

NHS FINANCE INSIGHTS PLACEMENT SCHEME

SOUTH WEST REGION

Handbook 2025-2025

Foreword

We are delighted to welcome you to the NHS South West Finance Insights Placement Scheme. This handbook will give you an understanding of what to expect from the Scheme and outlines what is expected of you as a trainee.

Throughout the 12-month programme, you will gain hands-on experience in an entry-level (band 2) finance role. This opportunity allows you to develop a wide range of new skills, enhance your understanding of financial operations, and acquire valuable on-the-job work experience.

You will have a dedicated Placement Manager available to provide ongoing support. Please make sure to stay in close contact with them to maximise the guidance they can offer.

Good luck with your placement.

Section 1: Welcome to the South West

Congratulations on securing a place on the NHS South West Finance Insights Placement Scheme. The scheme sets high standards, offers new challenges, and provides opportunities to build networks while stretching your abilities.

As part of the scheme, you will gain valuable experience and work with your team members to support the NHS.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

The section below outlines the roles of the key people involved in the scheme. The trainees' primary relationships on the scheme are with the following people:

Placement Manager

The Placement Manager holds day-to-day management responsibility for the trainee, which is a crucial aspect of ensuring a successful workplace experience. The Placement Manager will design, develop, and coordinate the trainee's work experience.

- Successfully induct the trainee into the organisation and team
- Identify and set key objectives of work
- Review progress and provide developmental feedback on a regular basis
- Identify robust and relevant training and development opportunities

In addition to your Placement Manager, you may have different Line Managers throughout your time on the scheme who will provide day-to-day support and training.

Workplace Buddy

A workplace buddy is a colleague who helps new employees settle in, offering guidance, support, and a friendly connection to ease their transition and integration into the team.

Value Maker Buddy

In addition to, or instead of your workplace buddy, you may be paired with a buddy from your local Integrated Care System (ICS) from the [Value Maker network](#). This buddy will engage in monthly catch-ups with you, offering opportunities for informal conversations, advice, and additional support.

Kings Trust Mentor

Trainees who have opted-in to the Kings Trust scheme may request a mentor from their Mentoring Programme¹ prior to starting their placement. The mentor will actively support the trainee in achieving their potential through regular contact.

¹ Only those who opted-in to this scheme prior to commencing their placement can access this benefit.

Insight Placement Scheme Trainees

We encourage you to stay in touch and network with your fellow Insight trainees, both in the South West and in other regions in England. Having a support network of others going through similar experiences can be incredibly beneficial. The induction days in September and the national and regional development days throughout the year will be great opportunities for everyone to meet and exchange contact details if you wish to do so.

South West Finance Academy

The South West Finance Academy is dedicated to managing the scheme and providing continuous support throughout your placement by offering ongoing guidance and resources to trainees including bi-annual online check ins.

Your contact is:

Charley Spicer

Programme Manager – Finance Academies

Email: charley.spicer@hfma.org.uk

Section 3: Work Based Learning

Over the course of your 12-month placement, you'll gain invaluable experience and exposure across various departments within your organisation's finance division. This rotation will provide you with a comprehensive understanding of financial operations, helping you develop a well-rounded skill set. Here are some of the key areas where you may gain experience:

- Accounts Payable/Receivable
- Management Accounts
- Financial Accounts

This diverse exposure will equip you with the practical knowledge, experience, and confidence to begin your finance career, laying a solid foundation for your professional development and setting you on the path to a successful career journey.

Placement Portfolio

The placement portfolio is your opportunity to showcase the work you have completed during your 12-month placement. It's an interactive document where you can add text, images, documents, and examples.

Completion of the portfolio is a requirement to receive your end of scheme certificate, so please ensure it is finished by the end of your placement. We recommend updating it regularly and setting aside time each week. This will not only make the process easier but also provide a valuable record of your achievements to draw on when applying for future roles and opportunities.

What Happens at the End of the 12-Month Placement?

