

WMCA ACCEND Implementation Plan Blueprint

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1. Introduction

The [Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development programme \(ACCEND\)](#) is an NHS England (NHSE) initiative designed to support cancer workforce development and transformation. Developed in response to increasing cancer rates, the rising complexity of cancer treatment, pressures on the workforce, and the uneven access to structured education and career development it is an NHSE required deliverable that acute trusts are expected to implement. It is founded on three integrated pillars designed to support the learning, professional growth, and career progression of the non-medical cancer workforce: a Career Pathway, a Capability Framework, and an Education Framework.

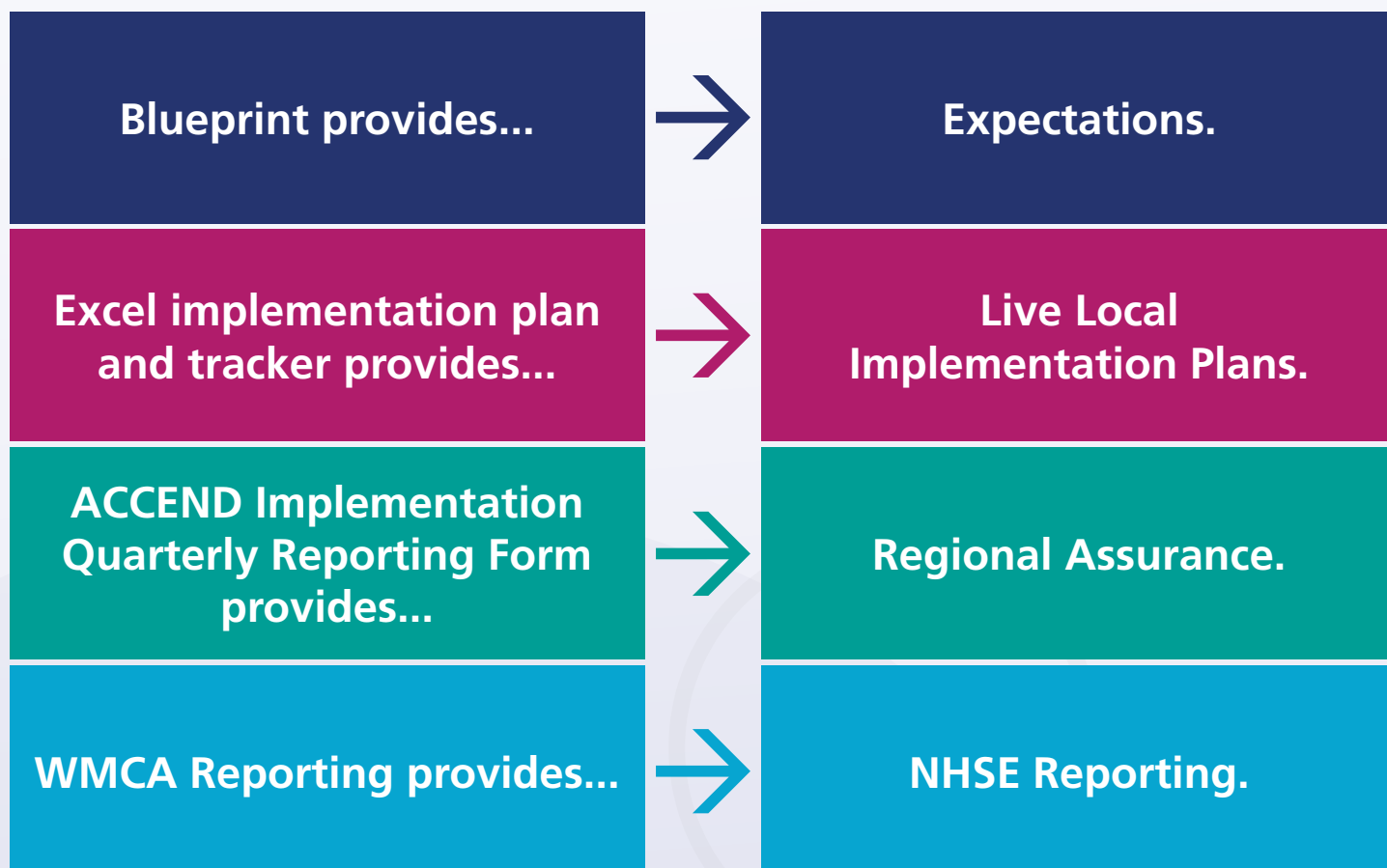
Cancer Alliances are tasked by NHS England to support providers to implement the ACCEND Framework, which outlines the core cancer capabilities in practice required at different levels of practice. For 2026-27, trusts are asked to ensure there is an implementation plan in place and to report on the number of cancer workforce members using ACCEND.

1.1 Purpose of this blueprint

The West Midlands Cancer Alliance (WMCA) has been collaborating with providers to embed all three elements of ACCEND for nursing, AHP and support worker roles in cancer.. Recognising that organisations are at various stages of maturity in implementing ACCEND, the WMCA Workforce and Education team have developed this regional plan to outline the expectations of Provider Trusts, supporting consistent and effective implementation across the region.

This implementation plan sets out the WMCA minimum expectation on how Provider Trusts will adopt and embed the ACCEND framework to support the development of the non-medical cancer workforce, including nursing, allied health professionals and the supporting cancer workforce. ACCEND provides a structured approach to career development, capability assessment and education for staff involved in cancer care.

This blueprint supports provider organisations to strategically plan, implement, monitor and sustain ACCEND as a core component of cancer workforce development and transformation.



1.2 Vision, objectives and success for ACCEND implementation

To deliver a future ready, skilled, and sustainable cancer workforce, by embedding ACCEND within workforce pipelines, education structures, and cancer service transformation. All organisations should establish an action plan along with governance mechanisms to support embedding ACCEND.

The objectives of the plan are to:



Organisations are expected to implement the ACCEND framework as business as usual for Cancer nurses, AHPs and support workers by the end of 2026/27 as outlined in the Cancer Alliance plan. This framework is relevant to the multidisciplinary workforce delivering and supporting care throughout the entire cancer pathway, from prevention and screening through to diagnosis, treatment, recovery, survivorship, palliative care and end of life care.

Reporting metrics will be routinely shared with WMCA Senior Leaders and NHS England to provide oversight of progress, highlight emerging challenges, and inform where targeted support may be required to enable successful ACCEND implementation. Details of the required reporting can be found in section 10.

2. Leadership, Governance and Strategic Planning

A robust governance structure is essential for delivering ACCEND consistently across the region and ensuring alignment with the NHS England Cancer Plan (2026). Clear lines of accountability, regular reporting, and ongoing oversight in collaboration with the West Midlands Cancer Alliance (WMCA) are required. Effective governance ensures that ACCEND is not implemented as a standalone education project, but as a foundational element of professional practice and workforce development across all cancer services.

