

WMCA ACCEND Champion Handbook

A helpful guide

Welcome to the team



Contents

Welcome from the Managing Director	2
What is West Midlands Cancer Alliance?.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Values and ways of working	5
What is an ACCEND Champion?.....	5
Purpose of the ACCEND Champion role.....	6
Your skills, experience, and qualities.....	7
Your commitment to us	8
Our commitment to you	9
ACCEND champion training and support	10
Next steps: Getting involved.....	10
Declaration of interest.....	11
Suggested reading	11

Welcome from the Managing Director

Thank you for stepping forward and volunteering to be an ACCEND for The West Midlands Cancer Alliance (WMCA). The ACCEND Champion Handbook has been developed to provide information to both existing and newly appointed Champions, to ensure that they have a guide to support their valued role supporting the Alliance to improve and transform cancer services.

Delivery of the National Cancer Plan and National Cancer Programme requires the staff to be supported to have the skills and knowledge required to deliver high quality care. Investing in our workforce now will help meet the new demands of a personalised cancer service.

I hope you find this resource useful and please provide feedback to shape future versions.

Sarah Hughes
Managing Director – West Midlands Cancer Alliance



WMCA are committed to the involvement of people affected by cancer at all levels of our work.



The involvement of people affected by cancer is crucial to the development of our services.



We will make sure that the workforce delivering Cancer care are listened to and their contribution valued.



We will provide support and appropriate training to help ACCEND Champions contribute.



What is West Midlands Cancer Alliance?

West Midlands Cancer Alliance is one of 20 alliances funded by the Government to help deliver the strategy of the independent Cancer Taskforce published in 2015.

West Midlands Cancer Alliance provides leadership to improve cancer patients' outcomes both in terms of survival and experience of care. This extends from prevention strategies, through screening and early diagnosis, delivery of evidence-based treatment, living with and beyond cancer, palliative and supportive care to end of life care.

The Cancer Alliance is seen as the vehicle for sharing best practice and innovation, identifying, and addressing variation, integrating care pathways, monitoring performance, and supporting providers to provide high-quality, cost-effective care.

The Cancer Alliance Board provides leadership to ensure successful delivery of the Alliance's programme of work, including that local plans are aligned and support Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and transformation across the West Midlands. It will function as the decision-making body in relation to the planning and delivery of the Cancer Taskforce strategy locally.

What we do

Cancer Alliances look at the care and support patient populations should expect to receive, covering the whole pathway from prevention and screening programmes to living with and beyond cancer, so we can address variations in treatment and care provision to ensure equal access and implement best practice. The Cancer Alliances are provided with funding, support and guidance to assist in their work.

West Midlands Cancer Alliance fosters productive partnerships with and between the Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), commissioners (including specialised commissioners), specialised service networks (for example radiotherapy networks), service providers (including GPs, other primary and social care providers and NHS Trusts) and patient groups, and has established robust governance to bind these partnerships together. Within the West Midlands there are fifteen service providers (hospitals).

Further information can be found on our website: [Home - West Midlands Cancer Alliance](#)



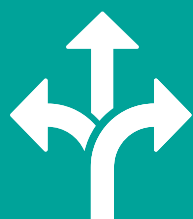
Introduction

The ACCEND (Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development) Programme provides a multiprofessional workforce framework designed to support individuals working in cancer care across all levels of practice. It enables:

- Clear career pathways
- Structured education and training opportunities
- Defined knowledge, skills and capability expectations

This handbook expands on the ACCEND Champion role, outlining expectations, development opportunities, and the support available to enable success.

ACCEND is built around three core pillars:



1. Career Pathways

Defines progressive roles across cancer care from support workers through to advanced and consultant practitioners, aligned to national workforce frameworks.



2. Core Cancer Capabilities in Practice

Outlines the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required at each level of practice, ensuring consistency and quality across services.



3. Education Framework

Links learning opportunities to capability development, enabling individuals to achieve competency through formal education (Higher Education Institute programmes), workplace learning and digital training and tools (such as the ePortfolio).

Values and ways of working

All our representatives must be able to participate without fear of discrimination based on ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, class, age, gender identity, gender presentation, language, ability or disability, asylum status, political or religious affiliation. Constructive criticism is welcome, but should be focused on the issue, not the person. Everyone is entitled to their own views and beliefs, and we expect everyone to be respectful when there are personal differences.

What is an ACCEND Champion?

