



NHS
Health Education England

The NHS Apprenticeship Levy Study: the 2022 edition.

In collaboration with
Health Education England

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Introduction.



In 2023 and beyond we can expect to see more apprenticeship starts, a greater percentage of available levy spent, and even more skills gaps addressed with apprenticeship training.

When Health Education England (HEE) and BPP conducted the first NHS Apprenticeship Levy study in 2018 there was a great deal of uncertainty about apprenticeships. Many people in the NHS, especially those in clinical roles, had little experience of the levy. We asked NHS trusts to tell us how they planned to use the levy, but only time would tell whether their predictions were accurate.

In 2022 HEE and BPP collaborated on a second Apprenticeship Levy study, to investigate those 2018 predictions and provide a more up-to-date picture of apprenticeship usage in the NHS.

The story in 2022 is one of growth. 101 trusts participated in our latest study, and 80% of the trusts surveyed said they had 100+ apprentices on programme. 71% of trusts say that they are using 50% or more of their available levy, and 85% of trusts are transferring some of their unspent levy, often to other healthcare providers. The number of apprenticeship standards used by NHS trusts has rapidly expanded from 86 to 196, suggesting that trusts are using apprenticeships to equip their staff with a wide variety of different skills, over and above the expected nursing skills and business management skills.

Our study suggests that there is even more growth on the horizon in 2023: trusts predict a larger percentage of their levy will be spent and even more apprentices will be on programmes by the end of the next financial year.

This apprenticeship growth could form part of the solution to the high NHS vacancy rates: there are signs that increases in the number of nursing apprenticeships starts are contributing to the efforts to address the nursing vacancy rates across the NHS.

This 2022 study includes a detailed look at the skills gaps in NHS trusts. Trusts identified gaps in six different digital skills and high percentages of trusts reported gaps in clinical skills and digital skills generally. The good news is that 85% of respondents saw apprenticeships as a solution to these skills gaps.

NHS trusts tell us that apprenticeships improve diversity, equality and inclusion: in 2018 trusts told us that diversity and widening participation was one of the top five reasons they were spending their levy, so it is pleasing to be able to say that in 2022 more than half of the trusts surveyed said that apprenticeships had improved diversity, equality and inclusion.

This survey, which would not have been possible without the help and support of Health Education England, shows that trusts have engaged with the apprenticeship programme over the last four years and that this engagement is set to continue: in 2023 and beyond we can expect to see more apprenticeship starts, a greater percentage of available levy spent, and even more skills gaps addressed with apprenticeship training.

BPP, with over 45 years’ experience training professionals in the public and private sectors, is delighted to be able to help NHS trusts with their apprenticeship training plans.



Professor Lynne Gell
Dean, BPP University
School of Nursing

Apprenticeships and long-term workforce planning.

Apprenticeships can make the NHS a more inclusive place to work, opening up opportunities to people from all backgrounds and in underserved areas. Apprenticeships create new routes into the NHS and enable widening access and participation in education and career development.

According to the trusts we surveyed in 2022, diversity, equality, and intentionally using apprenticeships as part of workforce planning could help address diversity, equality and inclusion in the NHS.

Survey respondents are reporting gaps in digital skills, and while some apprenticeships are specifically designed to equip employees with the digital and data skills, all apprenticeships improve digital capability generally needed to operate in a more digitally-enabled NHS.

To meet the needs of a constantly evolving service, apprenticeships both support new talent pipelines for those embarking on their NHS career, and for those already part of our workforce, who are developing new skills and progressing. Apprenticeships also offer a practical means to expand critical, but often less visible professions, where workforce shortages exist now, and are projected to increase.

Long-term workforce planning for the NHS will involve supporting employers in finding the most effective, sustainable way to use apprenticeships. Apprenticeships don’t resolve all skills gaps in the NHS, but they do contribute.

Jane Hadfield
National Lead, Talent for Care and Senior Programme Manager – NHS Apprenticeships, Health Education England



Executive summary.

In 2018 HEE and BPP collaborated on an Apprenticeship Levy study that asked NHS trusts to comment on their current use of the levy, their use of apprenticeship frameworks and standards, and how they planned to use the levy in the future.

In 2022, HEE and BPP came together again to collaborate on an update on this research: a new Apprenticeship Levy study that asked representatives of trusts to reflect on the last four years and comment on the ways that trusts have used the Apprenticeship Levy, the standards they use now, and the successes and challenges they've experienced. We have also asked trusts, once again, to make predictions about apprenticeship usage and spend in the future.

This 2022 study involved a much more detailed look at the specific apprenticeship standards trusts use: at least 196 standards are now in use. This increase is partly because trusts have more standards to choose from: there are more apprenticeship standards in 2022 than there were in 2018 because more standards have been approved for delivery in the intervening years. In this report we have a clear picture of which standards trusts have deployed most frequently.

Key statistics

1. The number of apprentices in NHS trusts has grown significantly between 2018 and 2022: now 80% of trusts say that they have more than 100 apprentices in the organisation.
2. Trusts use a greater variety of apprenticeship standards than ever before: the number has increased from 86 to 196 between 2018 and 2022.
3. Respondents say that 32% of trusts will use 75%-100% of their levy by the end of this financial year. Our respondents predict that by the end of the next financial year 51% of trusts will use 75%-100% of their levy.
4. In 2018, trusts told us that diversity/widening participation was one of the top five reasons they were spending their levy. In 2022, 60% said apprenticeships had increased diversity, 63% said apprenticeships had increased equality, and 71% said apprenticeships had increased inclusion.
5. The top four skills gaps overall were clinical skills: nursing (74%), clinical skills: allied health (73%), digital capabilities (70%), and management and leadership skills (61%).
6. Teaching, learning, and self-development with digital tools was the #1 digital skills gap: 75% of respondents said there was a gap in this skill.
7. Respondents said that their trusts still needed education about the differences between apprenticeships and traditional professional qualifications programmes (69%) and the benefits of apprenticeships (61%).

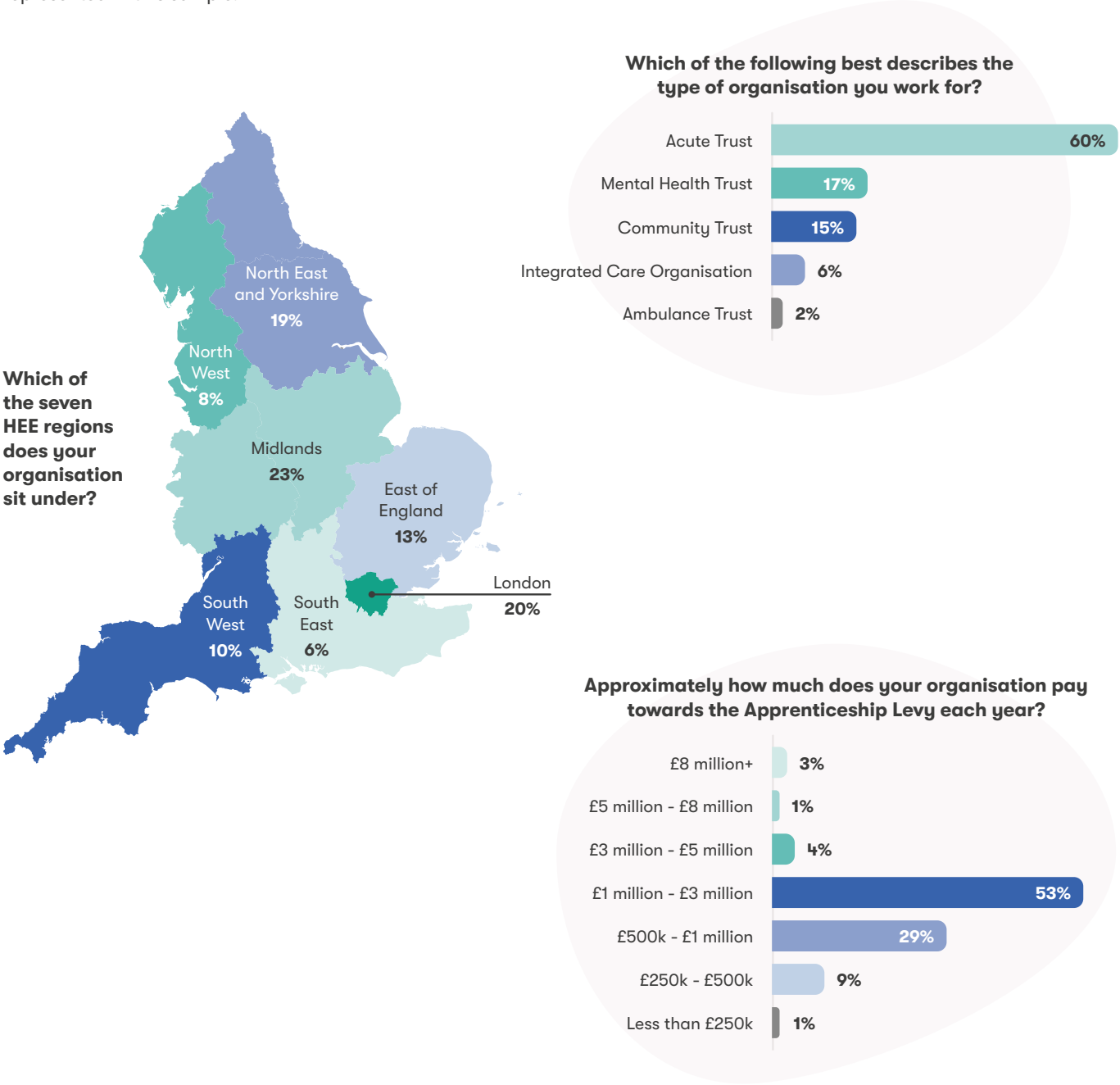
Study responses and participating trusts.

