

Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust (Wessex NVQ Centre)

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 58839

Name of lead inspector: Richard Beynon HMI

Last day of inspection: 3 February 2011

Type of provider: Employer

Address: South Academic Block
Southampton General Hospital
Tremona Road
Southampton

Telephone number: 02380 796989

Information about the provider

1. The Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust (SUHT) Wessex NVQ Centre (the Centre) operates within IDEAL (the Integrated Directorate of Education and Learning), working to widen participation in learning and training among staff on pay bands 1 to 4 within SUHT. These staff undertake roles in areas such as portering, administration, housekeeping, pharmacy and healthcare.
2. The Centre has been providing clinically-based training and qualifications since 1991 and has evolved in this time to offer a wide variety of clinically-based National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) both within the Trust itself and also to other employers. The Centre specialises in clinical NVQs as it has access to subject specialists to teach on training days and can provide specific programmes for small numbers of staff in specialist areas, such as clinical laboratory support NVQ at level 2. Such provision meets a workforce development need in the Trust.
3. The Centre is validated by City and Guilds for delivery and assessment of provision in a number of clinically-related health NVQs at levels 2 and 3. SUHT has not been subject to inspection before, and has not had any monitoring visits.
4. Since commencing government-funded training in 2008, around 45 learners have undertaken qualifications, mainly NVQs at levels 2 or 3. At the close of the current Train to Gain contract the Trust is intending to sub-contract all future NVQ and apprenticeship training to a local college.
5. The SUHT does not provide government-funded training on behalf of other providers.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision: Train to Gain	45 learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision		Grade 2
Capacity to improve		Grade 3
		Grade
Outcomes for learners		2
Quality of provision		2
Leadership and management		2
Safeguarding		2
Equality and diversity		2
Subject Areas		
Health, Public Services and Care		2

Overall effectiveness

- Provision at SUHT is good. Success rates and the proportion of learners successfully completing their programme in the agreed time are satisfactory. Learners develop a good range of useful skills during their training, which gives them confidence and increased independence in their job roles. Many learners have progressed through a number of courses, and some have gone on to nursing or other professional training. Training quality is good, with some very well-planned off-the-job sessions to support learners' skills development and understanding. Learners receive good support from the Centre staff and from their assessors, who are usually skilled practitioners. Partnerships within the Trust and with a range of external organisations are effective and productive in broadening training and development opportunities for employees. Training is managed well, and senior managers plan well to meet the Trust and regional sector needs. Arrangements to gather and act upon the views of learners are satisfactory overall, although there are insufficient formal mechanisms to gather feedback about assessor support or workplace training. Departmental and ward managers have insufficient formal opportunity to contribute to self-assessment of provision. Equality and diversity are promoted well, and measures to ensure learners' safety and well-being are good.

Main findings

- Learners' attainment of qualifications and other learning goals are satisfactory. In 2009/10, the proportion of learners achieving their qualification in the agreed time was equal to the national rate of 70%.
- Learners develop a good range of skills during training. They make significant gains in confidence and in their ability to work independently. Managers value these skills gains and recognise the ways that learners perform better in their job roles following training.
- Training effectively helps develop learners' economic well-being. Many learners have progressed from level 2 to level 3 training, and a number have gone on to study in higher education or taken up professional training for areas such as nursing. Many learners have also obtained permanent employment following training.
- Specialist practitioner assessors in wards and departments carry out effective on-the-job training and assessment. In most cases assessors are able to provide timely assessment of learning and understanding. Generally, Centre staff put in place a suitable range of alternative measures when clinical or other organisational priorities delay assessment.
- Learners value the good off-the-job training. SUHT provides a useful and productive range of skills development and knowledge-based sessions for learners. Trainers plan these sessions well, with good strategies to address learners' literacy and numeracy needs.
- The range of provision meets organisational and sector needs effectively. SUHT provides good progression and development routes for learners. However, learners have insufficient access to ICT and inadequate access to online learning.
- Partnerships successfully support and enhance the provision and the employment routes available for learners. Centre managers maintain good links with local schools and schools' careers services.
- Learners receive good support from their trainers and from the Centre staff. Assessors and workplace colleagues in most areas recognise and support learners' needs and aspirations.
- Strategic planning and prioritisation are good. Senior Trust managers effectively widen participation and improve the employability skills of employees. Close links between the training and other functions of the Trust management structures ensure effective planning to meet individual and organisational needs.
- Management within the Centre is highly effective. Staff maintain very good communications with other departments in the Trust. Staff are highly supportive and have productive relationships with learners.
- SUHT promotes equality and diversity well. Opportunities for development and progression to permanent employment or higher job grades are very good. Policies and procedures are comprehensive and clear; essential elements of these are communicated well to learners. Learners are safe, know their rights

and responsibilities well and receive suitably frequent training in equality and diversity matters.

