



NATIONAL FINANCE TALENT POOL

BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

NHS Future-Focused Finance (FFF) has a history of developing a National Talent Pool for those who are ready now or in the very near future to take on Finance Director or equivalent level roles in the NHS. The aim of the National Talent Pool is to build a diverse pool of talent that improves the number and quality of applicants for future finance leadership vacancies.

Regional Talent Boards (RTBs) were established in 2017 across the NHS in England, in order to enable a high quality, sustainable approach to identify, develop, support and deploy leaders, at all levels, to produce a compassionate, inclusive leadership culture. Five Regional Talent Boards are now in place operating under the brand of Aspire Together and their early focus is to develop talent pools of 'ready now aspirant Directors' to fill Board level vacancies in the NHS.

A New Collaborative Approach

FFF and the Aspire Together RTBs are pleased to announce a combined approach for the 2020 intake of the National Finance Talent Pool.

Early engagement with stakeholders has indicated that collaboration is needed between FFF and RTBs in order to enhance and the existing FFF offer and align this to the broader formation of talent pools by RTBs. The leadership teams of both FFF and RTBs are committed to the collaboration and can see the overall benefits for all stakeholders and ultimately the NHS workforce and the public.

The information included in this document has been designed to inform and provide guidance for those thinking about applying for the scheme and those wanting to nominate others on to it. It will also provide details on the application and interview process and details of what will be available to you if you are selected on to the Talent Pool.

PURPOSE

Diverse teams make better business decisions, and the NHS 'top tiers' tend to be unrepresentative of the communities we serve. We aim to address this deficit by looking wider and deeper for all potential talent, with a particular focus on staff with protected characteristics who are under-represented at present across the region.

The National Finance Talent Pool is made up of Finance Leaders across England who are ready now, or in the very near future, to take on Finance Director, Chief Finance Officer or equivalent level roles in the NHS.

Supported by the Finance Leadership Council, the board that sets the strategic direction for Finance Skills Development in the NHS in England and NHS England and NHS Improvement Regional Finance Directors,

Our aim is to build a diverse pool of talent that improves the number and quality of applicants for finance leadership roles that reflect the populations that we serve.

Selection into the National Finance Talent Pool is through a competitive application and interview process designed to reflect the FD/CFO application procedure.

Over time it is envisaged that this will be the source of most of our executive talent and will become the default method by which organisations make their senior appointments. It is recognised that organisations will sometimes need to recruit externally, however as the talent pool becomes bigger and the process is more trusted the need for this will reduce. The Talent Pool will be a resource for organisations to access individuals identified through this process for director vacancies, and this should reduce the cost and time to hire for these positions.

IS IT FOR ME?

If you are considering applying to join the National Finance Talent Pool, then you need to be able to answer yes to the following questions:

- I aspire to be a finance director or chief finance officer in England and consider myself ready now, or in the very near future, to reach board level or equivalent level roles in the NHS.
- I am currently operating at deputy director level (or equivalent), have completed a recognised leadership development qualification (e.g. NHS Leadership Academy Nye Bevan Programme, an MBA, HFMA qualification or SDN/FFF senior talent development programme) and can meet the required selection criteria.
- I have the active support of my Director of Finance/Chief Finance Officer, or my Chief Executive/Accountable Officer.

Please note

- Candidates should be aware that this initiative is designed to identify, assess and then deploy ready now aspirant directors as well as offering development opportunities.
- Applying for the Talent Pool should be viewed as a similar process as to applying for a new role and requires a considerable amount of preparation (c.1 day).
- Candidates currently working at 'one below' board (provider or commissioner), or equivalent level for candidates currently working in Arm's Length Bodies, should be operating at Band 9 / ESM1 or equivalent.

WHAT WILL I GAIN?

Following the application and interview process, successful candidates will be enrolled onto the National Finance Talent Pool for a 2-year period. Membership to the pool gives you fully funded access to:

- Individually tailored support and development to identify and apply for suitable finance director and chief finance officer roles and support to produce a personal development plan.
- In-depth understanding of a board recruitment process including CV writing, interviewing and presentation skills, giving you the best chance of being successful in future applications.
- Three one-on-one sessions with an executive coach.
- A three-day residential assessment centre on June 10th – 12th in Birmingham which will provide you with:
 - a range of personal development masterclasses;
 - opportunities to experience at first-hand how an NHS Board operates;
 - networking opportunities with peers, senior leaders and regional finance directors;
 - time to reflect on what helps finance leaders to build and maintain resilience when under pressure in a corporate director role, including managing work/home balance.
- Action learning sets and national masterclasses.
- Membership to the Aspire Together Regional Talent Board pools of aspirant Directors – for more information visit <https://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/aspiretogether/>

OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

We have an ambition to increase the diversity of leaders within our talent pools, therefore nominations can either be initiated through local talent profiling exercises within your organisation or by you identifying yourself as a ready now, or in the near future, Director of Finance. This is important as research shows that relying only on organisations and senior leaders identifying talent can often disadvantage those with protected characteristics or from a less obvious background, which can over time reduce the diversity of individuals in the talent pool. In both methods of application, you will need to:

1. Ensure that the candidate / yourself is ready now, or in the very near future, to reach board level or equivalent level roles in the NHS.
2. Have a talent conversation and review the Success Profile and assess your candidates / your own skills and abilities against the characteristics outlines in the NHS Executive Director Success Profile
3. Identify a Nominated Senior Leader who can complete pre-work in preparation for your interview if selected. Your Nominated Senior Leader will ideally be the FD/CFO, CEO/AO or another board/governing body director within your organisation. Where this support is not forthcoming you can identify an alternative Nominated Senior Leader – please contact futurefocusedfinance@nhs.net to discuss the options.
4. Complete equal opportunities monitoring form

5. Obtain a factual reference from your organisation (typically the FD/ CFO / CEOs / AOs / Regional Directors) that the individual is currently working at 'one below' board or equivalent level and not involved in any ongoing performance, grievance or disciplinary discussions. This may be provided by your Nominated Senior Leader where suitable.
6. Ensure that you can make one of the interview dates in your region and the residential development centre on June 10th – 12th in Birmingham.
7. Submit all information to Futurefocusedfinance@nhs.net by COP on January 6th

OVERVIEW OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS – POTENTIAL SHORTLIST, NOMINATED SENIOR LEADERS AND INTERVIEW

- In the event of oversubscription to the Finance Leaders National Talent Pool a shortlisting process may be used to select a limited number of applications to an interview based upon the information supplied in the application form – those not shortlisted will still be offered the opportunity to attend an assessment centre to join their Aspire Together regional talent pools.
- For those shortlisted the Nominated Senior Leader will be asked to complete pre-work to support your application and provide evidence to the interview process.
- Invites to an interview will be as follows:
 - London – 5 & 6 March
 - North West – 12 & 13 March
 - North East and Yorkshire – 12&13 March
 - South East – 17 & 18 March
 - East of England – 17 &18 March
 - South West – 26 &27 March
 - Midlands – 26 & 27 March
- Candidates attend a 2-hour assessment composing of a competency-based interview and a situational judgement interview- both assess readiness against the NHS Executive Director Success Profile.
- The candidate's readiness is assessed at the interview by the Regional Finance Director, a CEO/AO/Chair and a qualified HR/OD practitioner.
- Those with an outcome of 'ready now' or highest state of 'ready soon' enter the Finance Leaders National Talent Pool – those with an outcome of 'ready later' or not the highest state of 'ready soon' will be referred to the support available through their Aspire Together regional talent pools and FFF Finance Leaders Network.

NHS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUCCESS PROFILES

The Success Profile defines the optimal characteristics that drive success in an executive director level role in the NHS. It is used to support talent management conversations and assess if candidate's readiness to join the National Finance Talent Pool.

We do not expect you to have all of the competencies and experiences listed in the Success Profile and understand that we need different styles and types of leadership. We'll be looking for those who understand the board / governing body director role, have a good range of experience and demonstrate a range of strengths in the competencies. The full success profile [can be found here](#).

Competencies		Experiences
<p>The high performing Executive Directors of today are supported by the following competencies ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Drives for better outcomes▪ Takes people with them▪ Speaks up▪ Brings compassion and humility▪ Brings a learning mindset	<p>The high performing Executive Directors of tomorrow will be supported by the following competencies....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Acts from a system's mindset▪ Finds new solutions▪ Develops people▪ Creates a culture of inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Driving change and delivering tangible results▪ Engaging external stakeholders▪ Breadth of experience▪ Managed budgets▪ Managing poor performance▪ Leading leaders and engaging the workforce▪ Building a more inclusive and compassionate culture
Traits		Drivers
<p>The high performing Executive Directors of today are supported by the following traits ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Decisive and action orientated▪ Influence▪ Flexible	<p>The high performing Executive Directors of tomorrow will be supported by the following traits....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Supportive and consultative▪ Creative problem solvers▪ Resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Demonstrates an understanding of what the role entails in terms of responsibility, risk and impact.▪ Expresses a desire to learn, grow, do interesting work, and stretch oneself.▪ Sense of purpose beyond self

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

Webinar: for organisations

Date: 13 Nov 2019

Time: 12:00 – 1:30pm

[Click here to register.](#)

Webinar: for candidates

Date: 8 Nov 2019

Time: 12:00 – 1:30 pm

[Click here to register.](#)

Further information about the process can be found on the [FFF website here](#).

Please contact futurefocusedfinance@nhs.net if you have any queries with the process.