

# BRIDGEWATER COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

We spoke to Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust who offer a diverse range of clinical and non-clinical apprenticeships. Read on to find out more about their experiences.



## Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust



### 1. Briefly describe your organisation

We are a leading provider of community health services in the North West of England. We provide high quality community and specialist services to people living in; Halton, Warrington, St Helens and Oldham and a specialist community dental network covering a larger geography. As a dedicated provider of community services, our strategy is to bring more care closer to home.

This means providing a wider range of services in community settings and to keep people healthier for longer by developing more specialist services to support people to live independently at home.

## **2. Currently which apprenticeship do you offer?**

We offer a diverse range of clinical and non-clinical apprenticeships including:

- Level 3 Business Administrator
- Level 2 Healthcare Support Worker and Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker
- Level 5 Nursing Associate and Degree Nursing Top Ups
- Associate and Degree Level Project Management Apprenticeships
- Level 6 Chartered Manager (degree) Apprenticeships
- level 7 Advanced Clinical Practitioner (integrated degree)
- Finance Level 2 to Level 7
- Level 7 Digital and Technology Solutions Specialist Masters Apprenticeship

**You can access further information about these apprenticeship standards [here](#).**

## **3. What benefits have apprenticeships brought to your organisation?**

Apprenticeships are providing us with greater opportunity to support our existing staff to access career progression and development. They benefit us by helping us to create clear career pathways for our staff and are fast becoming a key part of our recruitment and retention strategy.

The diverse range of apprenticeship standards now available are helping us to address skill gaps and give us the flexibility to ensure our people are trained and equipped with the knowledge skills and behaviours to support service transformation and new ways of delivering care.

Crucially apprenticeships are also helping us to attract a new pool of talent from our local communities as we strive to grow our own workforce for the future. When externally appointing to apprenticeship positions, we can be more flexible with our entry criteria and so widen access to our vacancies.

## **4. What has been your proudest achievements for your apprenticeship programmes?**

In 2021 we joined all other NHS Trust in a call to reduce our health care support worker vacancies to zero, we took the decision to convert all our vacancies to apprenticeship positions. We recruited 15 'new to care' apprentices directly from the communities in which we provide services. The initiative significantly raised the profile and awareness of apprenticeships and their benefits internally. This has encouraged more of our recruiting managers to consider apprenticeships as an alternative to like for like recruitment. Additionally, our approach to widen access and offer an enhanced recruitment and onboarding experience received national acclaim at the Nursing Times Workforce Awards, an accolade we are incredibly proud of.

## **5. What do you hope to achieve in the next 12 months with your apprenticeship programmes?**

We hope to continue to grow the number of externally recruited apprenticeships throughout the organisation and we are excited to be introducing our first Allied Health Professional Degree Apprenticeships in 2022.

## **6. What would you say to other organisations considering employing apprentices?**

There are so many options it really can transform training and development within your organisation. You'll uncover incredible talent and potential through apprenticeships and apprenticeship progression and retention statistics tell their own story.

Apprenticeships can help all of us change the narrative that you must have 'previous NHS experience' to apply for our vacancies, ensuring we can attract more people to the sector and establish the workforce for the future.



### **What the apprentices say:**

**Sandra speaking about her proudest achievement on her apprenticeship:**

**"I am proud to have supported a clinical team and worked with Asylum Seeker families at the Daresbury Hotel at the start of the apprenticeship. This was a very humbling experience to listen to the family's stories on their passage to England to escape their prior living conditions."**