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Mrs Alex Glover
Local Director
Health Education England
4 The Waterfront
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Dear Mrs Glover

Short inspection of Health Education England (North of England)

Following the short inspection on 4 and 5 July 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in March 2015.

This provider continues to be good.

You and your management team continue to ensure that Health Education England (North of England) (HEEN) provides high-quality apprenticeship training for National Health Service (NHS) trusts in the north east of England. Your managers work very closely with managers in the trusts to maintain the high standards of training that apprentices receive in business administration, dental nursing, engineering, healthcare support and pharmacy. As a result, your team is making a significant contribution to the development of a highly skilled workforce in the NHS. You and your managers have tackled successfully most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Managers in the trusts value the support that they receive from your small team of managers. Trust managers receive useful informal support when required. Frequent management meetings take place between your team and trust managers to ensure that apprentices receive high-quality training and support, and make very good progress. Trust managers have valued particularly the advice that your small team has provided to enable individual trusts to secure funding to become apprenticeship training providers in their own right.

You and your team have a clear strategy for the future to specialise in apprenticeship training across the whole of the north of England in key occupational areas, such as dental nursing, pharmacy and engineering, which the individual trusts cannot deliver without your help. You also have plans to deliver new apprenticeships in specialist areas, such as training to become a mortuary

technician. Your team will shortly cease to work with trusts to train apprentices in business administration and healthcare support as individual trusts will take over responsibility for this training.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding has a very high priority within HEEN, and the trusts and all staff ensure that apprentices have a comprehensive understanding of their own safety and that of others. All apprentices complete a range of training about key safeguarding topics, and their trainers reinforce the knowledge very effectively in off-the-job training. For example, apprentices know the indicators of potential abuse of children and adults and how to report these in their work settings. Maintenance engineering apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard patients while undertaking maintenance work in hospitals.

Managers support apprentices very well with safeguarding and other welfare issues. Staff in the trusts and HEEN managers record safeguarding incidents well and provide good support, using outside agencies where appropriate. Managers provide excellent support to apprentices suffering from poor mental health and make effective use of NHS services, such as occupational therapy and counselling, to aid recovery and enable apprentices to complete their courses successfully.

Managers ensure that apprentices are able to report easily any safeguarding concerns that they have. For example, they use a policy called 'speak up, we're listening' to encourage apprentices to share any concerns. Trainers and assessors ask apprentices regularly if they have had any reason to feel unsafe or uncomfortable in the workplace. Managers learn from workplace experiences that negatively affect apprentices. For example, they now monitor staffing issues, such as high levels of staff sickness in departments, so that appropriate support can be put in place to ensure that apprentices continue to make good progress.

Inspection findings

- Very well qualified and experienced trainers, assessors and workplace managers use relevant learning activities and work tasks that challenge apprentices to develop their vocational skills to a high standard and make very good progress. Dental nurse apprentices value the opportunity to work in a range of dental departments, such as orthodontics, outreach and emergency dental care, to gain a good variety of experience. Consequently, they develop excellent skills in, for example, putting patients at ease, recognising the correct equipment in advance of procedures and aspiring during dental procedures.
- Managers provide excellent opportunities for maintenance engineering apprentices to gain additional vocational qualifications, such as working at heights, testing for legionella, and portable appliance testing. Managers have high expectations of, and set high standards for, maintenance engineering apprentices. As a result, apprentices rise to the challenge and produce excellent records and explanations of the engineering jobs that they complete. Apprentices gain very good occupational skills and quickly progress on to more demanding

jobs, such as servicing air filtration units. Managers support apprentices to gain experience from different hospitals if necessary. For example, they provide the opportunity for maintenance engineers in a mental health trust to go to other hospitals to gain experience in servicing sterilising equipment. Apprentices value developing a range of engineering skills that prepare them exceptionally well for their future careers.

- Managers and trainers have high expectations of intermediate-level apprentices at the South Tees NHS Trust. The majority of these apprentices move from unemployment into responsible job roles very quickly and develop valuable skills in business administration and healthcare support. For example, business administration apprentices have quickly taken on extra responsibility for health and safety risk assessments in their department. For a small minority of intermediate-level apprentices, trainers and assessors are too slow to provide feedback on their work. As a result, these apprentices make slower progress and do not improve the quality of their work quickly.
- The small management team at HEEN has very good oversight of the training provided by the individual trusts. They meet frequently to hold trust managers to account for apprentices' progress. This ensures that apprentices across the north east continue to make very good progress. HEEN managers also provide high-quality support for trust managers, including useful training events such as how to evaluate the quality of provision accurately within each trust. HEEN managers ensure that managers from all the trusts share with each other their evaluations of the quality of training provided. As a result, managers share good practice effectively and their quality improvement actions are implemented well across all the trusts.
- Managers in the trusts manage very effectively the work of staff in further education colleges that provide the vocational qualifications for the apprenticeships. Consequently, apprentices benefit from high-quality off-the-job training. For example, at Tyne Coast College, highly qualified trainers with significant occupational experience teach specialist units to pharmacy apprentices. Trust managers monitor the performance of subcontractors closely and have ceased to work with subcontractors that failed to provide the high standards of training required.
- Leaders at HEEN have improved the quality of management information significantly since the previous inspection. They produce very useful data for managers across the trusts that enables all managers to identify any issues quickly. In the current year, the number of apprentices leaving their course early has increased in two of the trusts. HEEN managers quickly identified this increase. They have worked closely with managers in the trusts to seek out the causes and develop a good-quality action plan to tackle the issue. At the time of the inspection, it was too early to measure the impact of managers' actions.
- The vast majority of apprentices recruited on to advanced-level apprenticeships already have appropriate qualifications in mathematics and English. Staff do not encourage these apprentices sufficiently to improve their skills further. Consequently, apprentices do not recognise the value of continuing to develop these skills for their future careers. Staff do not provide sufficient feedback to

apprentices about how to improve the quality of their written work by, for example, improving their spelling or grammar.

- Employers encourage most maintenance engineering apprentices to take higher-level qualifications to develop their mathematics skills. Many take this opportunity as they recognise that it prepares them well to take extra responsibility at work. Trainers support intermediate-level apprentices who do not have qualifications in English and mathematics to develop their skills rapidly, and the majority of these apprentices achieve these qualifications quickly.
- Staff provide the vast majority of apprentices with good advice and guidance about the career opportunities available in their vocational area within the NHS. Apprentices make good use of the NHS careers website. Most apprentices are ambitious and want to secure good-quality careers within the NHS. Staff use the experiences of past apprentices who have secured promotion or extra responsibility to motivate and inspire current apprentices. A very high proportion of apprentices remain with the NHS when they complete their apprenticeship. Many of those who do not remain use their training to secure roles with prestigious employers or to secure a university place. A very small minority of intermediate-level apprentices do not receive clear advice and guidance about their next steps.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- trainers and assessors provide all apprentices in healthcare support and business administration with timely feedback on their work
- they monitor the actions that managers take to increase the number of apprentices who remain on their programme and take swift action if it does not increase rapidly
- trainers and assessors encourage apprentices to develop their skills in English and mathematics by:
 - making sure that apprentices understand how developing these skills further will benefit their future career plans
 - providing good-quality feedback to apprentices on the presentation of their work.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Angus
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection team included one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors. We were assisted by the apprenticeship lead manager. We met with managers, employers and other staff. We observed teaching, learning and assessment and spoke to apprentices. We looked at apprentices' work. We also scrutinised key documentation relating to safeguarding and quality assurance.