



Greater Manchester  
Cancer Alliance

# Greater Manchester ACCEND Standards



## Introduction

The cancer workforce in England has been facing increasing pressure due to rising incidences of cancer, complexity of care, workforce shortages, retention challenges; and inconsistent access to structured cancer education and career development across regions and professions.

National projections highlight significant impending shortages of cancer nurses, with Macmillan Cancer Support estimating a need for an additional 4,000 in the UK by 2030<sup>1</sup>.

The Aspirant Cancer Career, Education and Development programme (ACCEND) was established as a national programme initially to address these issues and has evolved in response to a growing recognition of the need to enhance the capability, and consistency for the non-medical workforce involved in cancer care across the UK.

The ACCEND framework<sup>2</sup> is built around three core components that work together to support the education, development, and progression of the cancer workforce: *Career Pathway, Capability Framework, and Education Framework*. Because people affected by cancer are supported across all health and social care settings, the framework and Greater Manchester (GM) standards are designed to extend beyond specialist services.

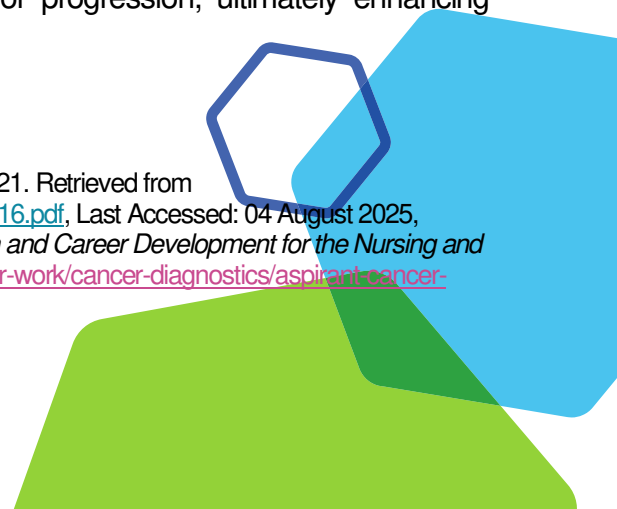
ACCEND aims to build a skilled, competent, and confident cancer workforce by:

- 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 multi-professional development for all health and care staff involved in cancer care.
- Creating clear cancer career pathways from entry-level to consultant level practice.

The Greater Manchester Cancer Alliance Workforce and Education team has been working with providers to support embedding the three components of ACCEND. Acknowledging that providers are at varying stages of implementation, GM standards have been developed to outline the core principles for embedding the three components. Implementation is further supported through the [GM Cancer Academy Development Hub](#), which offers examples of good practice across Greater Manchester and promotes shared, peer-to-peer learning. Trust Cancer Leadership teams should be mindful that these principles may require significant changes to job plans, and equity in access to education offers. Barriers to these changes should be identified, and Trust Cancer Leadership teams should support staff to feel empowered and enabled to introduce the necessary changes. This will help ensure continuous professional development and equal access to opportunities for progression, ultimately enhancing professional standards and improving patient care.

<sup>1</sup> Cancer nursing on the line: why we need urgent investment across the UK, 2021. Retrieved from [https://www.macmillan.org.uk/images/Forgotten-C-Nursing-Report\\_tcm9-360416.pdf](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/images/Forgotten-C-Nursing-Report_tcm9-360416.pdf), Last Accessed: 04 August 2025,

<sup>2</sup> NHS England. (2023). *ACCEND: A National Framework for Cancer Education and Career Development for the Nursing and Allied Health Professional Workforce*. Retrieved from <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/cancer-diagnostics/aspirant-cancer-career-education-development-programme/accend-framework>



## Principles of ACCEND

### 1. Strategic Planning and Governance

ACCEND should be implemented across **all non-medical professional groups** involved in the delivery of cancer care and supporting cancer patients including both generalist and specialist roles.

All organisations should consider developing an organisational plan and establish governance mechanisms to support embedding ACCEND:

- Plans should consider including all three components of ACCEND – **career pathways, capabilities, and education frameworks**, and be **multi-professional** in both design and delivery.
- Cancer capabilities and education opportunities should be supported for both **generalist** and **specialist** roles, recognising that 1 in 2 people will receive a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime.
- Senior leaders should consider establishing clear mechanisms to provide **assurance** on ACCEND implementation, for example through governance via relevant internal boards and forums.

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### 2. Role Design and Job Descriptions

Job descriptions for cancer-specific roles should be aligned with the ACCEND capabilities appropriate to the relevant level of practice:

- Standardised job descriptions aligned to ACCEND currently exist for **Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists**, and **Cancer Care Coordinators**. These should be adopted or aligned wherever possible, with consideration for how they can be incorporated into the national job profile work mandated by NHSE.
- Local role design and workforce planning should integrate ACCEND to appropriately support role, level of practice, and required capabilities.

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### 3. Education and Learning Infrastructure

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 **generalist** and **specialist** staff.
- **Job planning** should incorporate protected 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.



- All staff should have access to a foundation in cancer course for example, the [GM Core Cancer Essentials](#) education package, with consideration for how this could be integrated into staff induction packages.
- Organisations should ensure all staff have a clear **education framework** aligned to ACCEND, where appropriate, to support continuous professional development.
- **Internal education offers** should consider alignment with ACCEND capabilities.
- Organisations should consider offering **cancer specific learning environments** aligned to ACCEND to attract the future cancer workforce.
- Where education gaps exist, organisations should work with regional education providers (e.g. [Greater Manchester Cancer Academy](#)) to commission or develop provision.

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#### 4. Career Pathway Implementation

Cancer workforce development should be aligned to the ACCEND Career Pathway Framework:

- Clear **career pathways** should be **accessible** across the non-medical cancer workforce.
- Career progression should be appropriately supervised through structured professional development plans, annual appraisals, mentorship, coaching, and learning aligned to ACCEND career pathways and capability levels.
- 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, aligned with ACCEND where appropriate.

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#### 5. Leadership Commitment and Accountability

Chief Nurses and Chief AHPs are encouraged to take on the role of executive sponsors to support the embedding of ACCEND:

- Senior leaders should consider cancer workforce development as part of their **strategic workforce priorities**.
- Senior leaders should consider identifying a named Executive Lead to provide **oversight, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation** of ACCEND implementation.
- Implementation should be supported by **baseline assessments, KPIs, and regular progress reviews** (to be agreed locally).
- Feedback from staff, patients, and education providers should inform ongoing improvement.
- Organisations are encouraged to utilise the [GM Cancer ePortfolio](#) where appropriate, which can provide reporting to **benchmark progress**, identify gaps in **uptake**, and support **goal-setting** for workforce development across all levels of practice.

