



Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust

Case Study from ESFA

Case Study - Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust

Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust cares for a diverse community of around 750,000 people across the east London borough of Barking and Dagenham. Introducing apprenticeships back in 2015, the Trust has rapidly increased its apprenticeship offer for new starters and its existing staff – with a focus on encouraging both into clinical roles. So far, the Trust is confident that apprenticeships can assist in helping it address key skills gaps, retain and develop a local workforce, and ultimately better its patient care.

Increasing appetite

Starting its apprenticeship programme back in 2015, Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust has developed a diverse and comprehensive programme of both clinical and non-clinical roles, from level 2 up to degree. Standards on offer include its new nursing degree, pharmacy, maternity care, as well as customer service, IT, leadership and management and HR. In 2016/17, the Trust saw over 125 apprenticeship starts from both existing employees and new starters, the bulk of which fell into clinical roles – a key area of focus for the Trust.

“Apprenticeships haven’t been part of the Trust a long time but are already making an impact, especially in some of our clinical roles where skills shortages are most prevalent. We’ve seen the appetite for apprenticeships increase across our departments and consequently our starts have increased year-on-year. This has certainly been assisted by the levy. And with funds for training being reduced in other areas, apprenticeships offer us a unique opportunity to train those looking to start a career with the NHS, as well as give existing staff the chance to develop.”

Cliff McLeod, Clinical Apprenticeship Lead

Adding value

The Trust is divided into seven divisions, each of which is responsible for its own apprenticeship numbers and targets and identifying where an apprenticeship may be of value.

“The departments themselves are much more aware of their most prevalent workforce needs and where particular skills are needed.”

Cliff McLeod, Clinical Apprenticeship Lead

One department within the Trust which has embraced apprenticeships is the Maternity department. Where, having identified a significant need to grow talent in this area, have taken on a cohort of 16 Maternity Care Assistants in the last year. The department are also involved in the Midwifery trailblazer – where shortages are well-known across the NHS.

With the autonomous nature of divisions across the Trust, Cliff and his team work hard to ensure the apprenticeship message reaches far and wide across its different locations and 6,500 staff.

“We invite managers to drop in and speak to us about apprenticeships, publicise new apprenticeship standards of relevance and organise marketing events to inform staff about the opportunities available. We encourage those we speak to go back and report to their divisions. It’s in doing this we’ve been able to work with our divisions and departments to help them identify which apprenticeships can truly add value.”

Cliff McLeod, Clinical Apprenticeship Lead

Local workforce

One area which the Trust hope apprenticeships will aid them is in building and retaining a local workforce.

“Employing and developing people from the local area with apprenticeships is a fantastic way to secure the long-term future of our workforce. Due to the Trust’s location, on the border between London and Essex, there is often competition for and to retain talent. This is a result of there being a high concentration of London NHS Trusts, and so staff have a lot more choice in where they can work in relation to where they are based.”

Cliff McLeod, Clinical Apprenticeship

By offering older workers who have settled in the area more opportunities to develop with an apprenticeship, the Trust hope to keep this experienced talent. Also, in response to this issue, the Trust has increased efforts to recruit a local workforce, going into local schools and councils to talk about careers within the NHS. It is also looking into how it can develop areas of untapped talent, by setting up traineeships for those with additional needs – such as learning disabilities.

Looking ahead

Going forward, the Trust is excited by the continued opportunities presented by apprenticeships as a ready-made career pathway for its employees. In addition to the standards already on offer, the Trust is keen to see standards developed in Occupational Therapy, Physio and clinical coding and is also looking to procure nursing associates and further develop its finance department with apprenticeships.

Healthcare Apprenticeships

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Barking, Havering and Redbridge
University Hospitals



NHS Trust

“With apprenticeships, you don’t need to stop after one qualification – there’s the opportunity to continue learning and progressing and for the Trust to develop a motivated, skilled and knowledgeable workforce. It’s a win-win and we hope, as we continue to grow our apprenticeship programme, we can continue to build the skills and talent that we need.”

Cliff McLeod, Clinical Apprenticeship Lead