

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer's Clinical Fellow Scheme

Guidance for employers 2025/26

A pharmacist within your organisation is interested in developing their leadership and management skills by applying to the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer's Clinical Fellow Scheme 2025/26. This document provides key details for employers wishing to support the applicant's leadership development ambitions.

About the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer's Clinical Fellow Scheme

Established in 2015 and sponsored by the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer of NHS England, this prestigious scheme identifies and supports pharmacists who present with the clearest potential to develop as clinical leaders of the future.

Successful applicants will spend 12 months outside of clinical practice as clinical fellows in a national healthcare-affiliated organisation, developing an enhanced range of essential skills in leadership, management, strategy, project management and health policy.

The scheme is aimed at developing future leaders who have had limited leadership opportunities and have not yet held a senior leadership role in pharmacy. It is designed to equip pharmacists with the skills required to lead effectively, and to prepare them for leadership roles in a complex healthcare system.

The scheme is managed by the [Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management](#), the UK professional home for clinical leadership.

Benefits of the scheme for individuals and employers

Clinical fellows return from the scheme equipped with a comprehensive set of developed skills, which is of considerable value to employers and the healthcare system. These include but are not limited to:

- Skills in developing and working with teams and supporting others in developing their own personal insight and effectiveness.
- The ability to deal with complex issues, to communicate these concisely, and to critically evaluate policies and processes.
- An enhanced understanding of healthcare policy and the mechanism to support implementation.
- An enhanced understanding of the complexity of emerging policy and the ability to lead positive change and cultural improvement, by identifying the contexts for change, applying knowledge and evidence, making decisions, and evaluating impact.
- The ability to explain clinical issues, and their relevance, to clinical and non-clinical colleagues in a clear and persuasive manner.
- The ability to communicate with stakeholders at all levels and to influence positive outcomes and change.
- Access to a wide range of professional networks at system and national level, and the ability to build effective collaborative relationships.

How does the scheme work?

Candidates submit an application for a place on the scheme during the annual recruitment period and shortlisted candidates are interviewed before appointments are confirmed. Successful applicants are seconded from their current NHS trust to take up a fellowship role.

Starting in September 2025, the clinical fellows will be based in national healthcare-affiliated host organisations for 12 months. Clinical fellows are supervised and mentored by senior organisational leaders and will lead on projects that directly contribute to national healthcare system priorities. Clinical fellows are also supported by a comprehensive development programme facilitated by FMLM.

Terms and conditions of employment

- Clinical fellows will be seconded from their employers to their allocated host organisation for the duration of the fellowship.
- Clinical fellows will remain employed by their existing organisation under their existing NHSE/employer contract and terms and conditions.
- Employers will continue to pay salary and on-costs and will be reimbursed by the clinical fellow's allocated host organisation by prior arrangement.

The scheme forms part of the NHSE's commitment of the [People Plan](#) and [Long-Term Workforce Plan](#) to strengthen clinical leadership capability in NHSE, and to support talented developing clinical leaders.

We hope that you will recognise the benefits of the scheme to your organisation and employee, and that you will support their interest in applying to this scheme.

Important note: Candidates should commence discussions with executive teams within substantive organisations, HR partners and finance leads. Failure to do so may result in secondment contracts being rejected, and a fellowship post being delayed or withdrawn.

For further enquiries, please contact:

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