

# Quality Principles for NHS Apprenticeships

Standards for Healthcare Employers



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How to use this document</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Embedding Apprenticeships in the organisation's workforce development strategy</b>	<b>5</b>
The Principles:	5
Applying the Principles:	6
External issues to be aware of:	7
<b>Management commitment</b>	<b>8</b>
The Principles:	8
Applying the Principles:	9
External issues to be aware of:	10
<b>Effective learning programmes and processes</b>	<b>11</b>
The Principles:	11
Applying the Principles:	12
External issues to be aware of:	14
<b>Summary of the principles that underpin delivery of high quality Apprenticeships in healthcare</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix: Sources of support</b>	<b>18</b>

# Introduction

This document presents a **set of principles** that, when reflected in practice, demonstrate excellence in Apprenticeship delivery within healthcare employers. The principles offer a tool to aid improvement – they will help those already engaged in Apprenticeship training to develop their practice further. Those new to Apprenticeships may benefit from additional support to help plan and implement their own approaches, but this document will help by making clear the standards to which they should aspire.



Health sector employers value Apprenticeships as a key means to ensure that new recruits get the best start to their careers as well as developing the skills and careers of the sector's existing workforce. The ambitious public sector Apprenticeship target and the Apprenticeship Levy provide further impetus to the take-up of Apprenticeships in the health sector.

It is vital that Apprenticeships add value to patient care by enabling health employers to 'grow their own' team, reaping the rewards of retaining a well trained and committed workforce and providing a wider and deeper talent pool who are capable of progressing to secure more hard-to-fill vacancies across a range of occupations.

Apprentices are employees and partnership working with local Trades Union representatives can provide an effective source of advice and support for employers, not only in agreeing appropriate employment packages, policies and procedures for a high quality offer, but also in ensuring that strategies and implementation plans provide genuine equality of access to attract the best applicants from across local communities and potentially under-represented/ disadvantaged groups. Partnership working also creates excellent opportunities for apprentices and staff to access wider union learning support and mentoring mechanisms.

## How we developed these principles

These principles are drawn from existing examples of health organisations that demonstrate good practice in Apprenticeship delivery. Detailed discussions with health employers, learning providers and apprentices themselves identified the vital features of high-quality Apprenticeship delivery within healthcare settings.

High-quality Apprenticeships do not arise fully formed from their initial design but are the result of a process of incremental improvements. All the case studies report that they found it necessary to improve on their initial design, often with major alterations to delivery arrangements. The vast majority did not alter their ambition for high-quality Apprenticeships. The following sections present a distillation of that learning with the intention that others can take full advantage of this experience.

## Introduction



### How to use this document

This document is designed to help employers and those leading on the development of Apprenticeships in their organisation to understand what it takes to achieve high-quality outcomes and the standards they should be expected to evidence through their organisational approach to Apprenticeships. There are 21 principles, structured around three main themes;

- Embedding Apprenticeships in the organisation's workforce strategy
- Securing management commitment
- Effective learning programmes and processes

Each principle is illustrated with real-world examples from the research, and is structured in the following way:

*The principles:* Lists the defining success criteria which, when present, demonstrate that an organisation's practice can be considered to represent excellent practice in relation to that theme. The principles are also summarised at the end of this document.

*Applying the principles:* These offer advice on meeting the standards expected of high-quality apprenticeships within the healthcare setting. This section therefore expands on the success criteria that an employer needs to have in place to support good practice delivery.

*External issues to be aware of:* Here we identify confounding factors raised by healthcare employers, where present, may act as barriers to the successful implementation of apprenticeships, but which are not normally under the direct control of health employers. Employers need to be aware of these and take account of their potential impact within their plans and actions.

In all cases, illustrative examples of practice from across healthcare employers are used to help clarify how others have sought to deliver high quality processes and outcomes that benefit learners and the organisation.

