

# FE COLLEGE PROVISION OF REGISTERED NURSE DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP

Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has taken on Registered Nurse Degree Apprentices recently. They are leading the way nationally on delivering the Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship through a Further Education College, Truro and Penwith College. We spoke with both the trust and college to find out more.

## Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust



## **1. Why did you want to invest in the Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship (RNDA) route?**

We felt that using apprenticeship provision enabled our current staff to have access to these career development opportunities, and still be able to earn a salary whilst doing so. If this had not been an option, the vast majority of our current staff members would not have been able to undertake their training as they could not have afforded to leave employment and utilise a student loan.

It is also a useful recruitment tool to enable us to recruit to our vacant clinical support worker positions, promoting our career development opportunities for individuals who wish to progress to undertake their professional registration.

## **2. Why did you want to partner with an Further Education (FE) College rather than a Higher Education Institution (HEI)?**

We feel it was important to retain as much of our money within our own local economy as possible. Cornwall is an area that is known for its deprivation status, and now having lost the EU funding we are trying hard to maintain our local economy. We have also previously partnered with the local FE college for the delivery of our Level 3 programmes. Many of the staff undertaking the RNDA programmes will have had contact with the FE college at some stage, either as a learner themselves or as a parent of students. As such they would feel less intimidated about attending a course run by these providers than attending a University provision.

## **3. What were the main challenges for you in setting this up?**

Ensuring that the University working with the FE college understood the specific needs within Cornwall was a challenge. As was recognising our previous relationships with the



FE College and the need for some flexibility for our students at times due to work pressures from our NHS systems

## **4. How has your experience been to date?**

At the current time, we have started a small cohort of 9 apprentices, 5 Mental health and 4 Adult. It was due to be 5 and 5 but sadly we had 1 apprentice resign from the programme within 1 month of starting due to personal circumstances. So far we have found the FE college to be incredibly responsive to any questions and are very supportive of our students.

## 5. What are your future plans for the RNDA programme?

We will be continuing to offer RNDA cohorts for our current staff with a further cohort planned for September 2022. This will be significantly higher in numbers, with an agreement so far for 20 RNDA's Mental Health and plans for a similar number of Adult branch.

# Truro and Penwith College



## 1. Why, as an FE College, did you want to provide the RNDA route?

Approximately half of all 16-18 year olds in Cornwall choose to study at the College. A high number of them are studying towards science A-levels, Health and Social Care Diplomas and the new Health T Level. The medics and Health and Social Care academies are also well attended. We also have a significant number of adults studying Access to Nursing qualifications. Many of these individuals leave the county to attend universities elsewhere in the country, studying health related programmes.

Current numbers include 1500 A Level students (25% studying science), 300 Level 3 Health and Social Care students, 60 Access to Nursing Students, 25 Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker Apprentices, a number taking the theatre pathway and 60 Level 5 Nursing Associate students.

Having successfully established the Senior Healthcare Support Worker and Nursing Associate Apprenticeships, there was a desire to further this provision and address the local workforce requirements for Registered Nurses in both Adult and Mental Health Nursing. Local employers currently have substantial vacancies and have to source candidates from outside of the county.

## **2. How did you establish this partnership in your local system?**

At the start of 2019 the two NHS Trusts within Cornwall began initiatives to highlight issues with their future workforce, a key issue being a lack of local training for nursing roles and an inability to tap into the young talent leaving the county to study elsewhere and then not returning. They highlighted a wish to work with providers who would be able to teach provision locally, have a visible presence within departments and a supportive and nurturing approach to students. Due to the reputation of the College, we were invited to explore how we could support these workforce development needs. All parties had very clear shared objectives and established an open, close working relationship, with weekly and sometimes daily contact

The Trusts were involved in programme design and are actively involved in delivery with any challenges openly discussed and addressed together. A number of the teaching team are still actively working within local NHS Trusts, as well as ensuring currency of knowledge and practice these contacts enable the College to pull on a wealth of specialist speakers to enrich the programme.

## **3. What were the main challenges for you in setting this up?**

The College required a Higher Education partner that would support us in this journey, we had previous links with the University of Greenwich, which led to initial discussions. The partnership has grown in strength from there, based on a mutual passion for outstanding health provision. The Link Tutor and Quality Lead from the University of Greenwich has formed strong relationships with the programme team and local NHS Trusts. The relationship is open, supportive and productive.

## **4. How has the experience been to date?**

We have welcomed our first cohort of RNDA, 5 Mental Health and 4 Adult students. We have been very lucky to attract a highly experienced teaching team, who all share a strong passion for delivering an outstanding, student-centred programme. The team have invested significant time in developing teaching resources and enriching the programme. The students are settling in well to the programme and feedback has been highly positive. Starting small has enabled us to fully embed the programme and ensure outstanding quality before ramping up to larger cohorts.

## 5. What are your future plans for the RNDA and other degree level programmes?

The BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing and BSc (Hons) Mental Health Nursing Programmes address a significant remaining gap needed to meet local workforce requirements. This provision enables local learners, 16+, to have full access to the route to nursing career pathway. A number of these learners will feed in from courses delivered by Truro and Penwith College, as previously outlined. In addition, the programme provision will meet a local requirement of learners to learn in the community, with the community and for the community. Expanding our healthcare delivery programmes also enables the College to build a multi-disciplined team strengthening the learning experience across each programme. It is our intention to continue to expand our delivery.

We are now hoping to apply for and gain Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) approval. This will enable us to take UCAS direct entry students onto both the Mental Health and Adult Registered Nurse Degree programmes, to further support local workforce requirements. As we have now built a strong multidisciplinary teaching team, we would be open to developing additional health provision in response to local workforce needs in future years.