- Measures to gather and act upon learners' views are satisfactory. Learner feedback on the quality and usefulness of study days and off-the-job training is comprehensive, but there is less opportunity to comment on overall training quality and effectiveness, including workplace assessment. SUHT has recognised this as an area for improvement.
- Arrangements to assure the quality of training are satisfactory. The Centre managers and staff have a good awareness of strengths and areas for improvement. However, the Centre self-assessment report is too descriptive and lacks self-critical analysis of training effectiveness.

What does Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust need to do to improve further?

- Introduce a more comprehensively devolved system of self-assessment that draws upon comments from all assessors and ward or departmental managers to provide the Centre managers with a more complete view of training quality.
- Improve the proportion of learners who successfully complete their qualifications in the agreed time by ensuring that all workplace assessments are conducted promptly and that there is continuity of contact between assessors, verifiers and learners across all clinical and supporting departments.
- Develop quality improvement systems and formal evaluation mechanisms to fully capture the learners' experience and skills gains in the workplace.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the support from approachable and helpful NVQ centre staff
- training while earning
- the experienced practitioner assessors available in the workplace
- the quality of the off-the-job training sessions
- the progression opportunities afforded by training
- the gains in confidence and skills and the broadening of career aspirations following training.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the timeliness of assessment and verification in pharmacy
- the amount of paperwork involved in the NVQ process
- the cramped training rooms
- the lack of cover arrangements for assessor absence.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good skills development of learners
- the responsiveness and flexibility of the Centre staff
- the ways that training develops learners' confidence to take on new tasks.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the clarity of the NVQ and programme information
- the time available for assessors, verifiers and managers to support learners.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

7. SUHT has a sound track record of sustained improvement. Success rates have remained below national averages during the contract, but the Trust is able to identify clinical priorities or personal reasons for most learners' failure to complete whole NVQ qualifications. The proportion of learners completing in their planned time is satisfactory. Skills gains are good or very good. Learners derive significant benefits in both their job roles and their employability from training. Training quality is good. Target setting for most learners is effective, and learners are clear about their aims and the opportunities open to them. Processes for self-assessment and quality improvement are adequate overall, although self-assessment reporting is under developed. The use of learners' views to bring about improvement is satisfactory. Centre staff, managers and Trust senior managers contribute effectively to securing improvements in training and opportunities for employees.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

8. Attainment of learning goals is satisfactory. In 2009/10, overall success rates were below the national average of 85%. However, the proportion of learners completing in their agreed timescale was satisfactory. The Trust has maintained an overall success rate at, or a little below, the national average across the contract period. Seven learners who have yet to complete training are making good progress and most are expected to complete within their planned end dates.
9. Learners make good gains in confidence and skills during their training. They are able to identify ways they perform their jobs more effectively and with greater confidence, and the ways training enables them to undertake more complex and varied tasks. Departmental managers value the increased flexibility and independence of learners, who are able to assume greater responsibility and are better able to support their clinical and non-clinical colleagues. Some level 2 pharmacy learners based in the stores have made slow progress.
10. The standard of work in portfolios is good. There is well-documented evidence of learners gaining very good, high-level skills and producing some good assignment work. However, in a small number of portfolios, literacy needs are not identified and mistakes remain uncorrected.
11. Training enhances learners' economic well-being. Several learners have progressed to professional training, for example nurse training, while some have undertaken Open University courses. Some level 3 learners have gained permanent employment as senior healthcare assistants and many make the transition from level 2 to level 3 training. Learners feel safe and know how to deal with harassment in the workplace.

12. Good additional training opportunities exist for learners. For example, on the patient transfer course, there is good take up and success rates are good. All level 3 learners are given the opportunity to complete this course in order to be competent to transfer patients and monitor the recovery process following sedation. Such specialist provision successfully meets the needs of the employer and the sector.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

