



WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE AN APPRENTICESHIP MANAGER

We spoke with Alys Reeves (apprenticeship manager) and Deborah Barker (group talent manager), about what it's like to implement healthcare apprenticeships at Spire Healthcare.



Spire Healthcare

1. What is your organisation's approach to apprenticeships?

The UK Healthcare sector is facing a severe skills shortage which is only expected to worsen over time. We are looking to use the Apprenticeship Levy to develop our colleagues and help reduce the skills shortage, especially around the lack of nurses.

We champion Apprenticeships by giving all Apprentices the time they need to complete their studies. For the degree level programmes this is a substantial amount of time "off the job" over and above the 20%.

We have just launched the Spire Healthcare Apprenticeship Awards that looks to reward Apprentices who can demonstrate their achievements, contribution and the impact they have had on Spire Healthcare and their hospital, department or area of work.

We have some wonderful, enthusiastic and committed trainees right across our business in hospitals and in our support/distribution centres and we want to celebrate their success and showcase their achievements.

2. Which apprenticeships do you deliver?

We offer a range of Apprenticeships both clinical and non-clinical. This includes: Accountancy, Project Management, Engineering, Business Administration, Chef, Cyber Security, Digital Marketing, Pharmacy, IS Business Analyst, Laboratory Technician, Electrician, Operating Department Practitioner, Registered Nurse, Healthcare Support Worker and Senior Leaders Master's Degree.

We are also introducing a Management Development Apprenticeship Programme called LEAP (Learn, Engage, Apply and Perform) that started February 2020 for all levels of management including our Team Leaders, Heads of Department and Senior Management Teams.

3. Which providers and EPAOs are you partnering with?

We are working with over 30 Providers to deliver these Apprenticeships.

This includes: Pier Technology, BPP, Buckinghamshire New University, Buttercups, CSR Scientific Training, Canfield University, Estio, Hit Training, JTL and Derby University.

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We have found that Apprenticeships are a fantastic way to develop our colleagues.

4. What steps have you taken so far to move towards setting up the apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships at Spire Healthcare were first set up in 2017. Since then we have partnered with over 30 Apprenticeship Providers/Universities to deliver a range of Apprenticeships to support our clinical and non-clinical requirements. We work with the Providers/Universities to make the content of the Apprenticeships meet the needs of Spire Healthcare. In most instances this required a senior expert in the field from Spire working with the provider to input on the content of the Apprenticeship, whilst ensuring it meets the requirements of the standard and the Assessment Plan.

Throughout the Apprenticeship we ensure that each apprentice makes suitable progress and set up suitable lines of escalation and feedback. We also ensure the quality of each provider and regularly oversee quality through feedback and monitoring.



Alys Reeves (L) Apprenticeship manager
Deborah Barker (R) Group talent manager

5. What are your apprentice numbers looking like?

We had the first Apprentices at Spire Healthcare in 2017 with 150 HCA learners. Since then it has grown in to 350 at the beginning of 2020. This is set increase even further with the introduction of the LEAP Programme.

6. Do you have an agreed start date?

Each Apprenticeship has different start dates and have continual start dates throughout the year. The exception to this is the Degree programmes that tend to start in May and September.

7. What has been the hardest part?

I would say the hardest part is finding suitable providers. With 39 hospitals we need geographical coverage throughout England so national providers are required, but for our Higher and Degree Apprenticeships we partner with various Universities. There has to be a contract in place with each Training Provider and University which takes time and resource before an Apprenticeship can commence.

8. What has been the best part?

There is nothing more rewarding than seeing your colleagues progress. We have found that Apprenticeships are a fantastic way to develop our colleagues and we have seen many success stories of people starting as a Healthcare Assistant Level 2 and progressing all the way to starting on the Nursing Degree.

9. Do you have any tips for other apprenticeship leads?

With all the different Apprenticeship standards on offer I think it can be a mind field of where to use your Levy. I think the best starting point is looking at where the biggest need in the organisation is.

This may require taking a longer term view and identifying where there may be skills gaps in a few years and how a career and development plan can be implemented in the short term that will prevent gaps in the future.

10. What are the next steps for you?

The implementation of the LEAP programme will dominate the beginning of the year. We will also continue to look at other way of utilising the Levy to help the skills shortage in the Healthcare Sector.

Resources available

[HASO standards](#)

[Toolkit](#)

[Pathways tool](#)

[Calculator tool](#)

[T Levels](#)