

## **Student Physician Associate Placements and Student Support Allowance Guidance for HEIs**

### **Introduction**

This document provides guidance around placements for physician associate students and payment of the Student Support Allowance. It outlines the key responsibilities and procedures to ensure our records are accurate and that payments are made promptly.

*Note:* When the word “*School*” is used throughout this document, it refers to the School of Foundation Training and Physician Associates.

### **Process for reporting placement data**

We require PA placement data within two weeks of the placement start date. We are aware that occasionally there may be challenges around placement capacity so please advise as soon as possible if the data is to be delayed for this, or any other any reason. In the past, the school was able to use the university timetables to see when placements were expected to occur and directly request the data from HEIs to ensure we had it in time for payments. Unfortunately, due to the publication of the recent NHSE 2025/26 Priorities and Operational Planning Guide and immediate pause on all staffing recruitment activities we continue to operate with reduced resource in the team. For this reason, we’re currently unable to prioritise the limited resource we have to pro-actively seek out this information from HEIs and will be solely reliant on HEI submissions within the two-week window.

Submissions that are not sent in time to be captured for processing will be delayed until the next reporting and payment period.

To help ease administrative resource and data manipulation at our end please can we ask that you use the School template to record placement data. Please include the full trust name for all

Secondary Care placements. For Primary Care placements please include which training hub organised the placement and will be claiming the funding– we do not need the name of the practice unless the placement was organised independently of a Training Hub. (For placements outside the region or not organised through a hub see further notes) The information provided will be used by the School to populate our PA Student Tracker. This will then inform payments to trusts through the Education Funding Agreement and through Primary Care Training Hubs for dissemination to the GP provider.

The current rate (June 2024 still valid February 2025) is £111 a day for primary care placements and £132 a week for secondary care.

Under the national funding model, placement tariff has been calculated based on the students being on placement 8 hours per day. For a 5-day week this equates to a 40-hour week. Placements should be supporting a student for 40 hours per week to receive the total £132 per week for trusts and 8 hours per day for GP Practices to receive £111 per day – with study hours, this is 35 hours active on placement and up to 5 hours per week study.

Please note the following

- All primary care placements are now paid through the three North West Training Hubs. The School do not hold a contract with individual GP practices and as such are unable to pay invoices directly. (Exceptions apply in certain circumstances)
- The school understand that on some rare occasions payments through the hubs may not be possible. Please seek approval for any non-standard arrangements with the School **prior** to finalising any placements – failure to do so may result in significant delays in payment being made to the placement provider.
- If a student does not attend placement for any reason, you must inform the school at the earliest opportunity.
- Payment for repeated/extended placements is by prior discussion/agreement first.
- Primary care providers are paid for days the PA students attends. They are not paid if a placement is cancelled by themselves or the HEI. However, reasonable costs may be considered if the HEI cancels a placement at short notice and the practice can show costs were incurred in setting up the placement.

- From July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, the School no longer deducts one days placement tariff when a bank holiday occurs. All placement periods that include a bank holiday will be paid as a standard week.
- Before payment is made to the training hubs, the school validate their reported data with that provided by the HEI, as such it is vital that the data you report to the hubs match that which you submit to the School.
- Whilst payment for placements is referred to as tariff, this is not the same as Clinical / Non-Clinical Tariff that other professions attract and as such does not have the same arrangements or guidance.

### **Placements taking place outside the region and not organised through the hub.**

If you are aware of any students needing placements that cannot be found by any of the three regional training hubs it may be possible to use local connections to place a student in another NHS region. Before confirming the placement with the provider and student, please get in touch with us at the first opportunity to discuss. Due to NHSE Finance policies we will need to enquire first if / how a payment can be made.

All Primary Care providers must be an approved Unified Learning Environment (ULE). Please signpost any potential provider to the Training Hub if they are not already an ULE.

### **Payment of Student Support Allowance (formerly Travel Grant)**

NHSE currently support student Physician Associates with a payment of £2,653 per annum - in the Northwest this payment is paid in line with the programmes required clinical placements and is aimed at assisting students with travel costs. (rate updated from £2601 on July1st 2024 and equates to £885 per student per trimester payment) Payment is made to the HEIs based on their reported programme numbers, three times a year. It is at the discretion of the HEI as to how and when payments are made to students. The payment is not means tested and students do not have to apply for it. The payment cannot be withheld or used against outstanding fees or any other university incurred costs.

The school will request programme numbers from the HEI PA team at three points in the year. When requesting we will advise what was reported in the previous trimester. If there has been

change in numbers, we ask that you advise the name of the students who have withdrawn / interrupted/ rejoined along with an expected restart date when applicable.

As these figures are used to populate our quarterly forecasting and aid our financial planning for subsequent years, it is vital that the numbers reported are accurate and submitted on time. Please note that payments for student physician associates are not made through the SDCT and as such we do not validate or check any data reported by the HEI through the SDCT.

Any periods of time out or extensions should be communicated to us as early as possible so our records can be updated.

### Timeline of SSA payments

Email to PA teams at HEI requesting number of active students on X date and details of any changes	Date of when active students are recorded	HEI finance teams contacted with copy of schedules / PO number	Invoice requested and submitted to SBS for payment
Circa February 15th	February 15 <sup>th</sup>	June	July
Circa October 31st	October 31 <sup>st</sup>	February	March
Circa June 30 <sup>th</sup>	June 30 <sup>th</sup>	November	December

Version 1 – June 2024

Version 2 – February 2025