

Healthier Together

Improving health and care in Bristol,
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire



Bristol North Somerset South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Healthier Together Apprenticeship Strategy

Rich Francis
Apprenticeship Manager
September 2021





Contents

- Introduction
- Key drivers and strategic objectives
- How we will achieve system goals
- Project timeline
- Performance Monitoring and Engagement
- Summary
- Appendix 1: What is an apprenticeship and who are apprenticeships for
- Appendix 2: Benefits of Apprentices
- Appendix 3: Workforce Planning
- Appendix 4: SWOT Analysis
- Appendix 5: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Appendix 6: Supporting Post COVID Economic Recovery
- Appendix 7: Implementation Plan





Introduction - Apprenticeship Strategy for Bristol North Somerset South Gloucestershire Integrated Care System (ICS)

The number of apprenticeship roles has increased considerably over the last few years across organisations, in both the private and public sectors, looking at apprenticeships as a way to address the needs of the workforce, job opportunities, social mobility and development pathways. This growth in the availability of apprenticeships has led to an increase in competition during the employer recruitment processes, driving ever more the need for BNSSG to ensure an attractive and collaborative approach to apprenticeships.

There are many benefits to a collaborative approach to a system wide Apprenticeship Strategy; these include the ability to move apprentices across organisations and the ICS, a consistent apprenticeship offer throughout the BNSSG and to be able to develop cross organisational placements for those standards that require it. The collective employer led purchasing power of the BNSSG system provides opportunities for negotiating bespoke responsive training courses from education providers able to be mapped to evolving system needs and value for money initiatives to benefit apprenticeships that require funds not covered by the levy. Ultimately a diverse range of BNSSG apprenticeship opportunities attracts local talent, enables widening participation and retains staff within the health and social care sector.

Nationally, the government is committed to developing vocational skills and increasing the quantity and quality of apprenticeships in England with the intent of securing an additional 3 million apprenticeship starts by the end of March 2022. In seeking to achieve this, there has been a change in apprenticeships national policy with the introduction of significant reforms, these are (source: [Apprenticeship Reform Programme - GOV.UK](#)):

- Employers will be expected to be directly involved in investing and supporting apprenticeship activity
- An annual Apprenticeship Levy applies to all organisations with a pay bill of £3 million or more
- All Public Sector organisations have a legal duty to support apprenticeship starts at 2.3% of the current workforce
- An emphasis on higher apprenticeships



Healthier Together

Improving health and care in Bristol,
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

This Apprenticeship Strategy has been developed and agreed through the Apprenticeship Widening and Engagement (AWE) Sub Group and sets out key drivers and strategic objectives for a collaborative, system wide apprenticeship approach.

Key drivers and strategic objectives

There are numerous primary key drivers and strategic objectives for apprenticeships:

1. *Workforce supply and development*

Attract new staff into the health and social care workforce through clinical support worker and entry-level roles, including non-clinical estates, digital, facilities and hospitality apprenticeships etc. This activity will provide career opportunities for progression to address gaps in our workforce; enabling hard to recruit roles to be filled whilst providing a sustainable pipeline to complement other sources of supply. Using apprenticeship standards to upskill the system workforce, to fill hard-to-recruit roles creates effective talent/succession plans. Equally, as more Degree (level 6) and Masters (level 7) apprenticeship standards emerge the system is able to secure and promote these as pathways to professional registration; thereby growing workforce supply at all levels. Mapping apprenticeships to skill gaps will grow system capability so that we have 'the right people, in the right place with the right skills'.

2. *Workforce Transformation*

As part of our Healthier Together collaboration, there are a range of service transformation programmes which require staff to work in new roles and different ways. Apprenticeships provide opportunities for staff to develop skills to enable them to support new models of care by the development of identified skills using recognised frameworks delivered in the workplace. By collaborating on workforce development, partner organisations are able to develop the appropriate skills in a consistent and integrated way.



Healthier Together

Improving health and care in Bristol,
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

3. *Utilisation of the levy*

The apprenticeship levy is collected by the government on a monthly basis and has a specific 'shelf life' of 24 months before 'sun setting'. Therefore, monies not spent within the 24 months period will return to central government to re-distribute. Organisations and the ICS have the collective opportunity to maximise the utilisation of the levy to support the wider health economy and care pathways through the apprenticeship levy transfer process.

