

Healthcare

Apprenticeships



Education & Skills
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NHS

York Teaching Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Case Study from ESFA

Case Study - York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

York Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust serves around 800,000 people across its region, providing both acute and specialist healthcare services. With over 8,500 members of staff across eight hospitals, apprenticeships are a growing presence across the Trust's workforce, with a variety of clinical and non-clinical apprenticeships on offer for both new starters and existing staff. Although apprenticeships have been part of the organisation for several years, the Trust is excited by the recent opportunities provided by the Apprenticeship Levy in offering staff the chance to upskill, address specific skills needs and grow a sustainable workforce for the future.

Developing a pipeline of talent

Apprenticeships have always played a role at York Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, primarily used in previous years as a way to recruit school leavers into business administration roles. Since 2017, however, the Trust has used its levy fund to expand its programme, with current apprenticeships on offer in laboratory medicine, biomedical science and pharmacy to team leading, business admin and customer services. With standards now on offer up to degree level, the Trust is also using apprenticeships to offer its existing staff more career and personal development opportunities, and around 80% of those on an apprenticeship are current employees.

"Since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy we've been proactive in expanding and diversifying our apprenticeship offer. At present, we're focusing on encouraging our current employees onto an apprenticeship, allowing them to gain skills to support their current or future role – this is particularly valuable for departments which did not have these training opportunities previously. Also, in doing this we can secure a pipeline of talent, particularly for hard-to-fill roles in some of our clinical areas."

Cathy Skilbeck, Clinical Workforce Development Coordinator

Facing increasing demand

With the Trust facing increasing demands on service provision, a common experience across the NHS nationally, having highly skilled professionals available to fill essential roles is crucial. As such, apprenticeships are proving critical to the continuation of providing high quality patient care.

There has been a notable reduction in applications to universities for the registered professional degrees. Nursing is just one example of this, particularly following the removal of the NHS Bursary. Apprenticeships and the introduction of the levy mean that employees can still be supported to undertake the necessary qualifications for professional roles which are essential for our Trust. This is why, as an organisation, we're keen to support the use of higher and degree apprenticeships to address workforce challenges where possible. Also, by using apprenticeships to provide comprehensive training to current staff, we have a stronger guarantee that we can retain these quality staff and develop a sustainable workforce that is fit for purpose."

Cathy Skilbeck, Clinical Workforce Development Coordinator

Ageing workforce

Another way in which apprenticeships are helping the Trust build a sustainable workforce is by helping tackle its ageing workforce. The Trust has a significant population of experienced staff who could retire in the next five years. As such, apprenticeships are being built into workforce plans both for existing and new staff, with entry level roles, such as health care support workers and Laboratory technicians, being supported through an apprenticeship specific to that vacancy.

"We know we need to 'grow our own' talent. We are not alone in having an ageing workforce. Therefore, using apprenticeships from entry level is a fantastic way to bring younger talent into our organisation, provide them with the relevant training and continue to offer a defined career pathway."

Cathy Skilbeck, Clinical Workforce Development Coordinator

Looking ahead

With plans for an annual growth of its apprenticeship intake, the Trust sees apprenticeships as an effective way to invest in its employees and its services in the long-term. Looking ahead, the Trust is keen to see the further development of apprentice standards at level six and seven that are relevant for professional registered roles and will further support the development of more senior roles.

"Apprenticeships are so far proving a fantastic way for us to invest in employees, grow our workforce and equip staff with the relevant training to contribute to high quality patient care. We're excited to see the impact apprenticeships can continue to have on our work as a Trust."

Cathy Skilbeck, Clinical Workforce Development Coordinator