Please note that the principles set out in this guidance are specific to the delivery of Apprenticeships and should be considered alongside the Health Education England (HEE) Quality Framework for education and training.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many health employer staff and other stakeholders who generously gave up their time to provide the evidence base on which these standards have been developed. Members of the Project Board have provided valuable insight and contributions throughout. They are: Kirk Lower, Health Education England; Candace Miller, National Skills Academy for Health; Ian Wheeler, Skills for Health; Sue Sparks, RDASH NHS; Jill Elsworthy, Health Education East of England; Gill Risby, Health Education England and Daryl Keyworth, National Skills Academy for Health. We should also like to thank members of the Trade Union Apprenticeship Sub-Group for their insightful contribution in the development of these principles.

# Embedding Apprenticeships in the organisation's workforce development strategy

## What is the issue?



Apprenticeships at their best are a basis for both career progression pathways – flexible options for learning and working to build a productive and knowledgeable workforce – and better healthcare through addressing skill-shortage occupations, improving retention rates and reducing reliance on agency workers, amongst other factors. Many health employers report above average completion rates, and providing a high quality offer that matches learners' aspirations will ensure health apprenticeships can routinely outperform national benchmarks and deliver on workforce ambitions. National statistics on apprenticeship completion rates can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>. Senior management involvement has been highlighted as a crucial element in encouraging service managers to engage with Apprenticeships and drive the business case for investment. More evidence is required to establish the full impact of Apprenticeships on workforce development outcomes, however organisations can benefit from formal systems that collate information on the performance of Apprenticeships, ensuring that they are delivering on employers' objectives and providing a return on investment.

### The Principles:

*Clear recognition of Apprenticeship contribution and a high-quality Apprenticeship offer*

- Apprenticeship programmes are designed to support the organisation's workforce development objectives to deliver better patient outcomes, while at the same time providing the learner with the skills, qualifications and ambition to succeed in their role and progress to the next level.

- Apprenticeship delivery across the organisation follows consistent, clearly stated policies and procedures, and a clear and well-understood Apprenticeship 'identity', which recognises the employee status of apprentices and the roles they fulfil, is used to help support positive perceptions of quality and relevance among learners and staff.

*Senior management leadership and commitment:*

- The Executive Team and Board have approved high quality Apprenticeship provision as a fundamental component of the organisation's

long-term workforce development strategy. They receive regular reports as to the success of this provision in addressing specific hard-to-fill vacancies/skill shortages and in improving patient care through a more flexibly skilled workforce.

- There is highly visible endorsement of high quality Apprenticeships by the CEO, Board and senior management team (SMT) including medical directors/nurse directors and the chief nurse. This provides a clear affirmation for service leads and builds long-term management commitment to Apprenticeships.

## Embedding Apprenticeships in the organisation's workforce development strategy



### *Feedback systems and learning lessons to spread best practice:*

- Apprenticeship completion rates and subsequent progressions within work and further education and training are monitored and benchmarked, alongside wider workforce development benefits such as improved staff retention rates, improvement in productivity, reductions in hard-to-fill vacancies, improved equality and diversity and reduced use of agency workers. These are collated and reported on a regular basis to the SMT, within a culture that drives for improvements and seeks to ensure that the organisation is among top performers for the region and nationally.
- Lessons on good practice and market intelligence on effective learning providers are not only shared with other health organisations but sought out, to learn and make improvements in the organisation's performance. Managers recognise that many areas of good practice are common across different types of health employers and different Apprenticeships and that learning can and should come from a range of sources.

### **Applying the Principles:**

- Having the endorsement of the organisation's leadership, including the CEO, medical directors/nurse directors, chief nurse and Board, encourages engagement and commitment among service managers. To that end, think about ensuring the SMT is always visible and engaged at Apprenticeship events and in staff publicity/communications promoting Apprenticeship pathways.
- Think about making Apprenticeships a standing item in SMT agendas and reported on at Board level. How well do SMT implement and hold managers to account for the application of Apprenticeship policies and operating procedures?
- Review your workforce strategy to ensure it makes clear what part you intend Apprenticeships to play in addressing key workforce development goals (e.g. replacing an ageing workforce, creating multi-skilled staff who can work more flexibly, or providing cost-effective routes to addressing skill shortages across clinical and non-clinical roles).
- Develop a clear range of metrics by which to measure and report on the impact that your Apprenticeship provision has on organisational performance. Measures relating to costs of recruitment; sickness/absence rates; uptake of training; staff satisfaction; qualification levels; retention and vacancy rates, how well the workforce represents the community, for example, will allow the SMT and Board to set targets, review progress and establish the return on investment.