Organisations are able to transfer 25% of their levy account to non-levy paying organisations, such as primary care, social care and charities. For example, the ICS could transfer up to 10% of expiring levy to Primary Care Networks for enabling workforce development priorities through apprenticeship standards. This offers the opportunity to further enhance and cement strategic partnership working across the ICS and will enable social care and primary care to attract, develop and retain their workforce

4. *Increasing local engagement and employment*

Engaging the local population through highly visible employment initiatives will allow BNSSG organisations to become employers of choice and further support recruitment and retention strategies. Promoting diversity and inclusivity within the workforce through accessing untapped talent that may ordinarily not have joined the health and social care sector. By having a grow your own strategy and apprenticeship recruitment objective allows the local population that the BNSSG serves to apply for apprenticeship roles, this in turn will widen engagements and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

5. *The public sector target (as set by the government in the Enterprise Bill)*

The aim is to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities and achieve public body workforce target. The introduction of the government's public sector targets for apprenticeships means all public sector bodies, with 250 or more employees in England should employ an average of 2.3% of their workforce as new apprentice starts over the period of 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022. This target was granted a one-year extension due to the impact of the pandemic. Within the ICS this equates to approximately 1200 apprentices.



6. *Qualification achievement rates and benchmarking*

The system will collectively measure apprenticeship successes and completion rates, both timely and non-timely in line with the national qualification achievement rates. BNSSG will compare the achievement rates and benchmark against other public sector organisations, training providers and regions. The system will aim to achieve a 95% staff retention rate, this will include apprentices remaining in their current role or progressing to a higher level apprenticeship. Note that during the pandemic national qualification achievement rates are completed using formulae: [Apprenticeship Success Rate Methodology for 2011 - Technical Specification \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/Apprenticeship-Success-Rate-Methodology-for-2011-Technical-Specification.pdf)

7. *Partnership working with education providers to meet the needs of our ICS*

Work collectively with training providers to ensure the curriculum offer meets the bespoke needs of the ICS, including particular pathways within apprenticeship standards and adapting an existing offer to meet new and emerging workforce needs.

8. Healthier Together project collaboration

The apprenticeship project will collaborate with other system projects such as; nurse supply, schools and colleges engagement, retention, equality and diversity and recruitment projects. Working collectively with associated project teams allows the apprenticeship project to increase the amount of apprentices from the local community, enable the ICS to promote equality and diversity, work with schools and colleges to create a long term sustainable talent pipeline, which in turn will assist the nurse supply project and the recruitment and retention project.



Healthier Together

Improving health and care in Bristol,
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

How we will achieve system goals

In order to achieve these objectives, we will work collectively as a system, setting a series of strategic short, medium and long-term goals:

Short term goals 0 – 12 months

- Develop an apprenticeship strategy, to be adopted and implemented across the ICS.
- Monitor progress against the public body targets and working alongside the schools and colleges project lead, to plan activity around apprenticeships intakes each year.
- Collect accurate apprenticeship reporting data, through an individual and system wide approach to inform business planning and workforce development.
- The ICS will engage with organisations such as the Weston Training Provider Network (WTPN), Skills for Care, Proud to Care and West of England Combined Authority (WECA). This will enable the system to promote the levy share opportunity to the wider supply chain, including addressing urgent workforce needs in social care and the PVI sector.
- Capture and utilise HEE/national updates and procurement opportunities to inform and develop the apprenticeship and workforce pipeline.
- Ensure system wide and collaboratively procured apprenticeships for high focused areas (ensuring a return on investment).
- Evaluate all entry level vacancies, such as bands 2-4 as an apprenticeship opportunity.
- Ensure apprenticeship career pathways are clear with equitable access to careers advice and guidance.
- Develop a marketing strategy to raise the profile of apprenticeships, through the use of digital recordings, case studies, social media, virtual tours etc. and the creation of clinical and non-clinical career maps.
- Work in partnership with education /training providers ensuring value for money and high-quality provision to meet the future needs of the system with collective ownership.
- Report and act on apprenticeship workforce numbers aligned to system, regional and national workforce priorities