As you approach the end of your 12-month placement, we recommend discussing potential

next steps with your Placement Manager. Options may include pursuing apprenticeship pathways, further qualifications, or applying for entry-level finance roles.

The South West Finance Academy will offer support with CV and interview preparation before the completion of the scheme.

Section 4: Learning and Development

To complement the work-based learning experience, a programme of online workshops delivered by One NHS finance and the regional academy will run alongside the placement where you will access training for different basic skills to help you throughout the year and for your future career development such as basic excel skills, job application and interview techniques.

Personal Development

As you embark on your 12-month training programme, you will have access to a range of additional development opportunities designed to enhance your understanding of NHS Finance and support your professional growth. These opportunities include various programmes and resources offered by HFMA, One NHS Finance, and the East and West South West Skills Development Networks. Appendix 1 details the 2025-26 timetable, including:

- HFMA online learning library courses
- Excel Events
- Induction and Introduction to NHS Finance Events
- CPD and Technical Events
- Webinars

Recommended Resources:

Here are some helpful links for you to explore:

NHS Finance Careers website: [One NHS – Careers in Finance \(financecareers.nhs.uk\)](https://financecareers.nhs.uk)

Glossary index: [NHS Glossary of Terms: A-Z of Healthcare](#) – The NHS uses many abbreviations and jargon. While you're not expected to memorise all terms, this glossary is a valuable tool for familiarising yourself with NHS terminology.

One NHS Finance: [ONF Homepage \(onenhsfinance.nhs.uk\)](https://onenhsfinance.nhs.uk) – Discover the different networks and programmes available to all NHS Finance staff. Once you start, you will be able to create an account and have access to all the events and training material.

HFMA: [Healthcare Financial Management Association | HFMA](#) The professional association for healthcare finance. Once you start, you will be able to create an HFMA account, granting you access to a range of resources tailored to your professional development.

Skills Development Network: Whether you're aiming to develop analytical skills or focus on personal development and awareness, there's something for everyone on the Skills Development Network. You can find the events on the One NHS Finance "[regional events](#)"

page, you will need to have an account with One NHS Finance to access this and please ensure your organisation and region are on your profile. Please note that spaces are limited for each event, so participation cannot be guaranteed.

YouTube Videos: We recommend watching the following three videos to give you insight into how the NHS is structured and funded as well as the career options and development opportunities available in NHS Finance.

- [How does the NHS in England work and how is it changing? \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- [NHS finance explained: How money flows in the NHS - 2023 Update \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- [What could a career in NHS Finance offer you? \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Please note, these animations were created before the announcement that NHS England will be brought back into the Department of Health and Social Care. To understand more about this change, we recommend the following documents:

- [Fit for the future: the 10-year health plan for England - a summary for finance staff](https://www.nhs.uk/...)
- [The 10 Year Health Plan explained](https://www.nhs.uk/...)

Pass Functional Skills

[Pass Functional Skills](https://www.passfunctional.co.uk/) are the leading service for Functional Skills Maths and English Ofqual regulated exams and online courses. They offer lots more resources, including free diagnostic assessments, revision products such as revision guides, revision cards, and practice papers, tuition, and lots of free revision materials, such as revision web pages, worksheets, and past paper solutions.

These services are aimed at students who scored less than a grade 4 in Maths or English and are looking to gain a Functional Skills Qualification.

Section 5: Employee Information – Overview

This section is designed to act as a useful reference, providing an overview of employment policies and procedures.

Contract of Employment

Your contract of employment is with your host organisation, this will vary for each Insights trainee. Please ensure that you are familiar with the individual policies and processes for your organisation.

Salary

Your salary is payable monthly in arrears through the host organisation's payroll, by credit transfer into your nominated bank account. Your host organisation will confirm how pay slips are issued.

It is important to keep a record of your pay slips in case you need to refer to them at a later date. The pay slip summarises your personal details. Your basic pay will be detailed along with any deductions for tax, NI (for trainees over 25 years old) and pension as applicable. Your cumulative salary, tax, NI and pension are also detailed.

