There was a slight increase in the number of places across modular, community and split training providers and a slight decrease in places offered by hospital and remote & rural training providers, compared with the previous year (Figure 1). The decrease in the number of hospital places is balanced by these now being offered within the split or modular places.
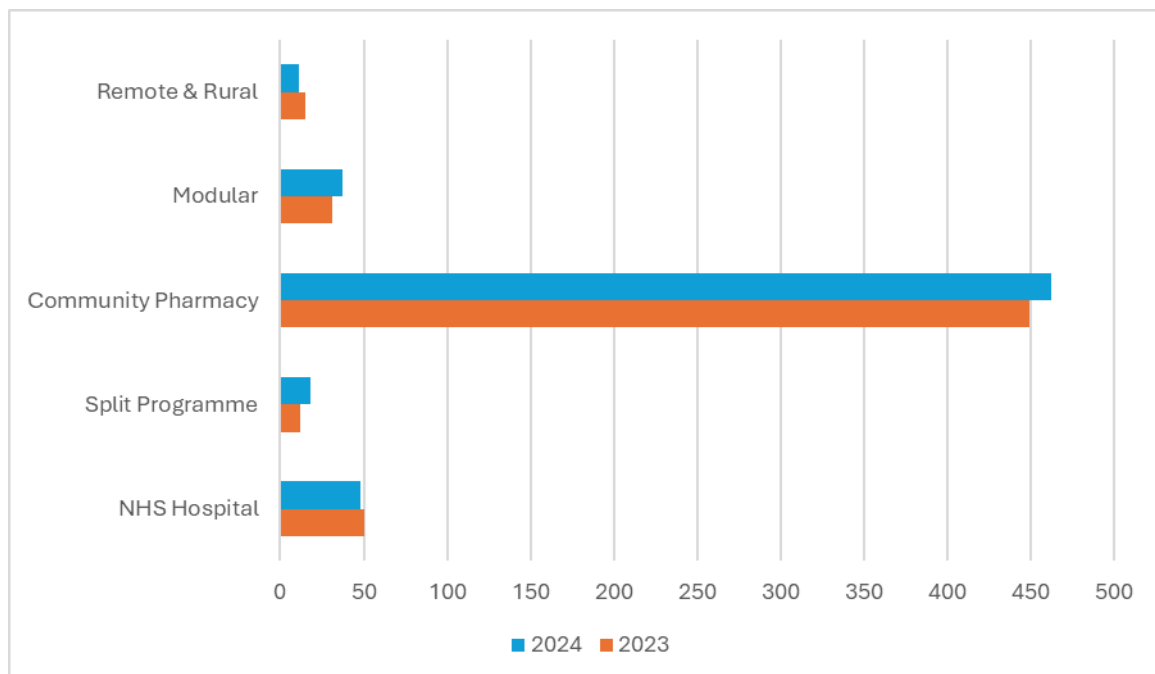

Figure 1 Year on year comparison of foundation training places across different types of training providers

1.4.   Tables 1 and 2 below provide an overview of the numbers of training providers, training places and sponsorship available in the 2024 scheme, broken down by sector and geography.

Table 1 Training providers, training places and sponsorship availability in the 2024 Foundation Pharmacist Scheme

Training Provider type	Number of Training Providers	Number of Training Places	Number of Training Providers offering Skilled Worker Sponsored posts	Number of Skilled Worker Sponsored places available
NHS Hospital	10	48	3	3
Split Programmes	4	18	0	0
Community Pharmacy	118	462	11	68
Modular	6	37	0	0
Remote & Rural	5	11	1	4
TOTALS	**143**	**576**	**15**	**75**

Table 2 Geographical spread of training providers (and training places) by sector

Scotland Pharmacy Region	NHS Hospital	Split Programmes	Community Pharmacy	Modular	Remote & Rural
North	2 (7)	0	22 (54)	3 (20)	5 (11)
East	3 (13)	1 (5)	19 (38)	1 (3)	0

West	5 (28)	3 (13)	53 (106)	2 (14)	0
National	0	0	24 (264)	0	0
TOTALS	**10(48)**	**4 (18)**	**118 (462)**	**6 (37)**	**5 (11)**

2. Training Provider Preferencing

2.1   In 2024 training providers had two options with regard to preference list submission:

Option A: Submit a Training Provider preference list of candidates that they would be willing to employ and work with over the training period.