101 NHS trusts responded to the survey.

The Trusts that responded included Acute Trusts, Mental Health Trusts, Community Trusts, Integrated Care Organisations, and a small number of Ambulance Trusts.

Each of the seven HEE regions were represented in this sample.

Just over half of the trusts included in this sample pay between £1 million and £3 million towards the Apprenticeship Levy each year. 40% paid less than £1 million, and 8% paid more than £3 million.



Apprenticeships four years on: 2018 to 2022 compared.

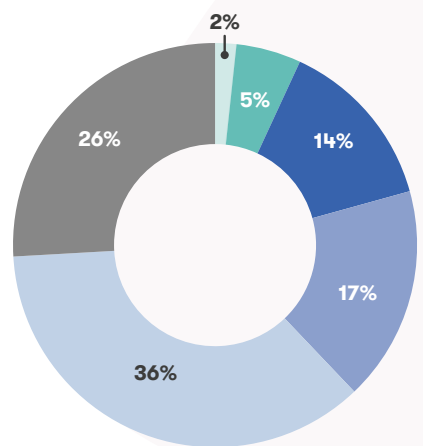
Analysis

When we conducted the original NHS Apprenticeship Levy study in 2018, we saw plenty of enthusiasm for the Apprenticeship Levy and optimistic predictions about increases in levy usage and apprenticeship numbers. HEE have supported employers' ambitions to deploy more apprenticeships¹ by providing employers with support over the last few years, including developing more standards in health, creating apprenticeship toolkits, establishing quality principles, and researching apprenticeship best practice. In 2022, we can see the effects of all this work: levy usage has increased, there are more apprentices on programmes than ever before, and there are more increases on the horizon for 2023.

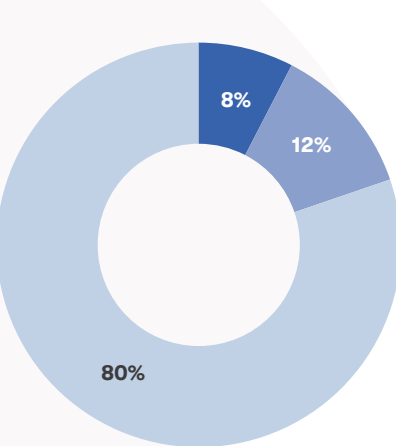
Research summary

The number of apprentices in NHS trusts has grown significantly. In 2018, 36% of trusts said that they would have 100+ apprentices starting on programmes 2018-2019. In 2022, 80% of trusts surveyed said that they had 100+ apprentices on programmes at the end of last financial year, which suggests a significant growth² in NHS apprenticeship starts over the last four years.

(2018) How many new apprentices will you be starting on programmes between the end of April 2018 to the end of April 2019?



(2022, modified) How many apprentices did your organisation have on programme at the end of last financial year?



1 to 4 5 to 9 10 to 19 20 to 49 50 to 99 100+ Unsure

There's even more apprenticeship growth on the horizon: trusts predict even more learners on programme by the end of the next financial year.

In 2022 trusts use more apprenticeship standards than ever before. In 2018/19 there were 86 different standards and frameworks² in use in the NHS. Between 2018 and 2022 the number of available standards increased significantly, and now our 2022 research indicates that there are at least 196 different standards in use in the trusts we surveyed.

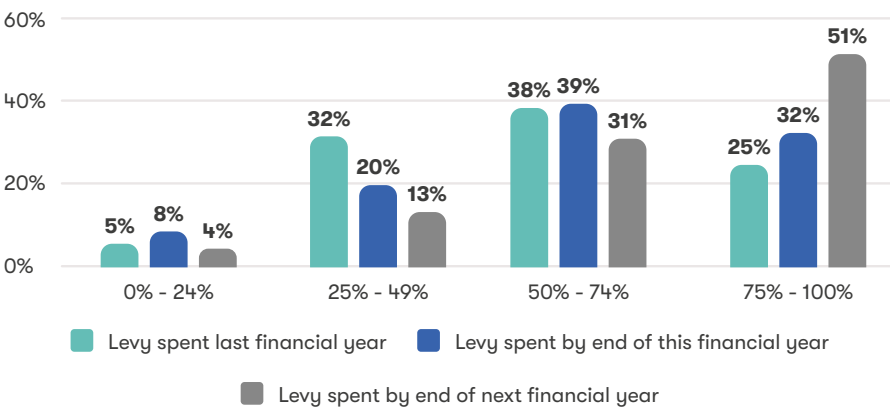
In 2018, 97% of trusts predicted that they would use 50% or more of their levy in four years' time (by 2022).

In 2022, the majority of trusts are not using all of their levy, but they are predicting an increase in their levy usage in the next financial year: 51% of trusts say that they will use 75%-100% of their levy by the end of the next financial year.

196

Apprenticeship standards have increased significantly, from 86 to at least 196 different standards.

(2022) Percentage of levy spent



*Note: in 2018 we were asking trusts to comment on apprenticeship starts within a specific window of time. In 2022 we asked trusts to indicate the total number of apprentices in their organisation at the end of the previous financial year. These two questions are therefore not directly comparable, but they do suggest an increase, which we describe more accurately with government start statistics for nursing apprentices in the section of this report on government data.

1. <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/apprenticeships>

2. <https://www.aelp.org.uk/media/3482/aelp-employer-forum-update-december.pdf>

Skills requirements and future skills.

Analysis

In this edition of the study we wanted to explore skills gaps and digital skills in more detail. HEE's Health and Care Digital Capabilities Framework³ provides an NHS-specific way of looking at digital capabilities, and this survey was an opportunity to measure the percentage of trusts that were experiencing gaps in these skills. Many trusts report skills gaps in these areas, but the good news is that they think that the Apprenticeship Levy is an effective way of addressing these skills gaps.

Many of the skills listed here are what we would call future skills: skills that set employees up to work in a more digitally enabled NHS and to manage and lead the NHS more effectively.

Digital capabilities are the third most frequently selected skills gap, right behind Nursing and Allied Health. The handling of information, data and content is the second most frequently selected digital skills gap. Later in this report we will see that the demand for data-related skills is increasing generally in the NHS, and that digital apprenticeships are one of the most frequently deployed categories of apprenticeship in the NHS.

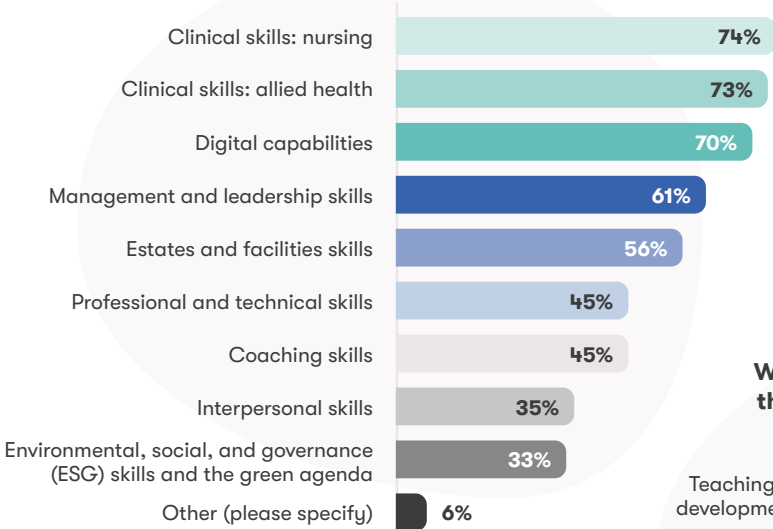
Research summary

Teaching, learning, and self-development with digital tools was the #1 digital skills gap: 75% of respondents said there was a gap in this skill.

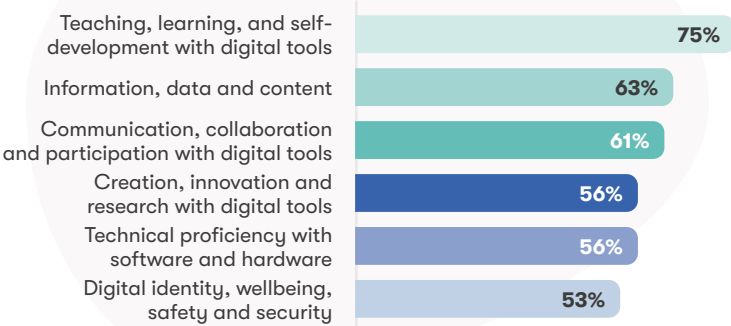
The top four skills gaps overall were clinical skills: nursing (74%), clinical skills: allied health (73%), digital capabilities (70%), and management and leadership skills (61%).

98% think that apprenticeships help provide a new talent pipeline, and 85% think that apprenticeships help to address the skills gaps in their organisation.

