



Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Case Study from ESFA

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Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is one of the UK's largest, busiest and most successful NHS Foundation Trusts. Providing a range of hospital and community services across Sheffield, as well as specialist care across the region, developing and retaining a skilled workforce is paramount to the Trust's continued provision of high quality patient care. Apprenticeships have contributed to the Trust's success over the past decade. Following the introduction of the levy, apprenticeships are set to play an even bigger role in developing a skilled workforce, improving retention rates and ensuring that the Trust is able to continue responding to ever-growing service needs.

Long standing commitment

Over its decade-long commitment to apprenticeships, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has developed five key areas within its apprenticeship programme – healthcare, business administration, pharmacy, dental nursing and healthcare science. Apprenticeships in these core areas to the Trust's services have proven an effective way to respond to growing demands on the Trust's services. Following recent significant expansion in relevant standards available the Trust's apprenticeship offer is now growing.

Standards on offer now also include clinical engineering, assistant practitioner, nursing associate and leadership and management, as well as higher level apprenticeships available in its core areas. At present, the Trust employs in the region of 150 apprentices – with a rough 50/50 split between those it recruited externally and existing staff looking to develop their careers.

“Apprenticeships have been used in the Trust for years, primarily helping us to attract new talent to entry level roles. With the introduction of a much wider range of available apprenticeship standards we are now able to extend the offer to a wider range of occupational groups. Also, the availability of a wider range of intermediate and higher level apprenticeships provides us with a very attractive offer to new starters with a clearly defined career pathway from support role to registered professional all delivered through apprenticeships.”

Fay Froggett-Brown, Learning and Development Facilitator

Addressing Trust needs

The Trust believes apprenticeships help it to develop staff with the essential skills that they need. This can range from audio-typing – a significant Trust need, which higher level business administration apprenticeships can help fulfil – to nursing, and the new Nursing Associate Apprenticeship will help to provide a clear career progression route.

The Trust has plans to recruit over 60 trainee nursing associates in the coming months, with this number set to double again in six to eight months' time.

“Trainee nursing associates are an area we are keen to dedicate our levy funding to. They help bridge the gap between Healthcare Assistants and registered nurses. By focusing on this area, we can widen the demographic of people entering the nursing profession and provide an essential stepping stone to becoming a registered nurse.”

Fay Froggett-Brown, Learning and Development Facilitator

Retaining key talent

The Trust also hopes that apprenticeships will help it better retain staff in particular areas, such as Healthcare Science.

“We actively support placements for these students during their Higher Education but can lose those healthcare science students in the longer term because many students move back home or to another area once they have completed their degree.”

Fay Froggett-Brown, Learning and Development Facilitator

With a proven 85% success rate in retaining staff with its healthcare support worker and business administration apprenticeships, the Trust hopes this can be replicated across the Healthcare science workforce by ‘growing our own’.

“We hope that by creating a healthcare science pathway, using the apprenticeship levels to provide a clear career path from level 2 to level 6, we can attract more people to the programme and then keep this talent within the Trust.”

Fay Froggett-Brown, Learning and Development Facilitator

Looking forward

Looking ahead, the Trust is excited about the potential opportunities apprenticeships can bring to the organisation and its workforce.

“We are in really strong position currently, having built our apprenticeship programme in key areas over the years. Moving forward, we will continue to review service need and look to apprenticeships as an effective way to meet these needs. It is our intention to optimise the use of our levy budget to best meet service, organisational and workforce needs so that patients at our Trust receive the best possible care.”

Fay Froggett-Brown, Learning and Development Facilitator