Clear leadership and governance process will:



The alliance will provide strategic leadership, via a variety of forums to ensure consistent adoption of the ACCEND framework across the region. This will include offering guidance, resources and practical tools to support systems, facilitate shared learning and enable access to ACCEND aligned education opportunities and the ePortfolio to support staff to identify their training needs and evidence their learning. The alliance will monitor Trust level progress and support improvement actions to help overcome barriers by offering tailored support.

2.1 Local governance requirements

ACCEND to be a standing agenda item at appropriate Trust forums such as:

- Workforce and Education Steering Groups
- Cancer Operational Groups / Board
- Human Resources / Education Operational Groups
- Professional Boards

These groups ensure cross organisational oversight and monitoring of ACCEND progress across nursing, Allied Health Professionals (AHP), Cancer Support Workers (CSW) and wider cancer supporting roles.

ACCEND is for any staff that supports the cancer pathway from prevention, early diagnosis, treatment (Chemotherapy, Radiotherapy, surgery etc), living with and beyond cancer and end of life.

Directors of Cancer/Nursing/AHP Education are encouraged to take on the role of executive sponsors to support the embedding of ACCEND. They will work with the named ACCEND lead to establish a governance structure that ensures clear accountability for leadership, operational oversight, reporting, evaluation and ongoing cancer workforce engagement.

Organisations to appoint a Trust ACCEND Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), responsible for:

- Strategic oversight of ACCEND implementation
- Integrating ACCEND into Trust workforce, education and cancer transformation programmes
- Providing senior sponsorship and removing barriers to adoption
- Acting as the escalation point to WMCA for risks and resourcing concerns
- Ensuring ACCEND is included in departmental objectives and Trust workforce strategies
- Managers have the capability and capacity to support staff with ACCEND
- Clear expectations are communicated to all new and existing staff
- Barriers such as digital access, training needs or capacity pressures are addressed proactively
- Progress is monitored and reported to Trust Executives and WMCA

Organisations to appoint a named ACCEND Implementation Lead / Facilitator, responsible for the day to day delivery of ACCEND within the Trust, including:



Developing and maintaining the local implementation plan.



Coordinating rollout of the ACCEND ePortfolio.



Supporting managers and staff to embed core cancer specific Capabilities in Practice (CiPs) into practice.



Liaising with WMCA on progress, issues and updates.



Ensuring staff have access to guidance, training, and resources.



Escalating risks and issues to Trust SRO and WMCA.



Completing quarterly WMCA reporting tool.

Organisations to appoint ACCEND Champions across tumour groups, for the Nursing, AHP and CSW workforce groups.

Identify ACCEND Champions (best practice is minimum of 3 per Provider Trust) within the existing workforce to support implementation, knowledge sharing and provide peer support. An example role description has been provided in [Appendix 1](#). The Cancer Alliance Workforce team can provide training. Champions act as local ambassadors, providing peer led support and promoting adoption at team level and support the named ACCEND lead. An example of their responsibilities include:

- Encouraging staff engagement with the ePortfolio
- Supporting colleagues to understand CiPs and map their practice
- Raising awareness of WMCA CPD and professional development opportunities
- Feeding back issues, barriers and success stories

Managers play a crucial role in embedding ACCEND, the Senior Responsible Officer for ACCEND should ensure protected time for the named ACCEND implementation lead, line managers and ACCEND Champions to support the production of the following:

- Guides on using CiPs for development conversations
- Tips for supporting staff to map existing competence
- Refresher training as updates to the system are released

Ensuring managers and staff are confident users will significantly improve staff engagement and uptake.

2.2 Establishment of local ACCEND steering group

Whilst historically Lead Cancer Nurses have played a key role in providing strategic clinical leadership and informal implementation for ACCEND; successful implementation requires a whole-system approach and should not be reliant on a single individual. To facilitate organisational adoption and embed ACCEND within routine practice, the WMCA requires each organisation to establish a Trust ACCEND Steering Group. The group should oversee implementation, promote cross-organisational engagement, and demonstrate collective ownership and commitment from senior leadership teams.

Membership will vary according to local governance arrangements, but WMCA recommends the following representation:



Expected outputs of the local Steering group include:

- ACCEND Implementation plan and timeline
- Communications plan
- Discussions around bottlenecks and enablers
- Risk and issues register
- Quarterly reporting

An example template for a term of reference is included in [Appendix 2](#).

2.3 Strategic planning for ACCEND implementation

Successful implementation of ACCEND requires more than operational delivery. Organisations should adopt a strategic approach that aligns ACCEND with workforce, education and service transformation priorities. ACCEND should be viewed as a long term workforce development programme that supports sustainable cancer services, workforce retention, capability development and succession planning, rather than a standalone education initiative.

Each organisation should ensure ACCEND is embedded within existing planning cycles and considered as part of wider workforce transformation programmes. Strategic planning should be proportionate to organisational size and workforce need but should demonstrate a clear commitment to implementing all three ACCEND components over time.

Strategic planning expectations

Organisations should ensure ACCEND is aligned with:

- Cancer service strategies and transformation programmes.
- Trust workforce and people strategies.
- Nursing, AHP and support workforce development plans.
- Organisational education and learning strategies.
- Annual workforce planning and investment cycles.
- Succession planning and talent management programmes.
- NHS England cancer workforce priorities and Cancer Alliance objectives.

Baseline assessment

To inform implementation priorities, organisations should undertake a baseline assessment of their current position using the ACCEND Implementation quarterly report form. This should provide an understanding of workforce capability, existing development processes and organisational readiness for implementation. Areas for consideration may include:

- Current cancer workforce establishment, vacancies and turnover.
- Existing education, training and professional development provision.
- Workforce awareness and understanding of ACCEND.
- Current use of the ACCEND ePortfolio.
- Existing workforce capability and skills gaps.
- Alignment of job descriptions and career pathways.
- Existing governance and reporting arrangements.
- Availability of workforce development and practice educator support.

The findings from the baseline assessment should be used to identify priorities and inform local implementation plans.

Identifying local priorities

Recognising that organisations are at different stages of implementation, ACCEND priorities should reflect local workforce needs and organisational maturity. As a minimum, organisations should identify a set of priority objectives for the implementation period. Examples may include:

Mapping cancer workforce roles to ACCEND levels of practice.

Increasing uptake of the ACCEND ePortfolio.

Embedding Capabilities in Practice within appraisal processes.

Aligning job descriptions and person specifications to ACCEND.

Expanding access to cancer-specific education and CPD.

Developing ACCEND Champions across workforce groups.

Strengthening workforce pipelines and succession planning arrangements.

Resource and capacity planning

Implementation plans should clearly identify the resources required to support successful delivery. Organisations should consider the workforce capacity needed to achieve implementation objectives and ensure adequate support is available. This may include:

Executive sponsorship and leadership support.

Dedicated ACCEND implementation lead time.