Healthier Together

Improving health and care in Bristol,
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

- Ensure the effective utilisation of the levy transfer system, agreeing a target of £400k for 2021-22, by working in close alignment with the BNSSG Training Hub.
- Integrated system working to build pathways for T-Levels, traineeships and work experience to gain apprenticeship opportunities and to work in line with the newly formed BNSSG careers hub.
- Rationalise the number of training providers the BNSSG work with by the scoping and creation of a BNSSG preferred suppliers directory, while driving up the quality of training provision.
- Inform workforce planning – ensure the inclusion of apprenticeship numbers within workforce plans to build a sustainable talent pipeline that will respond to hard to fill roles.
- Commit to how apprenticeship opportunities are marketed and delivered to ensure a more inclusive approach, removing barriers for staff from protected characteristics.
- Work collaboratively to support potential recruits furthest from the labour market, helping them to address and overcome obstacles to securing suitable and sustainable employment through apprenticeships.
- Provide an opportunity and process for smaller organisations to apply for a transfer of apprenticeship levy funds to support a wider increase in apprenticeship uptake across the ICS. Ensuring an equitable system process for smaller non levy organisations to apply for apprenticeship levy funds.
- Achievement of the public sector target of 2.3% of the workforce being an apprentice and 95% employability retention rate
- System wide collaboration on opportunities for employer led trailblazers for system wide workforce transformation.
- Implement Health and Care Ambassadors knowledge of apprenticeships and entry routes for example the nurse ambassador's network.



Healthier Together

Improving health and care in Bristol,
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Medium term goals 1 – 3 years

- Incorporate opportunities for apprenticeships into the BNSSG learning offer for the current workforce via appraisals and personal development plans.
- Influence HR departments to provide recognition throughout the recruitment process to consider vacant posts for an apprenticeship opportunity
- Work with schools, the careers hub and partners to raise aspirations and promote organisations within the ICS as employers of choice.
- Work with system partners to utilise schemes such as Disability Confident and partner with various charities such as The Prince's Trust and employability organisations to drive apprenticeship participation and to support a wider E, D&I agenda.
- Standardise recruitment processes to embed functional skills assessment at levels 1 and 2.
- Increase the levy transfer by 20% through promoting the BNSSG levy bank, having a targeted approach to workforce needs and priorities.
- Advertise all vacancies via the National Apprenticeship Website as well as on other platforms such as NHS Jobs.
- Increase the availability of higher-level apprenticeships toward professional registration or higher skills attainment such as leadership.