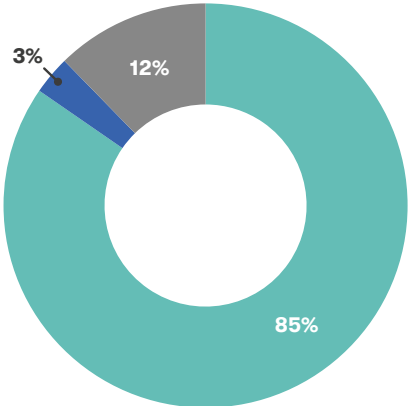
Which of the following types of skills do you think are skills gaps in your organisation? (Please select all that apply)



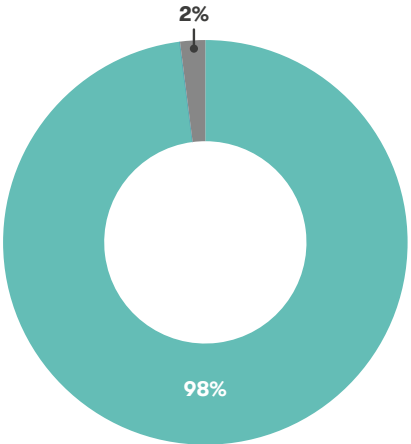
Which of the following digital skills do you think are skills gaps in your organisation? (Please select all that apply)



Do you think apprenticeships help to address the skills gaps in your organisation?



Do you think apprenticeships help to provide a new talent pipeline?



Yes No Not sure

3. [https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Digital Literacy Capability Framework 2018.pdf](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Digital%20Literacy%20Capability%20Framework%202018.pdf)



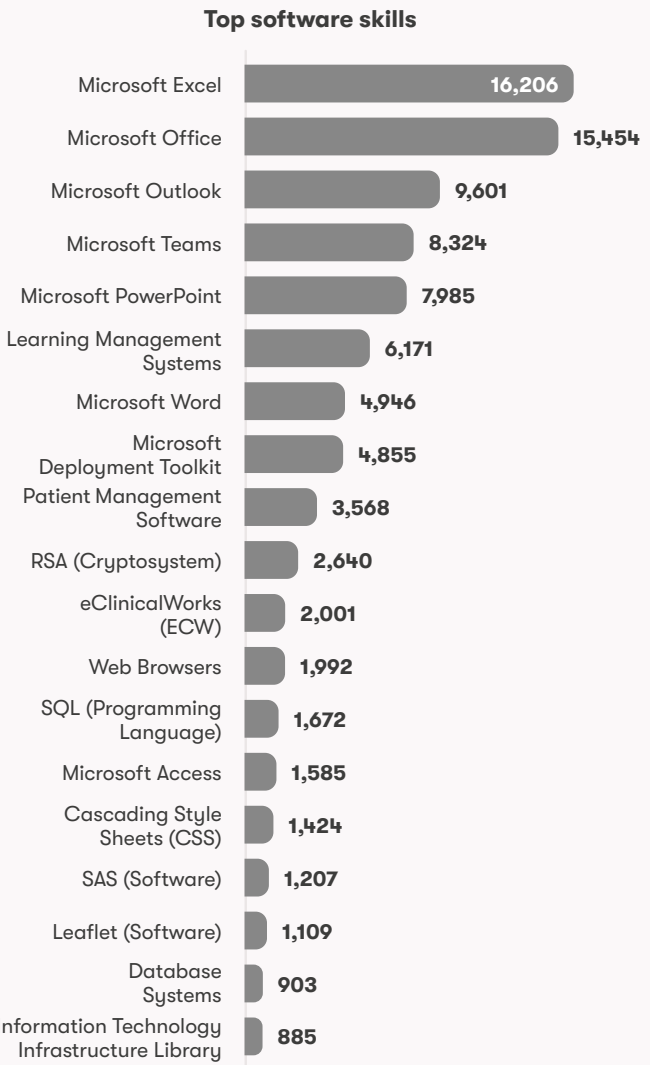
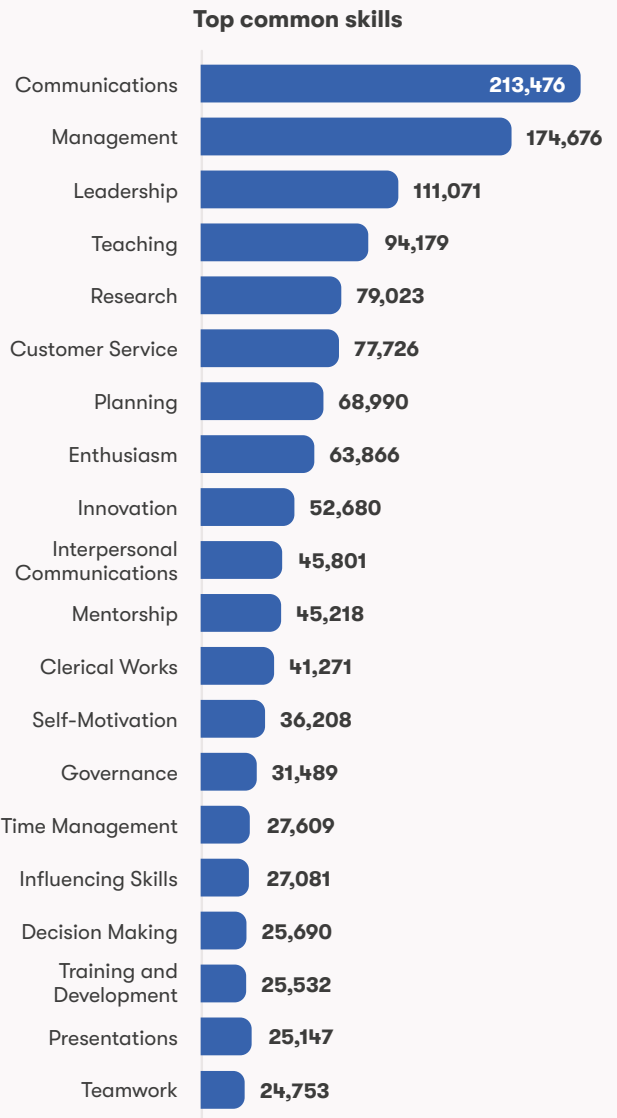
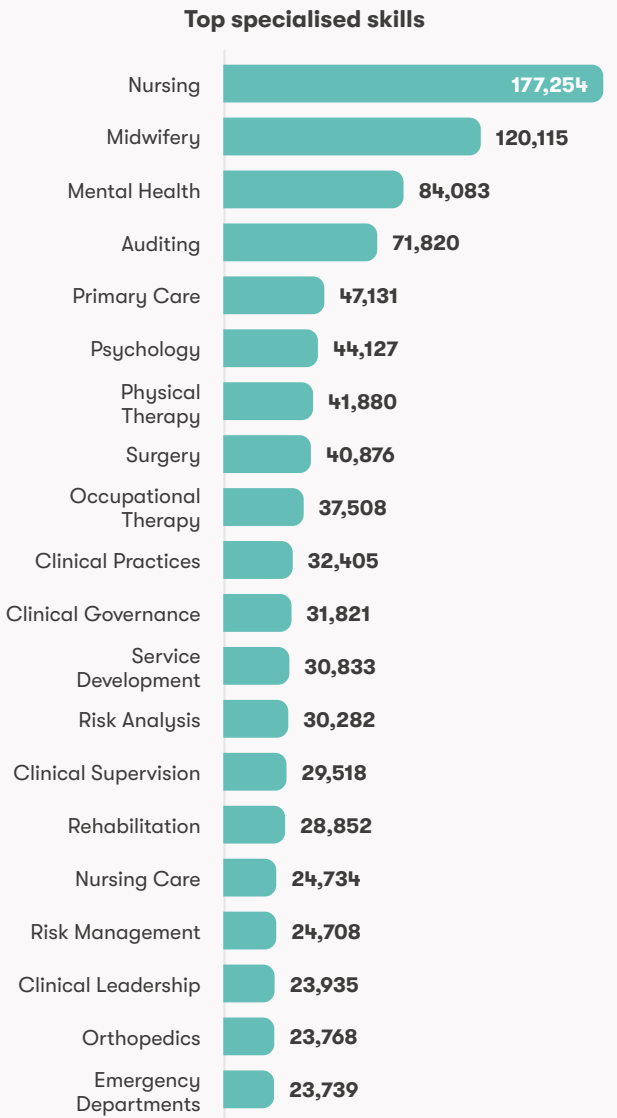
Extra insight: Lightcast NHS skills statistics.

Lightcast is a labour market analytics company that collects and analyses job advert data, identifying the skills listed in job adverts and using that information to describe skills trends over time. At BPP we use Lightcast data to describe skills trends for groups of employers.