ACCEND Champion capacity and support.

Practice educator and workforce development resources.

Administrative and project management support.

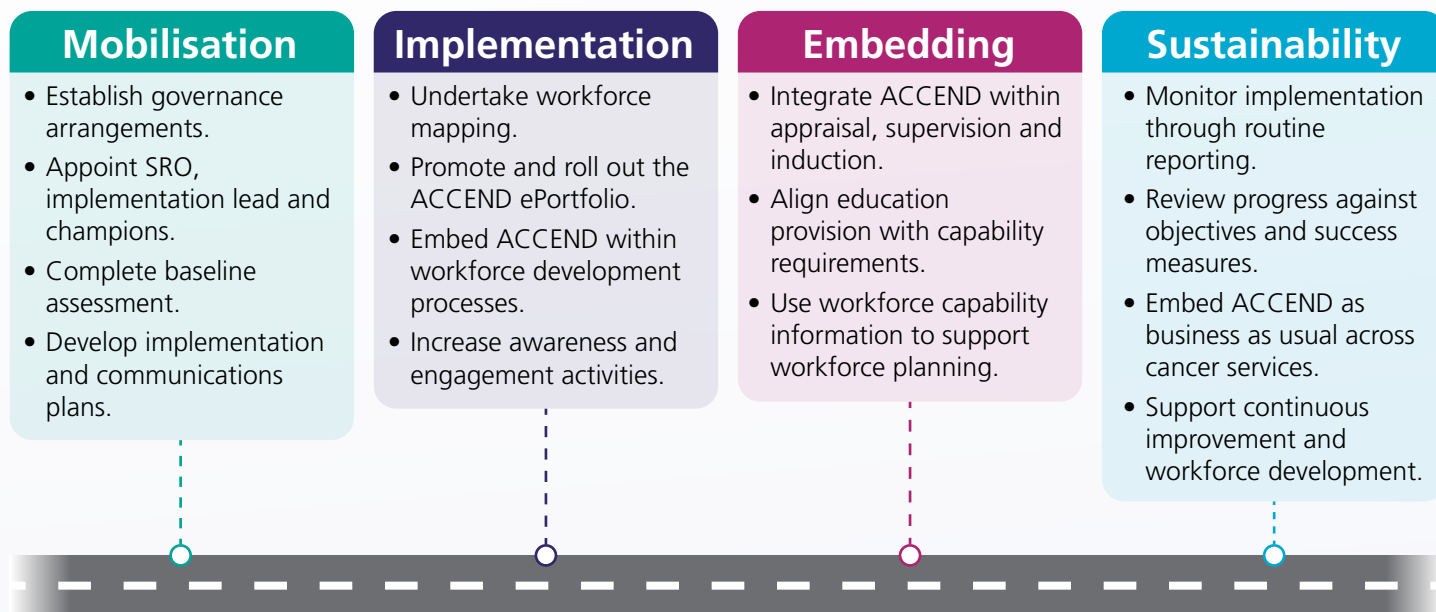
Education and training investment.

Digital infrastructure and access requirements.

Early identification of resource requirements will support realistic implementation planning and reduce barriers to adoption.

Implementation roadmap

Organisations should develop a phased implementation approach with clearly defined milestones, responsibilities and expected outcomes. Whilst local approaches may vary, implementation is likely to include the following stages:



Success measures

Organisations should define what successful implementation looks like within their local context. As a minimum, organisations should work towards achieving:



Strategic plans should be reviewed regularly through established governance arrangements to ensure implementation remains aligned to organisational priorities, workforce requirements and the evolving needs of cancer services.

3. Career Pathway Component

To embed ACCEND as the foundation for professional development across all cancer roles, Trusts should integrate the ACCEND Career Pathway and Capabilities in Practice (CiPs) into local workforce systems, job planning, recruitment processes, role design and induction.

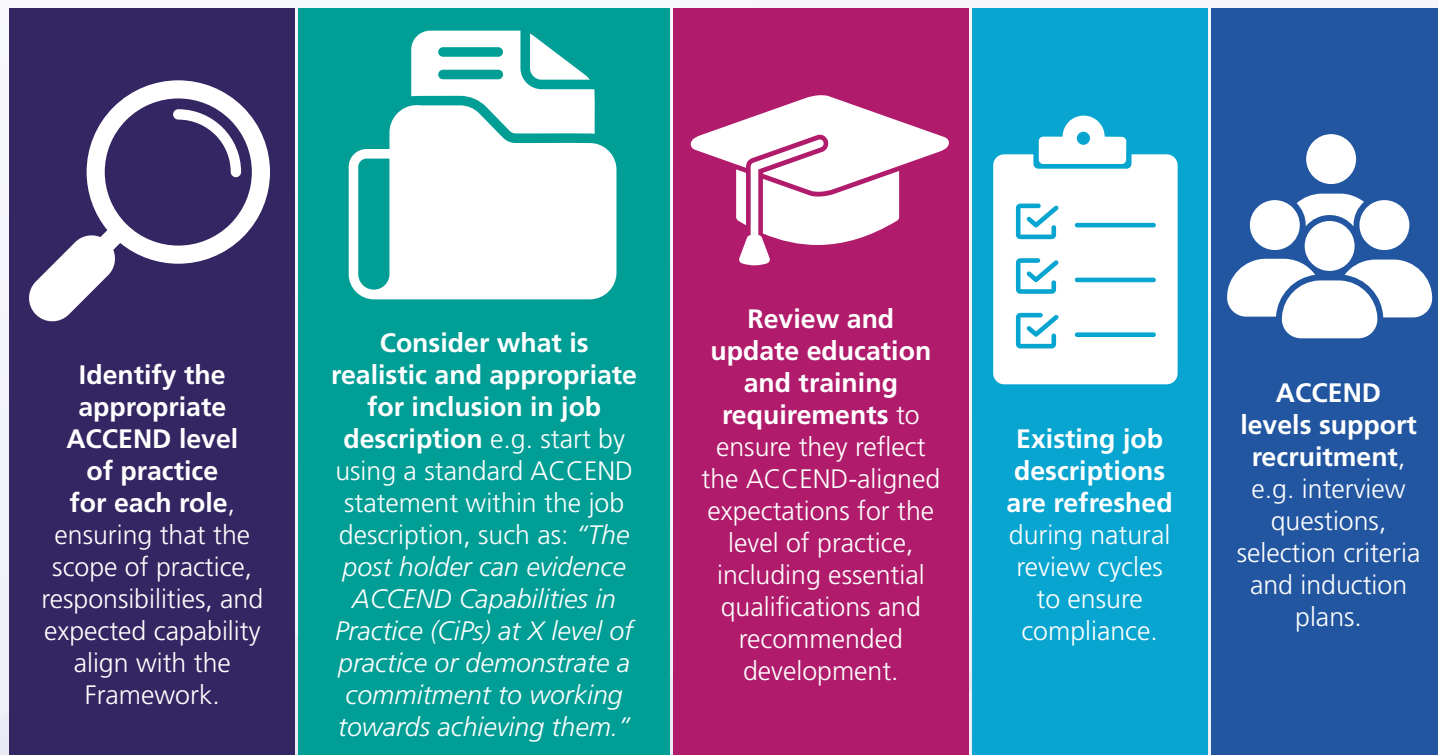
Trusts should collaborate with their ACCEND Champions, Workforce Leads, LCN colleagues and WMCA to map the relevant Workforce to ACCEND levels of practice:

- Map all existing cancer workforce roles to ACCEND levels (Support Worker, Registered Practitioner, Advanced Practice, Consultant Practice) using national ACCEND levels of practice tool
- Use CiPs as a benchmark to understand current workforce capability
- Identify gaps or areas for development to inform workforce plans
- Maintain a live and accurate picture of workforce competence

This creates a clear, structured view of the skills and capabilities within each team and identifies training or recruitment needs.

