

Birmingham Women's and Children's (BWC) Hospital Workforce and Apprenticeship Vision

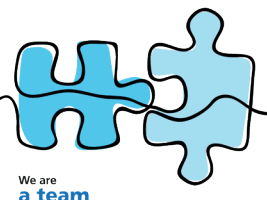
Case study summary

To address workforce challenges within the estates and facilities workforce, Vital Services, part of BWC NHS FT took some bold steps, including maximising apprenticeship levy spend and ensuring the whole workforce had access to training opportunities, allowing anyone to access education or training at least one day a week.

The service had the idea to create a career and academic pathway from leaving school at 16 through to achieving masters level qualifications.

They also had a vision to empower the workforce and introduced complete flexibility and a 'no set hours' policy resulting in increased productivity, morale and the attraction of a more diverse workforce. In addition, pay progression is constantly reviewed in line with education and training achievements.

These dynamic strategies have resulted in a positive transformation of the estates and facilities workforce.



Organisation

**Vital Services, part of Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS FT.
Birmingham and Solihull ICS region.**

What was the aim/problem?

Problems seen nationally for the estates and facilities workforce were all present at BWC including:

- Large proportion of current workforce due for retirement in the next 5 years
- Lack of skilled labour in the local area wanting to join the NHS
- Little investment in the workforce
- Perception of NHS estates being a "retirement" job

What was the solution?

- ✓ Upskill current workforce by creating a 'promotion from within' culture.
- ✓ Utilise apprenticeship levy spend.
- ✓ Become a progressive department where EVERYONE can access training one day a week.
- ✓ Draw up an academic pathway to support development followed by designing a structure to align with it.
- ✓ Progression rounds every 6 months to align with cohort starts and completion dates for when professional and academic targets are met.
- ✓ Illustrate the short- and long-term financial benefits of employing and training skills in relation to external contractors.
- ✓ Appoint training and development lead within the team who is also responsible for managing mentor allocation, ensuring it is diverse and inclusive.

BWC Estates Career and Academic Pathway

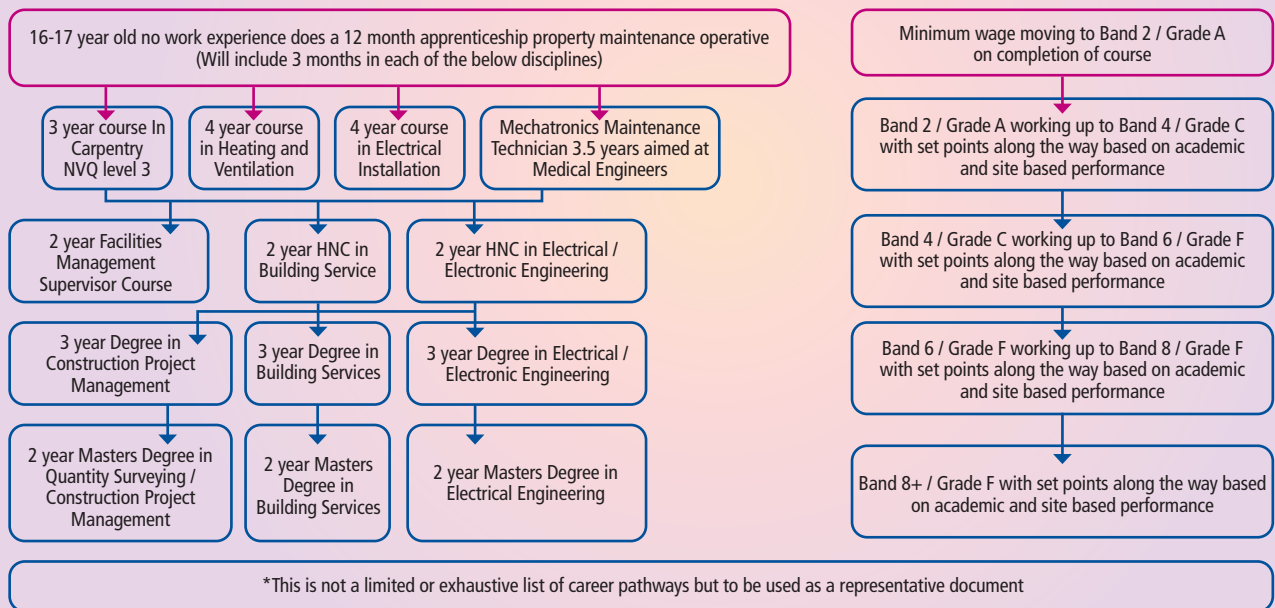
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Everyone here plays an important role in helping us support the wonderful work of the world - leading Birmingham Women's & Children's NHS Foundation Trust.



What were the challenges?

Lack of budget

To overcome this, the team met with the finance director to understand the current apprenticeship levy position. The service now has full support from the finance team, including the Chief Finance Officer to spend levy funding in EFM.

Lack of training providers

Finding a local training provider that could support the academic pathways was a challenge. The service overcame this by working with the Institute of Technology Dudley, who have in turn partnered with Avensys and have a focus on bespoke healthcare training.

What were the results?

- 30 employees classed as apprentices all in formal academic training in the trust estates engineering workforce
- 50 staff accessing education
- Apprentices at numerous different stages in the pathway from trade level qualifications, right the way up to master's degree
- Cultural change from a stagnant department to a forward thinking one that invests in and develops its workforce, leading to increased morale and, in turn, work output

What were the learning points?

- Engage with existing team by speaking with them regularly to gauge interest in formal academic training resulting in guaranteed progression
- Add development discussions into recruitment process
- Work out annual apprenticeship levy investment required to start working towards desired staff structure
- Link training to all roles showing new and existing staff that a career, not just a job is open to them

Next steps and sustainability?

- Appoint ICS training lead to develop the training offer across ICS to attract and retain EFM workforce
- Work collaboratively to increase cohorts of staff able to access training and development across multiple sites
- Focus on improving a bespoke healthcare engineering pathway in the ICS utilising existing academic qualification but being able to utilise levy funding and local Institutes of Technology (IOTs)

Want to know more?

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Head of Infrastructure BWC Management Services Ltd also known as Vital Services
- Supporting Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust