



FUTURE-FOCUSED FINANCE
IS DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE
THE LAUNCH OF ITS
**ACCREDITATION
PROCESS**



The process will
allow NHS finance
departments to
demonstrate and
gain recognition for
their **commitment to
the development of
finance skills across
their workforce.**

The Future-Focused Finance (FFF) accreditation system is designed to allow the NHS Finance Leadership Council (FLC) to give due recognition to those NHS organisations that have the very best finance skills development culture and practices in place. It is based on North West Skills Development's successful and long-standing Towards Excellence accreditation process.

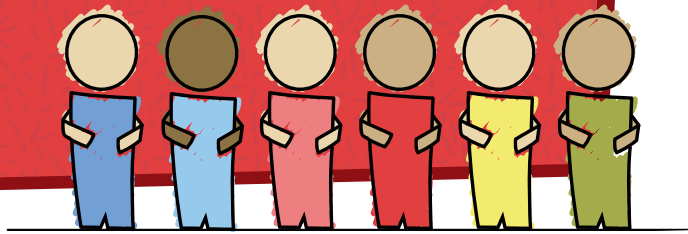
There are three levels within the process. They reflect the continuous development of the organisation's finance function, with level three recognising the highest standards of financial competence and commitment to the skills development of the finance team. Level 1 will be achieved through a process of self-assessment with verification from the organisation's audit committee. Levels 2 & 3 will require peer-assessment by colleagues from another NHS organisation.

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE

The organisation is fully signed up to Future-Focused Finance's aim of ensuring that everyone connected with NHS Finance can influence decision making in support of high quality patient services. This is demonstrated by adherence to each of the criteria in the accreditation document.

GUIDANCE

- Organisations should collate an evidence proforma which should include a brief statement against each criterion of the evidence being provided to support the application for accreditation at the appropriate level. This does not need to go into extensive detail, but should clearly demonstrate that the criterion has been met. Blank proformas for this purpose can be downloaded from the FFF website.
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- For level 1 accreditation, the organisation should submit its completed evidence proforma to the FFF team on futurefocusedfinance@nhs.net along with statements from the finance director / chief finance officer and audit committee chair confirming that all the relevant criteria are achieved by the organisation. The FFF team will review a sample of the submissions to ensure that the relevant standards are being maintained. There is no requirement to submit the evidence itself, though the FFF team may ask for certain items to be submitted to verify achievement of the level.
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- For level 2 and level 3 accreditations, organisations should notify the FFF team that



they wish to be accredited and the team will work with FSD colleagues, to allocate an assessor to visit the organisation and to review the evidence with them. Accreditation will be awarded following completion of a review and the submission of a brief report by the assessor to the FFF team.

- The role of the assessor is pivotal to the accreditation process. Initially FFF will work with colleagues from FSD NW to ensure that the knowledge and experience gained through their operation of the Towards Excellence scheme is shared across the wider NHS. A series of knowledge sharing events will be arranged in early 2017 at which interested parties will be introduced to the role of the assessor. To ensure a supply of assessors all organisations applying for Level 3 accreditation will be required to provide a member of their finance team to take on the role.
- Accreditation will expire after 3 years. Organisations will be expected to maintain continuous accreditation, so should plan for reassessment as the expiry date approaches. However, should expiry occur, a timeframe will be agreed

for organisations to submit for re-accreditation, within a period of no longer than 12 months. Organisations that do not become re-accredited during this period will no longer be accredited and will be expected to restart at Level 1.

- Smaller organisations – especially CCGs – are encouraged to form into consortia to seek accreditation as it is recognised that some of the criteria may be difficult to achieve in organisations with few staff.
- The Finance Leadership Council (FLC) will formally sign-off the FFF team's recommendation of which organisations should be accredited and at what level at its regular meetings. Organisations will be informed in the week following the FLC meeting at which they are accredited and they will be sent a certificate to acknowledge their status.
- It is recommended that, wherever possible, in order to celebrate organisations' successes, certificates of accreditation should be formally presented at a suitable local meeting (e.g. finance directors' communication meeting, FSD or HFMA branch conference, etc.).

THE PROCESS

LEVEL 1

Level 1 will be achieved through a process of **self-assessment** with verification from the organisation's audit committee.

Levels 2 & 3 will require **peer-assessment** by another NHS body.

LEVEL 2 & 3

The FFF team will work with colleagues in the North West to roll out training to support the peer assessment process.

The team will also issue guidance on how the process will work and how completed assessments should be submitted for approval.

Each accreditation will last for a period of three years and will then require reaccreditation.

For further details please visit:

WWW.FUTUREFOCUSEDFINANCE.NHS.UK

Or contact the FFF team on
futurefocusedfinance@nhs.net



GREAT
PLACE TO
WORK