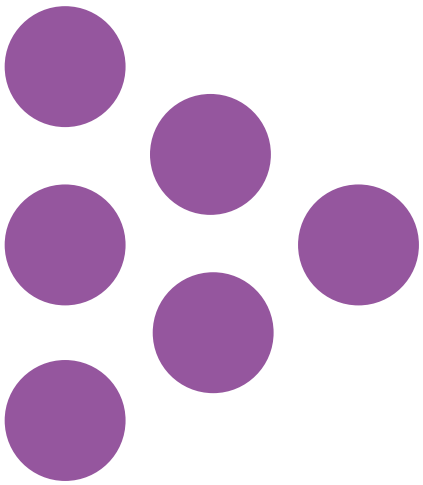
Coder Recruitment Information

2026 key stage 1 technical pre-test, key stage 2 technical pre-test and key stage 2 item validation trial

National Foundation for Education Research (NFER)



V1.0 **24 November 2025**

1 Introduction

In 2026, NFER will be coordinating the delivery of three separate coding exercises on behalf of the Standards and Testing Agency (STA):

- Key Stage 1 technical pre-test (KS1 TPT) in Mathematics
- Key Stage 2 technical pre-test (KS2 TPT) anchor in English reading, GPS and mathematics
- Key Stage 2 technical pre-test (KS2 TPT) main in English reading, GPS and mathematics
- Key Stage 2 item validation trial (KS2 IVT) in English reading.

The KS1 TPT and KS2 TPT coding exercises will be onscreen and home-based, following a day of residential training. The KS2 IVT coding exercise will be in-person, at a venue to be confirmed.

One day of pre-coding for both KS1 TPT and KS2 TPT will be in person, with all the remainder undertaken remotely onscreen.

This document outlines:

- team structures for 2026 trials
- coding models
- roles and responsibilities
- coder selection criteria
- coding activity dates
- payment rates

2 Team structures for 2026 trials

For each coding exercise, the following positions are available:

Trial	Subject	Leads	Deputies	Coders
KS1 TPT	Mathematics	5	5	25
KS2 TPT Anchor	English reading	1	1	13
KS2 TPT Anchor	GPS*	1	1	13
KS2 TPT Anchor	Mathematics*	3	3	**24**
KS2 TPT Main	English reading	3	6	39
KS2 TPT Main	GPS	4	4	68
KS2 TPT Main	Mathematics	5	4	50

*If you apply for KS2 TPT mathematics or GPS anchors, you must also be available during the main coding period and will be contracted on the basis that you can participate in both coding exercises.

The nature of the KS2 IVT means that only individuals with prior-experience of coding can undertake the work – we call these individuals “senior coders”:

KS2 IVT	Senior Coders
English reading	12

3 Roles and responsibilities

The key roles and responsibilities can be found below. A more detailed job specification will be provided when contracted.

Coder roles and responsibilities
Be available for all required dates specified
Adhere to security requirements
Professional conduct at all times and in a manner suitable to represent STA, DfE and NFER
Adhere to the NFER Code of Conduct (including Values and Behaviours for Associates)
Ensure clear and consistent verbal and written communication with NFER and supervisory coder prior to and throughout the coding period
Maintain regular contact with supervisory coder during coding period
Adhere to deadlines set by NFER
Accurately apply coding frames to test question responses
Actively engage in discussions with team members, team leaders, NFER and STA
Undertake training and clarify any areas of uncertainty
Complete a standardisation exercise prior to starting coding and seeding during coding
Seek and implement feedback on coding performance ensuring quality is maintained
Engage in verbal evaluations of test question and coding frame performance with team leaders and STA
Raise appropriate exemplars
On completion of coding, provide feedback on the coding exercise

Supervisory coder roles and responsibilities
Be available for all required dates specified
Adhere to security requirements
Professional conduct at all times and in a manner suitable to represent STA, DfE and NFER
Adhere to the NFER Code of Conduct (including Values and Behaviours for Associates)
Ensure clear and consistent communication with STA and NFER throughout the coding period

