

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Case Study from ESFA

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Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is the leading provider of eye health services in the UK. As a specialist health provider, being able to attract and develop the right skills and talent is essential to continuing the Trust's high-quality services. Since 2017, following the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, apprenticeships have become a key part of doing this, with apprenticeships available at the Trust in over 40 roles and some up to degree level. With a continued investment in apprenticeships, the Trust is looking to address prevalent skills gaps, upskill its current staff, improve its succession planning and diversify its talent pool.

A fresh approach

Apprenticeships at Moorfields Eye Hospital have very quickly made their mark, with standards on offer including team leadership, healthcare support, business administration and registered nursing across a range of departments. Since 2017, the Trust has quickly grown its apprenticeship programme from a small cohort of business administration apprentices in entry-level roles, to 50 apprentices – the bulk of which are existing staff.

“The introduction of the levy made us reassess how we could use apprenticeships to approach workforce issues. We see apprenticeships as a great opportunity to provide training where there has previously been a lack of opportunities, offer our staff a chance to improve their skillset and ultimately ensure we have the talent we need to protect the future of our services.”

Robert Brooks, Strategic Workforce Development Manager

Specialist services

As a specialist eye hospital, having a pipeline of talent with the relevant skills – particularly in clinical roles – is essential to maintaining the Trust's quality services. Recognising a lack of provision for healthcare support roles specifically, the Trust identified the healthcare science associate apprenticeship as ideal training to cover its needs. As such, the Trust is taking the reins and planning to deliver the training itself from 2019 to ensure its able to offer the precise training and experience the organisation needs.

“The healthcare science associate apprenticeship offers us the opportunity to not only grow our entry-level healthcare support workers to understand our ways of working, but to provide them with the foundational training to then either go into a more science-specific support role, or an area like nursing. Being able to provide this type of training internally is a fantastic way to harness the precise skills we need and build our talent pipeline.”

Robert Brooks, Strategic Workforce Development Manager

Apprenticeships at the forefront

With succession planning in mind, the Trust is also taking a series of other measures to ensure that apprenticeships can provide the skills and talent they need at both entry and higher level. One way in which the Trust is securing this talent is through transitioning its entry level roles into apprenticeships, with apprenticeships now the default option when recruiting at this entry-level.

“We’re putting apprenticeships up as a first choice for departments. By putting them at the forefront of our recruitment plans, we hope we can encourage an organisation-wide recognition of apprenticeships.”

Robert Brooks, Strategic Workforce Development Manager

In addition to its work at entry level, the Trust is also looking to apprenticeships in management for staff at a more senior level. And, as a number of existing employees approach retirement, having leadership and management apprenticeships available means the Trust is able to offer an ongoing supply of staff able to take up responsibilities at a higher level.

“Preparing our workforce for the next step on the career ladder ensures we are able to support, develop and retain our high-quality staff. Instead of spending significant amounts of money on recruitment, we can feel confident that we have a selection of experienced staff who can step into senior roles.”

Robert Brooks, Strategic Workforce Development Manager

Looking ahead

Going forward, the Trust is keen to grow its apprenticeship offer and continue to present its staff with the opportunity to develop – in both a clinical and non-clinical capacity.



“Apprenticeships have become very much embedded into our thinking. This is a big opportunity for our employees and for us as an organisation to support and retain good quality staff. We will continue to be proactive and forward thinking with our apprenticeships, looking out for new standards, as well as widening access to them. This way, we can continue to grow, train and retain our own talent.”

Robert Brooks, Strategic Workforce Development Manager