Long term goals 3 – 5 years

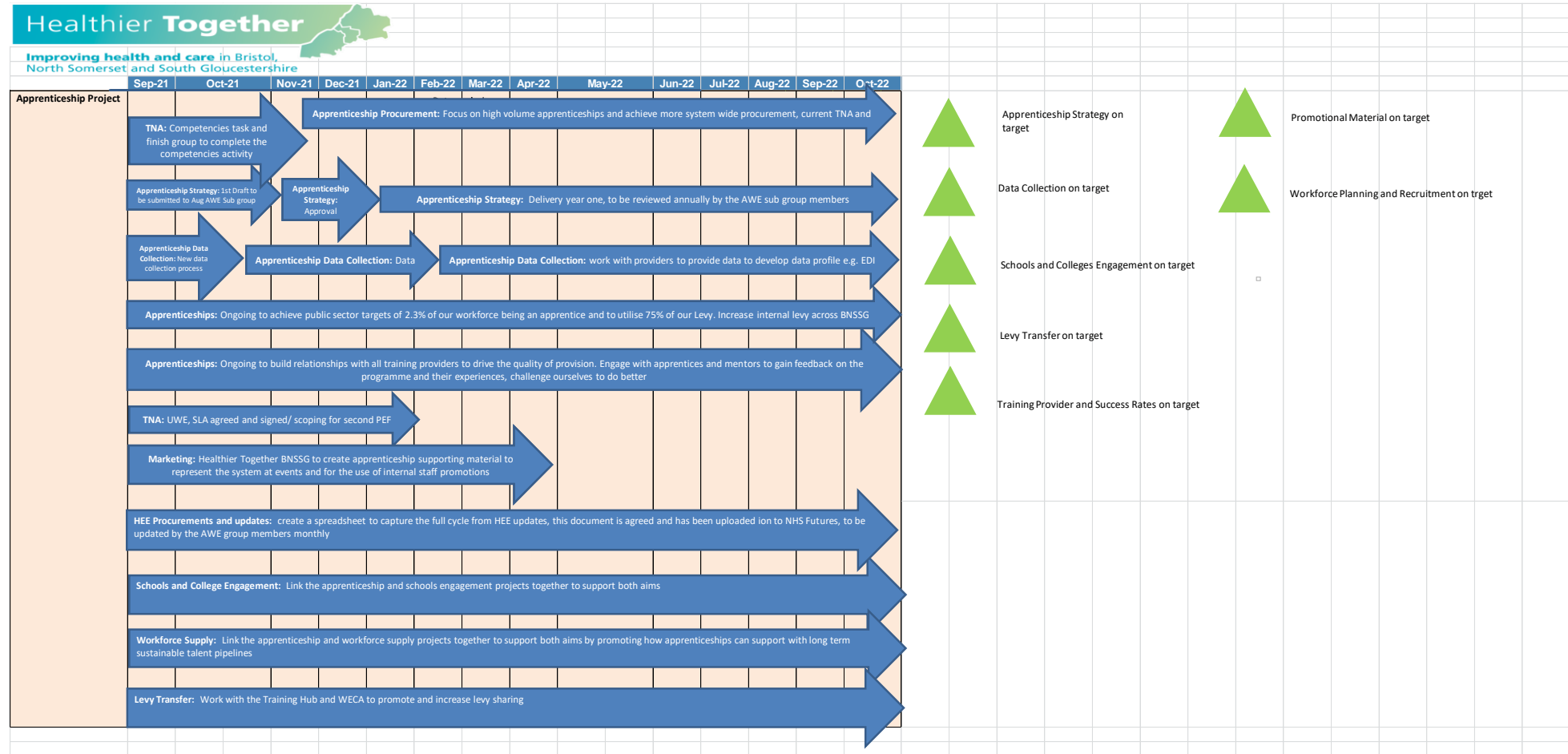
- Maintain a sustainable pipeline of Health and Care Ambassadors knowledge of apprenticeships and entry routes.
- Review rates of pay within the ICS, to avoid competition and to ensure an offer that is transparent and fair by developing a clear system wide apprenticeship pay policy.
- Build innovative models of apprenticeship delivery and provision driven by employer needs.
- Become a national system leader for apprenticeship provision.



Healthier Together

Improving health and care in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Project Timeline



Healthier Together

Improving health and care in Bristol,
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Performance Monitoring and Engagement

The apprenticeship project will be evaluated quarterly by the ICS Apprenticeship Widening Engagement subgroup (AWE) at the start of each financial year, the outcomes of this evaluation will then be fed back in to the Learning Academy Group (LAG) . This evaluation will look at:

- How much of the levy was spent the previous year and assessing the effectiveness of the investment.
- Track career progression, learner journey or personal progression of individual apprenticeship or departments as best practice case studies.
- Track roles post-apprenticeship programme to evaluate impact and workforce need.
- Identify, plan and address through the apprenticeship programme those areas of on-going staff shortages or skill shortages.
- Assess and measure apprenticeship retention rates and recruitment rates.
- Evaluate levy spending against public sector targets.
- Monitoring of apprentices employed across the system to ensure the ICS meets its equality diversity and inclusion agenda.

Summary

This Apprenticeship Strategy builds on the existing framework of collaborative BNSSG system working and shared expertise through the Apprenticeship & Widening Engagement Sub-Group which is a sub group of the Learning Academy Group to:

- Develop system wide apprenticeship procurement for high volume and key target areas for recruitment
- Increase local applications to reflect the diverse community we serve to 'grow our own' staff and retain them
- Reduce the number of education providers across the system in order to gain better value for money and drive up the quality of provision
- Build a framework for agile response to funding applications to make the best use of resources across the system
- Devise clear career development pathways to attract and retain staff and offer consistent career development opportunities across BNSSG
- Enhance relationships with education providers to embed innovative and flexible solutions to the evolving training needs of the ICS.

