

BRIDGE TO BANK: SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO NHS EMPLOYMENT

How North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust harnessed talented young health and social care students and gave them the required experience to work for the Trust as health care assistants.

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust provide hospital and community health services to half a million people. They have a long history of youth engagement, having taken part in the dream placement scheme; a scheme which gives students an insight into the world of work with leading Cumbrian employers.

The challenge

Young people seeking employment in the NHS can sometimes find it challenging to access opportunities if they have no previous health sector experience. North Cumbria Integrated NHS Foundation Trust realised that there was a wealth of talented young people on their doorstep who could be future healthcare support workers if only they could evidence the required experience.

What they did

The Trust worked with their local college to design a new programme which has helped students gain employment as bank health care assistants within the Trust.

The 'bridge to bank' programme is a three week scheme that has been set up to help nurse cadets and health and social care students get the required experience to work for the Trust as health care assistants. The programme includes induction, the Care Certificate, placement on a ward, team building and patient safety.

The Trust ran the first cohort in the summer of 2019 after local students had finished their studies with Carlisle college.

“We decided to launch the programme to provide nurse cadets and health and social care students with a ‘bridge’ into employment with the Trust as health care assistants which could then lead to other career opportunities such as nursing apprenticeships and other substantive nursing posts.”

- James Manser, Learning Facilitator at NCUH

The outcome

From the first cohort of students eight students were successful in gaining employment on the bank as HCAs, with several of the successful applicants hoping to moving into apprenticeships soon and develop their careers with the Trust.

The Trust ran a second cohort this year, which has resulted in an additional seven learners gaining employment with the Trust. Realising the positive impact of the course the Trust recently started a third cohort with 4 learners at west Cumberland hospital.

The program has enabled North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust to not only harness young talent from the local area to enhance their workforce but also provide valuable chances for learners to take the first step in building their NHS careers.

“Bridge to the bank has taught me valuable life skills and gave me the opportunity to gain deeper knowledge on healthcare and also gave me the chance to work as a proper employee in a health care environment.”

- Chris Greensmith, health and social care student from Carlisle who successfully completed the programme