Pension

For information on paying into a pension, please ask your Placement Manager.

Hours of work

The Working Time Regulations 1998 provide for a maximum “average” working week of 48 hours. In accordance with the contract of employment, trainees are required to work a 37.5 hour week (exclusive of lunch periods) spread over 5 days. Flexible working hours apply in many organisations, although systems vary locally. Trainees are required to adopt the arrangements operated by the organisation to which they are working for.

Consistent lateness or poor timekeeping may lead to disciplinary action. If trainees are experiencing problems that may impact on their ability to attend work on time they should speak to their Placement Manager in the first instance.

Annual Leave

Your full year leave entitlement is 27 days annual leave, plus national and bank holidays, per annum. The annual leave year runs from 1st April to 31st March.

Special Leave

Special Leave, either paid or unpaid, may be available in circumstances of domestic crisis, bereavement, or family illness. Should you require special leave, you should contact your Placement Manager and ensure that the leave is recorded.

The amount of time off and whether it is unpaid or paid will vary depending upon the circumstances.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Trainees are asked to schedule routine medical, dental, optician, and planned hospital appointments outside of working hours wherever possible. If this is not feasible, time off to attend such appointments may be granted at the discretion of the Placement Manager. This will normally be unpaid leave, usage of annual leave, or made up through flexible working arrangements. The same applies for blood donation sessions and screening appointments (e.g. NHS health checks).

Paid time off will be granted for emergency medical/hospital appointments, disability-related appointments (where this forms part of a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010), and any appointments requested by the employer such as Occupational Health assessments.

In all cases, trainees should notify their Placement Manager in advance and may be asked to provide an appointment card or confirmation of attendance.

Sickness

In the event of absence from work due to sickness, you must notify your Placement Manager and Line Manager on the first day of your illness, and then follow your host organisation's procedure on sick leave.

Un-notified sickness will be counted as unauthorised leave. In the event of unauthorised leave, disciplinary action as well as loss of pay may result.

Change of personal details

In the event that any of your personal details should change (i.e. name, address, telephone number, emergency contact, marital status, etc) you should contact the Employment Services Team at your host organisation.

This will ensure that you receive information, communications, and documents correctly (i.e. payrolls, expenses and other important documents).

Health and Safety

Your host organisation has a duty to:

- Provide safe equipment for employee's use
- Develop safe systems to ensure that equipment used is maintained and in a safe condition
- Develop safe systems and means for the safe use, handling and storage of substances and materials
- Provide information, training and supervision
- Maintain its premises in a safe condition
- Provide welfare facilities e.g. rest rooms, WCs etc.

It is your duty to:

- Take care of personal health and safety and that of anyone else who may be affected
- Co-operate with your host organisation so that it can fulfil its duties
- Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety
- Familiarise yourself with and comply with the local workplace regulations

Host organisations must ensure that trainees attend their department Induction and participate in all mandatory training such as Health & Safety. It is the responsibility of host organisations to ensure that all appropriate training is provided to the trainees to enable them to fully complete their role. Trainees should not be asked to get involved in activities if the necessary training has not been provided by the organisation.

An accident book should be available in every organisation. All accidents (however minor) should be reported and recorded, as this is a statutory requirement.

Support

Trainees are encouraged to address any workplace or personal difficulties by discussing them with their Placement Manager or Line Manager in the first instance. Additional support and guidance are also available through the South West Finance Academy.

Performance Review

Progress will be reviewed and assessed with reference to reports on general performance in the workplace and objectives.

Appendix 1: Training and development opportunities 2025-26

Introduction

During your 12-month placement you will have access to a range of training and development opportunities designed to enhance your understanding of NHS Finance and support your professional growth. These opportunities include various events and conferences offered by HFMA, One NHS Finance, and the East and West South West Skills Development Networks.

The timetable below indicates whether attendance is expected or whether it is optional. For all optional events please ensure you seek approval from your Line Manager and Placement Manager before booking. The South West Finance Academy will fund any places where attendance is charged.

