

WMCA ACCEND Implementation Plan 2026/27: Executive Summary

Purpose

This implementation roadmap provides a high-level overview of the West Midlands Cancer Alliance (WMCA) ACCEND Implementation Plan and should be read alongside the full ACCEND Implementation Blueprint. It is intended to support senior leaders in understanding the strategic requirements, organisational expectations and key milestones associated with embedding ACCEND across the cancer workforce.

Strategic context

ACCEND (Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development) is an NHS England workforce priority designed to support the development, capability and progression of the non-medical cancer workforce. The framework brings together three core components: career pathways, cancer specific capabilities in practice (CiPs), and an education framework, supported through the ACCEND ePortfolio. Provider Trusts are expected to implement ACCEND as business as usual across cancer nursing, allied health professional and support worker roles throughout 2026/27.

Key actions to support ACCEND implementation

WMCA will work collaboratively with provider organisations to support implementation of ACCEND across the cancer workforce. This includes supporting organisations to establish appropriate governance arrangements, identify executive sponsorship and nominate a local ACCEND Lead to coordinate implementation across cancer nursing, allied health professional and support worker roles. Successful delivery is strengthened by visible executive sponsorship, effective local leadership and integration of ACCEND within workforce planning, education, recruitment, appraisal and service transformation activities. WMCA will support organisations to develop an ACCEND Implementation Plan that outlines local approaches to implementing ACCEND across the cancer workforce.

To support delivery of the NHSE ACCEND ambition and enable regional oversight of progress, organisations will be invited to complete and submit the WMCA ACCEND Implementation Plan and Tracker detailing how ACCEND will be implemented locally during 2026/27. This includes plans to establish governance arrangements, map the cancer workforce to ACCEND levels of practice, align education and workforce development activity, increase adoption of the ACCEND ePortfolio and embed ACCEND within key workforce processes. Organisations are encouraged to maintain the plan as a live document and provide quarterly progress updates to WMCA to support shared learning, regional assurance and NHS England reporting requirements.

What success looks like

Successful implementation will result in ACCEND becoming embedded as business as usual across cancer services. Organisations will benefit from improved workforce visibility, clearer career pathways, greater access to education and development opportunities, stronger succession planning and enhanced workforce capability. Collectively, these actions will support the development of a sustainable, skilled and confident cancer workforce capable of delivering high quality care and improved outcomes for patients across the cancer pathway.

ACCEND Implementation Plan 2026/27

Roadmap to embed the ACCEND framework across our cancer workforce



Our Aim:

To embed ACCEND as business as usual across our organisation, supporting the whole cancer workforce from prevention to end of life through development of career pathways, core capabilities, education and use of the Portfolio.



Our Vision:

A skilled, confident and supported cancer workforce delivering outstanding care for our patients and communities.

Our Implementation Roadmap

Phase 1: Mobilise	Phase 2: Build	Phase 3: Implement	Phase 4: Embed & Assure
✓ Executive Sponsor and ACCEND Lead identified ✓ ACCEND Steering Group established ✓ Baseline assessment and maturity review completed ✓ Implementation plan approved ✓ Communications and engagement plan launched ✓ ACCEND awareness and introductory sessions delivered	✓ Cancer workforce mapped to ACCEND levels of practice ✓ Priority job descriptions and person specifications identified ✓ Education offer mapped to ACCEND framework ✓ Portfolio promotion and registration activity increased ✓ Barriers and enablers reviewed and actions agreed	✓ Job descriptions and person specifications updated ✓ Career pathways and succession planning developed ✓ ACCEND integrated into appraisals and supervision ✓ Induction and CPD aligned to ACCEND ✓ Champions network active and ePortfolio in routine use ✓ Education and training gaps addressed	✓ ACCEND embedded in governance and workforce planning ✓ ePortfolio and CiPs used to inform development and career progression ✓ Impact measured and benefits realised ✓ Quarterly reporting and continuous improvement in place ✓ Success stories shared across teams and the region
Key Outcome: Strong foundations and governance in place	Key Outcome: Strong foundations and governance in place	Key Outcome: Strong foundations and governance in place	Key Outcome: Strong foundations and governance in place

Key Enablers

 Leadership & Governance Strong leadership, clear governance and dedicated capacity to drive delivery.	 Career Pathways Role clarity and progression opportunities for every member of our workforce.	 Core Capabilities (CiPs) Consistent capabilities embedded in practice, appraisals and supervision.	 Education Framework High quality learning, aligned to need and accessible to all.	 ePortfolio Digital record of learning and achievement to support development and progression.	 Engagement & Communications Active engagement, champions and effective communications drive culture and adoption.
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Success Measures ✓ 100% ACCEND Implementation Plan in place ✓ ACCEND Steering Group operational ✓ >90% cancer workforce mapped to ACCEND levels ✓ ACCEND aligned job descriptions in place ✓ Increasing uptake of Portfolio across workforce ✓ ACCEND aligned education offer implemented ✓ Quarterly reporting to WMCA and NHSE completed	Our Key Milestones PHASE 1 • Governance established • Baseline completed • Implementation plan approved PHASE 2 • Workforce mapping • Education mapping • Portfolio promotion launched PHASE 3 • Career pathways developed • Job descriptions updated • Induction & CPD aligned PHASE 4 • ACCEND embedded • Impact reviewed • Business as usual achieved	Our Risks ! Limited workforce capacity and competing priorities ! Protected time not secured for staff and leads ! Variable Portfolio engagement ! Reduction in funding or resource availability ! Change fatigue and limited leadership visibility 	Reporting Providers to maintain the ACCEND implementation plan and tracker as a live document and submit quarterly updates via the WMCA Monday.com reporting platform.  Plan, Do, Review, Improve
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Working together across the West Midlands to develop a confident, capable and valued cancer workforce that delivers the best possible outcomes for our patients.

