

# Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1278579

**Name of lead inspector:** Gerard McGrath Her Majesty's Inspector

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**Type of provider:** Employer

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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.

Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust [EPUT] received a direct contract to be a provider of apprenticeships in April 2018. It offers apprenticeships to EPUT employees working in a wide range of care settings across Essex, Bedfordshire and Suffolk. At the time of inspection, EPUT had 36 apprentices funded through the employer levy. Twenty-eight apprentices are on level 3 apprenticeship standards programmes in healthcare support and adult care. Eight are on a level 5 healthcare practice for England [Assistant Practitioner] apprenticeship standards programme.

### Themes

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

#### **Reasonable progress**

Managers and staff are ambitious for their apprentices. Leaders recognise that the further development of new and existing staff is essential to the continuing success of EPUT. Leaders, managers and all staff share a keen focus on the development of apprentices' new knowledge and skills and how they contribute to high-quality care delivery.

Senior leaders participate in influential boards and strategy groups to further develop the provision. For example, they have improved staff retention by increasing the number and range of training opportunities for apprentices across the service.

Apprentices are recruited with integrity. Assessors ensure that apprentices and their line managers clearly understand the structure and demands of the apprenticeship programme. Consequently, leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive their full entitlement to training away from work. As a result, they make effective progress towards the achievement of end-point assessments, as well as significantly improving their work-related skills.

Leaders and managers know their provision well. The self-assessment report is sufficiently self-critical. For example, it accurately identifies the need for further development of apprentices' mathematics skills and the need for managers to improve the use of data to monitor performance. However, actions set in the quality improvement plan do not cover all the areas for improvement.

Managers give insufficient strategic focus and operational planning on the further development of the apprenticeship provision. Although senior officers are ambitious for the service and its staff, plans to realise this ambition are underdeveloped. For example, they have not agreed key performance indicators for the provision. EPUT does not have a formal strategy that sets out how apprenticeships will support the workforce development plan.

Directors have yet to apply enough scrutiny and challenge to the apprenticeship provision. Although they are positive advocates for apprenticeships, they have yet to develop fully the processes the provision needs to make continuous improvements.

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

Well-planned on- and off-the-job training help apprentices make good progress in their learning. Assessors use the results of initial assessments of English and mathematics skills, as well as relevant previous vocational experience, to plan training that meets the needs of apprentices well. Leaders and managers make excellent use of a wide range of clinical placements to ensure that apprentices understand how their learning applies in different care settings. Assessors and workplace mentors provide useful individual coaching and support to apprentices and ensure that they understand the standards of care expected of them.

Apprentices enjoy their learning and apply their theoretical learning well to their work roles. For example, one apprentice has developed a greater understanding of urinary tract infections and the impact that they may have on a service user's behaviour. As a result, the apprentice has improved the plan of care for this individual.

Apprentices understand the contribution that English and mathematics skills make to their personal and career aspirations and continue to develop these skills throughout their training.

Assessors provide accurate, detailed feedback that motivates apprentices to improve the quality of their academic work. Apprentices have a clear picture of where they are in the programme and what they need to do to achieve or make good progress. They use their reflective diaries well to record clearly the new knowledge and work-related skills that they develop.

Assessors ensure that apprentices receive appropriate advice and guidance to help them make choices as to their next steps in learning, particularly the progression routes to undergraduate student nurse training. For example, an apprentice with little previous experience of working in healthcare has already achieved a level 3 qualification in healthcare and is now working towards a level 5 qualification that supports her ambition of progressing to higher education.

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

Apprentices feel safe and are safe. Managers and assessors give a high priority to health and safety. Consequently, apprentices demonstrate safe working practices in busy, high-risk environments. Apprentices have an appropriate recall and understanding of the risks arising from radicalisation and extremism.

Assessors and their workplace supervisors ensure that apprentices understand their responsibilities towards their service users. However, they are not always clear about who to talk to about any safeguarding concerns they have as an apprentice, rather than as an employee.

Appropriate checks are carried out on all NHS trust staff as a condition of their employment. During the monitoring visit, managers had difficulty retrieving the records of identity and Disclosure and Barring Service checks for staff involved in training apprentices. Records of these checks are held in the resourcing department of the NHS trust, which is responsible for the recording and management of this confidential information. Managers acted immediately and provided evidence that all staff involved in training have passed such checks and completed training on relevant topics.

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