13. The quality of teaching and learning are good. The devolution of training and assessment to specialist practitioner assessors in wards and departments is effective. In most cases assessors are able to provide timely assessment of learning and understanding. When clinical priorities need to override training and assessment plans, trainers, assessors and learners are usually able to put in place workable alternative schedules. However, the progress towards qualifications in some areas is slow. For instance, level 2 pharmacy and pharmacy stores learners often experience problems being released from their job roles in order to participate in training and assessment.
14. Off-the-job training is highly valued by learners; most lessons are good or better. Learners speak very positively of the gains made in their knowledge and understanding from such sessions. Learners can identify ways that they apply new knowledge to their working practices. Schemes of work and session plans are detailed and include a good range of activities, with attention paid to the variety of learning needs and styles among learners. Trainers make good use of opportunities for informal assessment of learning.
15. SUHT offers a good range of provision which supports the needs and interests of the learners as well as of the Trust. The Trust has a well-developed progression programme that enables learners to move from level 2 to level 3, and then to permanent employment. Since the start of the contract many learners from all areas have progressed to full-time employment or more specialised job roles following training. Training patterns often support learners in making informed employment or progression choices. For instance, level 3 pharmacy learners circulate around the various pharmacy sections, which helps them to decide in which area they would like to be employed. Provision of up-to-date information and communication technology (ICT) resources is insufficient in many areas. Also, learners' access to online learning is inadequate. The Trust recognises this area for development and a review of network capacity and hardware is underway.
16. Partnerships are good. The Centre maintains very good links with departments, with the Trust careers service and with local schools through NHS careers events. A productive and positive relationship exists with the local college and with neighbouring Trusts. The Centre and IDEAL have engaged in successful project work in conjunction with Job Centre Plus, Southampton City Council, Southampton Primary Care Trust, and the Southampton Solent University.

17. Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good support from trainers and the Centre staff. Assessors, tutors and workplace colleagues in most areas are supportive of learners' needs and aspirations.
18. Learners all receive an adequate initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills and needs. The Centre runs a good range of workshops and study weeks to provide assistance with literacy, numeracy and key skills. However, some assessors do not identify literacy errors in portfolios so that trainers and learners may work towards improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

19. The SUHT education and learning strategy and business plan is clear and sets out an effective strategy for training and workforce development over the next three years. Senior managers within the Trust have a clear commitment to widening opportunities, and securing improved employability skills for employees. The close links between the education and training and the medical, scientific and nursing functions of the Trust's management structures ensure that there is good oversight of training effectiveness and good planning to meet organisational needs.
20. Operational management within the NVQ centre is highly effective. Communications with other departments in the Trust are very good, and the Centre staff maintain very supportive and productive relationships with learners. Reasons for learners' slow progress are well known, and relate mostly to clinical demands or learners' personal and domestic problems. There are no variations in progress between learners from different ethnic or other identifiable groups.
21. Arrangements to promote and secure equality of opportunity are good. Opportunities for development and progression to permanent employment or higher grades are very good. The Trust's policies and procedures are comprehensive and clear, and essential elements of these are generally well communicated to learners. Learners know their rights and responsibilities and receive suitably frequent training in equality and diversity matters. The Trust's education and learning policy demonstrates the importance placed by managers on the development of staff at all levels. The policy has been suitably equality impact assessed.
22. Measures to safeguard learners are good, and conform with the Trust's overall policies and procedures in this area. Learners feel safe, and know their rights and responsibilities well. Good attention is paid to maintaining learner, patient and service-user safety.
23. User engagement and measures to gather learners' views are good overall. Learner feedback on the quality and usefulness of study days and off-the-job training is comprehensive, but there is less opportunity to comment on overall training quality and effectiveness, including workplace assessment. The Trust has recognised this as an area for improvement and plans for improving feedback on all training are being discussed at IDEAL strategy level. Views of

ward and department managers are gathered effectively, and communications between the Centre and managers are very good. Managers generally have a good understanding of NVQ requirements and training plans.

24. Self-assessment processes and arrangements to assure the quality of training are satisfactory. Senior managers, centre managers and staff have a good awareness of training strengths and areas for improvement. Strategic and operational management focuses well on improvement and on quality assurance. However, formal self-assessment reporting is under developed. The current self-assessment report, which is the first produced by the Centre, is too descriptive and presents an insufficiently self-critical analysis of the effectiveness of training. Ward and departmental managers do not currently make a formal contribution to the self-assessment process. Although staff and managers' awareness is good, quality assurance processes relating to specific elements of training are underdeveloped. For example, training quality is reviewed during off-the-job training through observation of teaching and learning sessions, but no formal system exists for assuring the quality of assessor-learner interactions. Internal verification is satisfactory overall, and external verifier reports are positive. However, a small number of learners' portfolios were held for too long during the verification of a single NVQ unit.

Information about the inspection

25. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's vocational training manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
26. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Southampton University

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	7	7
Part-time learners		
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	3	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>		
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>		
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011