Option B: Do not submit a Training Provider preference list of candidates.

2.2   58.05% (n=83) training providers decided to submit preference lists and 41.95% (n=60) opted to be matched with any appointable candidates and not submit a preference list.

Table 3a TP preference list submission comparing to previous year

TPs preference list	2024	2023
Submitted preference list	83	72
No preference list submitted	60	49

2.3   61.25% (n=49) of all matched training providers were ones who decided to submit a preference list.

2.4   Training providers who decided to submit a preference list managed to fill 28.6% (n=63) out of all matched posts.

Table 3b TPs who matched and their preference list submission comparing to previous year

Training Provider Preference list breakdown	2024	2023
Matched TPs with preference lists	49	46
Matched TPs without a preference list	31	23

3. Skilled Worker visa sponsorship

3.1.   Skilled Worker visa sponsored training place availability decreased across more than one sector in 2024. There was an overall decrease to 75 sponsored places 29.3% (n=31) less sponsored places in total than were available to applicants' requiring visas in 2023 (n=106).

4. Multi-sector placements

4.1   Modular programmes consist of three training blocks where trainees are placed within community, hospital and specific sector settings during their one-year placement. Split programmes are programmes where training is split between hospital and primary care (both with the same NHS Board).

4.2   In 2024 we had 6 Modular TPs and 4 TPs with split programmes offering 55 posts in total across the North, East and West of Scotland with the majority of the posts in the West region.

4.3   Only 5 posts overall were left unfilled out of 55 offered by training providers.

Applicant outcomes

5. Applications

5.1.   The number of applications received via the Oriel system was 554 (not including incomplete applications), compared to 548 in 2023, 542 received in 2022, 448 received in 2021 and 350 received in 2020.

5.2   21.8% (n=121) of applicants were either currently enrolled on an accredited Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP) or were OSPAP graduates.

6. Longlisting

6.1   6 applicants did not progress through the formal longlisting process. All other applications (n=548) were longlisted successfully.

6.2   21 applicants subsequently withdrew their application, leaving 527 applicants invited to assessment: a 3.3% decrease from the previous year and a 4.6% increase from recruitment year 2022.

7. Assessment

7.1   453 applicants attended their assessment. Of these 100% (n=453) were successful and subsequently received an overall ranking based on their test scores. In 2024 recruitment, the assessment outcome process changed whereby those not meeting the cut off score were no longer deemed unsuccessful at assessment and removed from the process, and instead, were provided the opportunity for remedial support from their university prior to commencing training, if matched to a post. Out of 453, 10 applicants were under the cut-off score. 2 for SJT, 6 for numeracy and 2 for both.

8. Applications and programme

8.1   For the purposes of this section, we have removed applicants who did not consent for their personal data to be used for research purposes, therefore, refer to the following

Application – the number of applications received (n=491)

Offer – applicants who received a post offer on Oriel (n=253) irrespective of whether this offer was accepted by the applicant

8.2   Table 4 provides breakdown of applicant gender, along with data pertaining successful applicants and programme offers received by these groups.

Table 4 Applications and post offers by gender

Group	Percentage of applications	Percentage of successful applicants	Percentage of offers made	Percentage of offers accepted
Male	27.90%	25.74%	20.16%	20.62%
Female	70.26%	72.39%	78.26%	78.35%
Non-Binary	0.61%	0.27%	0.39%	0.52%
Not disclosed/Other not listed	1.22%	1.61%	1.19%	0.52%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%

8.3   Table 5 below provides a breakdown of applications received, along with data pertaining to the percentage of successful applicants and programme offers received, for each of the age categories.