Supervisory coder roles and responsibilities
Maintain regular contact with team of coders during coding period
Critically assess coding frames and test questions
Construct training and quality assurance materials
Lead a coding team and provide high-quality training
Implement quality assurance processes
Support coding team and resolve queries, escalating where appropriate, including any clarification of coding points
Take responsibility for driving progress and ensure deadlines are met
Provide regular verbal and written reports on the performance of the coding team throughout the coding period, and immediately report concerns around under-performance
Ensure completion of quality assurance documentation each day as appropriate
Evaluate the performance of test questions and coding frames in written reports
Assist STA Test Development Researchers (TDRs) in the continuing development of coding frames
Gather exemplars as determined by TDRs
Work with other supervisory coders to ensure consistency of training for the same/similar item types
Complete item-level feedback report
Feedback on the performance of the coding team

Senior coder roles and responsibilities
Be available for all required dates specified
Adhere to security requirements
Professional conduct at all times and in a manner suitable to represent STA, DfE and NFER
Adhere to the NFER Code of Conduct (including Values and Behaviours for Associates)
Ensure clear and consistent communication with STA and NFER throughout the coding period
Maintain regular contact with STA Test Development Researchers (TDRs) during coding period

Senior coder roles and responsibilities
Adhere to deadlines set by NFER and TDRs
Accurately apply coding frames to test question responses
Actively engage in discussions with team members, NFER and STA
Engage in verbal evaluations of test question and coding frame performance with the coding team and STA TDRs
Undertake training and clarify any areas of uncertainty
Assist TDRs in the continuing development of coding frames
Seek and implement feedback on coding performance ensuring quality is maintained
Complete coding feedback log and raise any appropriate exemplars
On completion of coding, provide feedback on the coding exercise

4 Coder selection criteria

Please find below details of the criteria against which coders and supervisory coders will be selected.

We recommend that you review these criteria carefully before applying. We will not be able to offer positions to applicants who do not meet the required criteria.

Any applicants who have not coded or marked for NFER or STA within the last three years will be required to provide two satisfactory references (essential) from senior colleagues in coding, marking or teaching.

Any coders who have not previously held a senior or supervisory coder position and are being considered for a senior or deputy lead coder role (or reserve) will also be required to provide two references, from senior colleagues in coding, marking or teaching.

Any previous coder performance will be taken into account when considering applications for the roles. We will consider your application against the criteria stated as well as our experience of working with you in previous rounds or Assignments for NFER. This will include observations relating to behaviour, collaborative working, adherence to guidelines, policies and instructions and competence in using the NFER onscreen coding system.

If you have not worked for NFER before we will also refer to the information provided by your referees.

4.1 Baseline criteria for all coding roles

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Availability for the training event and coding period and access to a secure and reliable broadband internet connection	✓	
Qualified Teacher Status	✓	
Relevant previously held curriculum co-ordinator role (e.g., literacy co-ordinator)		at least one year
Current or recent (2014 – 2025) experience of teaching the relevant subject at the relevant key stage.	at least one year	more than one year
Previous experience of coding trialling papers at either KS1 or KS2 in the relevant subject		in 2024 or 2025
Previous experience of live marking for KS2 national curriculum tests in the relevant subject		in 2024 or 2025
Ability to accurately apply a coding frame to a set of subject-specific test questions	Minimum 70% score in coding exercise within application form	Minimum 90% score in coding exercise within application form

4.2 Supervisory and senior coder criteria

In addition to the baseline criteria required for all coding roles, all supervisory and senior coders must also demonstrate the following:

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Availability for the pre-coding dates	✓	
Current or recent (2014 – 2025) experience of teaching the relevant subject at the relevant key stage		at least one year
Previous experience of live marking for national curriculum tests		since 2022
Experience of coding in the relevant key stage and subject	at least 3 years	including 2022 and/or 2023
Ability to demonstrate key skills and aptitude to undertake supervisory role	✓	
Lead coders only - Previous experience in lead or deputy lead marker/coder role in the relevant key stage and subject	✓	
Deputy lead and senior coders only - Previous experience in lead or deputy lead marker/coder role in the relevant key stage and subject		✓

5 Coding activity dates

To be appointed, coders must be available for all the required dates applicable to the trial and role.

Unless otherwise specified, NFER will make all accommodation arrangements for all events.