Here we have taken the data from 762,477 NHS job postings between December 2021 – December 2022 and described the skills listed in those job postings. The skills listed here are an aggregation of all skills across all jobs in the NHS. We can break down those skills into:

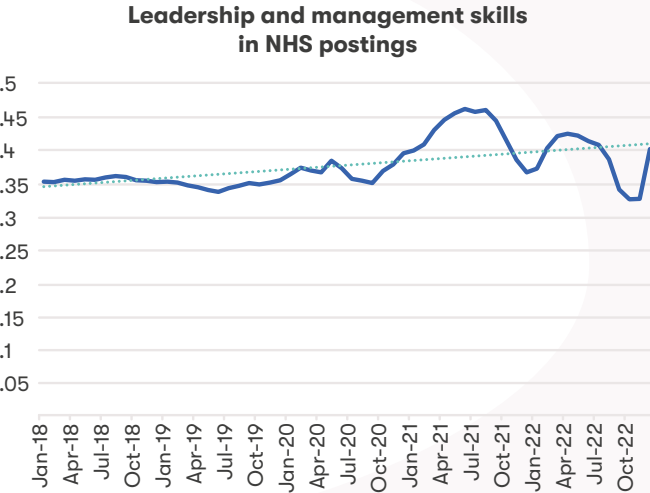
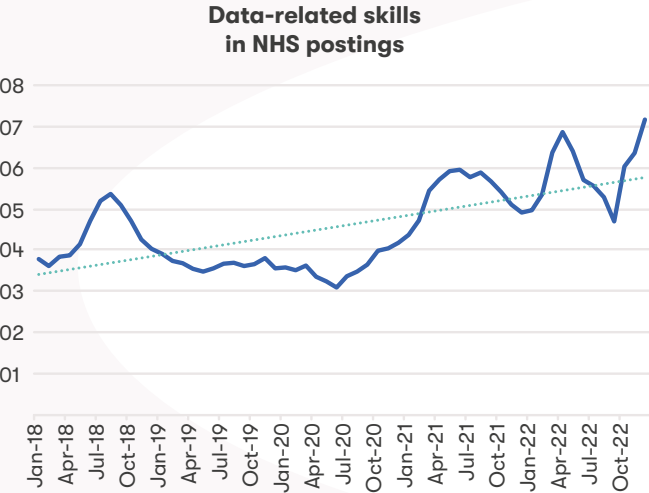
- Specialised skills
- Common skills
- Software skills

We can immediately see echoes of the trends in the NHS trusts survey: management and leadership skills ranking highly in the common skills, for example, which makes sense when we consider the number of management and leadership apprenticeships deployed by NHS trusts, and many of the software related skills would be suitable for the business administrator apprentices. The number of nursing-related skills is to be expected, considering the nursing shortages we can see in staff vacancies.



Lightcast data can also be used to look back at specific skills or groups of skills, establish whether those skills are increasing or decreasing over time, and make predictions about the future of those skills.

When we look at data-related skills in the NHS we can see clear signs of increase from 2018-2022, which suggests these skills will be even more in demand in the future. Leadership and management skills, too, show distinct signs of increase. We can expect to see more demand for both of these skills groups in the NHS in the future.



*Note: these time series charts describe the percentage of NHS job postings that contain keywords related to these skills.

Apprenticeships and diversity, equality and inclusion.

Analysis

Inclusion is a significant part of the NHS People Plan, which includes a commitment to an NHS that is open and inclusive. The plan says: “the NHS must welcome all, with a culture of belonging and trust. We must understand, encourage and celebrate diversity in all its forms.”⁴ The NHS Long Term plan, too, says that “respect, equality and diversity will be central to changing the culture and will be at the heart of the workforce implementation plan.”⁵

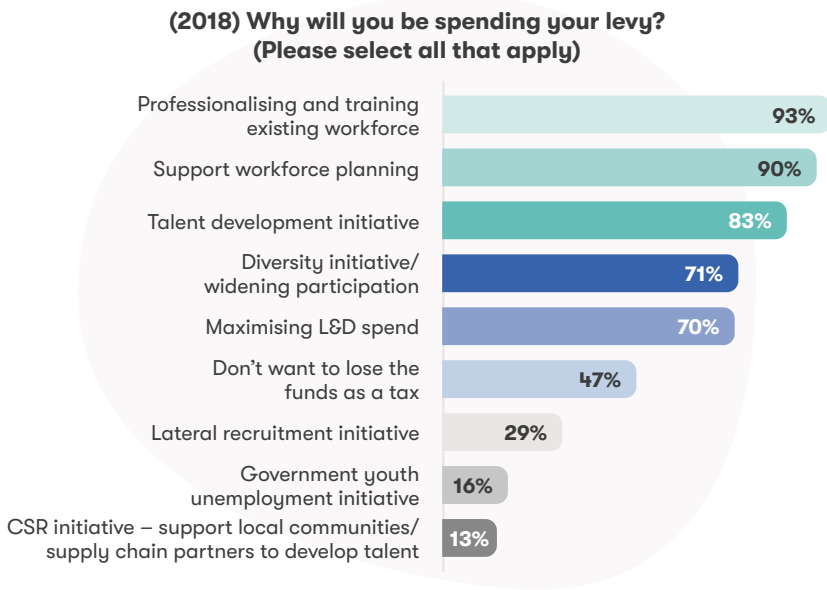
The NHS Long Term Plan specifically suggests that apprenticeships can help to improve social and economic outcomes and suggests that trusts should offer “apprenticeship opportunities in areas of greater deprivation”.⁶ Apprenticeships are an ideal method of widening access to careers and training because they give people the opportunity to earn while gaining experience and a qualification.

NHS trusts have told us that apprenticeships improve diversity, equality and inclusion. In 2018 trusts told us that diversity and widening participation was one of the top five reasons they were spending their levy, so it is pleasing to be able to say that in 2022 more than half of the trusts surveyed said that apprenticeships had improved diversity, equality, and inclusion.

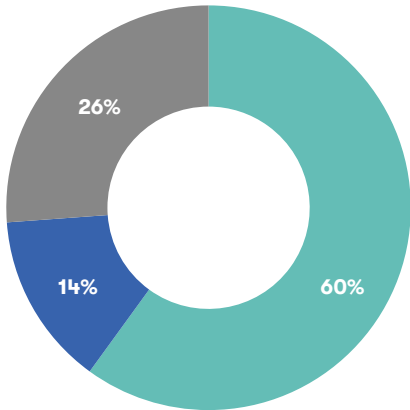
Research summary

In 2018 we asked trusts “why will you be spending your levy?” 71% selected ‘diversity initiative/widening participation’ as one of the reasons.

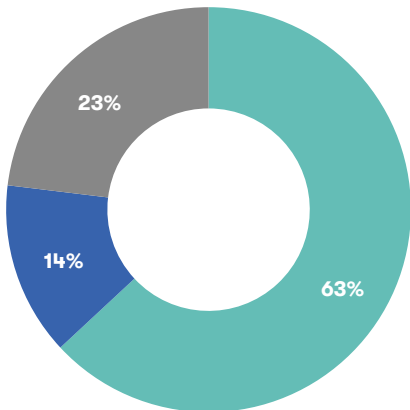
In 2022, respondents were very positive about the effects of apprenticeships on diversity, equality, and inclusion: in 2022, 60% said apprenticeships had increased diversity, 63% said apprenticeships had increased equality, and 71% said apprenticeships had increased inclusion.



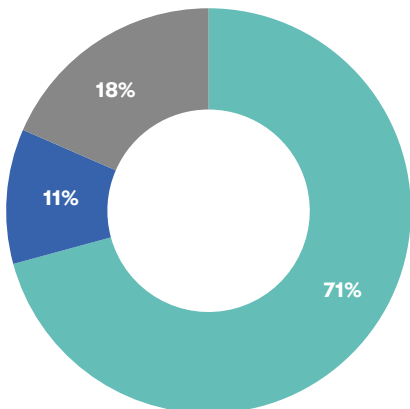
Do you think apprenticeships have increased the diversity of the NHS workforce?



Do you think apprenticeships have increased equality in the NHS workforce?



Do you think apprenticeships have increased inclusion in the NHS workforce?



Yes No Not sure

4. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourpeople/online-version/belonging-in-the-nhs/>
5. and 6. <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nhs-long-term-plan-version-1.2.pdf>



Case study: Great Ormond Street Hospital and developing a diverse workforce.

Challenge

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) wanted to develop and diversify its workforce in line with the hospital’s five year Above and Beyond Strategy.⁷

The goal was to make GOSH a great place to work and a centre of excellence for learning. GOSH wanted to develop a diverse workforce using alternative routes to the normal recruitment process. The hospital also wanted to report on its workforce development more systematically: it did not have central statistics on their workforce development.

Why BPP?

BPP has worked with GOSH to build its award-winning nursing apprenticeship pathway. Where possible GOSH wanted to deliver accelerated learning to ensure practical application to the workplace and to retain apprentices on their career path. BPP was able to deliver part of the nursing career path by offering the Foundation Degree Nursing Associate apprenticeship, and through the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) programme, progress apprentices to the Registered Nursing Degree apprenticeship where they are awarded the BSc (Hons) Nursing (Child). BPP was chosen for its ‘blended’ learning approach which enables healthcare support workers to develop and progress to achieve a nursing degree locally. The blended learning model includes on-site face-to-face delivery along with online live learning with formative assessment resources. When in practice, nursing apprentices are supported throughout the programme by practice supervisors and practice assessors, as well as continuing support from a personal tutor and academic assessor from the School of Nursing.

Solution

Apprenticeships were, for GOSH, part of the answer.

GOSH chose to use apprenticeships in two ways: to create a pipeline of local talent, recruiting staff from the local population who did not necessarily have prior work experience, and to use apprenticeships to develop its existing staff.

