

Workforce Development Training Grants applications for 2025

Grants are available to help individual performers cover course and placement costs. These grants are funded by Birmingham, Solihull & Black Country LOCs through NHS Health Education as part of a Workforce Development Project. Eligible courses may change to meet the needs of local NHS services.

Criteria for allocation of grants

Grant awards are evaluated by an LOC WDP panel and given based on:

- A supporting statement of no more than 100 words describing how the course will enable you to:
 - Enhance your role in a commissioned community pathway.
 - Benefit the local community (Black Country wide).
 - Contribute to the development of the local professional workforce.
- The geographical location of your practice to meet the needs of the local population.
- The amount of working time provided in primary care services to benefit the community, with priority given to those working the most in primary care.
- Ensuring a balanced distribution of an upskilled workforce across the region.
- The potential impact of these qualifications on influencing the ICB to commission new or improved local services.
- Any specific local needs.

Higher Qualification Courses considered for grants and the amount of grant of are:

100% of course fees.

- Professional Certificate in Glaucoma (Prof Cert Glauc)
- Professional Certificate in Low Vision (Prof Cert LV)
- Professional Certificate in Paediatric Eye Care (Prof Cert Paed Eye Care).

50% of course fees

- Professional Certificate in Medical Retina (Prof Cert Med Ret) -
- ABDO Professional Certificate in Paediatric Eyecare
- Independent Prescribing – Course & Placement

Important

- Applications must be submitted via the online application form at <https://forms.office.com/r/Ln02Heu6m3>.
- Only one application per performer will be considered.
- Courses or placements must commence in 2025 or Spring 2026.
- Previous recipients of grants are entitled to apply for further qualifications.
- Grants may be paid as 50% of fees in advance and any balance paid after successful completion of the course
- When course costs vary between providers for the same qualification, your award may be set as the course fees of the lowest price provider.
- Applicants are responsible for their own applications to their university or placement of choice.
- Grants are only paid once suitable proof of acceptance on a course and payment of fees has been provided.
- Balance of fees is only paid upon proof of course completion and qualification award.
- Awards decisions are at the sole discretion of the elected LOC WDP panel.
- From time-to-time higher grant awards may be made to ensure a sufficient uptake of specific skills required across the region.

Next Steps:

- Research and select your course.
- Apply for the grant by:
 - Reading the Terms and Conditions provided here.
 - Completing and submitting the online application form at <https://forms.office.com/r/Ln02Heu6m3>.
- Apply for the course directly with the provider.
- Upon receiving confirmation that your grant application is successful, sign and return the Terms and Conditions.
- Provide proof of payment for your course/placement fees.
- The grant will be paid directly into your nominated bank account.



GRANT APPLICATION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

General

1. The Grant is provided by the Birmingham, Black Country & Solihull LOCs (The LOCs) as full or part payment towards a locally approved higher professional qualification course (The Course).
2. The decision of the LOCs on the allocation of grants is final, and no appeals will be permitted.
3. The Applicant shall utilize the Grant in a lawful manner for the activities or purposes indicated in their application and for no other activities or purposes.
4. The Applicant must ensure that, at all times while this Grant Agreement is in force, they are correctly registered with the General Optical Council and have appropriate professional insurance in place.
5. The Applicant is responsible for their own applications to the Course Provider and ensuring they meet the course requirements, including, where required, letters of support from Ophthalmologists or placement places.
6. The Applicant must provide evidence of a sponsoring GOS Contractor practice within the LOCs' geographic region that can ensure a supportive work environment enabling the applicant to have the time and resources to complete the course.
7. The Applicant shall not use the Grant to pay for any spending commitments other than the Course Fees for the selected course.
8. The Applicant must provide details of other grant assistance received, or which may be received, in respect of this Course from other organizations.
9. Where actual course costs incurred are less than the amount of Grant offered, the Applicant will return any unspent amount to The LOCs
10. The LOCs may reduce, suspend or withhold Grant payment, or require all or part of the Grant to be repaid in any of the following circumstances:
 - a) The Applicant fails to meet any of these terms and conditions.
 - b) The Grant has not been used for the purposes for which it was given.
 - c) There is unsatisfactory progress towards completing the Course.
 - d) The application form was completed inaccurately or gave false or misleading information.
 - e) Any financial irregularities or fraud on the part of the Applicant has been suspected or identified and insufficient measures are being taken to investigate and resolve such irregularities/fraud.
 - f) It is likely that the Applicant will have to stop their professional practice as an Optometrist.
 - g) The Applicant receives duplicate funding from another source for the same or any part of the course fees.
 - h) The Applicant becomes legally ineligible to hold the Grant.
 - i) There are any other reasons why continuing to fund the Course would be undesirable.
 - j) The applicant fails to commence the course with twelve months of the initial offer of a grant.

