

Trust ACCEND implementation blueprint



Supporting the implementation of the Aspirant Cancer Career, Education and Development (ACCEND) Framework within organisations

Introduction

The ACCEND framework was developed as a national programme to respond to the rising incidence of cancer, growing complexity of cancer care, workforce challenges and inconsistent availability of structured cancer education and career development opportunities. ACCEND is built around three core components that work together to support the education, development, and progression of the non-medical cancer workforce: Career Pathway, Capability Framework, and Education Framework.

ACCEND aims to build a skilled, competent, and confident cancer workforce by:

- Providing a national framework for education, training, and career progression in cancer care.
- Ensuring consistency in cancer-related education across roles, levels, and settings.
- Supporting development for all health and care staff involved in cancer care.
- Creating clear cancer career pathways from entry-level to consultant level practice.

National Context

Wessex Cancer Alliance has been collaborating with providers to embed all three elements of the ACCEND Framework. In 2026/2027, providers have been asked to report against key metrics which show assurance that Trusts have robust ACCEND implementation plans in place and staff are actively engaged with the framework. Implementation plans should focus on -

- Leadership and governance
- Role design
- Job descriptions
- Appraisals
- Career pathways
- Education

NHSE require all Cancer Alliances to report on key metrics including the number of Trusts with implementation plans and the number of staff engaged with ACCEND.

Recognising that organisations are at various stages of maturity in implementing ACCEND, the Alliance workforce team has developed this guidance to support consistent and effective implementation across the region.

Vision for ACCEND Implementation in a Trust

All organisations should consider developing an organisational plan and set up governance mechanisms to support embedding ACCEND.

An acute Trust should have:

a. ACCEND Integration across Cancer Workforce

- A plan for embedding ACCEND in recruitment, job descriptions, inductions, role development, appraisal, and CPD planning.

b. A Standardised, Equitable Workforce Pathway

- Provide clear, consistent expectations for cancer capabilities and education at all levels of practice.

c. A Sustainable Education Infrastructure

- Accredited modules, in-house teaching, supervision arrangements aligned to ACCEND.
- Clear, equitable process for applying for CPD funding, education grants & other opportunities.

d. Embedded ACCEND Governance

- A Trust-level ACCEND Steering Group aligned with Cancer Alliance governance requirements.

e. Reporting and Assurance Framework

- Quarterly data submission to the Cancer Alliance on metrics required by the National Cancer Programme.

Implementation Principles

To ensure realistic and sustainable implementation:

1. **Start where you are** – build on existing induction plans, development programmes, and appraisal systems.
2. **Make ACCEND the default** – embed it into HR, education, line management, and recruitment processes.
3. **Use the Cancer Alliance for support** – the Alliance is required to support Trusts to implement ACCEND.
4. **Consistency across roles and services** – Apply ACCEND equally across all cancer pathways and appropriate professions.
5. **Leadership-led culture change** – Cancer Leadership teams must create an environment that empowers staff to make ACCEND-led changes.
6. **Use available resources** – Implementation Guides, Induction toolkits, WCA webinars, local and Wessex Cancer Academy education, and the Greater Manchester e-portfolio

Role of Wessex Cancer Alliance

- Provide strategic leadership to ensure consistent adoption of the ACCEND Framework across the region.
- Fund an ACCEND Facilitator for 12 months to support implementation and transition to business as normal.
- Offer guidance, resources, and practical tools to support local implementation within Trusts.
- Facilitate shared learning through networks, workshops, and communities of practice.
- Enable access to ACCEND-aligned education, training opportunities, and funded development pathways.
- Monitor Trust-level progress, identify gaps, and support improvement actions.
- Coordinate regional workforce planning to ensure ACCEND outcomes inform development priorities.
- Help Trusts overcome barriers by offering advice, connections, and tailored support.

Establish ACCEND Governance

Senior leaders should consider identifying a named Cancer Clinical Lead to provide leadership, oversight, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of ACCEND implementation with accountability to the Trust Cancer Board.

Create a Trust ACCEND Implementation Group, membership could include:

- Lead Cancer Nurse / AHP Lead
- Radiotherapy Lead
- Workforce Lead
- Education Lead
- Practice Educators
- Legacy mentor
- Advanced Practice Lead
- HR Business Partner
- Matrons/Ward/SACT Leads
- Lead Cancer Support Worker
- Cancer Alliance Workforce team representative
- ACCEND Champions (May be a later addition)
- Local HEI partners

Membership will vary between organisations depending on organisational structure and priorities for implementation.

Outputs:

- ACCEND Implementation plan and timeline
- Communications plan.
- Quarterly reporting
- Risk register

[An example template for a terms of reference can be found here.](#)

Communication Plan

Developing a communication plan clearly naming all key clinical, operational, and educational stakeholders specifying their roles, needs, and influence. Effective communication requires establishing tailored, timely channels—such as briefings, workshops, and regular updates—to ensure shared understanding, support engagement, and maintain momentum throughout the implementation process.

ACCEND Facilitators

To support organisations in embedding the ACCEND Framework as business as usual, Wessex Cancer Alliance has funding available to support a part-time post in each Trust. The funding application process will be via the Wessex Cancer Alliance Senior Workforce Programme Manager.

[Read our proposed role description for consideration.](#)

Job Descriptions

As part of ACCEND implementation, all organisations should work with their HR business partners to agree a coordinated approach to review relevant job descriptions to ensure consistency with the ACCEND Framework. Consideration needs to take into account how job descriptions can be incorporated into the national job profile work mandated by NHSE. This should:

- **Start by identifying the appropriate ACCEND level of practice** for each new role, ensuring that the scope of practice, responsibilities, and expected capability align with the Framework.
- **Consider reviewing job descriptions, in collaboration with HR**, as new roles are recruited or developed to support the pace and demands of the work.
- **Consider what is realistic and appropriate for inclusion in job description e.g. start by using a standard ACCEND statement** within the job description, such as:
“The post holder can evidence ACCEND Capabilities in Practice (CiPs) at X level of practice or demonstrate a commitment to working towards achieving them.”
- **Review and update education and training requirements** to ensure they reflect the ACCEND-aligned expectations for the level of practice, including essential qualifications and recommended development.

Local role design and workforce planning should integrate ACCEND to appropriately support role, level of practice, and required capabilities.

Incorporating ACCEND into Appraisal Processes

Integrating the ACCEND Framework into appraisal processes ensures that capability development, levels of practice, and education requirements are routinely reviewed and supported. Using ACCEND as part of the annual appraisal provides a consistent structure for discussing progress, identifying

evidence against the relevant capabilities and agreeing development goals that align with service needs and career pathways.

Wessex Cancer Alliance have developed a discussion tool to compliment and support current Trust processes. This can be used to help structure conversations as part of appraisals, induction or job planning.

[Download our appraisal template here.](#)

Education, training and capability development

Organisations should ensure infrastructure exists to support the cancer education and capability development of the workforce across all levels of practice:

- Access to learning opportunities, within cancer, aligned to ACCEND capabilities should be available to the workforce.
- Job planning should incorporate time for education, development, and supervision aligned to ACCEND.
- All staff should receive a comprehensive induction and continuous development plan to support lifelong learning, including education that supports development of ACCEND capabilities.
- The cancer workforce should have access to a foundation in cancer course for example, the Foundations of Cancer Care or Fundamentals of Cancer Care depending on level of practice, with consideration for how this could be integrated into staff induction.

[Catalogue](#)

[MSc Modules - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance](#)

- Internal cancer education offers should align with ACCEND capabilities and map the learning outcomes to ACCEND CiPs to provide clarity and encourage reflection on progression.

Annual Training Needs Analysis

ACCEND-aligned appraisal discussions should directly inform each organisation's annual Training Needs Analysis (TNA). Evidence gathered through appraisal—such as identified capability gaps and progression goals - should be systematically collated to determine workforce development priorities. This information should be used to shape requests for education funding and support ensuring investment is targeted where it will have the greatest impact on capability development and service quality.

Standardising Local Inductions

To ensure a consistent and high-quality experience for all staff organisations should adopt a standardised induction approach aligned to the ACCEND Framework. Induction programmes should provide a clear introduction to the ACCEND levels of practice, expected Capabilities in Practice (CiPs), and associated education requirements. Core content should include role expectations, access to learning resources and supervision, creating an ePortfolio account, and an overview of the ACCEND development pathway. Standardising induction in this way supports workforce readiness, promotes fair

development opportunities, and ensures all new starters begin their role with a mutual understanding of ACCEND principles and expectations.

ACCEND ePortfolio

All staff should be supported to use an ePortfolio or other resources to track learning, reflect on progress, and follow a meaningful, structured development plan relevant to their role and level of practice. This also provides leaders, educators, and the Cancer Alliance with valuable insight into workforce capability and educational attainment.

[Find out more about the ePortfolio here.](#)

Reporting Structure

Each organisation is asked to feedback information on the following each quarter.

- Is there an implementation plan for 2026/7 in place within organisation.
- Number of staff with ePortfolio accounts
- Number of staff with active ePortfolio accounts
- Number of cancer workforce roles mapped to ACCEND levels of practice.
- Number of cancer workforce with ACCEND-aligned appraisals.
- Number of roles with ACCEND-aligned job descriptions.
- Number of staff registered on accredited courses.
- Number of staff completed registered courses.

Reporting metrics will be routinely shared with NHS England to provide oversight of progress, highlight emerging challenges, and inform where targeted support may be required to enable successful ACCEND implementation.

[Read our Summary of Actions here.](#)

For more information on ACCEND, visit our [Wessex Cancer Academy website](#).

Content adapted from the Greater Manchester Cancer Alliance ACCEND Standards and Line Manager Handbook used with acknowledgement of their contribution to national implementation.

[The-Greater-Manchester-ACCEND-standards-2025.pdf](#)

[ACCEND line manager handbook \(Document \(A4\)\)](#)