Engaging with local populations and communities helped to change the perception of apprenticeships. This approach also helped to increase diversity by recruiting locally and using apprenticeships to make roles and qualifications more accessible, breaking down barriers of experience and prior formal qualification.

GOSH is using apprenticeships to create a career pathway for every role in GOSH. Apprenticeships have accelerated learning because of the way they encourage learners to apply these new skills in the workplace, especially in clinical roles.

Success

Today GOSH has over 220 apprentices in learning and 45 Clinical and Non-Clinical pathways, which accounts for over 4% of the trust’s workforce.

Apprenticeships empower apprentices to take their careers further:

“I have worked at GOSH for 14 years and I am currently a band 4 healthcare assistant. I studied health and social care at college and enrolled onto a traditional nursing route but found it didn’t fit my style of learning. As a passionate and committed employee, the apprenticeship programme has enabled me to achieve my goal to become a paediatric nurse which was difficult through the traditional route. The apprenticeship has been useful in providing vital on the job learning skills and helped me develop my existing skills and knowledge.”

“The unique thing about being an apprentice is the access to resources – a traditional route would rely on the university but as an apprentice she has a line manager, student practice facilitators, the association of apprentices, her colleagues and peers. The apprenticeship pathway has been a golden ticket for me. I feel invested in and valued by my trust and as an apprentice I feel a sense of belonging and a respected member of the team. In 2021 I won Apprentice of the Year at the Great Ormond Street Spark awards which felt good to be recognised for my hard work.”

Dhimple Patel, Registered Nurse Degree Apprentice

The feedback from staff has also been positive:

“We’ve had so much positive feedback from the children and families. It shows our apprentices that they’re doing a brilliant job.”

Alice Knight, a Nursing Apprenticeships Educator at GOSH

“Our apprentices at GOSH are absolutely invaluable to our organisation.”

Clare, a Clinical Educator at GOSH⁸

The statistics tell a good story, too.

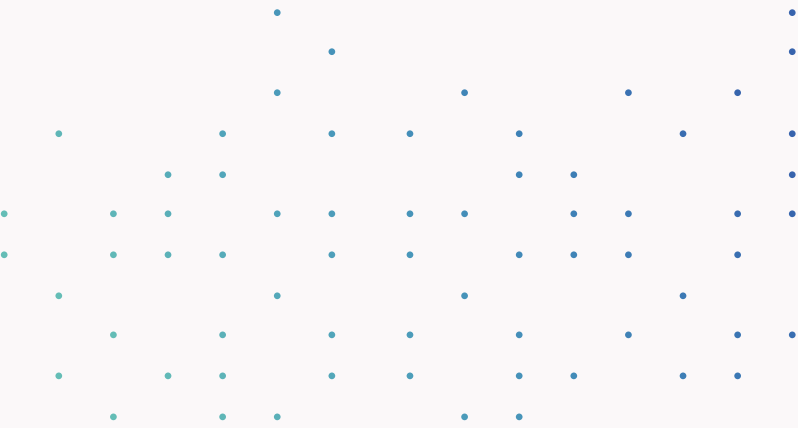
Apprenticeships have improved learner retention at GOSH, this has been particularly evident in clinical apprenticeships. The HCSW Apprenticeships retention post-programme is now 95%, a great improvement on past training programme retention rates. Similarly, nursing apprenticeships are showing comparable retention.

“Over 25% of our Healthcare Support Workers (HCSW) have been supported to progress onto a registered nurse program with BPP. The Registered Nursing Degree Apprenticeship is now two years into a four-year programme with 98% retention, compared with 75% at this stage for those following a traditional pathway in Higher Education. We are also very proud and excited to welcome our first cohort of qualified nurses this spring from the BPP nursing degree top-up program. Our excellent relationship with BPP, who work closely with our nursing apprenticeship education team, has been fundamental in ensuring that our first home grown nurses will have a smooth transition. We believe the apprenticeship route, whereby our learners are employees, may have a positive impact to patient safety, patient experience and retention through this developmental opportunity. The nursing apprenticeship has been received positively across the trust and last year we were able to gain directorate support for a further cohort on a full time 3-year degree pathway. The BPP lecturers and apprenticeship team make themselves available often at short notice to our team.”

Jesse Manget Lead Practice Educator, Clinical Apprenticeships at GOSH

GOSH apprentices are diverse, which contributes to diversity in GOSH overall. 51% of apprentices are people from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is significantly higher than the industry standard. GOSH apprenticeship programmes have won awards for their impact on diversity over the last two years, including:

- BAME Apprenticeship Awards 2020 – Winner Large Employer of the Year
- BAME Apprenticeship Awards 2021 – Finalist in (1) H&SC Employer (2) Large Employer, plus two apprentices in final
- BAME Apprenticeship Awards 2021 – Highly Commended Apprentice
- National Apprenticeship Awards 2020 – Apprentice Special Recognition Award
- National Apprenticeship Awards 2021 – Winner London Regional Large Employer, and Highly Commended for Recruitment Excellence
- National Apprenticeship Awards 2021 – National Finalist Large Employer and Winner of Highly Commended Large Employer
- National Apprenticeship Awards 2022 – Winner Diversity Award and National Finalist in Large Employer category



7. <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/about-us/our-strategy/>

8. <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/working-here/gosh-learning-academy/organisation-employee-development/building-our-future-with-apprenticeships/#>

Apprenticeship Levy financials and levy transfers.

Analysis

The NHS is the largest collection of employers in the UK, and NHS employers collectively have a large levy to spend or transfer. In 2018 we saw optimistic predictions that 97% of trusts would be using 50% or more of their levy by 2022. While our latest study shows that levy usage is not yet that high, trusts are using a large percentage of their available levy, the vast majority of trusts are transferring levy, and even higher levy spend is predicted for 2023.

Research summary

We asked respondents to indicate the percentage of the available levy that their trust would use by the end of this financial year.

We also asked respondents to indicate the percentage of levy spent at the end of last financial year and predict the percentage of levy that would be spent by the end of next financial year.

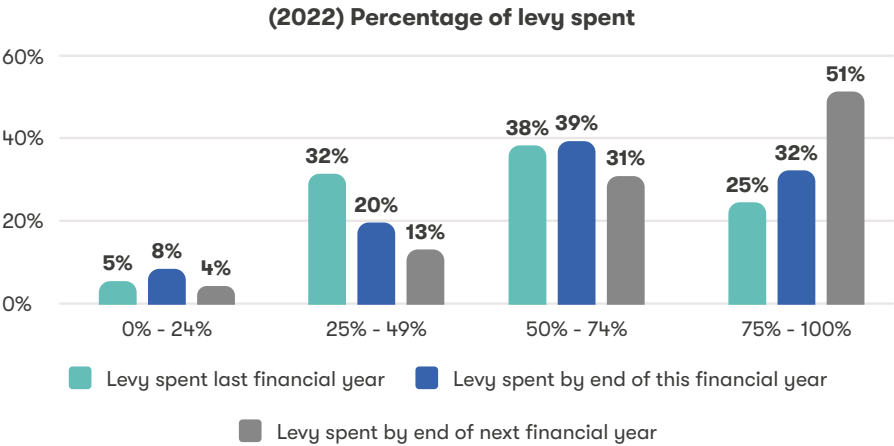
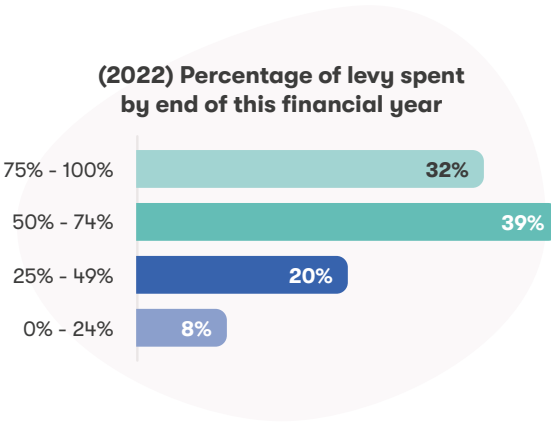
By the end of this financial year, 72% of trusts will be spending 50% or more of their levy.

In 2018, respondents predicted that 97% of trusts would be using 50% or more of their levy. This means that levy utilisation is a little lower than our 2018 study predicted, but in 2022 respondents were predicting even more growth by the end of next financial year.

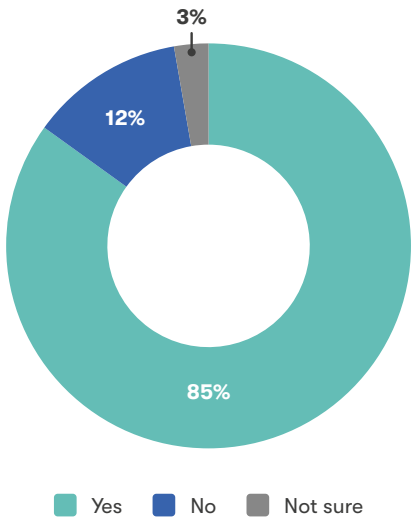
85% of trusts said that their organisation transfers levy funds to other employers. 85% of those transfers went to other healthcare organisations.

HEE provides guidance and support for Apprenticeship Levy transfers,⁹ and HEE's work here will have contributed to the high transfer rates we see reflected in these charts.