**Health Education England working across Yorkshire and Humber** operate a regional Healthcare Science Apprenticeship where Apprentices work across three main areas: physiological science; life sciences and clinical engineering. The workforce need was identified through a regional data collection exercise that identified a fall in the number of degree candidates since the withdrawal of bursaries in 2012 and the intention is to "home-grow" the future workforce through Apprenticeships with small numbers of individual employers becoming a network with scale.

## Embedding Apprenticeships in the organisation's workforce development strategy

**Leeds Teaching Hospital** apprentices who have successfully completed their Level 3 Medical Engineering Apprenticeship are applying for a foundation degree in Clinical Engineering. Their service manager has investigated options, and chosen a distance-learning course at the University of West of England. Course materials are online, and the plan is to allocate one day per week for study. In addition, there are some two-week residential blocks in Bristol, for exams. On completion they will qualify for Band 6 Technician job opportunities.



- Consider how well your organisation's Apprenticeship strategy benefits from (and/or leads on) initiatives that respond to regional workforce issues and challenge yourself to engage actively.
- Actively challenge perceptions that may exist in the organisation that Apprenticeships are only for entry and non-professionally registered level roles by promoting Higher Apprenticeships in a range of areas, non-clinical as well as clinical, e.g in management, finance or health sciences.
- Offering Apprentices good prospects with terms and conditions that attract candidates of the appropriate quality will help to underpin successful delivery and reinforce a burgeoning reputation that Apprenticeships in the health sector represent a high quality work-based route to career progression. How well is your workforce vision being communicated to potential apprentices, both within the organisation and externally?
- Engaging in effective partnership working with trades unions will help ensure your Apprenticeship policies and procedures not only align with best practice but truly underpin a strong and attractive Apprenticeship 'identity' within the organisation.



### External issues to be aware of:

- The nature of the local labour market can play a significant role in the ability to attract and retain appropriate candidates in a variety of circumstances. Pay attention in particular to the 'offer' being made by other local employers seeking to attract apprenticeship candidates.

# Management commitment

## What is the issue?



Design choices need to rest with service managers so they can maximise the contribution from Apprenticeships to their workforce and there are significant benefits to be had where managers are involved not only in the design of programmes but in reviewing how well ‘their’ apprentices are progressing and contributing to services as the apprentice grows in competence. Apprenticeship leads have a key role in guiding service managers through this process and linking them with learning providers so that a strong working partnership can be established that will improve the design and ensure high-quality delivery. The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) publishes rules and guidelines from time to time that clarify contractual parameters that such relationships need to have in place. These can be found by accessing the SFA webpages at <https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>. Developing Apprenticeships to become higher quality and to instil greater ambition among learners typically requires investment and the targeting of additional resources in designing, setting up and delivering Apprenticeships and in building a broader pipeline for engagement in all areas of health employment.

### The Principles:

#### *Service manager engagement*

- There are regular opportunities (online and face-to-face) for service managers to explore common workforce development issues from across different service areas and seek to generate potential solutions that combine Apprenticeships and other learning as appropriate.
- Service managers routinely use Apprenticeships in their staff development plans as an effective mechanism to build skills and progress talent. Design choices for delivery rest with service managers so they can use their understanding to maximise the contribution from Apprenticeships to their workforce.

#### *Well-resourced Apprenticeship programmes*

- There is adequate resource for the development, procurement and quality assurance of Apprenticeship programmes as well as for day-to-day delivery. This allows the organisation to build on the best of local and national knowledge and to demonstrate and celebrate success.
- Apprenticeship leads are able proactively communicate the benefits of Apprenticeships among service managers and develop a shared understanding of how Apprenticeships can best meet their workforce needs.