Which will ultimately create a sustainable talent pipeline.



Appendix 1:

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a job that requires substantial and sustained training, leading to the achievement of an apprenticeship standard and the development of transferable skills.

This definition is underpinned by four principles of future apprenticeships:

- Apprenticeships is a job, in a skilled occupation
- Apprenticeships requires substantial and sustained training, lasting a minimum of 12 months and including off-the-job training
- Apprenticeships lead to full competency in an occupation, demonstrated by the achievement of an apprenticeship standard that is defined by employers
- Apprenticeships develop transferable skills, including English and maths, to progress careers

Who are Apprenticeships for?

All apprenticeships are linked to job roles and employers choose who to employ as an apprentice. Apprenticeships remain a programme for people aged 16 and over with each apprentice undertaking an education and learning programme leading to genuine skills gain or enhancement, rather than the accreditation of existing skills.

Apprenticeships are available to new and existing employees, but should only be offered to the latter where substantial training is required to achieve occupational competency or in support of career progression.



Healthier Together

Improving health and care in Bristol,
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Health Education England Talent for Care Strategic Framework

Health Education England [HEE] launched the Talent for Care strategic framework, which is focussed on the education, training and development of the support workforce. The framework recognises the value of apprenticeships for both individuals and organisations and has the expansion of apprenticeships listed as one of its key strategic intentions.

- **Get ready** – to engage with future talent.
- **Get in** - improving opportunities for people to start their career in a support role.
- **Get on** - supporting people to be the best that they can be in the job they do.
- **Go further** - providing opportunities for career progression including into the registered professions.

Widening participation is largely about attracting people from a diverse range of backgrounds to pursue a career in healthcare (source HEE web site: Talent for Care strategic framework). It is acknowledged that within healthcare a diverse workforce can ensure a better understanding of patients' needs - crucial skills for the delivery of joined up, personalised care. As a major employer, it is also recognised that the healthcare sector has the potential to make a significant/positive impact on the employment and economic stability for communities as well as support an agenda of corporate social responsibility.

Apprenticeships encourage lifelong learning and development; this allows individuals career progression and helps organisations to bridge any skills gaps.

Local government's community leadership role and strategic priorities such as economic growth and inclusion also emphasises the need to attract people from a diverse range of backgrounds, aiming to ensure that the local government workforce profile reflects the people it serves.



Appendix 2: Benefits of Apprentices

What are the benefits of an apprentice?

1. The apprenticeship scheme offers an opportunity for someone to enter a field of work without a work related qualification
2. The opportunity to invest and guide the skills and knowledge that the apprentice acquires
3. At the end of the training period the apprentice will have the skills and knowledge to be a competent and valued team member
4. An apprenticeship is a job, in a skilled occupation
5. An apprenticeship leads to full competency in an occupation, demonstrated by the achievement of an apprenticeship standard as defined by employer
6. An apprenticeship develops transferable skills, including English and maths, to progress careers
7. Apprenticeship programme supports national and local drivers such as the levy and the public sector apprenticeship duty and target
8. An apprenticeship support career progression



Appendix 3: Workforce Planning

Workforce Supply

The priority to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of suitably qualified and skilled staff remains a top priority for ensuring delivery of services across BNSSG Healthier Together. In this respect, apprenticeships offer a real opportunity for addressing short to medium-term supply challenges as well as investing in the training and development of the workforce for the longer term. New apprenticeship standards continue to evolve; therefore, opportunities will be presented to adapt and amend the system wide apprenticeship offer from entry-level through to highly skilled roles, but also to recruit into other parts of the workforce.

