

# WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE AN APPRENTICESHIP LEAD



**We spoke with Leigh-Ann Johnston (Apprenticeship Manager), about what it's like to implement healthcare apprenticeships at South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust**



**South Warwickshire**  
NHS Foundation Trust

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

We cover a wide range of apprenticeships in the clinical and non-clinical areas of the workforce. We have been running the Senior Healthcare Support Worker (Level 3) along with Business Administrator (Level 3), Assistant Practitioner (Level 5), Nursing Associate (Level 5), Operations Departmental Manager (Level 5), Chartered Manager Degree (Level 6) and Senior Leader (Level 7) for a few years now.

We recruited in September 2020 our First Occupational Therapy Degree (Level 6) apprentice, our first two Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Level 7) apprentices and we are currently in the process to recruit the first Registered Nurse Degree (Level 6) apprentices due to start in March 2021.

We currently work with managers when they wish to post a new job out on making it an apprenticeship role. We hope to deliver the Dietitian Degree, Podiatry Degree, District Nursing Degree and Operating Department Practitioner Degree apprenticeships very soon.

## **2. Which providers and EPAOs are you partnering with?**

Our current training partners are; Coventry University, The University of Derby, Solihull College and Pier Technologies. All of these providers were procured using Salisbury.

## **3. What steps have you taken so far to move towards setting up the apprenticeships?**

We adopted the apprenticeship provision from the onset in 2017, this enabled the Trust to offer a wide range of apprenticeships and develop the programmes. As the apprenticeship manager I work with the Pre-graduate Development Team as they provide advice and support to the Clinical Support, Assistant Practitioners, Nursing Associates and Registered Nurse Degree apprentices. We are now a supporting provider for apprentices due to the pre-graduate development nurses being so involved in the delivery of the courses.

We mainly use the levy to support Trust staff to upskill and to 'grow our own' with pathways including the Assistant Practitioner and Nursing Associate apprenticeships. We do also recruit into post for our non-clinical roles, we have had many 18-24 year olds who need additional support and our team is able to provide this working closely with the providers we have.

## **4. What are your apprentices numbers like?**

So far, each year we are increasing our numbers and we currently have 160 apprentices on programme.

## **5. What has been the hardest part?**

We have found the 20% of-the-job training for current staff a difficult side of the apprenticeships as managers sometimes feel they are losing them for a day a week.

## **6. What has been the best part?**

The opportunities we can offer people and opening up career pathways for staff.

## **7. Do you have any tips for other apprenticeship leads?**

Work with managers to ensure they have all the information needed on what the apprenticeship requires and keep them informed throughout the process. Keep close links with training providers and ask for regular updates of the apprentices. Be organised and plan your cohorts in advance. I believe connection is key to growth and I am part of a careers hub which is led by a lead who strategically aligns apprenticeships across health and care in Coventry and Warwickshire making it easier to procure courses and work together to offer the best apprenticeships to our trust.

## **8. What are the next steps for you?**

We will be looking at what other apprenticeship standards we can offer, for example IT and Project Management apprenticeships. We will also be linking with the colleges to provide T-Level placements and how they link to an apprenticeship.