#### *The selection of roles, programmes and pathways that deliver organisational needs:*

- Service managers ‘own’ their Apprenticeship process through selecting learners, agreeing the learning content, providing mentoring and support arrangements through to progression planning. As service managers drive Apprenticeship activity directly, central Apprenticeship teams are able to focus on expansion and development of the organisation’s Apprenticeship offer as a whole.
- Service managers agree what measures of success are appropriate and report back on these, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data to evidence activity and benefit. These enable the employer to account for their investment in Apprenticeships and provide a clear picture of the returns.



## Management commitment

### Applying the Principles

- Think about the channels within the organisation (online or face-to-face) that you could use to debate workforce development issues and build collective understanding that Apprenticeships, combined with other learning programmes, can be a means to achieving workforce development goals, rather than being seen as an end in themselves. Organisations with well-developed Apprenticeship programmes, typically have structures in place for service managers and learners to feedback on the delivery of Apprenticeships. These help to improve existing provision, build ownership, encourage engagement and the sharing of lessons.
- Encouraging service managers to ‘own’ their Apprenticeship process through selecting learners, agreeing the learning content, providing mentoring and support arrangements through to progression planning can really help embed a quality process. Look at how consistently your managers are involved in review meetings to evaluate apprentice progress – could you make it an organisational requirement that service managers must be involved in the design and review of Apprenticeship learning? Service managers may need extra support, especially

**Homerton University Hospital NHS Trust** are trying to increase Apprentice numbers and the Apprentice project manager is working to identify areas with high turnovers of staff where it is felt Apprenticeships will bring something to the team. The Project Manager has had a mixed experience in convincing managers and considers it is important to start slowly and get buy-in from a few managers making sure they are really on board and then test the model, build on it and get good success stories, which can be shared with others.

where new to Apprenticeships. Think about how well your specialist Apprentice leads can meet the demand. Will extra resourcing be needed?

- Make sure your Apprenticeship leads are supported to communicate the benefits of Apprenticeships across the organisation and build capacity among service managers.
- Be aware that Apprentice leads also need time to develop the future pipeline of Apprenticeships through external partnerships and procurement processes. There are benefits to having access to a variety of learning providers offering a range of different delivery models which provide flexibility and choice.



## Management commitment

**Bexley CEPN** a networked arrangement of service and education providers, introduced the level 5 Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship across the 27 GP Practices in Bexley. The first step was to create interest from GP practices by asking them about the retirement age of nurses. The CEPN advertised the opportunity to study for the L5 Assistant Practitioner qualification and they had a cohort of 26 in January 2016 representing about one third of HCA headcount.



- Higher Apprenticeships are maturing rapidly and opening up new opportunities but while the development of standards that cover all occupational areas is underway, it will take time. A number of health employers have chosen to adopt the next best alternative and adapted these to suit their objectives while developments are progressed.
- Do use your networks and contacts with the various agencies that can offer support and advice to help you identify good quality learning providers with a clear understanding of health settings. Ofsted reports and the Skills for Health Quality Mark offer helpful indications and other employers will be able to share experiences of working with different providers.

### External issues to be aware of:

- Guidance for young people on Apprenticeships and the potential routes into higher-level careers is often limited. Many parents can have a strongly negative perception of the employment patterns associated with Apprenticeships. In an increasingly competitive market, health employers need to focus on their ability to offer flexible career paths with good employment terms and conditions.

### **Kings College Hospital, in partnership with Guys and St Thomas and St Georges**

could not convince local colleges that the numbers for a medical physics Apprenticeship would be sufficient for a viable cohort. They used the Level 3 Healthcare Assistant Apprenticeship instead and delivered job specific knowledge via weekly seminars. Host managers deliver specialist units that sit alongside the Apprenticeship framework. Although these are not currently a formal part of the qualification they provide much of the apprentices' technical knowledge.



# Effective learning programmes and processes

## What is the issue?

Partnership working between service manager and provider establishes a strong platform to improve the design and ensure high-quality delivery. The learning process is further improved if mentoring support underpins the knowledge transfer process and can also be used as a staff development tool for existing employees. Quality assessment procedures are vital to ensure that apprentices can apply their learning safely and appropriately in the workplace and can make a valuable contribution to service delivery as they progress through their Apprenticeship. Higher Apprenticeships represent an important bridge to progress from technician level to professional level through a work-based platform. Health Apprenticeships are already providing high-quality learning and career progression opportunities that make the most of the existing talent available – this is worth recognising and celebrating more widely.



