

Peer Worker Apprenticeship: An implementation journey

We spoke to Saffron Bradshaw, Peer Support Development Worker at Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to learn how the organisation is preparing to implement the Peer Worker Apprenticeship

What is the Peer Worker Apprenticeship?

The [peer worker apprenticeship standard](#) has been developed to support increased opportunities for people with lived experience to enter and progress in Peer Worker roles. This apprenticeship standard will provide a significant steppingstone into a wide variety of peer support roles including leadership roles such as Senior Peer Support Worker, Peer Support Lead or Peer Support Supervisors.

The Peer Worker apprenticeship standard has been co-produced with Peer Workers who have drawn on their own personal experience of the peer role to inform the knowledge, skills and behaviours. You can find out more about the apprenticeship [HERE](#)

About Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Nottinghamshire Healthcare provides integrated healthcare services, including mental health, intellectual disability, and physical health services. Over 9000 dedicated staff provide these services in a variety of settings, ranging from the community through to acute wards, as well as secure settings.

The challenge

Nottinghamshire Healthcare are the lead employer for the Peer Worker Trailblazer Group, and as an organisation they were well placed to understand the opportunity the Peer Worker Apprenticeship presented and were keen to implement the apprenticeship once it was approved for delivery.

The challenge was that the organisation had established a successful internal Peer Support Worker training programme and the apprenticeship was not widely understood by staff and managers. The Trust needed a strategy to engage with staff so that when the apprenticeship was ready for delivery, they had a pool of “ready to go” learners whilst also raising awareness among managers. The Trust also wanted to ensure that existing experienced Peer Workers were equally recognised for learning opportunities outside of the apprenticeship.

What they did

The Peer Support Development Team at Nottinghamshire Healthcare implemented a series of communication and engagement initiatives to start to socialise and prepare for implementation, these included:

- **Accessible and easy to read guidance.** Staff and managers could access this in their own time and at their own pace via the Trusts intranet.
- **Step by step process.** Part of the guidance that was produced was a step-by-step process map, this really helped staff to navigate the information more easily.
- **Drop-in sessions.** The team ran drop-in sessions for staff and managers where they could find out more about the apprenticeship and see if it was right for them.
- **Existing staff.** The team understood that the apprenticeship wouldn't be suitable for all staff, especially experience Peer Workers. Therefore, they ensured that they were also able to advise experienced Peer Workers about other apprenticeships (for example the coaching apprenticeship) and CPD options.
- **Application form.** Staff were able to express an interesting in the apprenticeship via an online application form.
- **English and Maths.** All staff were able to access functional skills support as standalone CPD and also in preparation for starting the apprenticeship.
- **Myth busters.** Myth busting guidance was fundamental in breaking down misconceptions about apprenticeships in general.
- **Managers and service leads.** Managers were given dedicated resources and sessions so that they could understand how the apprenticeship would complement their departments.

The outcome

The Peer Support Development Team has successfully raised awareness for the Peer Worker Apprenticeship across the organisation and they have been able to create a pool of staff who are eagerly waiting for the apprenticeship to be approved for delivery so they can start this exciting learning opportunity.

At the same time experienced staff who weren't eligible for the apprenticeship have benefited from drop-in sessions and guidance that has enabled them to access CPD and explore other apprenticeship opportunities

The team have also ensured that managers feel more confident in their understanding of the apprenticeship and how they can also support future apprentices in their departments.

You can contact the team directly to find out more –
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