Table 5 Applications and post offers by age group*

Group	Percentage of applications	Percentage of successful applicants	Percentage of offers made	Percentage of offers accepted
19-24 years	63.14%	64.08%	78.66%	81.44%
25-29 years	16.09%	15.55%	9.88%	8.76%
30–34 years	9.78%	9.65%	5.53%	4.12%
35-39 years	5.70%	5.63%	2.77%	2.06%
40-44 years	3.87%	4.02%	2.37%	3.09%
45-49 years	0.41%	0.27%	0.0%	0.0%
50-54 years	0.20%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
55-64 years	0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not disclosed	0.81%	0.8%	0.79%	0.52%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%

Age on 01 July 2024

8.4   58.45% (n=287) of applications were received from applicants of 'Black, Asian and minority ethnic' (BAME) origin and 37.68% (n=185) were received from applicants of 'White' origin. 3.87% of applicants (n=19) chose not to declare their ethnic origin.

Table 6 Applications and post offers by ethnic group

Group	Percentage of Applications		Percentage of Successful Applicants		Percentage of Offers Made		Percentage of Offers Accepted	
White – British	27.90% (137)		32.17% (120)		43.87% (111)		51.03% (99)	
White - Irish	6.31% (31)	37.68% (185)	4.29% (16)	40.48% (151)	5.53% (14)	52.57% (133)	4.12% (8)	59.28% (115)
Any other white background	3.46% (17)		4.02% (15)		3.16% (8)		4.12% (8)	

Mixed White and Black Caribbean	0	3.06% (15)	0	3.75% (14)	0	3.17% (8)	0	3.09% (6)
Mixed White and Black African	0.61% (3)		0.80% (3)		0		0	
Mixed White and Asian	1.43% (7)		1.88% (7)		1.98% (5)		2.06% (4)	
Any other mixed background	1.02% (5)		1.07% (4)		1.19% (3)		1.03% (2)	
Asian or Asian British Indian	10.18% (50)	27.49% (135)	9.92% (37)	25.47% (95)	5.53% (14)	19.76% (50)	4.64% (9)	20.62% (40)
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	10.79% (53)		9.38% (35)		8.30% (21)		9.79% (19)	
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1.22% (6)		1.61% (6)		1.19% (3)		1.55% (3)	
Any other Asian background	5.30% (26)		4.56% (17)		4.74% (12)		4.64% (9)	
Black or Black British Caribbean	0	14.46% (71)	0	12.60% (47)	0	7.91% (20)	0	6.19% (12)
Black or Black British African	13.44% (66)		11.53% (43)		7.91% (20)		6.19% (12)	
Any other black background	1.02% (5)		1.07% (4)		0		0	
Chinese	5.50% (27)		6.70% (25)		7.12% (18)		3.09% (6)	
Any other ethnic group	7.94% (39)		8.04% (30)		6.32% (16)		5.67% (11)	
Not disclosed/Not Stated	3.87% (19)		2.95% (11)		3.16% (8)		2.06% (4)	
Totals	100% (491)		100% (373)		100% (253)		100% (194)	

9. Group Differences at a Test Level for SJT & Numeracy

9.1. To examine fairness issues surrounding use of the SJT and Numeracy test, group differences in performance between applicants were analysed on the basis of age, gender and ethnicity.
Analyses were conducted after outliers (applicants (n=1) with very low scores and / or missing data) had been removed.

9.2 Age

9.2.1. Pearson's correlations were conducted to examine the relationship between age and scores on the SJT and Numeracy Test

9.2.2. SJT: A small significant negative correlation (Pearson's r) between age and SJT score was found (r=-.34, p<.001). This suggests that younger applicants typically performed slightly better than older applicants on the SJT.

9.2.3. Numeracy: A small significant negative correlation (Pearson's r) between age and Numeracy score was found (r=-.30 p<.001). This suggests that younger applicants typically performed slightly better than older applicants on the Numeracy Test.

9.3 Gender

9.3.1 Independent t-tests were conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in SJT and Numeracy Test scores based on gender. The descriptive statistics can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7 Gender – Descriptive Statistics by Selection Method

		Female	Male
SJT	**N**	288	104
	Mean	555.94	539.28
	Std. Deviation	34.49	34.06
Numeracy	**N**	288	104
	Mean	7.95	8.01
	Std. Deviation	1.80	2.04

9.3.2 SJT: A significant difference in performance on the SJT based on gender was found with a small effect size, indicating that females scored significantly higher than males (t(390) =-4.24, p<.001, d=0.49).