### The Principles:

#### *Flexible approaches to meeting learner and organisational needs:*

- Delivery plans agreed with the learning provider include clear performance benchmarks in terms of the time required to complete and the proportion of starts that will complete. The arrangements for releasing staff for learning and assessment and regular communications between the apprentice, their supervisor and learning provider are all clearly specified.
- A structured approach to mentoring apprentices, with a dedicated tutor in their practice area, is in place to underpin the knowledge transfer process and provide mutual benefits to mentee and mentor.

- Learners are able to benefit from access to wider development opportunities and additional resources that are effectively integrated into their Apprenticeship programme.

#### *Strong selection and support mechanisms for learners:*

- There are strong selection and recruitment processes for Apprenticeship programmes that take account of the specific competences needed for the role and enable sound judgements to be made as to an applicant's capability to succeed.
- Available progression routes, qualifications, duration, timing and location of learning support services provided by the organisation, trade unions and training providers for

potential apprentices are clearly defined and describe tangible progression pathways. This allows potential learners to consider their career options, but also understand what is required of them along with how, where and from whom they can access support throughout their learning.

- There are signed Apprenticeship agreements/ learning 'contracts' in place that specify the mutual obligations on service managers and learners to commit the necessary time to undertake the learning and appropriate assessment. Learners understand that there is a commitment on their part to undertake any additional learning activities out of working hours (remember, learning in the apprentice's own time does not count towards the 20% off job requirement.)

## Effective learning programmes and processes

### *Partnership working with education and training providers*

- Structures are in place for service managers and learners to feedback on the delivery of Apprenticeships and help contribute to continuous improvement of provision. Managers and Apprenticeship leads are actively involved in regular review meetings to build ownership, aid improvement and sharing of lessons.
- Close inter-working between employer and provider means that Apprenticeship programmes effectively combine the learning delivery know-how of the provider with the expertise of the employers' own skilled staff. This ensures that apprentices are being taught and mentored in current best practice in a manner that fits with the employer's expectations and way of working.

**Kings College Hospital** uses an external provider to support their level 3 Apprenticeship for Assistant Clinical Technologists which provides a pathway for school leavers and those outside mainstream education to develop a career in healthcare. An assessment day uses group activities, English and Maths tests and an initial interview with Kings College Hospital. Successful candidates are invited to 'boot camp' – a two-week employability course, based at Kings. Where they undertake a course that covers life skills, attitude to work, customer service and working with colleagues. Candidates who complete the course have a second interview with Kings after which the successful applicants are offered a place on the Apprenticeship programme.

### **Applying the Principles:**

- Have robust selection procedures in place so you can be sure that potential learners have the capability to complete the Apprenticeship within the agreed timeframe. All sorts of processes can be used to assess aptitude, skills, values and motivation.
- Look for ways to make the best use of the specialist expertise you have in healthcare to add value to the overall learning experience for your Apprentices, not only when they are in the workplace, but also off-site.



## Effective learning programmes and processes

**Sheffield Teaching Hospital** has an established relationship with Sheffield College. The hospital staff deliver the healthcare training, which takes place one day per week on the provider's premises. Sheffield College provides the pastoral support and a member of their staff visits the apprentices in their clinical areas.

**Southampton Solent University (SSU)** has developed a Level 5 Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship in partnership with six trusts, including Southern Health, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight, Solent, Salisbury and Hampshire. SSU provides the academic units and the trusts provide the work-based elements. The trusts have put all of the content on the university platform. Each trust has a staff member, who is full time in education and development, to lead on the work-based elements.

- Make it very clear to managers and learners that learning release time is an essential component of the Apprenticeship programme and needs commitment from all parties.
- Create opportunities for apprentices to network with their peers, suggest improvements in delivery or simply provide mutual support.