The system need for a collaborative approach to recruiting apprentices for the five hotspot areas is greater now than ever before. The Healthier Together Recruitment Group has identified five hot spot areas that are top priorities for our collaborative recruitment efforts, which are as follows:

- Registered Nurses, including mental health and community nurses
- Allied Health Professionals
- Support Workers
- Radiographer

In order for apprenticeships to be sustainable, integration should be carefully considered within the workforce planning process as an essential. In workforce planning of apprenticeship provision will therefore support the recruitment agenda within the health and care sector, addressing issues such as:

- Recruitment of entry-level vacancies
- Address skills gaps
- Recruit to hard- to- fill posts
- Develop existing staff
- Improve the diversity profile of the workforce
- Build a 'grow your own' workforce model, accessible to the local community



Healthier Together

Improving health and care in Bristol,
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Healthier Together: Integrated Care System for BNSSG

Healthier Together is the health and care partnership for people in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire and will include the development of new care models which will improve the health of the local area population and make sure services work for everyone. Our People Steering Group has agreed the following principles which are embedded in our apprenticeship strategy:

1. ***New ways of working*** One system workforce approach, to enable an agile, system way of working across health and care
2. ***Growing for the future*** Deliver on the commitment to a joint Learning Academy and work together to recruit and retain more people into health and care
3. ***Looking after our people and belonging*** Develop the system Employer Value Proposition, treating staff fairly, consistently and inclusively, making health and care a great place to work and thrive through flexibility, development and valuing ICS staff



Appendix 4: SWOT Analysis

Each of the individual organisations within the ICS have completed a SWOT analysis based on the current Healthier Together apprenticeship offer, these have been merged in to one to form a system wide analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>BNSSG Levy Bank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully operational, allowing underutilised funds to be shared across Healthier Together. <p>Collaborative working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding and knowledge of everything apprenticeships, working with a team of industry experts, the ability to network and share experiences with the apprenticeships sub group. Shared accountability Ability to drive the quality of apprenticeship provision, build relationships with training providers, procure system wide apprenticeship standards and keep the cost low for additional qualifications added to apprenticeships. <p>Project support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having an Apprenticeship Project Manager to drive work forward AWE sub group provides opportunities each month and responds to new ways of working e.g. the introduction of MS Teams Experienced team with good range of both clinical and non-clinical experience. <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear communication channels for apprenticeships within the BNSSG Consistent flow of information between partner organisations <p>People and patients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved patient care through having a highly skilled workforce. 	<p>Training provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all partners utilising the same Training Provider provision, leading to inconsistencies with apprenticeship quality. Not fully utilising BNSSG partners that act as Training Provider delivering apprenticeships, (links into an opportunity for the creation of a BNSSG apprenticeship centre of excellence). <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent sources of information e.g. receiving communications from different departments within HEE, NSEI & NHS employers. Different ways of working – virtual home working makes it harder to communicate key messages to all relevant parties Not tracking where ex-employees or apprentices work after <p>Processes and governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Length of time over activity due to the need for an agreed consensus Less agile as a big group than operating alone - ability to obtain a unified consensus Increased attendance to meetings Change management and adaptability Accountability and control Complexity of system and number of roles within can challenge constructive progress <p>Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough Adult Social Care Providers represented in AWE, LAG and ICS Workforce work stream Smaller partners have an impactful voice Lack of joint apprenticeships across health and social care – creates silo working and opportunities where there could be system working Placement provision within smaller services <p>Sector differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hierarchical influence of some health care fields can lead to disparity with the way priorities are viewed With a number of healthcare support vacancies in the sector, internal apprenticeships are vital to maintaining care standards within our new to role employees, and developing knowledge, skills and behaviours of our longer serving teams 	<p>Growth and development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real opportunity to create an ICS wide Centre for Excellence in Apprenticeships. Grow the Levy transfer systems wider and make a real impact to the local Health Economy. Work wider than the BNSSG, should we be interacting more with counterparts across the "Top of the South West" – One Glos & Wilts Access to 20.5 billion funding boost for the NHS outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan The vocational nature of apprenticeships can be used to focus marketing on untapped workforce resources that may be put off by what could be construed as more educationally focused. <p>Wider range of provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To negotiate for best value with providers - Cost effective recruitment and training Providers are keen to win our collective business so service should be of a higher quality Good geographical spread for our staff to access <p>Recruitment and retention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widening Participation and Attracting Young People into the NHS Transferability and Progression Wide range of apprenticeships offered to staff at all levels – aiding retention and attracting staff who want to develop Stronger advertisement regarding opportunities as a system Health and Social Care has changed dramatically over the decades however it is still regarding as having a high set of values that people can relate to and want to be a part of. <p>People and skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased productivity A means of developing a skilled, motivated and qualified workforce Designing of career pathways for system employers using apprenticeships. (Larger employers may be doing this already but potential for smaller ones to take more advantage of apprenticeships too.) Practice and placement Expansion project to increase assessors and placement opportunities <p>New initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the development of new apprenticeships by starting and/or participating in Trail Blazer groups T levels and engagement with schools and colleges/work experience 	<p>Costs and funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The unaffordability of the RNDA. Not helped by employment costs. Funding from HEE helpful, but doesn't go far enough to make this really a viable option for organisations. There is a threat that staff we have supported and developed will hit an educational glass ceiling – one that the RNDA will open. Learning Providers leaving the market (e.g. SGS for level 2 ASC apprenticeship as not sufficient funding) Ability to continue to support a sustainable increase in training registered professionals through an established 'grow our own' approach. The primary challenge in this area is the financial backfill of significant release requirements associated with RNDA and other undergraduate preregistration programmes <p>System challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility to adapt to change quickly Lead provider threat for smaller partners Control by the larger organisations or the loudest voice <p>Staffing and Retention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of losing talent to other Trusts (for example, by not offering Nursing Degree apprenticeship) Lack of interest and take up of care and health careers by young people and those looking for work Lack of good placement opportunities for some Apprenticeships, particularly those being offered by HEIs System pressures, recruitment issues nationally and regionally all contribute to the ability to support learners/allow time out to learn Sickness/covid related problems meaning people are needing additional time off than "normal" either effecting them individually or close family and friends <p>Lack of support for non-clinical areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great focus and incentives given to clinical programmes. There are huge development needs within non-clinical areas e.g. facilities/estates. <p>Political situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in government support for apprenticeship may make them less appealing to employers Political will can influence the emphasis and funding relating to health care and education models.



Appendix 5: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Healthier Together BNSSG strives as an inclusive and representative ICS whose workforce reflects the people and communities it serves.

Within the communities some applicants face complex challenges and issues in finding and sustaining good quality employment. Therefore, this strategy aims to support apprenticeships as a catalyst to create more meaningful and accessible employment opportunities for the local population, offering apprenticeship schemes help to address the wider determinants of health such as social inequality.

In particular, to ensure young people are able to utilise apprenticeships as a pathway to sustainable employment. Therefore, the ICS supports a project lead for schools and college engagement to promote apprenticeships and other opportunities to engage young people. Consequently, in focusing upon young people this strategy seeks to prioritise marginalised groups, such as Care Leavers and other young people who are not in education, employment and training (NEET) to access apprenticeship vacancies.

Within the BNSSG ICS, apprenticeship opportunities should be inclusive and accessible, and therefore flexible to the meet the needs of a diverse workforce. Equally, the strategy focuses upon creating opportunities for those underrepresented in the workplace, including applicants with learning difficulties and disabilities, caring responsibilities and mental or physical health conditions. There is a significant disparity if representation of apprentices or staff from our BAME communities between the highest and lowest bands, apprenticeships can help to address this by providing inclusive career opportunities.

The apprenticeship strategy aims to promote an apprenticeship offer that raises aspirations and supports the ICS's priorities to tackle poverty and unemployment.



Appendix 6: Supporting Post COVID Economic Recovery

It is estimated there are almost 1.7 million people currently unemployed ([Coronavirus: Impact on the labour market - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)) because of the impact of Covid-19, in addition to thousands of young people whose final year of education has been disrupted before entering the labour market. The ICS has adapted and responded to the challenges apprentices have encountered as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and we must continue to recognise and respond to these challenges across the public sector. The 2021 to 2023 apprenticeship strategy gives the ICS the short-term flexibility to respond to these issues and the latitude to change course in future.

Appendix 7: Implementation Plan:



Apprenticeship
Strategy Implemental