3.1 Integrating ACCEND into job descriptions and person specifications

Organisations should work with their Human Resources teams to agree a coordinated approach to review relevant job descriptions to ensure consistency with ACCEND. Consideration needs to consider how they can be incorporated into the national job profile work mandated by NHSE:



This ensures consistency in expected competence and supports culture change from the point of recruitment.

3.2 Using ACCEND in workforce modelling and planning

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, this should be systematically collated to determine workforce development priorities. This information should be used to shape requests for education funding and support submitted to the Cancer Alliance, ensuring investment is targeted where it will have the greatest impact on capability development and service quality.

ACCEND should be used to support:

- Skill mix reviews
- Gap analysis for cancer nursing, AHP, CSW and supporting roles
- Workforce pipeline planning
- Succession planning and career pathways
- Cancer service transformation projects
- Identification and prioritisation of learning and education activities

Embedding ACCEND at this level will help Trusts align workforce planning to national cancer priorities and future proof teams. ACCEND should be included within Annual Workforce Planning Cycles including:

- Annual Trust workforce planning submissions
- Education investment plans
- HR/OD financial allocation cycles
- Cancer service transformation plans

Embedding ACCEND within long term financial planning ensures long-term sustainability beyond initial rollout.

3.3 Local inductions

All staff should receive a comprehensive induction and continuous development plan to support lifelong learning, including education that supports development of ACCEND capabilities. 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.

Induction packs should include links to the ACCEND framework, guidance on how to register and use the ePortfolio, a self-assessment tool identifying the relevant ACCEND capabilities and agree a personalised learning plan with their line manager identifying ACCEND aligned development opportunities.

All staff should have access to a foundation in cancer course (e.g. eLFH Foundations of Cancer Care or Fundamentals of Cancer Care) depending on role, with consideration for how this could be integrated into staff induction.

3.4 Strengthening the cancer workforce pipeline

A sustainable cancer workforce relies on expanding the pipeline of future cancer professionals. This section outlines how Trusts should use ACCEND to attract, train, and retain students, trainees, and early career staff across multiple professions.

Student placements are a core driver of workforce supply and a key enabler of the NHSE Cancer Plan (2026). By providing high quality placements in cancer services, Trusts can improve recruitment, broaden career awareness, and build a future ready workforce.

Expectations for provider trusts



Increase Placement Opportunities in Cancer Services for pre-registered nursing and AHP students. Trusts should work with HEIs, local education teams, ACCEND steering group and the alliance forums to:

- Identify cancer pathways and services suitable for placements (Cancer wards, Chemotherapy Units, Palliative Care, Radiotherapy etc)
- Identify existing or potential mentors and enable staff to offer regular student placements
- Expand multidisciplinary placements for nursing, AHP and support worker learners
- Facilitate cross-departmental learning opportunities to ensure students experience different cancer specialities, services and patient pathways. This may include agreed rotational placements between cancer wards, chemotherapy services and radiotherapy departments.
- Showcase cancer as an attractive and supportive career option
- Support the Cancer Workforce to attend local HEI open days

Placement induction & learning experience



Trusts should ensure:

- A standardised placement induction pack aligned to ACCEND CiPs
- Students are introduced to ACCEND Champions
- Learning opportunities are clearly mapped to ACCEND competence areas
- Students have opportunities to experience MDT working, personalised care, diagnostics and treatment pathways

Resourcing for student placement expansion



Resourcing should support:

- Increased supervision capacity
- Enhanced placement coordination
- Development of placement packs and learning materials
- Uplift in educator/training roles as needed

Embedding ACCEND into early career progression



To strengthen the transition from learner to practitioner, Trusts should:

- Align preceptorship programmes with ACCEND levels and CiPs
- Encourage newly qualified staff to adopt the ACCEND ePortfolio early
- Include ACCEND expectations in local early career frameworks
- Promote cancer careers at HEI open days, recruitment events and student fairs

These actions ensure a strong, confident and supported inflow of early career cancer professionals.

4. Core Cancer Capabilities in Practice (CiPs) Component

The Core Cancer-specific Capabilities in Practice (CiPs) Framework forms the foundation of ACCEND and sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to deliver high quality cancer care across different levels of practice. The CiPs component provides a consistent approach to assessing, evidencing and developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to deliver high quality cancer care across the cancer workforce.

Capabilities are organised across levels of practice and can be applied across professional groups. Rather than focusing solely on job titles, the framework focuses on what individuals need to be able to do to deliver safe, effective and person-centred cancer care.

4.1 Embedding CiPs in practice

Implementation of the CiPs Framework should not be viewed as a one-off exercise. Organisations should embed capability assessment and development within routine workforce processes to support continuous professional development and workforce transformation. The framework should be used to identify capability gaps, inform education priorities and support the development of personalised learning plans aligned to service and workforce needs.

Trusts should work towards ensuring that all members of the non-medical cancer workforce are aware of the relevant CiPs associated with their role and level of practice and are supported to evidence their development through the ACCEND ePortfolio. This will enable both individuals and organisations to demonstrate capability, support career progression and provide assurance of workforce competence across cancer services. Organisations should:

- Map relevant cancer workforce roles to the appropriate ACCEND level of practice.
- Promote awareness and understanding of the Core Cancer-specific Capabilities in Practice.
- Embed CiPs within induction, appraisal, supervision and development processes.
- Use capability assessments to identify workforce development priorities and educational needs.
- Support staff to record and evidence their capabilities through the ACCEND ePortfolio.
- Use workforce capability data to inform service development, workforce planning and succession planning.

4.2 CiPs within workforce processes

To maximise the benefits of ACCEND, the Core Cancer-specific Capabilities in Practice (CiPs) should be embedded within existing workforce processes rather than operating as a separate activity. Integrating CiPs into routine workforce management helps ensure capability development becomes part of everyday practice and supports a consistent approach to professional development across the cancer workforce.