The [South West Finance Academy page](#) gives detailed programmes and links to all training and development providers in the region.

Training and development timetable

- HFMA – Healthcare Financial Management Association
- ONF – One NHS Finance
- SWFA – South West Finance Academy
- SW SDN – South West Skills Development Network

To view all ONF events you need to first [create an account](#) on the One NHS Finance website. For all SDN events please check that your host organisation subscribes to the relevant East or West South West SDN programme.

Provider	Title	Description	Date	Location	Attendance
SWFA	Insights Regional Induction Day	Introduction to the scheme for South West, London and South West Insights Placement Trainees	8 Sept 2025	Springfield University Hospital, London	Optional (free ticket)
ONF	Insights National Induction Day (1)	Introduction to the scheme for all national Insights Placement Trainees (part 1)	9 Sept 2025	Online MS Teams	Expected
ONF	Insights National Induction Day (2)	Introduction to the scheme for all national Insights Placement Trainees (part 2)	26 Sept 2025	Online MS Teams	Expected
SW SDN	Wellbeing and supporting your mental health in the workplace	Join us for an engaging and insightful workshop led by Jude, an experienced psychotherapist and coach, designed to bring awareness to mental	7 October 2025	Online	Optional (free if your organisation is subscribed)

		health and wellbeing in the workplace.			
ONF	NHS Finance Inclusion Conference	Annual inclusion conference, this year themed on leading with allyship	9 Oct 2025	Online MS Teams	Optional (free ticket)
ONF	Value Maker Annual Conference	Annual event for everyone in the Value Maker network	19 Nov 2025	Online MS Teams and in-person London	Optional (free ticket)
SWFA	Excel training - basics	Excel essentials course for beginners	Nov 2025 – date tbc	Online MS Teams	Expected
ONF	Health and Wellbeing Conference	Annual event promoting health and wellbeing across NHS Finance	21 Jan 2026	Online MS Teams	Optional (free ticket)
ONF	Insights National Development Day	Development workshop for all Insights Placement Trainees nationally	Jan 2026 – date tbc	Online MS Teams	Expected
SWFA	Excel training – intermediate	Next step excel training following the basics course	Feb 2026 – date tbc	Online MS Teams	Expected
ONF	Insights National Development Day	Development workshop for all Insights Placement Trainees nationally	May/June 2026 – date tbc	Online MS Teams	Expected

The timetable will be subject to change throughout the year. Please use the links provided to check the latest details on the relevant website pages. The SW SDN puts on over 70 events the year, therefore, these are not all listed in this document and we recommend you view the One NHS Finance “regional events” page to view what is coming up and what you may be interested in.

For any sessions where attendance is expected, the event details will be sent to you directly in due course. Contact charley.spicer@hfma.org.uk for any event queries.

HFMA online learning library

As part of your training and development package, you will also be given free access to the following HFMA online learning courses:

- [NHS finance](#)
- [NHS budgeting](#)
- [NHS commissioning](#)
- [NHS governance](#)
- [NHS business cases](#)

When you have completed all five courses you will have gained 15 hours of CPD, and you will be awarded the HFMA Award in healthcare finance fundamentals certificate.

As part of this benefit, you will also have access to the full suite of finance fundamentals courses (19 modules) should you wish to complete any more than the five specified above.

Information will be sent from the South West Finance Academy on how to access your HFMA online learning courses. Please speak to your Line Manager and Placement Manager to arrange when you plan to complete these during your working hours.

Further Training links

- [South West Interview Skills Sessions](#)
- [South West calendar](#) – view all upcoming events in the region
- [South West Health and Wellbeing network](#)
- [Sign up as a HFMA member](#) – free of charge
- [HFMA news and policy](#)
- The South West Finance Academy will be providing “catch-up” sessions where you can chat to other trainees across the country. You will be sent this information directly.

The South West Finance Academy has a variety of networking groups, events, and development programmes that you can access. Please email: charley.spicer@hfma.org.uk for more information.