

Case Study - Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

In partnership with University of Leeds and Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTHT) delivers one of the largest medical education programmes across the NHS. Last year, the Trust employed nearly 600 Level 2 to Level 7 apprentices, across 29 programmes and a variety of disciplines, ranging from Business Administration to Facilities Management to Dental Nursing. Having kept pace with the apprenticeship agenda, the Trust has used the apprenticeship levy to build interest across the organisation and attract employees into rewarding apprenticeship roles. Apprenticeships have also helped the Trust address workforce need, reduce recruitment and agency costs, as well as giving back to the community through offering equal-opportunity apprenticeships to those who live in the local area.

Securing the future of the organisation

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is committed to promoting a workplace culture that actively values diversity. It recognises that people from different backgrounds, with varied experiences, can bring fresh perspectives and ideas to the Trust.

The Trust's approach to proactive recruitment attracts hundreds of new starters each year - an estimated 700 apprentice will start in 2018/2019. Furthermore, their recruitment strategy also ensures the organisation can access individuals from a wider range of backgrounds.

"We work hard to make sure we are recruiting from the local population and attracting local people, so this becomes part of our wider social mobility agenda. We strive to represent the population we serve, and apprenticeships are part of the solution."

Karen Vella, Head of Organisational Development & Learning

Additionally, as the Trust is a teaching hospital, education is at the centre of what they do. Motivated by the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, the Trust focused on raising awareness within their existing workforce about their range of apprenticeship programmes available to them.

"There has been a lot of mis-information surrounding apprenticeships, and some existing members of staff felt an apprenticeship wasn't right for them. We have worked hard to promote apprenticeships as a form of learning in the workplace and we believe we have done this successfully. As a Trust, we want our staff members to make an informed choice and know that through an apprenticeship they can gain a qualification and start a career full of opportunities."

Karen Vella, Head of Organisational Development & Learning

Return on Investment

Further to benefitting the individual, the Trust is aware of the many benefits apprenticeships can bring to their organisation. As well as building an engaged, well-trained and committed workforce, apprenticeships can help the organisation recruit people into their hard-to fill-vacancies and ensure there is a pipeline of skills which meets the specific requirements of the Trust.

The Local Workforce Action Board Workforce and Sustainability and Transformation Partnership in the region predicted a severe supply risk with a deficit of more than 15% for Adult Nursing by 2021.

The Trust's proposal to recruit 100 Registered Nurse apprentices between June 2018 and November 2019 provided a solution to addressing those nurse shortages. The annual cost of employing 100 RN apprentices is £2,062k – whilst the potential savings (from replacing 60 WTE Band 2 vacancies with apprentices) is £2,069k.

Plugging the skills gap

“People say they want to be a nurse, they want to be a mid-wife or work in outpatients, they don't say they want to be a clinical coder. We are working to attract people into those roles so we have a workforce for the future.”

Karen Vella, Head of Organisational Development & Learning

Investing in their employees allows the Trust to fill the gaps and address needs across the whole organisation.

“Apprenticeships are about having the right people, with the right qualifications, in the right place at the right time.”

Aislinn O'Hara, Education Learning and Organisational Development Manager

The shortage of nurses is one significant area in which both the Trust and the NHS more widely are experiencing challenges. Over the last three years, LTHT has focused on addressing these shortages and through maximising the use of the levy, nursing apprenticeships have helped reduce nursing costs and increased the ability to fill nursing vacancies in the long term.

“100 nursing apprenticeships in four years' time are 100 nurses we don't have to pay extortionate agency costs for.”

Aislinn O'Hara, Education Learning and Organisational Development Manager

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is opening its doors for those who are interested in becoming nurses but may have been unable to kick-start a career due to financial or personal circumstances. The Trust stresses that trainee nurses will receive the support they need when undertaking an apprenticeship. Having employed over 2,000 apprentices since 2010, and with over a 1,000 of those individuals still working at the Trust, LTHT believes supporting their staff encourages loyalty, often leading to individuals staying on following qualification.

“I have grown and developed as an apprentice and gradually gained confidence and professionalism as I have moved up in my role taking on more responsibility. The apprenticeship has given me an insight into different roles and it has helped me to decide what I want to do next in the next stage of my career.”

Amy Long, an Apprentice Trainee Assistant Practitioner at the Trust

The Trust has experienced a number of benefits from harnessing apprenticeship, including:

- **Financial:** the levy secures budget for apprenticeship training and development for new and existing staff
- **Meeting business needs:** support sustainability and long term planning by placing apprenticeships at the heart of workforce planning
- **Supporting clinical needs:** diverse range and growing number of clinical and non-clinical standards exist throughout bands are available
- **Developing workforce:** increasing the skills and retention of existing your workforce, widening participation and the talent pool