5.1 Coding activity dates for the KS1 TPT

KS1 TPT coders

	Coder training	Coding period
KS1 TPT mathematics	22 June 2026 9am – 5.30pm Venue to be confirmed	23 June to 3 July 2026 Home-based onscreen coding (approx. 2-4 hours per day). You will be required to code each day in the coding period to meet completion targets. We expect coding to be completed by 1 July and some additional allocations and quality assurance (QA) by 3 July.

KS1 TPT supervisory coders

	Pre-coding meetings (PCM)	Coder training	Coding period
KS1 TPT mathematics	**PCM1:** 12 May 2026 9am – 5.30pm Venue to be confirmed **PCM2**: 1 to 5 June 2026 9am – 5.30pm Remote meeting Preparation (at home) approx. 0.5 days prior to PCM1	22 June 2026 9am – 5.30pm Venue to be confirmed	23 June to 3 July 2026 Home-based onscreen coding

5.2 Coding activity dates for the KS2 TPT

KS2 TPT coders

	Coder training	Coding period
KS2 TPT Anchor	27 April 2026 9am – 5.30pm Venue to be confirmed	28 April to 8 May 2026 Home-based onscreen coding (approx. 2-4 hours per day). You will be required to code each day in the coding period to meet completion targets. We expect coding to be completed by 6 May and some additional allocations and quality assurance (QA) by 8 May.
KS2 TPT Main	**English reading:** 6 to 7 July 2026 9am – 5.30pm Venue to be confirmed **Mathematics & GPS:** 6 July 2026 9am – 5.30pm (non-anchor teams) Venue to be confirmed 9am – 1pm (anchor teams, remote)	8 to 17 July 2026 Home-based onscreen coding (approx. 2-4 hours per day). You will be required to code each day in the coding period in order to meet completion targets. We expect coding to be completed by 15 July and some additional allocations and QA by 17 July.

KS2 TPT supervisory coders

	Pre-coding meetings (PCM)	Coder training	Coding period
KS2 TPT anchor **English reading, mathematics & GPS**	7 April 2026 9am – 5.30pm Remote meeting Preparation (at home) approx. 1 day prior to PCM1 and 0.5 days prior to coder training	27 April 2026 9am – 5.30pm Venue to be confirmed	28 April to 8 May 2026 Home-based onscreen coding

	Pre-coding meetings (PCM)	Coder training	Coding period
KS2 TPT main **English reading**	PCM1: 11 May 2026 Venue to be confirmed PCM2: 15 to 19 June 2026 Both 9am – 5.30pm Remote meeting Preparation (at home) approx. 1 day prior to PCM1, 5 days prior to PCM2 and 0.5 days prior to coder training	6 to 7 July 2026 9am – 5.30pm Venue to be confirmed	8 to 17 July 2026 Home-based onscreen coding
KS2 TPT main mathematics & GPS	PCM1: 11 May 2026 Venue to be confirmed PCM2: Non-anchor: 15 to 19 June 2026 Anchor: 15 to 16 June 2024 Both 9am – 5.30pm Remote meetings Non-anchor teams: Preparation (at home) approx. 0.5 days prior to PCM1, 3 days prior to PCM2 and 0.5 days prior to coder training Anchor team: Preparation (at home) approx. 2 days prior to PCM2 0.5 days prior to coder training	6 July 2026 9am – 5.30pm (non-anchor teams) Venue to be confirmed 9am – 1pm (anchor team) Remote meeting	7 to 17 July 2026 Home-based onscreen coding

6 Payment rates

The tables below indicate the payment rates for the various roles. These will be confirmed at contract stage.

If required, you may claim supply cover at the rate of £190 per day in lieu of the attendance component of your fee for each day claimed. Please be aware that you can claim either supply cover or attendance fee, not both.

Travel and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed in line with NFER's expenses policy.

For all centre-based activities, accommodation will be booked on your behalf by NFER.