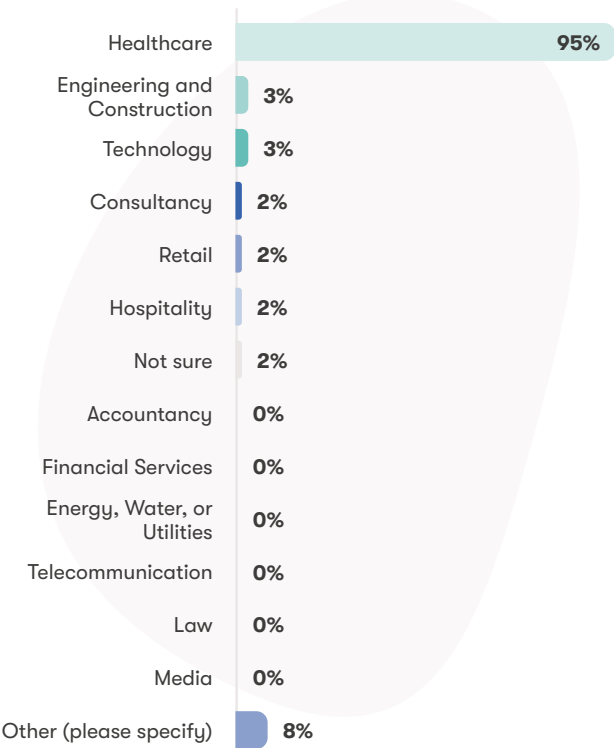
Our 2022 research involved surveying large NHS employers, and we can see from our figures that these large employers are transferring, but they are not transferring to other large healthcare employers: the large healthcare employers we surveyed said that they were not the recipients of levy transfers. Instead, trusts seem to be making transfers to other, smaller, NHS employers.



Does your organisation transfer any levy funds to other employers?



Which industries did your organisation donate levy funds to?



9. <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/news/levy-transfer-resources/>

Apprenticeship standards/ frameworks.

Analysis

The number and variety of roles in the NHS are vast: although almost all trusts are using apprenticeships to train nurses, business administrators, and leaders, there are many other roles that trusts could train using the levy, and in 2022 we wanted to capture a picture of that apprenticeship standard usage. Our survey revealed a wide range of standards currently in use: **at least 196 different standards**, according to our respondents.

The standard categories that trusts use are interesting: health and science and business and administration apprenticeships are used by almost all trusts surveyed, and the next most frequently used category is digital apprenticeships. Half of trusts say they are using the Data Analyst Level 4 Apprenticeship, which equips staff with the essential skills to handle and analyse data.

Apprenticeships improve digital skills even if the apprenticeship itself is not related to technology or data: in the Department for Education's Apprenticeship Evaluation Survey they found that 50% or more of learners in any subject area said their digital skills had improved as a result of their apprenticeship.¹⁰

HR apprenticeships ranked highly: both the HR consultant partner and the HR support apprenticeships appeared in the top 20. This is not a surprise: there are 16,000 people professionals in the NHS. The CIPD recently entered into a five year agreement to support NHS people professionals, and the CIPD recently entered into a partnership with BPP to deploy more HR apprenticeships.¹¹ BPP has been chosen as one of three providers by the NHS to deliver level 3, 5 and 7 HR apps under the following framework: NHS Commercial Solutions: Frameworks and Contracts.

Research summary

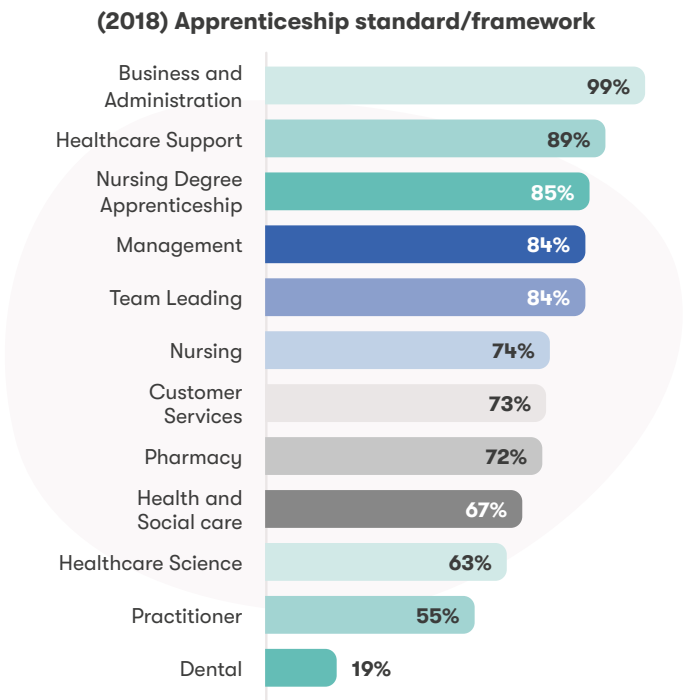
In 2018/19 there were 86 different standards and frameworks¹² in use in the NHS.

Our 2022 research indicates that there are at least 196 different standards/ frameworks in use in the trusts we surveyed.

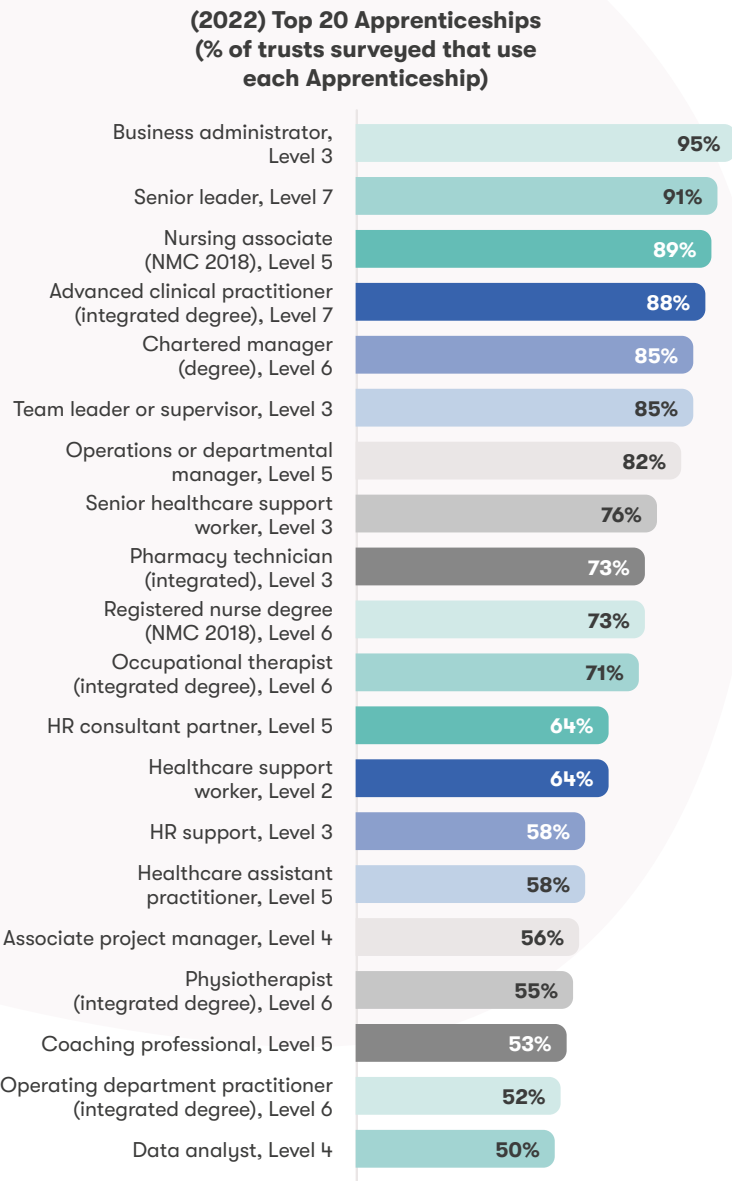
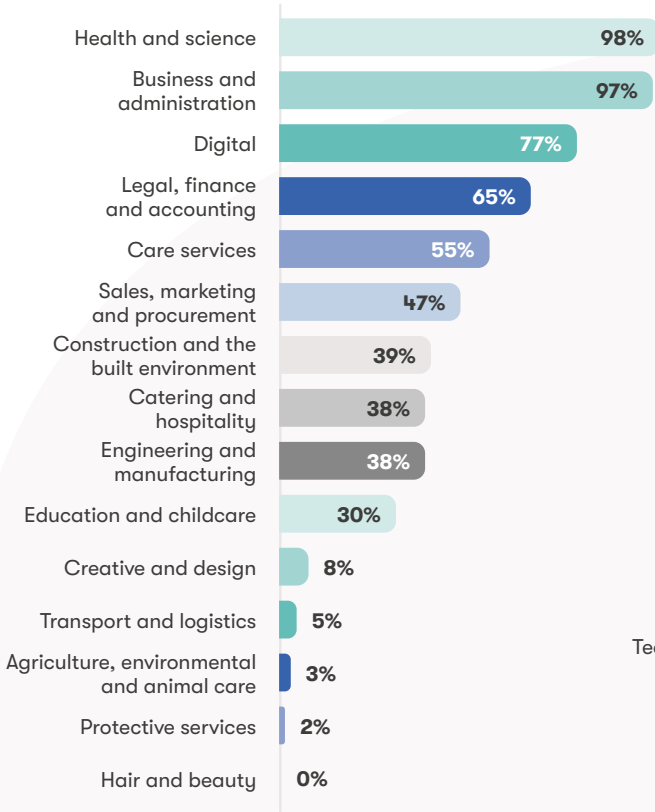
In 2018 we gave respondents a shortlist of apprenticeship standard/framework categories to choose from.

