

North East Ambulance Service 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 three themes set out below.

North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS) began to deliver apprenticeships in November 2018. At the time of the monitoring visit, 21 apprentices were on level 3 standards-based apprenticeships and one was on a level 3 apprenticeship framework. Seventeen apprentices were on an ambulance support worker programme, four were on an emergency service contact handling programme, and one was on a clinical healthcare support programme. Apprentices are employed by NEAS and work across the north east region. NEAS subcontracts provision to Derwentside College, which delivers apprenticeship frameworks in clinical healthcare support.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Leaders and managers have a clear and well-developed strategy to use the apprenticeship levy to provide career pathways for apprentices on level 3 programmes towards becoming paramedics. Through these pathways, apprentices receive helpful careers guidance to plan their progression.

Board members of NEAS and senior leaders have a thorough oversight of the quality of apprenticeship programmes and the progress that apprentices make. They hold managers to account well to ensure that apprentices develop skills and follow the correct career pathway. This helps NEAS to maintain a level of paramedic resource that fulfils the regional need.

Leaders and managers recruit apprentices who are fully suitable for an apprenticeship. Apprentices receive clear and helpful initial information and advice regarding their apprenticeship and how they can develop their skills to become successful in their job roles.

Managers monitor and evaluate the quality of apprenticeships accurately. They use information from observations, audits and feedback effectively to identify strengths and areas for improvement. They identify and implement relevant actions for improvement that have a significant positive impact on the quality of provision and apprentices' progress.

Highly experienced and qualified trainers deliver and support apprenticeship programmes very effectively. Leaders and managers ensure that trainers perform successfully in their role through well-planned, frequent performance management meetings and clear targets for professional development.

Apprentices benefit from very high-quality industry-standard learning resources. They have access to fully operational ambulances and digital learning resources. They develop their skills to a high standard before starting to work operationally.

Managers ensure that trainers plan and deliver high quality on- and off-the-job training that enables apprentices to develop quickly the skills, knowledge and behaviours that they need for their job role. Programmes are well sequenced to enable apprentices to develop knowledge and skills that they can apply in their job role.

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

Apprentices develop substantial new skills and knowledge to support them in their job role. They have a full understanding of the requirements of the apprenticeship and they know the requirements for their end-point assessment and when it is due.

Trainers provide a comprehensive induction programme for new apprentices. This identifies apprentices' starting points very accurately to prepare them well for future training and development. As a result, apprentices have very clear learning goals and know what they need to do to develop the skills required in their job role.

Apprentices benefit from thorough and supportive initial training at the learning centre. They continue learning in the workplace, supported by mentors, and quickly develop and apply their skills. As a result, they make expected or better progress on their programme.

Trainers provide helpful and supportive feedback to apprentices. Apprentices act swiftly following feedback, which helps them to build on their skills and knowledge. For example, they respond successfully to feedback on how to improve their skills in supporting patients to get into an ambulance safely.

Trainers monitor apprentices' progress highly effectively. When apprentices fall behind, trainers provide additional support to help them catch up and make good progress.

Apprentices receive helpful support to improve their English, mathematics and digital skills. They apply these skills effectively in their job roles, particularly those working in emergency contact centre roles. Apprentices working in ambulances communicate confidently with patients and their families and complete reports accurately. They apply their mathematics skills well to estimate journey times so that patients arrive at appointments on time.

Apprentices who need to complete English and mathematics qualifications attend courses run by Health Education England and make good progress in improving their skills in these subjects.

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

Leaders and managers take particular care when promoting and reinforcing safeguarding across NEAS. Staff have access to a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that ensure that apprentices are kept safe.

Leaders and managers carry out appropriate background checks relative to the job role for all staff. Consequently, suitable staff are appointed to work at NEAS.

Managers and trainers provide staff with extensive training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Trainers use this training very effectively to ensure that apprentices develop a very good knowledge of a wide range of risks. Apprentices use their knowledge highly effectively when assessing risk on a day-to-day basis in their job roles.

The appropriately qualified and experienced safeguarding leads work very closely with local authorities, the police and other relevant agencies to keep up to date with local issues. They cascade this information well to staff and apprentices.

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