- Consider promoting mentoring training as a first step towards supervisory responsibilities and a useful development tool for existing employees.
- Look carefully at staff resourcing and capacity within the teams where apprentices will be employed, as well as within Apprenticeship programme management roles within your Learning and Development or HR departments. Good quality programmes require there to be effective supervision, mentoring and support, both professional/occupational and pastoral, for the apprentices so be mindful of making the best use of all available provision.
- Think about not only encouraging Apprentices to make good use of CPD opportunities, or other learning resources in your organisation (e.g. provided through union support), but look at how well you ensure that Apprentices and their tutors understand and build links between learning gained in one context, and the achievement of their specific Apprenticeship programme. Giving apprentices opportunities to develop new skills, not necessarily only those directly related to their Apprenticeship programme – acquiring new skills is a skill in itself and supports motivation, which supports high completion rates.

**Torbay and South Devon Trust** have procedures to ensure that service managers are fully aware of the time commitment involved in successful Apprenticeship delivery and obtain formal commitments from both learner and service manager/supervisor. In most cases, this has been sufficient to secure sustained release of apprentices for learning and assessment but apprentice leads are considering introducing financial penalties for service managers who prevent their staff from undertaking learning or assessment with external providers so that there is a more level playing field and understanding of the costs of not releasing apprentices.

## Effective learning programmes and processes

**North Essex NHS Trust** was one of the first NHS organisations to use higher level Apprenticeships and in 2013 began to offer Human Resource Management Apprenticeships at level 5 as a means to support the development of existing staff and increase their morale and motivation. Apprentices from across several locations met every fortnight and formed study groups to share experiences and support learning.

- Use multiple communication channels to raise awareness of Apprenticeship opportunities within the organisation and externally, for example running Open Days and enabling employees who have completed an Apprenticeship to act as Ambassadors and talk about their personal experiences.
- Invest in creating good links with local schools, seeing them as part of your workforce supply chain. Build their understanding of how your apprenticeship opportunities link to future career pathways and what those imply for student choices at key decision points in the school curriculum. Having materials that schools can share with students and parents can help.

### External issues to be aware of:

- The demands of learning while working can be particularly significant for those with family or other external commitments, particularly for those embarking on a Higher Apprenticeship. Apprentices benefit from access to good facilities and resources where they can undertake essential study away from their immediate work environment.

**Yorkshire and Humberside** brochures were developed for healthcare science apprenticeships in conjunction with service managers to detail progression routes, qualifications, durations and timings and location of learning for new recruits. These help introduce the wide variety of occupations in healthcare science, many of which have a low profile with potential recruits.

**Calderdale and Huddersfield Trust** has worked hard to break down any barriers to learning. They found that many of their existing staff had very poor past learning experiences. All apprentices have a mentor who takes part in the regional mentor programme for pharmacy and attends a study day. The mentor has regular reviews to ensure they understand their role. Mentors are encouraged to support the apprentices to think for themselves and encourage apprentices to find out information for themselves.



# Summary of the principles that underpin delivery of high quality Apprenticeships in healthcare

## Embedding Apprenticeships in the organisation's workforce strategy

### *Clear recognition of Apprenticeship contribution and building a high-quality health Apprenticeship brand*

- Apprenticeship programmes are designed to support the organisation's workforce development objectives to deliver better patient outcomes, while at the same time providing the learner with the skills, qualifications and ambition to succeed in their role and progress to the next level.
- Apprenticeship delivery across the organisation follows consistent, clearly stated policies and procedures, and a clear and well-understood Apprenticeship 'identity' is used to help support positive perceptions of quality and relevance among learners and staff.

### *Senior management leadership and commitment:*

- The Executive Team and Board have approved high quality Apprenticeship provision as a fundamental component of the organisation's long-term workforce development strategy. They receive regular reports as to the success of this provision in addressing specific hard-to-

fill vacancies/skill shortages and in improving patient care through a more flexibly skilled workforce.

- There is highly visible endorsement of high quality Apprenticeships by the CEO, Board and senior management team (SMT) including medical directors/nurse directors and the chief nurse. This provides a clear affirmation for service leads and builds long-term management commitment to Apprenticeships.