In 2022 we gave respondents the entire list of apprenticeship standards and asked them to select every single standard they knew was in use in their trust, giving us a much more complete picture of apprenticeship standard usage in the NHS.

Here we chart the 2018 responses, the 2022 apprenticeship standard categories the trusts use, and the top 20 apprenticeship standards in use by trusts in 2022.



(2022) Apprenticeship standard categories used by trusts (% of trusts surveyed that use apprenticeships in each category)



10. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1080690/Apprenticeships_evaluation_2021_-_learners_research_report.pdf

11. <https://www.cipd.co.uk/about/media/press/200522-cipd-nhs-partnership-people-professionals#gref>

12. <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/news/registered-nurse-degree-apprenticeship-announcement/>

Challenges.

Analysis

Implementing apprenticeship programmes comes with some challenges. In both our 2018 and 2022 studies we asked respondents to describe the challenges they faced with implementation and internal education around apprentices: in both years off-the-job training and backfill came up, and in 2022 trusts are still suggesting that people in their organisations need education around the benefits of apprenticeships and the differences between apprenticeships and traditional professional qualification programmes.

Research summary

In 2022 we asked respondents to list the top three apprenticeship-related challenges in their trust in this financial year. This was a free-text question, which meant respondents could type anything they wanted.

The themes from their comments are outlined in the table below.

In both 2018 and 2022 we asked respondents to tell us whether people in their trusts needed more education about specific apprenticeship topics.

In 2018, respondents told us that people needed more education on off-the-job training and on the benefits of apprenticeships generally.

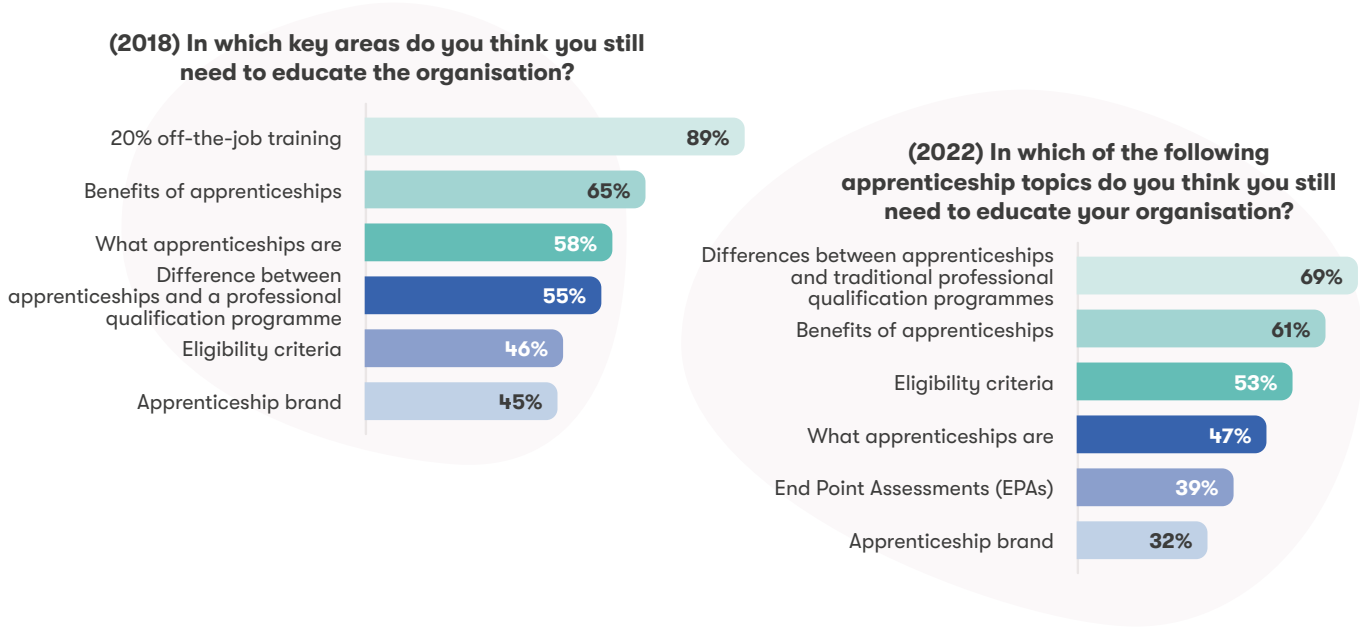
In 2022, the off-the-job requirement was not one of the options because the way the requirement works is due to change. That means that the charts should not be read as a direct comparison.

Off-the-job training time requirements are much higher for some healthcare apprenticeships than in other apprenticeships: 20% off-the-job training has been required by non-healthcare apprenticeships, but for nursing apprenticeships the percentage of time required for training can be considerably higher, increasing backfill costs.

By looking at the rank order of the options that were consistent between the two studies, we can see that respondents' internal education priorities have shifted: explaining the differences between apprenticeships and traditional professional qualifications programmes is more important than explaining the general benefits of apprenticeship in 2022.

Themes from the challenges question:

Theme	Explanation
Backfill	Backfill for apprenticeship roles was mentioned frequently, often in combination with off-the-job training time.
Off-the-job time	Off-the-job training time was mentioned frequently by respondents. The off-the-job training guidance has recently changed, ¹³ but this was still one of the most frequently mentioned themes in the 'challenges' comments.
Buy-in	Buy-in and engagement from stakeholders and from managers was a theme that came up repeatedly.



13. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1110377/20221011_OTJ_Guide_v4_-_For_22_23_Rules_Final.pdf



Government data: apprentice starts and vacancies.

This report has focused on the findings from our 2022 Apprenticeship Levy study, but there are many sources of NHS apprenticeship usage and skills data that we could draw on to paint a more complete picture of apprenticeships and skills in the NHS. In this section we draw on the government's Apprenticeship Levy statistics and NHS vacancy data to add to the statistics presented in the rest of this report.

Nursing apprenticeships starts

By describing the number of nursing apprentice starts over time we can track the deployment of at least one specific NHS apprenticeship over the last five academic years.

The chart below shows a swift initial increase in Nursing Associate starts in 2018-19. HEE facilitated funding support from the government via the 50,000 Nurses programme for Registered Nurse Degree Apprentices from 2020,¹⁴ contributing to the sharp increase in Registered Nurse Degree starts we can see between 2019-20 and 2021-22.

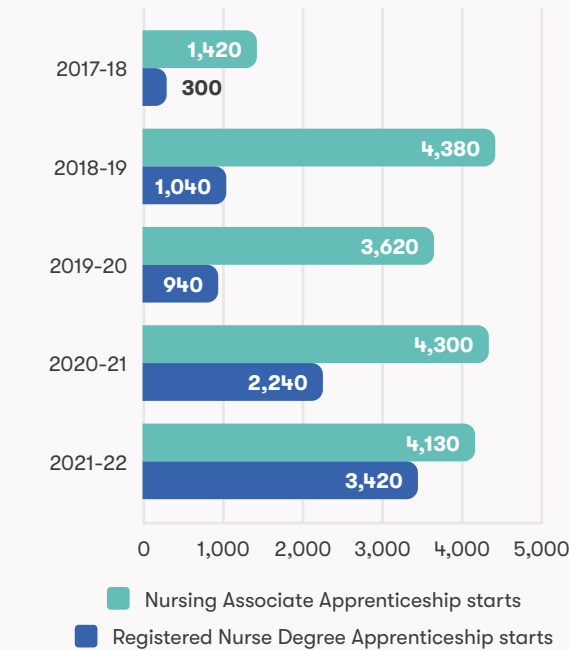
We know from our own Apprenticeship Levy study that apprentices are increasing generally in the NHS, but it is useful to be able to put a specific number to the increase in nursing apprenticeships, especially considering that clinical skills in nursing was one significant skills gap identified by our respondents in 2022.

NHS staff vacancies

Overall NHS workforce vacancy rates have been between 6% and 10% for the last four years, and nursing vacancy rates have been consistently higher, sometimes exceeding 12%.

Increases in nursing apprenticeship starts can only be a good thing for nursing vacancy rates: nursing apprenticeships provide training to address the skills gaps and create new nurses.