Coder payment rates

Trial	Activity	Payment rate
KS1 TPT	**Coder training**	Mathematics - £150 (1 day, 9am – 5.30pm)
	Coding (average rate, based on easy, medium and hard rates)	Mathematics - £1.60 per script equivalent
KS2 TPT anchor	**Coder training**	All subjects - £150 (1 day, 9am – 5.30pm)
	Coding (average rate, based on easy, medium and hard rates)	English reading - £2.75 per script equivalent GPS - £2.50 per script equivalent Mathematics - £1.60 per script equivalent
KS2 TPT main	**Coder training**	English Reading - £300 (2 days, 9am – 5.30pm) Mathematics & GPS non-anchor teams - £150 (1 day, 9am – 5.30pm) Mathematics & GPS anchor teams - £75 (1 day, 9am – 1pm)
	Coding (average rate, based on easy, medium and hard rates)	English reading - £2.75 per script equivalent GPS - £2.50 per script equivalent Mathematics - £1.60 per script equivalent

Senior coder payment rate

Trial	Activity	Senior coder
KS2 IVT	Coding fee	£1100

Supervisory coder payment rates

Trial	Activity	Lead coder	Deputy lead coder
KS1 TPT	Pre-coding fee (including associated home working)	£1690	£1225
	Training fee	£260	£190
	Script selection and training materials responsibility fee (flat fee)	£260	£260
	Report writing fee (flat fee)	£105	£105
	Coding responsibility fee (flat fee)	£330	£165
	Team management fee (per direct report)	£120	£120
	Coding/QA (per script equivalent)	£1.60	£1.60
KS2 TPT anchor	Pre-coding fee (including associated home working)	£520	£380
	Preparation for training	£130	£85
	Training fee	£260	£190
	Report writing fee (flat fee)	English reading: £315 GPS/Maths: £105	English reading: £315 GPS/Maths: £105
	Coding responsibility fee (flat fee) includes QA of scripts	£330	£165
	Team management fee (per direct report)	£120	£120

	Coding (per script equivalent)	English reading: £2.75 GPS: £2.50 Maths: £1.60	English reading: £2.75 GPS: £2.50 Maths: £1.60
KS2 TPT main	Pre-coding fee (including associated home working)	English reading: £3120 Maths & GPS non-anchor teams: £2210 Maths & GPS anchor teams: £1040	English reading: £2280 Maths & GPS non-anchor teams: £1605 Maths & GPS anchor teams: £760
	Preparation for training (home working)	£130	£85
	Training fee	English reading: £520 Maths & GPS non-anchor teams: £260 Maths & GPS anchor teams: £130 (9am – 1pm, remote)	English reading: £380 Maths & GPS non-anchor teams: £190 Maths & GPS anchor teams: £95 (9am – 1pm, remote)
	Script selection and training materials responsibility fee (flat fee)	£260	£260
	Report writing fee (flat fee)	English reading: £315 Maths & GPS: £105	English reading: £315 Maths & GPS: £105
	Coding responsibility fee (flat fee)	£330	£165
	Team management fee (per direct report)	£120	£120
	Coding/QA (per script equivalent)	English reading: £2.75 GPS: £2.50 Maths: £1.60	English reading: £2.75 GPS: £2.50 Maths: £1.60

7 Code of Conduct

Please be aware that on appointment, we will ask you to sign a Code of Conduct (including Values and Behaviours for Associates). This will clearly outline our expectations relating to behaviour and ways of working with your colleagues, NFER and STA.

8 Applications

If you have received an email notification regarding these vacancies from NFER, please follow the link in your email to the online application form.

If you have any queries about the application process, please check the FAQs available on the coder recruitment site or contact the NFER Coding Team at coding@nfer.ac.uk.

Links are unique to their recipients. If you received an application link from a source other than directly from NFER, do not click on it, please contact the NFER Coding Team at coding@nfer.ac.uk.

9 Appointment

Please be advised that NFER is under no obligation to offer you this work. There is no obligation for you to apply for projects, and please only apply for those you can undertake.

We are committed to maintaining a fair and thorough selection process to ensure that the most suitable applicants are selected for these increasingly competitive roles.

Please be aware that the decision to offer a coding role is made at the discretion of NFER, and unfortunately, we may not be able to offer a role to every qualified applicant due to the competitive nature of these roles.

We understand the importance of feedback in the application process. However, due to the high volume of applications we anticipate receiving, we will be unable to provide personalised feedback to all unsuccessful applicants.

Our selection process is designed to be transparent and fair. Every application will be thoroughly reviewed, and decisions will be made based on the alignment of skills, experience, and qualifications with the requirements of the position.

We appreciate your understanding and patience as we work through the application review process.