Trusts should utilise CiPs to support:

- Annual appraisal and performance review processes.
- Clinical supervision and reflective discussions.
- Professional development planning and personal development objectives.
- Line manager and staff development conversations.
- Career progression and development reviews.
- Identification of strengths, development needs and future career aspirations.

Embedding CiPs within these processes provides a structured approach to supporting workforce development, evidencing competence and identifying opportunities for progression.

4.3 Capability development and assessment

The CiPs Framework should be used to support both individual and organisational understanding of workforce capability. Regular capability assessment enables staff to identify areas for development, whilst providing organisations with valuable insight into workforce strengths, gaps and future development requirements.

Organisations should support:

Self-assessment against relevant ACCEND capabilities and levels of practice.

Regular capability reviews as part of appraisal and supervision processes.

Structured development planning to support progression through ACCEND levels of practice.

Access to appropriate education and development opportunities aligned to capability needs.

Line manager support to facilitate capability discussions and workforce development planning.

Training and development for managers to ensure confidence in applying the framework and supporting staff.

Capability assessment should be viewed as a developmental process that encourages continuous professional growth and supports workforce transformation.

4.4 ACCEND ePortfolio for capability management

The ACCEND ePortfolio is a key enabler for capturing, evidencing and monitoring capability development across the cancer workforce. It provides individuals with a personal digital portfolio to record learning, competencies, achievements and reflective practice throughout their career.

Organisations should encourage staff to use the ePortfolio to:

Record competencies and evidence achievement of relevant capabilities.

Document education, training and continuous professional development activities.

Undertake reflective practice and maintain a record of learning.

Support personal development planning and career progression.

Provide evidence for appraisal, revalidation and professional reviews.

At an organisational level, the ePortfolio provides valuable workforce intelligence through reporting and benchmarking functions. This data can be used to monitor workforce capability, identify development needs, support workforce planning and demonstrate progress in embedding ACCEND across cancer services.

5. Education Framework Component

The ACCEND framework brings together all education and Continuing Professional Development content together, outlining how ongoing professional development is essential to maintaining a skilled and confident cancer workforce. The national ACCEND course finder should be promoted and embedded into the identification and prioritisation of learning and education activities. This section sets out how Trusts should integrate ACCEND with the WMCA Cancer Academy to ensure consistent, equitable access to high quality learning and CPD.

5.1 Education framework principles

Organisations should ensure the necessary infrastructure exists to support the cancer education and capability development of the workforce across all levels of practice. Educational provision should be aligned to ACCEND capabilities and embedded within workforce, education and service development plans to support both organisational priorities and individual career aspirations. Organisations should work with their Workforce and Education teams to agree a coordinated approach to review relevant training and education offers to ensure consistency with ACCEND. Key principles include:

- Education aligned to ACCEND levels of practice and Core Cancer-specific Capabilities in Practice (CiPs).
- Equitable access to learning and development opportunities across all professional groups.
- Integration of education within workforce planning and service transformation activities.
- A commitment to lifelong learning, continuous professional development and career progression.
- Clear governance and oversight of workforce education and development.

5.2 Education and continuous professional development

Ongoing professional development is essential to maintaining a skilled and sustainable cancer workforce. Organisations should ensure that staff have access to learning opportunities that support the development of cancer-specific knowledge, skills and capabilities relevant to their role and level of practice.

Trusts should work with Workforce, Education and Cancer Service teams to ensure:

- Learning and development opportunities are aligned to ACCEND capabilities and levels of practice.
- Protected learning time is incorporated within job planning wherever operationally feasible.
- Staff are supported to access education that addresses identified capability gaps and career development goals.
- Internal education programmes are mapped to ACCEND capabilities and learning outcomes.
- Workforce development priorities are informed by appraisal, capability assessment and service need.

Providing a structured approach to education and professional development will support workforce retention, career progression and the delivery of high-quality cancer care.

5.3 WMCA cancer academy integration

The WMCA Cancer Academy provides a regional hub for cancer education, continuing professional development and workforce development opportunities. Organisations should actively promote and embed available Cancer Academy resources within local education and development programmes to support implementation of the ACCEND framework.

Trusts should:

Promote WMCA Cancer Academy courses, events and learning opportunities.

Incorporate Cancer Academy updates within workforce communications, induction programmes and appraisal processes.

Signpost staff to relevant learning opportunities aligned to their role, capabilities and career aspirations.

Utilise Cancer Academy resources to support local workforce development priorities.

Encourage staff engagement with regional education and networking opportunities.

Embedding WMCA Cancer Academy resources within existing education structures will help ensure equitable access to learning and support consistent workforce development across the region.

5.4 Education within induction and lifelong learning

Education should form an integral part of an individual's career journey from initial induction through to advanced and consultant level practice. Organisations should ensure that all staff are supported to develop a personalised learning plan that reflects their role, level of practice and development needs.

As part of local induction processes, organisations should:

Introduce staff to the ACCEND framework and relevant level of practice.

Provide information on the Core Cancer-specific Capabilities in Practice (CiPs) relevant to their role.

Support completion of an initial self-assessment and development plan.

Promote access to foundation cancer education and learning resources.

Introduce staff to the ACCEND ePortfolio and associated workforce development opportunities.

Staff should be encouraged to engage in lifelong learning throughout their career, utilising education opportunities to develop capabilities, support career progression and meet the evolving needs of cancer services. A structured education pathway aligned to ACCEND will help create a sustainable workforce with the skills and confidence required to deliver high quality cancer care now and in the future.

6. ACCEND ePortfolio

The ACCEND ePortfolio is a key enabler for the implementation of the ACCEND framework and supports both individual workforce development and organisational workforce planning. It provides a consistent platform for recording learning, evidencing capability development and monitoring progress across the cancer workforce. Organisations should actively promote use of the ePortfolio as part of routine workforce development processes and support staff to maintain an up-to-date portfolio throughout their career.

6.1 Individual benefits

The ACCEND ePortfolio provides individuals with a personal digital portfolio that supports professional development, career progression and lifelong learning. It enables staff to capture evidence of learning and development in one central location and supports reflection on professional practice.

The ePortfolio can be used to:

Record education, training and professional development activity.

Evidence achievement of ACCEND capabilities and levels of practice.

Maintain a digital library of certificates, competencies and development records.

Support reflective practice and continuous professional development.

Prepare for appraisal, supervision and career development discussions.

Provide evidence for professional revalidation and portfolio reviews.

Support individuals to identify and track personal development objectives.

6.2 Organisational benefits

The ePortfolio provides valuable workforce intelligence that can support workforce planning, education planning and strategic decision making. By providing access to workforce development data, organisations can better understand capability levels, identify development needs and monitor implementation of the ACCEND framework.

The ePortfolio supports:

Workforce capability reporting.

Identification of workforce development needs and capability gaps.