An ACCEND Champion is a member of the cancer workforce who volunteers to support the local implementation and promotion of the ACCEND framework. Champions come from a range of professional backgrounds, including nursing, allied health professions, and cancer support roles, and are united by a shared commitment to developing and strengthening the cancer workforce. ACCEND champions are passionate and experienced Nurses, AHP's or Cancer Support Workers who wish to make a difference across all levels of practice within the workforce to support with the implementation of the ACCEND framework.

The role is undertaken alongside an individual's substantive post and is designed as a developmental opportunity for those who are enthusiastic about improving workforce capability, education and career progression within cancer services. ACCEND Champions play an important part in helping to translate the framework into everyday practice by supporting colleagues to engage with development opportunities and understand how ACCEND applies to their role.

An important aspect of the role is the ability and willingness to act as a local advocate for ACCEND. This may include presenting at team meetings or professional forums, contributing to awareness events, or informally promoting the framework in day-to-day practice. Champions help to build understanding, generate interest and support colleagues to take practical steps in their development.

Ultimately, ACCEND Champions contribute to creating a culture where learning, development and career progression are actively supported, visible and valued across cancer services.

About you

We are looking for individuals who are motivated and passionate about making a difference. Effective Champions are those who are approachable, supportive and able to listen to the needs and experiences of others. They are confident communicators who can share information clearly, facilitate conversations about development, and encourage engagement across teams.



Purpose of the ACCEND Champion role

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.



Your skills, experience, and qualities

ACCEND Champions bring a combination of professional experience, personal motivation and interpersonal skills that enable them to effectively support others and influence workforce development in practice.

While Champions come from a range of backgrounds, there are common attributes that support success in the role:



Communicates effectively and builds positive working relationships across a range of roles and levels, adapting style to suit different audiences and confidently presenting in both informal and formal settings, including team meetings, forums and awareness events.



Demonstrates confidence in advocating for ACCEND locally, clearly articulating its purpose, benefits and practical application to colleagues and peers.



Listens actively and responds to the needs of others, demonstrating empathy, approachability and a supportive attitude when colleagues seek guidance on development.



Encourages and motivates others, helping individuals recognise their potential and supporting them to take practical and achievable steps in their development journey.



Shows a genuine commitment to workforce development and continuous learning, actively engaging with the ACCEND framework and modelling good practice.



Uses and promotes development tools such as the ePortfolio, demonstrating reflective practice and supporting others to do the same.



Takes a proactive and self-motivated approach, identifying opportunities to raise awareness, engage colleagues and embed ACCEND within everyday practice.



Brings experience of working within cancer services (clinical, allied health or support roles), with an understanding of the workforce context and challenges.



Demonstrates awareness of education pathways and staff development processes or a willingness to develop this knowledge with support.



Has experience of supporting others, such as through mentoring, supervision, teaching or informal peer support, contributing to the facilitation and coaching aspects of the role.



Flexibility and ability to use own initiative.

In addition to these skills and experiences, ACCEND Champions are expected to embody a set of core values. They should demonstrate professional integrity, inclusivity and a commitment to equity, ensuring that development opportunities are promoted in a way that is fair and accessible to all. They should act as positive role models, helping to foster a culture where learning is encouraged, development is visible, and continuous improvement is part of everyday practice.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of an ACCEND Champion is shaped not only by what they know, but by how they engage with others. By combining credibility in practice with enthusiasm, approachability and a genuine desire to support colleagues, Champions play a key role in creating an environment where workforce development can thrive.

Your commitment to us

As an ACCEND Champion, you are expected to play an active and visible role in supporting the local implementation of the ACCEND framework. This involves promoting awareness, supporting colleagues in their development, and helping to embed ACCEND within everyday workforce practices. The role requires a proactive and collaborative approach, ensuring that the framework is not only understood, but meaningfully applied across teams and services.

In practice, this will include:



Attend meetings reliably and conduct yourself in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner always.



Acting as a local advocate for ACCEND, raising awareness through team meetings, forums, awareness events and day-to-day interactions.



Providing practical, hands-on support to colleagues, including guidance on development pathways and use of the ePortfolio.



Engaging with local and regional forums, including steering groups, Community of Practice sessions and HEI events.



Contributing to workforce discussions and agenda items, helping to embed ACCEND within appraisals, training needs analysis and development planning.



Acting as a link between frontline teams and strategic leads, sharing feedback, challenges and examples of good practice.



Demonstrating a proactive approach, identifying opportunities to integrate ACCEND into routine practice and supporting a culture of continuous learning.



Promote collaborative working across organisations and teams to help drive improvements in cancer services.



Maintain awareness of your own wellbeing, recognising when to set boundaries and avoid taking on more than you can manage.



Stay familiar with relevant national programmes and future plans, ensuring your contributions are informed and up to date.