9.3.3 Numeracy Test: No significant differences in performance were found on the Numeracy test based on gender (t(390) =.29, p=ns).

9.4 Ethnicity

9.4.1   Ethnicity options provided to applicants when collecting data included: 'White', 'Asian', 'Black', 'Chinese', 'Mixed' and 'Other'. Applicants were also given the response option 'Prefer not to say', however these individuals were not included in the analysis. Due to small sample sizes in some ethnicity sub-groups, to reach an appropriate sample size for analysis 'Asian', 'Black', 'Chinese', 'Mixed' and 'Other' were combined into a "BME" category. Therefore, independent t-tests were conducted to investigate whether there were significant differences on the SJT and Numeracy Test scores dependent on ethnicity, comparing White and BME applicants. Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 8.

Table 8 Ethnicity – Descriptive Statistics by Selection Method

		White	BME
SJT	**N**	141	227
	Mean	567.83	541.35
	Std. Deviation	30.48	34.71
Numeracy	**N**	141	227
	Mean	8.60	7.57
	Std. Deviation	1.47	2.02

9.4.2   SJT: Significant differences in performance between White and BME applicants were found on the SJT with a large effect size illustrating that applicants who indicated that they were 'White' performed significantly better than BME applicants ($t(325.56) = 7.68$, $p<.001$, $d=0.80$). It should be noted that, due to differences in sample size between the groups, this may have an impact on the analysis and therefore, these results should be interpreted with caution.

9.4.3   Numeracy Test: Significant differences in performance between White and BME applicants were found on the Numeracy Test with a moderate effect size, illustrating that applicants who indicated that they were 'White' performed significantly better than BME applicants ($t(365.87) = 5.68$, $p<.001$, $d=0.57$).

9.5 Summary

Correlations were found in both the SJT and Numeracy test for age, younger applicants scored higher on average than older applicants.

Test scores on the SJT for gender with a small effect size, females scored higher on average than males.

Regarding ethnicity, significant differences were found in both the SJT and Numeracy test, White applicants scored higher on average than BME applicants. The effect size of these differences ranged from small to large.

10. Differences in Performance Based on Date

10.1   Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to investigate whether performance differs on the SJT and Numeracy Test based on when applicants complete the Numeracy Test and SJT. This was operationalised as whether the assessments were completed at the beginning (19th September – 24th September), middle (25th September – 29th September) or end (30th September – 4th October) of the testing period. Analyses were conducted after outliers (applicants (n=1) with very low scores and/or missing data) had been removed. Descriptive statistics are outlined in Table 9.

10.2   SJT: A significant difference in performance on the SJT was found based on the time point within the testing period it was completed, although the effect size was small $(F(2,449)=5.54, p<.01, d=.024)$. Applicants who completed the test at time point one scored significantly higher than applicants who completed the test at time point three, but not applicants who completed the test at time point two. No significant difference in performance on the SJT was found between applicants who completed the test at time point two and applicants who completed the test at time point three.

10.3   Numeracy Test: A significant difference in performance on the Numeracy Test was found based on the time point within the testing period it was completed, although the effect size was small $(F(2,449)=7.54, p<.001, d=.032)$. Applicants who completed the test at time point one scored significantly higher than applicants who completed the test at time point three $(p=.002)$, but not applicants who completed the test at time point two. Applicants who completed the test at time point two also scored significantly higher than applicants who completed the test at time point three. It should be noted that, due to differences in sample size between the groups, this may have an impact on the analysis and therefore, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 9 Date of assessment - Descriptive Statistics by Selection Method

Test	Descriptive	Time Period One	Time Period Two	Time Period Three
SJT	N	78	160	214
	Mean	560.92	553.65	546.23
	Standard Deviation	32.13	33.74	36.91
	Minimum	474.00	436.48	428.00
	Maximum	616.00	628.32	630.00
Numeracy	N	78	160	214
	Mean	8.47	8.16	7.62
	Standard Deviation	1.62	1.77	2.00
	Minimum	3	1	1
	Maximum	10	10	10

11. Applicants with Student Visas

11.1   International students in the main, require a Student visa to undertake their academic study in the UK. 13.9% (n=76) of successfully longlisted applications were received from those who indicated that they were on a Student visa. These applicants would generally enter their FTY either by applying for a Skilled Worker visa (requiring employers to be registered as sponsors) or obtaining a training place via the Graduate Visa route of entry.