Benchmarking of workforce engagement and adoption.

Monitoring progress against ACCEND implementation plans.

Workforce planning and succession planning activities.

Evidence of workforce development and educational attainment.

Organisational reporting and assurance activities.

6.3 Expectations for adoption

Provider organisations should take a proactive approach to encouraging uptake and utilisation of the ACCEND ePortfolio across the cancer workforce.

Trusts should ensure:

To ensure smooth and consistent onboarding of staff to the ACCEND ePortfolio, Trusts should integrate the ePortfolio platform into existing digital systems, processes, and workforce pathways.



Relevant staff are registered on the ACCEND ePortfolio platform.



Protected time is provided to support initial registration and ongoing maintenance of portfolios (Suggestion of 0.5 days per year).



New starters are introduced to the ePortfolio during induction.



Staff are supported to regularly review and update their portfolio.



Managers utilise the ePortfolio during appraisal, supervision and development discussions.



Local guidance and support are available to promote confidence and engagement with the system.



ACCEND Champions and Implementation Leads are available to provide advice and support where required.

7. Communications and Engagement

Effective communication and engagement are essential to raising awareness, promoting adoption and embedding ACCEND as business as usual across cancer services.

Organisations should develop a communication and engagement approach that supports understanding of ACCEND and encourages participation across all workforce groups.

Communication activities should aim to:

Increase awareness and understanding of ACCEND.	Promote the benefits of career development, capability development and education.	Encourage staff engagement with the ACCEND framework and ePortfolio.
Raise awareness of education and workforce development opportunities.	Share implementation progress, successes and lessons learnt.	Support cultural change and workforce development.

7.1 Digital communications

Trusts should use existing communication channels to promote ACCEND and provide regular updates to staff.

Examples include:

Dedicated ACCEND intranet pages.	Staff newsletters and bulletins.	Digital displays and screensavers.
Microsoft Teams channels.	Workforce and professional networks.	Staff briefing communications.

7.2 Staff engagement

Engagement activities should encourage participation, provide opportunities for feedback and support workforce understanding of ACCEND.

Examples should be led locally by the named ACCEND implementation lead and ACCEND Champions including:

Awareness sessions and workshops.	Webinars and ePortfolio drop-in sessions.	Question and answer events.
Team presentations and workforce roadshows.	Launch events and awareness campaigns.	

7.3 ACCEND champions and case studies

ACCEND Champions play an important role in supporting implementation and promoting workforce engagement. Organisations should utilise Champions to share experiences, provide peer support and promote local and regional opportunities.



Showcase examples of workforce development and career progression.



Share local success stories and learning.



Celebrate achievements and recognise participation.



Promote examples of good practice across services.

7.4 Regional campaigns

Trusts should work collaboratively with the WMCA to support regional ACCEND campaigns, promote Cancer Academy opportunities and share learning across organisations to support consistent implementation across the region. A strong communications approach will support cultural change and ensure ACCEND is recognised as a core part of professional practice.

External communications should ensure:



Social media posts about ACCEND engagement.



Promotion at career fairs, student events, and HEI open days.



WMCA-aligned regional campaigns.

8. Resources and Support

Successful implementation of ACCEND requires appropriate organisational support, workforce investment and access to educational resources. Organisations should ensure ACCEND is recognised as a strategic workforce priority and embedded within workforce, education and service development plans.

8.1 Funding and Workforce Investment

Organisations should consider how workforce and education resources can support implementation of ACCEND and ongoing workforce development.

This may include:

Cancer-specific education and training.	Continuing professional development opportunities.	Practice educator support.
Workforce development initiatives.	Protected learning and development time.	Resources to support implementation and adoption.

Successful implementation of ACCEND requires clear investment, both financial and organisational. This section outlines the alliance recommendations to ensure the ACCEND framework becomes embedded into core business functions and long term workforce planning. Where ACCEND implementation gaps exist, organisations should work with the WMCA and external providers to commission or develop provision.

ACCEND is a national workforce requirement and should therefore be considered a strategic priority within Trust workforce and education budgets. Trusts must ensure adequate resources are available to support rollout and ongoing delivery.

8.2 WMCA funding

Organisations may work with WMCA to explore opportunities for additional support where implementation barriers or workforce challenges exist.

Examples may include:

Workforce transformation initiatives.	Education programme development.	Student placement expansion.
Regional collaboration projects.	Support to address workforce shortages and capability gaps.	

Trusts may request WMCA resource support where system level barriers, transformation opportunities or scaling requirements exist.

WMCA may consider proposals for:

Additional resource to accelerate local implementation.

System wide student placement growth initiatives.

Education programme bids aligned to ACCEND.

Workforce transformation pilots.

Shared workforce models or regional collaboration.

Solutions to regional workforce shortages or critical capability gaps.

Trusts should provide clear evidence of need, outcomes, and expected impact to support these requests and submit all requests via the WMCA SDF Funding request form.

Providers should work with the alliance and the Lead Cancer Nurse for the organisation to maximise regional NHSE training grants.

Trusts should consider allocating budget for:

Cancer-specific education and module fees.

ACCEND aligned CPD.

Internal training sessions, masterclasses, and workshops.

**Access to specialist learning aligned to
CiPs and WMCA Academy offers.**

9. Monitoring, Reporting and Assurance

Monitoring, reporting and assurance processes are essential to understanding progress, demonstrating impact and supporting continuous improvement. Organisations should establish arrangements to monitor implementation and provide regular assurance through existing governance structures.

9.1 Provider trust ACCEND implementation planning process

To support a consistent and proportionate approach to ACCEND implementation across the West Midlands, the WMCA has established a standardised implementation planning and reporting process. Provider Trusts are not required to develop a separate narrative ACCEND implementation plan where the WMCA ACCEND Implementation Plan and Tracker is being utilised.

The WMCA ACCEND Implementation Plan and Tracker should be adopted as the organisation's local ACCEND implementation plan and maintained as a live document throughout the implementation period. The tracker should be reviewed regularly through local governance arrangements and updated to reflect progress, milestones, risks, issues, resource requirements and completed activities. As a minimum, organisations should ensure their implementation tracker demonstrates planned activity, named leads, milestones and target dates relating to:

	Strategic planning, leadership and governance
	Stakeholder engagement and communications
	Workforce mapping and role design
	Job descriptions and person specifications
	Career pathway development
	Core cancer capabilities in practice (CiPs)
	Education and learning infrastructure
	ACCEND ePortfolio implementation
	Workforce planning and succession planning
	Evaluation, monitoring and sustainability arrangements

9.2 Reporting requirements

To support regional oversight and assurance, organisations should submit regular implementation updates to the West Midlands Cancer Alliance. Reporting should include:

	Progress against local implementation plans
	Workforce engagement and uptake
	Governance arrangements
	Implementation risks and mitigating actions
	Workforce development activity and outcomes

The alliance has produced an ACCEND implementation plan and tracker ([Appendix 3](#)). This should be used as your local Provider implementation plan to indicate current position, planned milestones, and anticipated timescales for implementation against each component of the ACCEND framework. The completed tracker will support local planning, enable progress monitoring, and provide assurance to WMCA regarding implementation across the region and should be used by the named ACCEND implementation lead. The tool brings together the actions required by Provider Trusts to fully implement ACCEND in a consistent and measurable way.