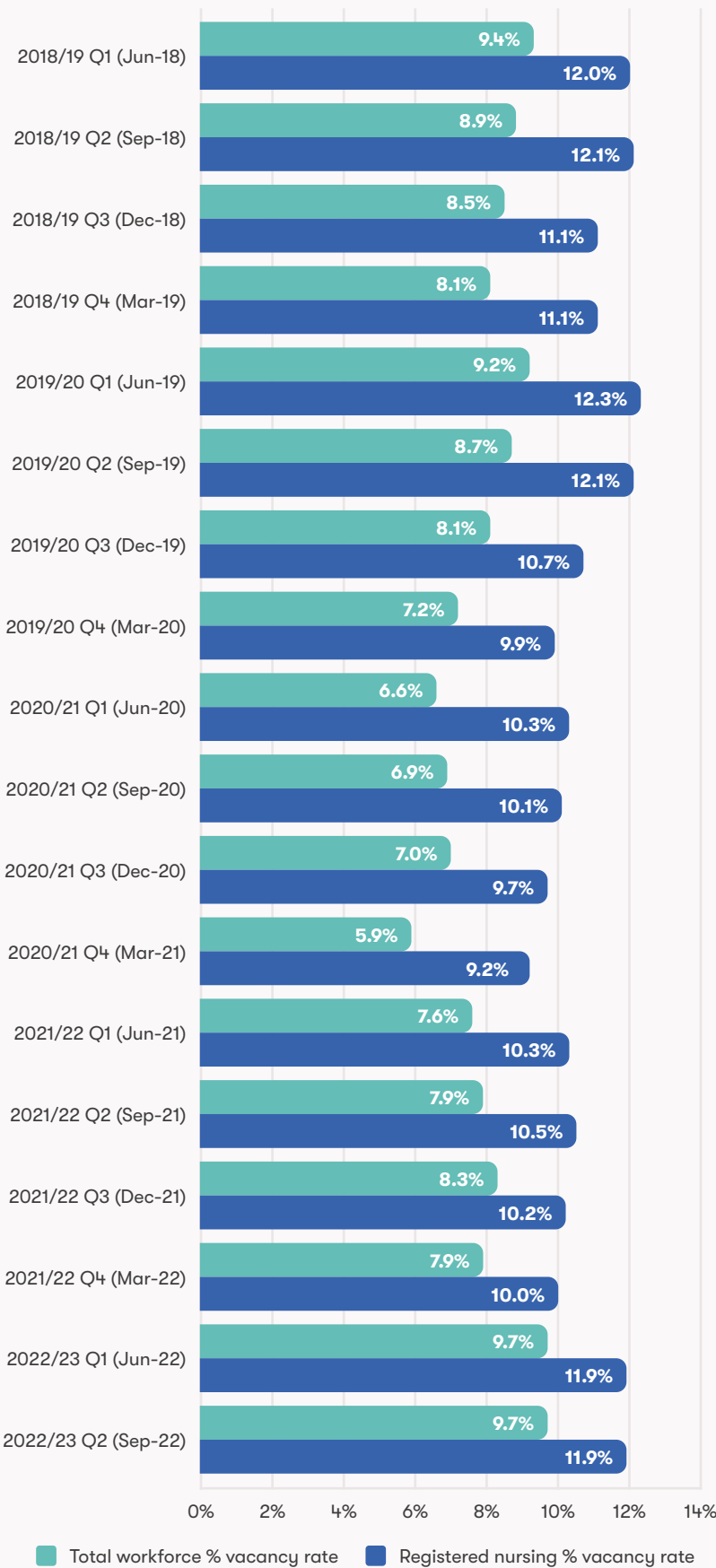
Nursing pathway starts by academic year (government statistics)



*Note: this chart comes from the government's Q4 2022 apprenticeship starts statistical release.¹⁵ This chart combines the Nursing Associate-ST0508 qualification and the Nursing Associate (NMC 2018)-ST0827. This chart combines the Registered Nurse - Degree (NMC 2010)-ST0293 and the Registered Nurse Degree (NMC 2018)-ST0781

14. <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/news/registered-nurse-degree-apprenticeship-announcement/>

NHS vacancy rates 2018/19-2022/23



15. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships>

The BPP Group: supporting the NHS with apprenticeships and training.

Working in partnership to make the NHS an employer of choice. Developing the specialist skills needed to deliver high quality care.

BPP Group is the UK leading training provider of professionally focused apprenticeships, working in partnership with NHS Leadership Academy and in collaboration with Health Education England to provide alternative routes to qualification via apprenticeships.

Our expertise means we have a deep understanding of the challenges of the healthcare profession, and we specialise in offering the full range of courses you need across all key disciplines including nursing, leadership, digital and data. Our courses allow you to solve your resourcing challenges – helping to support progression and retention of your employees.

Celebrating diversity of skills

Our courses are designed for every level of employee – from new colleagues to established leaders and are fully aligned to a range of NHS role profiles. They are suited to employees from all backgrounds, ages, and educational abilities. We offer enhanced levels of support for those employees who haven’t studied for a while to help develop the functional skills needed to enter a longer programme with confidence.

Creating a culture of outstanding leadership

We are an official partner of the NHS Leadership Academy, training our professionally experienced tutors on the specific requirements of the Edward Jenner and Mary Seacole NHS Leadership programmes. We focus on developing the authentic and inclusive leadership skills needed in the digitally transforming workplace, with specialist modules on digital leadership to develop relevant, future-proofed skills.

Developing a workforce to deliver 21st Century care

Our courses are shaped around the skills your workforce needs – both today and in the future, mapped long-term career pathways to upskill and reskill, or enable your people to deepen their expertise in their specialist discipline. Our specially commissioned research means that we understand the challenges faced by HR leaders in the NHS – and how to address them.

Bringing new nurses into the profession

Apprenticeships are an excellent way to shape trainees to suit the culture and values of your trust. Our courses focus on practical and applied learning, allowing your employees to apply their new skills and benefit your patients from day one.

BPP Digital and Technology

We’re the UK’s leading provider of digital and technology training and education.

We design and deliver practically focused training, qualifications and skills certifications that help trusts upskill and reskill professionals at every level, driving revenue and growth.

Our training focuses on the digital, data and IT skills needed by trusts and their employees across these disciplines:

- Cyber Security
- Data and Analytics
- Digital Marketing
- IT & Cloud
- Software

Our three specialist providers in the Group deliver training for every level of employee and proficiency:

- **Estio** – develop core skills in specialist areas through Level 3 and 4 apprenticeships
- **BPP** – become an expert in your field through our fully accredited university, delivering Level 6 and 7 degree apprenticeships, short courses and bootcamps
- **Firebrand** – get vendor certified for IT skills quickly and efficiently

We offer a full range of delivery options to suit you and your trust; ranging from one-day short courses and intense accelerated bootcamps and certifications, to levy fundable apprenticeships up to Master’s level qualification.

Our flexible delivery models allow you to build training around the demands of your trust and your teams, with options including on-demand, self-guided learning, and face-to-face teaching.

BPP and CIPD Enterprises

BPP is CIPD Enterprises’ preferred partner for HR Apprenticeships, working together to elevate the role, quality and uptake of apprenticeships and embed them in the professional development agenda.

As a chosen provider for the NHS and a partner of the CIPD, BPP’s HR apprenticeship programmes are contextualised to health to better support the development of the NHS’ people profession’s capabilities, professionalism and confidence.

Our shared vision

This partnership brings together two industry authorities who share a wealth of experience and a long-standing reputation for excellence in their respective fields. CIPD Enterprises recognises BPP’s extensive expertise in delivering future-facing, practical courses that develop well-rounded HR professionals. Working together, we will support HR professionals in becoming universally trusted and valued as a community of experts and develop a global workforce of well-rounded and professionally competent HR professionals.

We share information, collaborate and innovate to identify the skills needed by tomorrow’s HR professionals and then design programmes which develop these skills in the global HR workforce. This provides highly tailored training and advice to develop the capabilities of HR and L&D teams around the world, helping to elevate professional standards across the industry.

Trust BPP’s scale and expertise

Established more than 45 years ago, BPP is dedicated to providing quality training, with BPP recognised for its consistent quality performance with 60 regulators, including Ofsted who awarded BPP a ‘Good’ rating. BPP also has consistently high-quality feedback from CIPD through End Qualification Assessment activity over a number of years.

Trust CIPD Enterprises’ quality assurance

CIPD’s worldwide membership community of 160,000 people is growing as it develops a greater international profile and strengthens the credibility of CIPD as the professional badge of competence for HR professionals operating on a global stage. Incorporated under Royal Charter, CIPD is the only professional body in the world that can confer individual Chartered status on HR and L&D professionals.



**BPP Group:
a qualified
provider on
many NHS
Dynamic
Purchasing
Systems/
Frameworks.**

BPP is a qualified provider on the following NHS DPS/Frameworks:

- Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust Apprenticeship Framework
- Health Education England NHS People Professional Roadmap (HR) (under the Salisbury Framework)
- NHS London Procurement Partnership
- Crown Commercial Services DMP
- NHS East of England NHS Collaborative Procurement Hub
- NHS North of England CPC
- NHS Commercial Solutions Frameworks and Contracts

As a DPS/Framework listed provider you can be confident that we are on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP), meet the required series of quality assurance rules to qualify, including have an Ofsted grade of 'Good' and are compliant with Public Contract regulations.

We are pre-qualified, so contracts can be negotiated quickly and easily – especially if it's both parties' chosen route.

Notes.

Click here for more information about our **Nursing apprenticeships** and partnership with the **NHS Leadership Academy**.

If you have any questions or require any more information about how BPP works with NHS employers to address training needs visit **bpp.com/apprenticeships**, or call **03300 603 100**.

Disclaimer: This information is accurate as at the date of publication, February 2023. It is subject to change. This document is for guidance only and does not form part of any contract. For more, visit bpp.com.
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