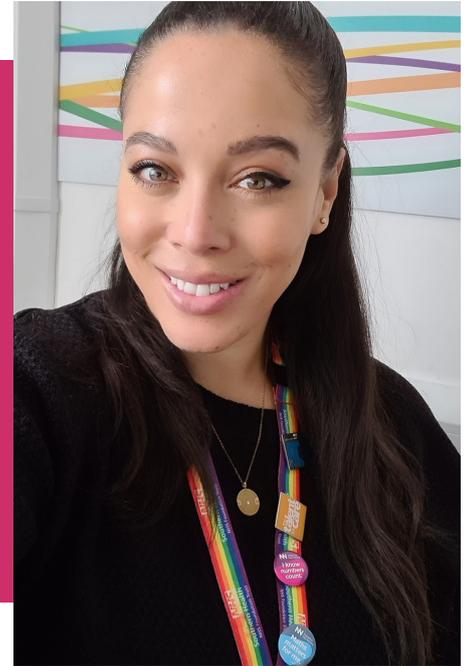


WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE AN APPRENTICESHIP LEAD



We spoke with Renée Lima, about what it's like to implement healthcare apprenticeships at Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust.

Renée is the apprenticeship lead at Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust. The trust employs 6000 staff in Hampshire providing community health, specialist mental health and learning disability services. Her day job involves operationally managing apprenticeship provision within the organisation.



Southern Health
NHS Foundation Trust

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

Within Southern Health we really value apprenticeships and are really keen to continue to grow them. We fully appreciate the opportunities that apprenticeships offer to both our new and existing employees towards developing their careers. Since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017 we have continuously expanded the apprenticeship standards that we offer. We have definitely seen benefits thus far including improved patient care, widened participation, transferability and progression through developmental pathways.

2. Which apprenticeships do you deliver/are you planning to offer?

We offer a range of apprenticeship standards at various levels from level 2 right up to level 7. Some of these include: Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker, Level 3 Business Administrator, Level 5 Nursing Associate, Level 6 Degree Registered Nurse, Level 6 Degree Occupational Therapy, Level 7 Advanced Clinical Practice, Level 2 Production Chef, Level 3 Engineering Service and Maintenance Engineer and many more. Coming soon will be the Level 7 Clinical Associate in Psychology.

3. Which Training Providers and EPAOs are you partnering with?

Given the variety of apprenticeship standards mentioned above, we partner with several organisations to deliver quality apprenticeships to our employees. More recently it has been beneficial working with other local Trusts and local authorities as a consortium to attract providers to deliver a particular apprenticeship standard locally. Initially when the apprenticeship levy was introduced in 2017, procurement was a complex task. However as apprenticeships have evolved, the procurement has become easier especially through the Salisbury Managed Procurement Service and the introduction of national tenders that we are able to tap into.

4. What steps have you taken towards setting up apprenticeships?

Initially when the apprenticeship levy was first introduced following the apprenticeship reforms, our team focused on a career development pathway based on the organisation needs in terms of addressing skills shortages (such as within Nursing), and additionally developing and upskilling the existing workforce. We had a communication strategy in place to inform and advise staff within the organisation about the changes to apprenticeships. We held drop in sessions for managers and staff to find out more information about the new apprenticeship standards and the apprenticeship levy, including the application process.

Nearly 4 years later we can now see the benefit that this career development pathway has had on the workforce. We can see that there is a clear pipeline of staff progressing through the various apprenticeship standards at different levels, and we can also see that knowledge and understanding of apprenticeships has vastly grown over the last few years.

5. What are your apprenticeship numbers like?

Our apprenticeship numbers continue to increase year on year. These numbers depend on the length of the apprenticeship programme, the service that the individuals are working within, the size of the team, and the level of support available within the team. This varies throughout the organisation.

6. What has been the hardest part?

Initially the hardest part was the lack of backfill support for the Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship. Although we wanted to support staff onto the programme, it was becoming a huge challenge to do so without any financial support being available for the teams. However, this has since changed, and we are so glad to receive the new employer support package which will help towards supporting more staff onto this apprenticeship standard.

7. What has been the best part?

It has been absolutely amazing to see the apprentices' progress and successful completion of their apprenticeship programmes. The transferability of the apprenticeship standards has also been really great to see. For example, non-clinical staff transitioning to a clinical support developmental pathway since completing their Business Administration apprenticeship.

Additionally we have staff who started on a Level 2 or Level 3 apprenticeship who are now nearing the end of their Level 6 Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship. All in all I am so proud of each and every apprentice, as I know it is not easy to study, work and have a personal life, let alone a global pandemic in the last year. They are truly inspirational.

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

- Get to grips with the ESFA funding rules.
- Contract management is key for quality apprenticeship delivery.
- Monitor progress of your apprentices tightly – including sickness etc.
- Engage managers, especially with 20% off-the-job training requirement.
- Keep up to date with standards, national policy, etc. HASO is a great source!

9. What are the next steps for you?

We will continue to grow our apprenticeship provision in line with our workforce plans. This will include working with providers regarding T-Levels and industry placement opportunities. Furthermore expanding into traineeships as part of our pipeline for the future, contributing towards social mobility and encouraging participation from underrepresented groups. This is an area we are really passionate about exploring and expanding within.