Let WMCA know if you need additional support or training to conduct your role effectively as an ACCEND Champion.

Our commitment to you

As an ACCEND Champion, you are a key part of delivering a more skilled, confident and sustainable cancer workforce. In return for your time, enthusiasm and commitment, the West Midlands Cancer Alliance (WMCA) is dedicated to ensuring that you are supported, developed and recognised in your role.

We are committed to providing you with a structured and supportive environment that enables you to succeed. This includes access to a clear induction into the ACCEND framework, ensuring you feel confident in understanding both the programme and your role as a Champion. Ongoing development opportunities will be available to help you build your skills, including training to become an ePortfolio super user, as well as access to resources that support facilitation, communication and workforce development.

You will be part of a wider Community of Practice, connecting you with other ACCEND Champions across the region. This network provides opportunities to share learning, discuss challenges, showcase good practice and develop ideas collaboratively. Regular sessions and resources will be made available to ensure you remain informed, supported and engaged.

We will provide you with practical tools and materials to support your role locally, including guidance, presentations and communications resources that can be adapted for use within your organisation. In addition, WMCA ACCEND Leads will be available to offer advice, answer questions and support problem-solving as you embed ACCEND within your teams.

Importantly, we recognise that this role is undertaken alongside your substantive position. We will work with your organisation to encourage appropriate support, including promoting recognition of the Champion role within development and appraisal processes, and advocating for protected time where possible.

Above all, we are committed to creating an environment where you feel valued, supported and empowered. Your contribution as an ACCEND Champion is critical to the success of the programme, and we will continue to invest in your development to ensure you can make a meaningful and lasting impact.



ACCEND champion training and support

To enable you to succeed in your role, a structured programme of training and ongoing support will be provided by the West Midlands Cancer Alliance (WMCA). This is designed to build your confidence, develop your skills, and ensure you feel well equipped to support others and promote the ACCEND framework within your organisation.

Your development as an ACCEND Champion will be supported through a combination of formal learning, practical experience and peer support. From the outset, you will be given a clear introduction to the role and the ACCEND framework, followed by opportunities to build your capability over time. This includes developing the knowledge, skills and confidence required to effectively engage colleagues, support workforce development, and act as a local advocate.

In practice, this support includes:



A structured induction programme, introducing the ACCEND framework, your role as a Champion, and the priorities of WMCA



Training to become an ePortfolio Super User, enabling you to confidently support colleagues in setting up, navigating and using the platform



Access to guidance, resources and toolkits, including presentations, communications materials and practical support tools for use in local settings



Participation in the regional Community of Practice, providing opportunities to connect with other Champions, share learning, and develop ideas collaboratively



Ongoing updates and development opportunities, including webinars, workshops and access to best practice examples



Support and guidance from WMCA ACCEND Leads, offering advice, problem-solving support and direction where needed



Opportunities to build wider skills in areas such as facilitation, leadership, education and quality improvement, supporting your personal and professional development

Next steps: Getting involved

If you are interested in becoming an ACCEND Champion, there are a few simple steps to help you get started and ensure you are supported in the role.

Before expressing interest formally, you should discuss the opportunity with your Line Manager. This conversation provides an opportunity to explore how the role aligns with your current responsibilities and professional development goals, and to ensure there is mutual understanding of the expectations and time commitment involved.

As the ACCEND Champion role is undertaken alongside your substantive post, it is important that you and your Line Manager agree an appropriate level of support, including consideration of time to attend key meetings, training, and engagement activities. Champions are typically asked to commit to the role for an initial period of approximately 12 months, allowing sufficient time to develop confidence, build relationships and make a meaningful impact.

Once agreed, you can formally express your interest by contacting your local ACCEND Lead if known and WMCA representative, who will guide you through the next steps, including enrolment onto the induction programme and access to relevant training and resources.

In summary, the key steps are:

- Discuss the ACCEND Champion role with your Line Manager
- Agree support and commitment, including a 12-month participation period
- Confirm your interest with your local ACCEND Lead
- Confirm your interest by contacting the WMCA at rwh-tr.wmca-academy@nhs.net
- Begin your induction and development as an ACCEND Champion

Declaration of interest

It is possible that there is a conflict of interest. The Cancer Alliance must record this. A QR code will be included in the agenda and at the beginning of every meeting. Members of the group will be asked to identify if there is a Conflict of Interest. The QR code takes the individual to the Form to complete. For more information about Conflict of Interest, please contact the generic email address:

rwh-tr.wmcanceralliance@nhs.net

Suggested reading

[National Cancer Plan for England February 2026](#)

[ACCEND Framework](#)





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