

RISEDALE ESTATES

The Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers were published recently and Risedale Estates were delighted to be ranked 53!
We spoke to them about their experiences of offering apprenticeships.

Risedale Estates operates care homes from four sites within the Furness Peninsula: three sites in Barrow-in-Furness and one at Aldingham. Their mission is to provide high quality care for residents and families, placing the residents at the heart of all that they do. They provide a supportive place to work with development opportunities for staff at all levels. There are around 800 staff working in various roles across all the sites.



When did you start supporting apprentices?

We began with Level 2 and 3 NVQs (National Vocational Qualification) back in 2011. Higher apprentices for the Level 5 Assistant Practitioner (Health) and Level 6 RNDA (Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship) programme began with Risedale Estates in 2017.

How many apprentices do you currently have on programme?

On programme currently, we have 42 Level 2 and 3 Health and Social Care apprentices, 16 RNDA apprentices and 12 Assistant Practitioner (AP) apprentices. We have a further 9 RNDA and AP apprentices commencing in March 2024.

Since January 2022, we have had 24 Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship completions and 8 Nursing Associates with another 1 RNDA completion due anytime. For 2024, we have 8 Assistant Practitioners due to qualify and 5 RNDAs with a further 9 RNDAs in 2025.

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What types of apprenticeship programmes do you support?

We support Level 2 and 3 Health and Social Care apprenticeships for 16-18 years olds and those who would like to upskill who do not fall into this age bracket. We currently offer the Level 5 Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard and the Level 6 Registered Nurse Degree programmes (for both adult and mental health) as apprenticeships. In the past, we have also offered the Level 5 Nursing Associate apprenticeship. Included within this, is the top-up programme for both adult and mental health for those who wish to top up to registered nurse from Assistant Practitioner or Nursing Associate.

Do you support a mix of new recruits and existing staff?

Currently, all of our higher apprenticeships are offered to existing staff. The level 2 and 3 apprenticeships are offered to both new and existing staff.

Our staff can complete their level 2 and 3 apprenticeships at any time and remain at this level. Alternatively, they can choose to apply for their Foundation Degree or RNDA. Staff who haven't completed their level 2 and 3 can also apply for this without having first completed their level 2 or 3. The idea is we "grow our own" nurses and the career pathway leads to Risedale Estates having skills, experienced registered adult and mental health nurses.

How has your organisation benefitted from apprenticeships?

Risedale Estates have benefitted as the staff are extremely grateful for the training opportunities and it means that the retention rate of staff is higher. We also get a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce. The training is tailored which means it suits the needs of Risedale Estates and it certainly diversifies the workforce. We also get to train our staff with funding, meaning we can train more and offer continued professional development for existing staff.

**APPRENTICESHIPS TOP
100 EMPLOYERS 2023**

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What makes Risedale Estates an exemplar apprenticeship employer?

The training opportunities Risedale Estates provides is second to none, including the ongoing training following the completion of an apprenticeship. It is one of the only companies in the area that offers the higher degree apprenticeships. The RNDA programme allows nursing students to have both internal and external placements, meaning they can develop their knowledge and vital skills in different settings such as hospital and community and bring this back to a care home setting. Their internal placements allow them to see different units within the home and put their development into practice. Risedale Estates offer study leave and other off-the-job learning opportunities to their students. They have 1 designated go-to clinical nurse manager who is the point of contact for all the higher apprentices who also arranges placement and assists with planning their time effectively.

What steps do you take to retain apprentices on programme and beyond?

Our apprentices are contracted into a time period after they qualify however they do have the option to leave at any time. The reason they stay are the ongoing training opportunities once they've completed their apprenticeship, including career progression. We have a Preceptorship programme for the Nursing Associates and Registered Nurses which gives extra support for at least 12 months which ensures they do not feel overwhelmed and feel supported. Level 2 and 3 apprentices stay with us as they know there is the opportunity for them to further progress right up to nurse degree level and beyond.

Please share any best practice for supporting apprentices on programme

Designated "go to" clinical nurse managers – one for level 2 and 3, one for higher level. They continuously check in with the apprentices and deal with any issues or concerns the apprentice may have or their manager may come to them with. If an apprentice is struggling, it's showing support and documenting this support, having regular, supportive conversations with the apprentice and implementing anything reasonable to help them. We also have the Preceptorship programme following completion of their RNDA which the apprentices know about and therefore go into qualifying knowing they will continue to be supported.

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Information about the award?

I first saw the opportunity to apply for the award of “Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers of the Year” in the newsletter sent out weekly by NHS England. I gathered the appropriate information including the number of apprentices, retention data, diversity data and such like and applied for the award. This was then announced earlier in the year. When at the celebration lunch, other employers were amazed at what we had been ranked considering we are a local company.

Do you have any future plans to support apprenticeship growth?

We have 9 new Assistant Practitioner (AP) apprentices due to start in March 2024 as well as 7 RNDA top-ups commencing in October and January. We also have 4 overseas employees who will be commencing the AP course (on a non-apprenticeship route due to restrictions) however they will be able to top up via the apprenticeship route on the RNDA programme in 2 years.