### *Feedback systems and learning lessons to spread best practice:*

- Apprenticeship completion rates and subsequent progressions are monitored and benchmarked, alongside wider workforce development benefits such as improved staff retention rates, improvement in productivity, reductions in hard-to-fill vacancies, improved equality and diversity and reduced use of agency workers. These are collated and reported on a regular basis to the SMT, within a culture that drives for improvements and seeks to ensure that the organisation is among top performers for the region and nationally.

- Lessons on good practice and market intelligence on effective learning providers are not only shared with other health organisations but sought out, to learn and make improvements in the organisation's performance. Managers recognise that many areas of good practice are common across different types of health employers and different Apprenticeships and that learning can and should come from a range of sources.

## Management commitment

### *Service manager engagement*

- There are regular opportunities (online and face-to-face) for service managers to explore common workforce development issues from across different service areas and seek to generate potential solutions that combine Apprenticeships and other learning as appropriate.
- Service managers routinely use Apprenticeships in their staff development plans as an effective mechanism to build skills and progress talent. Design choices for delivery rest with service managers so they can use their understanding to maximise the contribution from Apprenticeships to their workforce.

## Summary of the principles that underpin delivery of high quality Apprenticeships in healthcare

### *Well-resourced Apprenticeship programmes*

- There is adequate resource for the development, procurement and quality assurance of Apprenticeship programmes as well as for day-to-day delivery. This allows the organisation to build on the best of local and national knowledge and to demonstrate and celebrate success.
- Apprenticeship leads are able proactively communicate the benefits of Apprenticeships among service managers and develop a shared understanding of how Apprenticeships can best meet their workforce needs.



### *The selection of roles, programmes and pathways that deliver organisational needs:*

- Service managers 'own' their Apprenticeship process through selecting learners, agreeing the learning content, providing mentoring and support arrangements through to progression planning. As service managers drive Apprenticeship activity directly, central Apprenticeship teams are able to focus on expansion and development of the organisation's Apprenticeship offer as a whole.
- Service managers agree what measures of success are appropriate and report back on these, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data to evidence activity and benefit. These enable the employer to account for their investment in Apprenticeships and provide a clear picture of the returns.

### **Effective learning programmes and processes:**

#### *Flexible approaches to meeting learner and organisational needs:*

- Delivery plans agreed with the learning provider include clear performance benchmarks in terms of the time required to complete and the proportion of starts that will complete. The arrangements for releasing staff for learning and assessment and regular communications between the apprentice, their supervisor and learning provider are all clearly specified.
- A structured approach to mentoring apprentices, with a dedicated tutor in their practice area, is in place to underpin the knowledge transfer process and provide mutual benefits to mentee and mentor.
- Learners are able to benefit from access to wider development opportunities and additional resources that are effectively integrated into their Apprenticeship programme.



## Summary of the principles that underpin delivery of high quality Apprenticeships in healthcare

### *Strong selection and support mechanisms for learners:*

- There are strong selection and recruitment processes for Apprenticeship programmes that take account of the specific competences needed for the role and enable sound judgements to be made as to an applicant's capability to succeed.
- The workforce vision is clearly communicated to potential apprentices, both within the organisation and externally, using locally relevant promotion and communication mechanisms.
- Available progression routes, qualifications, duration, timing and location of learning for potential learners in the organisation are clearly defined and provide tangible progression pathways. This allows potential learners to consider their career options but also understand what is required of them.
- There are signed agreements/learning 'contracts' in place that specify the mutual obligations on service managers and learners to commit the necessary time to undertake the learning and appropriate assessment. Learners understand that there is a commitment on their part to undertake any additional learning activities out of working hours.



### *Partnership working with education and training providers:*

- Structures are in place for service managers and learners to feedback on the delivery of Apprenticeships and help contribute to continuous improvement of provision. Apprenticeship leads are actively involved in regular review meetings to build ownership, aid improvement and sharing of lessons.
- Close inter-working between employer and provider means that Apprenticeship programmes combine the learning delivery know-how of the provider with the expertise of the employers' own skilled staff. This ensures that apprentices are being taught current best practice in a manner that fits with the employer's expectations and way of working.

# Appendix: Sources of support

## Support from trade unions and Union Learn

Within the health sector, Trade Unions can offer support for the development of apprenticeships. In particular, Union Learn helps trade unions to support apprentices in the workplace. There are various areas of support including:

- Supporting unions to work with employers to develop and improve apprenticeship programmes.
- Support union reps, ULRs and other union members to work directly with apprentices, supporting them to complete their apprenticeship and build their careers.
- Provide resources, policy development, research and information to apprentices and union reps to ensure the union contribution to apprenticeships is rooted in the latest thinking and advice around apprenticeship quality.
- Campaign on issues impacting apprentices, such as low pay, poor training and lack of progression in work.

*For more information visit*  
<https://www.unionlearn.org.uk/apprenticeships>

## Support from the National Skills Academy

The National Skills Academy for Health works with employers to ensure the healthcare support workforce gets the training they need to do the job they love, creating and maintaining the high quality health service we all want. Our vision, and that of the employers we work with, is to create a qualified and transferable workforce, with every individual recognised and valued for the skills they have, and encouraged and enabled to develop the skills they want and need.

*We work on a not-for-profit basis, to meet five objectives:*

- Improving the quality of training provision available to healthcare support workers.
- Ensuring managers know how and where they can access great training for their staff.
- Helping our employer partners make the best use of their support workforce now and in the future.
- Offering practical support to help our employer partners make the best use of the workforce skills.
- Building capability, to free up professionally qualified clinical staff.

The National Skills Academy offers a range of products and services, including: Learning and development programmes, Apprenticeship Training Agency, Expert help and advice, Webinars, e-Learning, Quality Mark, Excellence Centres.

*For more information visit*  
<http://www.nsahealth.org.uk/>

## Support from Health Education England

HEE's vision is to provide the right workforce, with the right skills and values, in the right place at the right time to better meet the needs and wants of patients – now and in the future.

Their work covers;

- Planning and Commissioning.
- Attracting and recruiting.
- Development the workforce.
- Hospitals, primary and community care.
- Research, learning and innovation.

*For more information visit*  
<https://hee.nhs.uk/about-us>

## Appendix: Sources of support

### Support from Skills for Health

Skills for Health is the leading authority in the UK on Apprenticeships in the Health Sector. As a Sector Skills Council we are engaged extensively in this area and are directly involved in the delivery of circa 5000 apprenticeships per year. Working in partnership with the National Skills Academy for Health we can offer you the following support, information, advice and guidance to ensure you don't miss out on critical funding:

#### Strategy and preparation

- Understanding the levy and making the most of it of the new funding available and maximising your return.
- Apprenticeship Strategy Development (getting organisations started/making it sustainable).
- Apprenticeship/Framework Design.
- Completion reporting & benchmarking (FISSS data).
- Implementation and Delivery.

#### Capability & Capacity building

- Implementation support.
- Brokerage support – working internally to increase apprenticeship opportunities.
- Information Advice and Guidance – making most of levy/advice line services.
- Full managed service.
- Apprenticeship Training Agency/ Apprenticeship Employment Agency.

#### Accreditation

- Qualification Design/Award/End Point Assessment.

*For more information visit*

*<http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/>*

### Institute for Apprenticeships

From April 2017, the Institute for Apprenticeships will help ensure employers get the quality skills that they need from the apprenticeships system by acting as the ultimate decision maker on approving apprenticeship standards and assessment plans.

Independent, and with employers at its heart, the Institute for Apprenticeships will be responsible for approving new apprenticeship standards and how apprentices will be assessed to ensure they respond to the needs of business and give learners the skills and experience they need to succeed.

Independent, and with employers at its heart, the Institute for Apprenticeships will be responsible for approving new apprenticeship standards and how apprentices will be assessed to ensure they respond to the needs of business and give learners the skills and experience they need to succeed.

*For more information visit*

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/institute-for-apprenticeships-draft-strategic-guidance>*

**National Skills Academy for Health**

9th floor  
Lynton House  
Tavistock Square  
London WC1H 9LT

E-mail: [information@nsahealth.org.uk](mailto:information@nsahealth.org.uk)  
Telephone: 020 7391 7173

[www.nsahealth.org.uk](http://www.nsahealth.org.uk)