The alliance has produced a baseline and quarterly reporting form and each organisation is required to report each quarter to the alliance ([Appendix 4](#)). Trusts must monitor ACCEND implementation using a combination of quantitative KPIs and qualitative insight. This ensures a balanced understanding of progress, workforce engagement and long-term impact.

Success will be measured quarterly, with each organisation required to feedback information on the following using this regional WMCA standardised tool. Measures include:



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.

WMCA will develop a regional dashboard to support comparison, equity and consistency across all Provider Trusts. The ACCEND lead should also report progress updates to:

- Cancer workforce / education committees
- Professional boards
- Operational cancer groups
- Trust-level workforce meetings

9.3 ACCEND maturity matrix

The ACCEND Maturity Matrix provides a structured self-assessment tool to support organisational benchmarking and assurance. It enables leaders to assess progress against the core components of ACCEND, identify strengths and development opportunities, and prioritise future implementation activity.

Organisations are encouraged to review their position regularly across:

- Leadership and governance
- Career pathway framework
- Core cancer-specific capabilities in Practice (CiPs)
- Education framework
- ePortfolio adoption
- Workforce planning
- Data and reporting

Domain	Foundation	Developing	Established
Leadership and governance	ACCEND awareness within Cancer Services. No formal governance structure in place.	Executive sponsor identified and ACCEND discussed through workforce or cancer governance groups.	ACCEND embedded within workforce strategy, with regular reporting and executive oversight.
Career pathway framework	Limited understanding of cancer career pathways across services.	Priority cancer roles mapped to ACCEND career pathways.	Career pathways fully embedded and used to support recruitment, retention and succession planning.
Capability framework	Framework not yet utilised within workforce planning.	Capability assessments underway within selected teams or professions.	Capability framework routinely used to support role development, appraisals and workforce planning.
Education framework	Education provision not aligned to ACCEND.	Education opportunities mapped to ACCEND capabilities for priority roles.	Education and development programmes fully aligned to ACCEND with clear progression routes.
ePortfolio adoption	Limited or no uptake.	Staff registered and beginning to record learning and competencies.	ePortfolio embedded across services with reporting used to inform workforce development plans.
Workforce planning	Workforce planning undertaken independently of ACCEND.	ACCEND principles informing workforce reviews and role development.	ACCEND integrated into workforce, education and transformation planning.
Data and reporting	No formal reporting of ACCEND activity.	Basic monitoring of staff engagement and implementation activity.	Routine reporting informs organisational decision making and evidences progress against NHS England requirements.

The maturity matrix should be used to support ongoing improvement, inform implementation priorities and provide assurance of progress towards embedding ACCEND as business as usual across cancer services.

10. Potential Barriers and Mitigations

ACCEND Leads for each organisation should work with WMCA and ensure the following resources are available to support ACCEND implementation:

- FAQs, troubleshooting guides and local resources are available
- Staff have access to help via a dedicated Teams channel, email or intranet page
- ACCEND Champions are visible and active across service

Potential Barrier	Suggested Mitigation
Workforce capacity hinders rollout and adoption	Staged rollout, SRO support of targeted workforce groups and timeline.
Release of staff	Dedicated time planned with line manager and wider team in advance.
Digital access	Work with local IT teams to embed on intranet pages.
Competing organisational priorities	Systematic and systemic adoption of ACCEND, including Senior Leader support of prioritising ACCEND.
HR engagement	Senior Leaders promoting ACCEND at Organisational operational groups/ Boards to ensure consistent adoption.
Funding limitations	Prioritise funding for workforce/education to ACCEND framework. Explore resource support from WMCA, Charities etc.
Non-engagement	Staged rollout, peer-to-peer engagement and promotion. Line manager and team promotion at meetings and forums. ACCEND lead and ACCEND champion to support.

Appendix 1: Purpose of the ACCEND Champion Role

(Taken from the ACCEND champion handbook)

The ACCEND Champion plays a key role in supporting the successful implementation of the ACCEND framework across their organisation and the wider system. Rather than being an additional administrative responsibility, the role is centred on influencing practice, supporting colleagues, and embedding a culture of continuous workforce development within everyday clinical and operational environments.

ACCEND Champions act as local advocates for the framework, helping to translate its principles into meaningful and practical actions. They support colleagues at all levels to understand how ACCEND relates to their role, their current capabilities, and their future career aspirations. In doing so, Champions help to make career development more visible, accessible, and achievable for the workforce.

A central aspect of the role is acting as a bridge between strategic ambition and frontline reality. Champions maintain awareness of regional and national ACCEND priorities while remaining closely connected to the needs and experiences of their local teams. This enables them to provide valuable insight, highlight challenges, and share examples of good practice, ensuring that the implementation of ACCEND remains relevant, inclusive and responsive.

The role also involves working collaboratively with key stakeholders such as Lead Cancer Nurses, Practice Educators, Local Cancer Networks and ACCEND Leads within the West Midlands Cancer Alliance. Through these relationships, Champions contribute to aligning workforce development activity, supporting consistency in approach, and strengthening the overall impact of the ACCEND programme.

Importantly, ACCEND Champions are expected to lead by example. By actively engaging with the framework themselves, using tools such as the ePortfolio, and promoting reflective and developmental approaches to practice, they help to model the behaviours and mindset that ACCEND seeks to embed. In this way, the Champion role contributes not only to individual development, but to the wider transformation of workforce culture – ensuring that learning, progression and capability development are recognised as integral to delivering high-quality cancer care.

Appendix 2: Example ACCEND steering group ToR

ACCEND Steering Group – Terms of Reference	
Programme / Project	ACCEND Framework
Date Agreed	
Version No.	
Date Reviewed	
Review Due	
Author	

1. Introduction

The ACCEND Steering Group provides strategic oversight and leadership for the implementation of the ACCEND framework, ensuring a coordinated, high quality approach to cancer education, capability development, and workforce transformation across professions and settings. Bringing together clinical leaders, educators, system partners, and AHP representatives, the group works to support consistent adoption of ACCEND, address emerging challenges, share best practice, and guide regional priorities that strengthen the cancer workforce and improve patient care.

2. Objectives

The ACCEND Steering Group has been established to:

- Review each element of ACCEND Framework and plan how it can be implemented within the organisation in the agreed timeline.
- Explore how ACCEND can be communicated to different teams, acknowledging different levels of practice.
- Collaborate with WMCA Cancer Alliance (WMCA), including use of existing resources to support implementation.
- Provide a mechanism for joint action and joint decision-making for implementation issues that are best addressed collaboratively.
- Promote the objectives of ACCEND across the wider Trust.

