

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook*, especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (the trust) is one of the largest employers in the north-east of England, employing 14,500 staff. It has six main sites, including the Royal Victoria Infirmary and Freeman Hospital.

The trust's workforce development team began delivering levy-funded apprenticeships in May 2017. Previously, the trust delivered apprenticeships through Health Education England's national contract. Currently, the trust has 60 apprentices on programmes. Of these, 28 are on the pharmacy services framework at level 3, 18 are on the healthcare support worker standard at level 2, seven are on the dental nurse standard at level 3 and seven are on the business administration framework at level 2. The trust also commissions apprenticeship programmes from other learning providers to meet the development needs of its workforce, but these are not included in the scope of this monitoring visit.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers ensure that programmes meet the principles of apprenticeships fully. The trust recruits apprentices into genuine job vacancies and guarantees apprentices continued employment on completion of their programmes. The very few apprentices who have completed so far have continued in their jobs.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive high-quality and sufficient off-the-job learning. Staff plan learning well to prepare apprentices for the specific demands of their jobs. For example, healthcare support workers attend initial training in a wide range of relevant topics, including basic life support, bed bathing and stoma care, to prepare them to work with patients. Apprentices develop significant new skills and knowledge throughout their programmes.

Staff involve apprentices' line managers closely in planning and delivering the programmes. Line managers ensure that apprentices have timely opportunities to develop and practise their skills in their roles. They support apprentices well and contribute effectively to progress review meetings.

Leaders and managers provide good resources to support the programmes. Staff have extensive vocational expertise and use it well to develop learners' theoretical knowledge and skills. Trainer assessors who work with healthcare support worker and business administration apprentices have low caseloads and so meet with apprentices frequently to provide a high level of individual guidance and support. Physical resources to support learning are very good and include virtual reality technology to simulate clinical situations.

Arrangements to evaluate and improve the quality of provision, although informal, are generally effective, given the small number of apprentices on the programme. However, the trust does not fully meet its own expectations for quality assurance, as set out in its quality protocol. For example, the self-assessment report does not cover all the programmes offered. The quality improvement plan does not include sufficiently clear dates, targets and responsibilities. The trust has plans to increase the number of apprentices significantly and expand the range of provision. Managers are right to recognise the need to implement more thorough evaluation and quality improvement arrangements to support the planned growth.

Managers do not have sufficient oversight of a few elements of the provision, particularly the dental nurse and pharmacy apprenticeships that staff outside the apprenticeship team deliver. They do not routinely receive summary information on these apprentices' progress. They rely on staff raising concerns in the few instances where apprentices fall behind or have difficulties with their programmes. Staff discuss operational issues at monthly apprenticeship business meetings.

Managers do not check in sufficient detail the accuracy of information provided to the funding agency on the number of apprentices and details of their programmes. The trust forwards this information to Health Education North East, which submits it on their behalf. During the monitoring visit, minor errors in a recent submission were evident.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Significant progress

Staff carry out a thorough assessment to assess accurately apprentices' starting points. They use a range of techniques, including self-evaluation, observation, discussions with line managers and written assessments, to establish apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours at the outset. They use this information very effectively to plan programmes in conjunction with line managers. Consequently,

apprentices receive the right training to develop the knowledge and skills that they need for their jobs. Staff plan off-the-job learning carefully to ensure that apprentices receive their full entitlement. Managers appoint workplace mentors to ensure good support for apprentices in their work settings.

Apprentices make good progress and use an electronic portfolio confidently to manage their programmes. Staff provide timely and effective support to enable the very few apprentices who fall behind to catch up. Since May 2017, only one apprentice has left the programme early without completing her studies. The three apprentices who have completed their programmes did so within the planned timescale.

Apprentices benefit from extensive opportunities to develop their skills beyond the scope of their job roles, through taking additional training and qualifications. They attend training in subjects such as autism awareness, conflict resolution and manual handling. By working in a range of departments, apprentices broaden their experience and their understanding of career pathways.

Apprentices grow significantly in confidence and improve their ability to work as part of a team with a range of NHS professionals. They also develop their skills in communicating with patients and their families, including in sensitive and stressful circumstances. They increase their knowledge of NHS procedures on issues such as confidentiality, data protection and information assurance. They demonstrate clear adherence to managers' expectations.

Staff have high expectations of apprentices and challenge them to produce work of the highest standard, often beyond programme requirements. For example, business administration apprentices completed a comprehensive assignment on reception skills, based on considerable independent research that far exceeded qualification requirements. Others completed written work that included detailed academic referencing.

Staff provide very effective coaching and helpful feedback to apprentices, which aids their development. They meet with apprentices frequently to check on progress and keep apprentices on track. They agree clear targets and actions at each meeting. Staff provide clear feedback on apprentices' work, such as through mock interviews, which helps them to improve and prepares them well for end-point assessment.

Apprentices benefit from high-quality resources to support learning. Workplace resources are excellent. The hospitals have innovative simulation facilities to replicate a ward and an operating theatre, so that apprentices can practise their clinical skills and develop their confidence in a safe environment. Staff and peers review and evaluate apprentices' performance by watching recordings of their activities streamed live to nearby classrooms. Simulation facilities for cardiopulmonary resuscitation on manikins provide apprentices with feedback, so that they can optimise the speed and intensity of their chest compressions.

When apprentices already hold qualifications in English and mathematics to meet programme requirements, trainer assessors do not put effective plans in place to develop these skills further. Apprentices often improve aspects of their writing and oral communication skills during their vocational learning, and pharmacy apprentices improve their mathematical skills. However, other apprentices do not develop their mathematical skills sufficiently.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep apprentices safe.

Staff in the apprenticeship delivery team receive guidance from the trust's extensive range of safeguarding policies and procedures that set out clear responsibilities and accountabilities. Apprentices receive a useful summary document as part of their induction programme, which contains the essential information that they need to know.

Apprentices have a good understanding of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They know how to apply their knowledge to their job roles, including when dealing with patients. They also know how to recognise the signs of radicalisation and how to report concerns. They feel safe and have a good understanding of the risks that they face at work, such as the dangers posed by working in buildings that are open to the public. Staff check apprentices' understanding of safeguarding and develop it during progress review meetings.

A dedicated safeguarding team provides guidance and support and responds to safeguarding concerns raised by staff and apprentices. It deals with concerns appropriately. So far, no concerns have required referral to external agencies. The occupational health service provides support for apprentices to resolve any concerns.

All trust staff, including apprentices, complete training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty as part of their induction programme and update their training at appropriate intervals. They also complete more advanced training if required for their role. Apprenticeship business meetings, which take place each month, include safeguarding as a standard agenda item to ensure that the topic receives a sufficiently high priority.

The human resources team follows safer recruitment processes and carries out a suitable range of pre-employment checks on all new staff, including apprentices.

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