Where The LOCs require the Applicant to repay any amount of the Grant, it must repay the amount concerned in full within 28 working days of receiving the demand for repayment.

11. The LOCs require the Applicant to indemnify them against all claims, costs or proceedings arising from or in connection with the Applicant's participation on the Course or failure to comply with these terms and conditions.
12. The Applicant shall ensure that they comply with their professional and legal obligations.
13. The Applicant must seek the prior written consent of The LOCs in respect of any change to their Course.
14. The Applicant must notify The LOCs in writing of any events which might adversely affect the completion of the Course or any part thereof.
15. The Applicant recognises that the LOCs accepts no liability arising out of the Course participation, including, for the avoidance of doubt, the use of the grant or from the withdrawal of the Grant.
16. If the Course involves work with children, young people or vulnerable adults ("vulnerable people"), the Applicant shall take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.
17. The Applicant shall supply reports on their progress on the course within 28 days of any such written request for such information from The LOCs



**Birmingham, Black Country & Solihull LOCs
Workforce Development Project**

18. The Applicant will acknowledge the support of LOCs in any written papers, publications (including all forms of electronic communication) reports and in any publicity arising from participation on the course.
19. The Applicant consents to sharing their public information on the GOC register with The LOCs and accredited Education Providers for grant administration and compliance with these Terms and Conditions.
20. The Applicant consents to any publicity about The Course and the Project as the LOCs may from time-to-time issue.
21. The Applicant confirms that their principal geographic area of practice is within the geographical boundaries of The LOC's and that this will be maintained during the duration of the Course.
22. The Applicant, by their attainment of this qualification, will use their newly acquired skills for the benefit of their local population and will cooperate with the LOCs in promoting these benefits.
23. The Applicant will ensure that it accounts for all VAT, taxation and any similar liabilities in relation to the Grant for the project. The LOCs accepts no liability for such expenses over and above the agreed Grant.
24. The Applicant is responsible for any and all other course expenses that may be incurred by them (e.g. exam fees).
25. The Applicant will maintain accurate records on their progress on the Course including any activities and outputs achieved. These must be available for inspection by the LOCs at any reasonable time.
26. In the event that satisfactory performance in delivering the outcomes, milestones and key performance indicators of the course is not achieved the LOCs may reduce, suspend or withhold grant payment or require all or part of the Grant to be repaid.
27. The Applicant shall retain all financial and other records showing how the Grant has been used for at least 7 years.
28. The applicant will provide support and assistance to The LOCs in compiling communications to its members regarding The LOCs' support of the application.
29. The applicant will provide evidence of their course completion for The LOCs

Acceptance of LOCs Terms and Conditions

To accept these terms and conditions and apply for the grant please sign in the space provided below and return by email to: Charles Barlow (charles.barlow@nhs.net) for the LOCs.

I confirm I have been accepted on the approved course and apply for the grant specified.

Signed by the applicant:.....

Name (CAPITALS):.....

Sponsoring Practice:

Sponsor's Signature:

Date:.....

Banking Information for Payment of Grant

Account in the Name of :.....

Account Number:

Bank: Sort Code: