

Case Study - Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is one of the largest Trusts in the Northwest of England and is responsible for providing district general hospital services and specialist care to thousands of people across Lancashire and South Cumbria. Introducing apprenticeships in 2012, apprenticeships have become increasingly important to the continuing success of the Trust. With skills shortages, skills gaps and an ageing workforce being issues facing the Trust, the NHS and the public sector more widely, apprenticeships are proving an effective way for the Trust to help combat some of these long-term systemic problems.

Workforce of the future

Apprenticeships were first introduced at the Trust to support the Health Academies mission “to support the provision of safe, effective and compassionate care through educational excellence”. One of its Strategic Aims is to enhance its workforce and reputation through education, research and innovation. Apprenticeships help the Trust to train and develop the workforce of the future, with the aim of addressing some of the key skills gaps within the organisation. This year, the Trust has a target to take on around 230 apprentices, across 20 apprenticeship standards in business administration, accountancy and pharmacy, as well as in its more recently launched programmes in pre-nursing.

The recent introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy has also allowed the organisation to focus on funding higher-level and more wide-ranging standards to account for the specialisms needed.

“The recent move towards creating and developing apprenticeships in the clinical areas at the Trust has provided an opportunity to tackle some of the most difficult fields to recruit into.”

Andrew Stone, Apprentice Business Manager

The shortage of nurses is one significant area in which both the Trust and the NHS more widely are experiencing challenges. Having identified nursing as a key skills gap, in 2016, the Trust introduced a Level 3 pre-nursing apprenticeship as a clear route to the nursing profession. In an effort to allow its apprentices to progress their nursing qualifications further, the Trust negotiated with the University of Bolton to recognise the apprenticeship in the entry requirements for its nursing degree.

“The shortage of nurses across the NHS is well known. But retaining nursing talent is also a problem. As a teaching hospital we train a lot of student nurses who often return home or move to other parts of the country once their training is complete. By recruiting local candidates via an apprenticeship and offering the opportunity to continue their learning at university, we hope to develop and retain local talent for the long-term.”

Andrew Stone, Apprentice Business Manager

Meeting business needs

As a teaching hospital, education is central to what the Trust does. Motivated by the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, the Trust decided it was better placed to deliver the specialist training it needs. In May 2017, the Trust became a training provider, giving them control over their future apprenticeship programmes and allowing them to provide quality training that meets the specific requirements of the organisation.

“We already deliver lots of training so adding apprenticeships to the mix felt like a natural progression.” He continues: “Although it’s early days, we feel confident that we can now implement programmes which fit our purposes and are written and designed to meet our needs.”

Andrew Stone, Apprentice Business Manager

With this, for 2018/9 the Trust is keen to develop more higher and degree apprenticeships – including in medical engineering and HR. Also, the Trust is leading a Trailblazer for a Level 7 Physician Associate apprenticeship.

Upskilling the workforce

As well as using apprenticeships to attract and retain new talent, the Trust is keen to use apprenticeships to upskill their current staff and support staff development by recognising talent within the Trust.

“Age is not a driver for us with regards to new recruitment. We want to match the best person to the right role.”

Andrew Stone, Apprentice Business Manager

The Trust’s pre-nursing apprenticeship includes both new recruits and those who have come in as healthcare assistants. Similarly, the pathology team accommodates external applicants and those from within the department with a desire to progress.

Healthcare
Apprenticeships

Resource developed by the
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**Lancashire Teaching
Hospitals**
NHS Foundation Trust

“With a 7,000-strong workforce and 320 departments, embedding apprenticeships across the entire Trust is the aspiration, however we’re excited about the increased possibilities brought by our recent training provider status and the opportunities higher-level apprenticeships can bring us as an organisation.”

Andrew Stone, Apprentice Business Manager