11.2   Following the assessment, 80.3% (n=61) of applications with Student visas were deemed successful, amounting to 13.5% of all successful applicants. However, only 93.4% (n=57) of these 61 applicants submitted a preference list and therefore continued to offer stage.

11.3   Looking at those Student visa applicants eligible for offers (n=57), 50.88% were made an offer (n=29) and 22.81% (n=13) were matched to a training post in Scotland. Of the 49.12% of Student visa applicants who were not made an offer, 78.6% (n=22) of these were applicants who accepted another offer (i.e matched to a post in England/Wales)

11.4   Comparing with 2023 recruitment, where we had 76 Student visa applicants who continued to offer stage, 39.5% were made an offer (n=30) and 10.5% were matched to a training post in Scotland(n=8)

For training places there has been a decrease of 29.25% in places that offered Skilled Worker visa sponsorship. The recent introduction of the Graduate Visa route is affording a variety of training environments for applicants to select from. Any applicant wishing to utilise the Graduate Visa route of entry could select any training place, as this route does not require employers to be registered as sponsors for overseas trainees.

12. Final offers

12.1   At the end of the process, 63.63% of successful applicants (n=287) had received a post offer. Of these, 60 offers were declined, 7 offers expired. Overall, 76.66% (n=220) of final post offers were accepted by applicants.

12.2   7.51% (n=34) of successful applicants were left without a foundation programme offer at the end of the process, which was nine more than the previous year.

Candidates may not be made an offer for the following reasons:

- A candidate has not been successful in meeting the score threshold to secure one of the NES-funded places. Being eligible to receive an offer via Oriel does not guarantee that a candidate will receive an offer.
- The number of candidates who are taking part in the recruitment process is higher than the number of NES-funded places offered.
- A candidate may not match to a Training Provider if the Training Provider chose to submit a preference list and the candidate's name does not appear on this list.
- A candidate has been unable to make a successful match due to limited spaces with Training Providers. We have always strongly recommended that candidates do not limit their preferences. Some Training Providers are extremely popular with all candidates and have a very small number of places available and because of this, these Training Providers can become unavailable very early on in the matching process.

12.3   29.1% (n=132) of successful applicants were no longer eligible to be made an offer following withdrawal, this includes accepting a post in the England and Wales vacancy.

Recruitment outcomes

13. Fill rates

13.1   At the end of the recruitment process, 100% of available NHS Hospital training places were filled and 25.6% of community pharmacy training places.

13.2   The fill-rate of NES funded training places was 100% as we filled all 220 funded posts which make up for 38.2% of all places offered by Training Providers.

13.3   Tables 10-12 below provide a breakdown of training providers matched by employer type and geographical area compared to last year's recruitment.

Table 10 Training provider fill rates

Training Providers	2024	2023
Number of TPs taking part	143	121
Matched TPs	80	69
Not Matched	63	52
TPs who matched and have posts left	38	33
TPs who matched and filled all posts	42	36

Table 11 Training providers matched breakdown by employer type

Employer type – Matched TPs	2024	2023
NHS Hospital	10	10
Community pharmacy	58	52
Split	4	2
Modular	5	4
Remote & Rural	3	1
Totals	**80**	**69**

Table 12 Training providers matched breakdown by geographical area

Geographical area – Matched TPs	2024	2023
North	17	15
West	38	31
East	12	11
National	13	12
Totals	**80**	**69**

13.4   Tables 13 and 14 below provide a breakdown of candidates matched by employer type and geographical area compared to last year's recruitment.

Table 13 Candidates matched breakdown by employer type

Employer type – Matched candidates	2024	2023
NHS Hospital	48	50
Community pharmacy	119	127
Split	18	12
Modular	32	30
Remote & Rural	3	1
Totals	**220**	**220**

Table 14 Candidates matched breakdown by geographical area

Geographical area – Matched candidates	2024	2023
North	41	40
West	86	81
East	28	29
National	65	70
Totals	**220**	**220**

END OF THE REPORT