3. Responsibilities

The Group will take joint responsibility for the implementation of ACCEND by:

- Ensuring education and workforce strategies support the ACCEND principles.
- The group will work collaboratively with colleagues from WCA to guarantee the successful integration of the framework in the Trust.
- The responsibilities are to:
- Agree plans and take action to ensure translation of the framework.
- Ensure implementation and evaluation are carried out within an agreed timeframe.
- Oversee and monitor progress in delivering the implementation of ACCEND.
- Encourage innovative thinking, new approaches and improvement in the delivery of the framework.
- Act as a forum for the facilitation and promotion of active learning.
- Create a forum whereby best practice, including quality, safety and patient involvement, can be shared.
- Provide a forum for problem solving collectively and peer support.

4. Accountability

- The ACCEND Steering Group is accountable to the X.

5. Membership

- For membership please refer to WMCA ACCEND Implementation plan.
- Members are expected to attend meetings on a regular basis. Where this is not possible the chair will review and seek alternative representation.
- Representatives from other departments and organisations will be invited to the meeting relevant to agenda items.

6. Quorum

- Meetings of the ACCEND Steering Group shall be quorate if there is representation from the chair, or their nominated deputy and X (complete as agreed)
- The ACCEND Implementation Lead is responsible for preparing the agenda and will collate and circulate papers to members. Unless otherwise agreed by the Chair, the agenda and papers should be circulated not less than 1 week before the meeting.
- The ACCEND Steering Group may be transacted in person or on Teams. At the start of each meeting taking place without all parties physically present, the Chair shall be responsible for determining that the meeting is quorate.

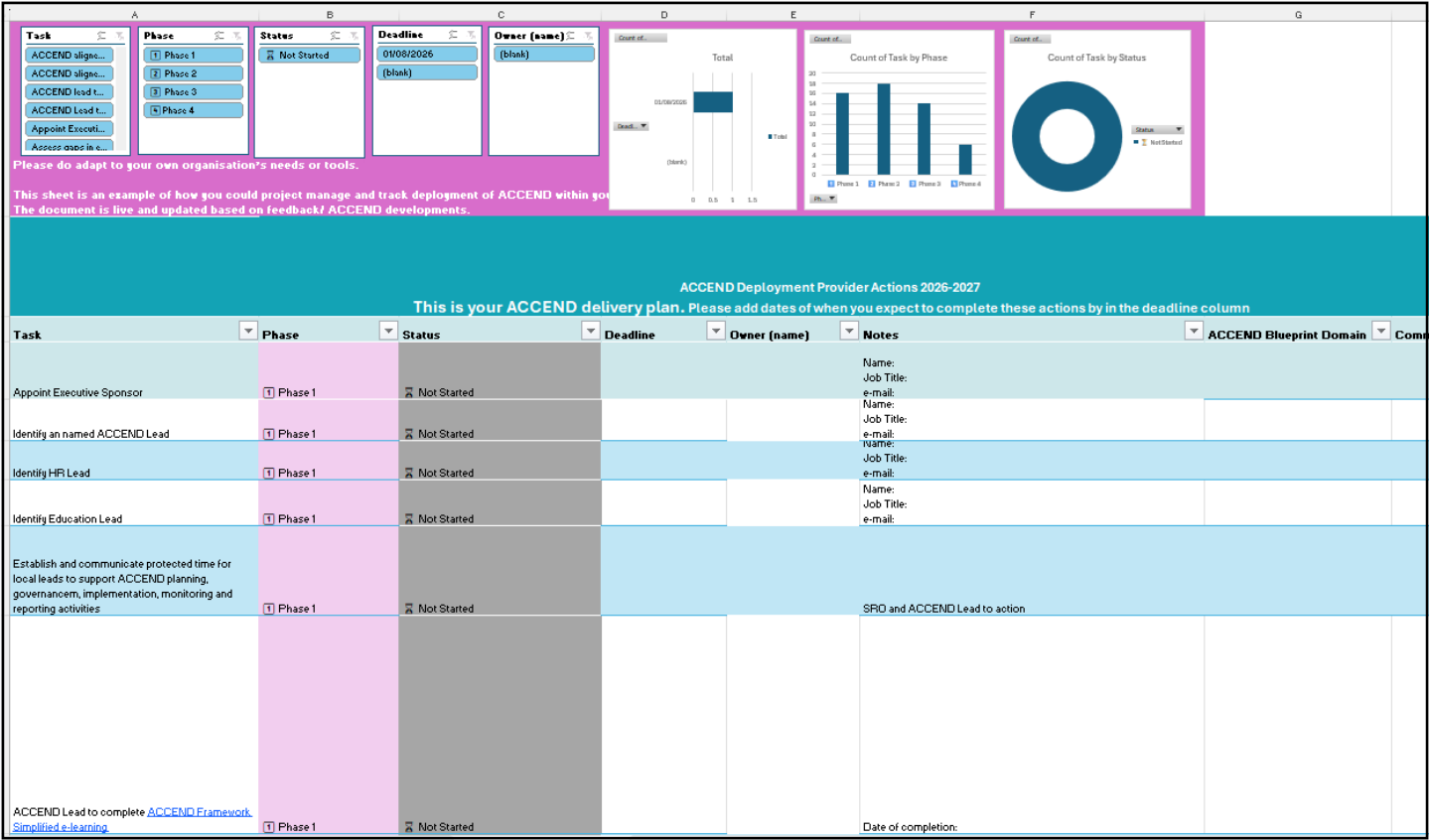
7. Frequency and duration

- Agree locally

8. Outputs and reporting

- Meeting notes and actions to be taken and circulated following each meeting.
- The Group will report to the WMCA Workforce and ACCEND System Partnership Committee and provide highlights and return agreed reporting metrics

Appendix 3: Screenshot of provider ACCEND implementation plan and tracker



Appendix 4: Screenshot of monday.com quarterly report form

ACCEND Implementation report

?

Please indicate your ACCEND rollout approach *

Do you have local ACCEND champions in place? *

Summary of engagement activity this quarter and evidence of impact *

e.g Identification and mobilisation of ACCEND champions, ACCEND engagement activities with teams this quarter, internal communications promoting ACCEND and staff stories, staff feedback of using ACCEND framework, recruitment/retention improvement

Indicate top barriers to ACCEND implementation *

Include new or ongoing barriers to local implementation (e.g Limited protected learning time/workload pressures/lack of awareness), risks or issues to planned ACCEND activity and any mitigation or escalation steps

Indicate key priorities for next quarter *

Outline your planned milestones and timelines for internal governance processes, ACCEND champion recruitment, Workforce mapping, ePortfolio rollout plans, anticipated barriers/risks.

Submit



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