

The Future of Apprenticeships in England

Apprenticeship Standard for Wellbeing Support Workers

Early in 2016 a Trailblazer group was set up to explore an apprenticeship standard for health promotion assistants. The group was chaired by Geoff Harris, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue, supported by Health Education England, Skills for Health, Public Health England and Royal Society for Public Health.

The following employers and other stakeholders were also engaged in the process: Royal Borough of Greenwich, Bromford Housing Group, Whittington Health NHS Trust, St Vincent's Housing Association, Northern Devon HealthCare Trust, Next stage, Nuffield Health, IOW Public Health Department, The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, South Warwickshire GP Federation, Active Luton, Hampshire County Council, Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS foundation Trust, Merton Chamber of Commerce, Home Group, Wakefield Council, Boots UK, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, Everybody Sport & Recreation, Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust, University Hospital of South Manchester, Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation Trust, FCMS Health Services Provider, Army Reserve, Street games, South Eastern Hampshire and Fareham & Gosport CCG and Royal College of Nursing.

Health Promotion Assistant Expression of Interest

An Expression of Interest for a Health Promotion Assistant was submitted by the Trailblazer group to government in May 2016 with the following role profile:

"The Health Promotion Assistant (HPA) works as part of a team providing high quality advice and support to individuals and groups on healthy lifestyles. They carry out assessment, brief advice interventions and work with clients with non-complex cases focusing on a single behaviour change. They also work with others in a team, including volunteers to facilitate activities in group settings example physical activities like walks, cookery sessions, smoking cessation. They also help with health campaigns like Dry January, Stoptober, Mental health day etc. HPAs work in a range of employers and settings."

Unfortunately this Expression of Interest was rejected. The government provided the following rationale:

- *the occupation does not appear to be broad and technical enough to ensure a sufficient stretch and transferability of skill*
- *further clarity on the kinds of behaviour changes, including what a typical intervention would look like is required*
- *detail of the environments and contexts that they work within to better understand the stretch of the role would be helpful*
- *an initial indication of how many apprentices the group members would individually be willing to take on per year is needed*



Wellbeing Support Worker

As a result, the trailblazer group reviewed the role profile, resulting in a new role entitled 'Wellbeing Support Worker.' The new occupation described was as follows:

This role incorporates working with individuals and groups to support behaviour change to improve their health, safety and wellbeing. It includes eliciting and providing information, implementing action plans, assessing and identifying or reporting risks, facilitating activities and being involved with a range of programmes designed to raise awareness of health and wellbeing with the public. The individual will follow workplace protocols and procedures, work in line with legislation and be supervised by a more senior worker.

The role focuses on supporting people to keep healthy and safe whilst improving their overall wellbeing. They implement a range of person-centred action plans designed to meet these objectives, checking the effectiveness of the interventions and tracking progress. They engage with people who have been referred to their organisation. In some cases the person will provide a service within an organisation or to those who self-refer. They build relationships, managing conflict, encouraging contribution and recognising benefits and opportunities. They make judgements and assess risks according to where and who they are working with, ensuring that they record, report and refer appropriately. They use identified strategies to encourage specific behaviour changes with groups or individuals. They focus on a single change or improvement at one time with each person or group that they are working with. They understand, and help others to understand specific processes that can be used to support health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities. They convey key public health messages to help manage individuals and the public perceptions using a range of media and processes. They facilitate activities such as physical activities (eg walks), cookery sessions or smoking cessation etc. They may also support specific campaigns such as Dry January, Stoptober, Mental health day etc. They connect people to local resources and services that promote their wellbeing. Wellbeing Support workers work in a range of settings including the fire or ambulance service; health, social care; or other community and voluntary services. They may need to coordinate closely or collaborate with other organisations or services to ensure the best outcome for the individuals they are working with. They take responsibility for their own workloads, acting with integrity, monitoring their own performance, taking part in appraisals and personal development activities. Some work with people in their own homes, and therefore need to adhere to specific lone working policies and procedures. Some may have day to day supervisory responsibilities for other workers as agreed with their line manager.



Consultation

A survey went out to consultation during October and November 2016 and 109 people responded. They came from a wide range of organisations, sectors and geographic locations.

The survey asked whether anything was missing from the description above, whether people were already employed within organisations to this kind of role, and what number of apprentices they would be likely to take should the standard become available.

The survey found that there is genuine interest in wellbeing and health promotion activity across a range of sectors and that roles are being developed which place a much greater emphasis on these activities. However, in many organisations the role is aspirational and not yet in place. In others, the skills are being used by staff but as an addition to their existing role. In these cases it is most likely the individual would have worked in one role and then as continuing professional development developed the skills to carry out health promotion and wellbeing activities. There was a lack of clarity around the number of apprentices that each employer may wish to support. Overall the consultation contained a high proportion of 'I don't know' responses which indicates that for many the stretch and depth of the role is still unclear.

Conclusion

The survey findings indicate that at this point in time the evidence to support a revised Expression of Interest for a Wellbeing Support Worker or Health Promotion Assistant is not available. At present it is not possible to meet the requirement set by the government which says that apprenticeships must relate to a defined occupation with a reasonable number of prospective apprentices.

Therefore, the steering group have now closed this piece of work.

