

University of Suffolk

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of a series of monitoring visits to a sample of new apprenticeship training providers funded through the apprenticeship levy. Ofsted's intention to carry out monitoring visits to these new providers was announced by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in November 2017. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

The University of Suffolk introduced levy-funded apprenticeships in healthcare practice and health and well-being in September 2017. The university offers apprenticeship programmes throughout East Anglia following requests from local National Health Service (NHS) trusts and as a contribution to the local enterprise partnership skills plan. All apprentices are employed in regional NHS trusts and care settings.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have designed apprenticeships which prepare apprentices effectively for a wide range of job roles in the NHS. Leaders have a clear strategy for their apprenticeship provision. They enable apprentices to learn new knowledge, skills and behaviours to enable them to be more effective in their work roles. This strategy is already improving apprentices' theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Healthcare practitioners become more confident about how and why they complete their day-to-day tasks and develop the knowledge and skills to take on new roles in nursing or healthcare.

Managers make sure that their programmes meet the requirements of an apprenticeship and that apprentices complete enough off-the-job training. The university board provides an appropriate form of governance to challenge and support senior leaders. University staff work effectively with employers, who were until recently unfamiliar with apprenticeships, to make sure that they understand their obligations. Managers communicate successfully with employers and apprentices to make sure that off-the-job training is useful and is tailored to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices need for employment. Assessors check and record that this training is taking place at the frequent progress reviews.

Employers, most of whom are from NHS trust organisations, value the close links with university managers and are involved fully in the design of the apprenticeships.

However, managers do not record the outcomes of their frequent meetings with employers. As a result, too many learning points provided by employers are not acted upon. Employers value the ways apprentices improve their skills and confidence because of the training they receive. For example, after recent study, apprentices checking blood pressure accurately identified the reasons for high blood pressure and were able to offer relevant advice to patients on how to improve their health and identify early symptoms of illness.

Applicants for the apprenticeship programme are recruited appropriately and prepared effectively for their apprenticeships. A bespoke induction at the university makes sure that apprentices understand the university's and employers' expectations. However, apprentices do not learn about the career options that are available to them until their final module on their apprenticeship programme. Consequently, some apprentices' understanding of their next steps is limited. Almost all apprentices stay on their programme but leaders and managers do not work closely enough with employers to understand the reasons why some apprentices leave early and to then plan actions to address any issues.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?

Reasonable progress

All lecturers are well qualified and experienced registered nurses. They successfully develop apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours and carefully design face-to-face and online learning sessions that enthuse apprentices. These help the apprentices to become more effective and efficient employees. They enjoy their learning and improve their confidence, teamworking and study skills. Employers benefit greatly from the skills and expertise of workers who become better motivated, thoughtful and mature in their attitudes and behaviours.

Lecturers check apprentices' progress frequently and effectively and involve employers fully in reviewing apprentices' performance. They support apprentices successfully to provide high-quality patient care. Almost all apprentices are on track to pass their current modules by the end of their first year. Leaders and managers make effective use of systems to track the progress apprentices make in achieving their modules. However, they do not effectively monitor the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices develop in order to identify those who are able to achieve at a higher level.

Lecturers provide detailed and constructive feedback to apprentices that helps them to understand what they need to improve. Apprentices develop new knowledge and skills and they apply these successfully in their workplace roles. As a result, they become more confident in their abilities. This allows them to perform a range of roles to a high standard, raising the efficiency levels of hospitals and freeing registered professionals to do more complex tasks.

Lecturers effectively identify errors in written English in assignments and give apprentices comprehensive and helpful feedback that helps them to improve their English knowledge and skills. Apprentices do not receive enough support in their programme to develop their mathematical skills. Specialist English and mathematics lecturers provide effective support for those who need to improve their knowledge and skills to gain their functional skills English and mathematics qualifications. Too few apprentices have achieved their English or mathematics qualifications at level 2 since starting their apprenticeship.

Leaders accurately identify the strengths and most of the weaknesses in the apprenticeship provision. They use this information to improve the quality of provision. However, although managers use peer reviews and feedback from apprentices to judge the effectiveness of their lessons, they do not sufficiently scrutinise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to understand fully if and how this is improving over time. Arrangements for endpoint assessments are not yet fully developed and managers do not have a sufficiently clear plan to prepare apprentices for achieving merit or distinction grades.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have effective arrangements in place to make sure that apprentices stay safe. Designated safeguarding officers are experienced, well trained and knowledgeable. They update their training frequently. They use their good relationships with specialist support agencies effectively to assist apprentices.

All personnel involved in staff recruitment are trained to recruit staff safely. Staff who work with apprentices are appropriately checked. Staff who teach apprentices complete comprehensive safeguarding training that is appropriately focused on how to keep adults and children safe.

Apprentices feel safe. They learn about all aspects of safeguarding in detail as part of their induction and as part of their healthcare practitioner qualifications. They have a good understanding of how to recognise and respond to concerns about themselves and their patients. Lecturers check apprentices' knowledge of safeguarding thoroughly. However, university staff do not keep records of the safeguarding training that apprentices receive from employers and cannot evidence that this has taken place. Employers contact university staff quickly if apprentices do not attend work and are informed if apprentices do not attend taught sessions by the university.

Despite a comprehensive 'Prevent' duty action plan, managers do not make sure that staff ensure that apprentices have a good awareness of the dangers they might face from those with radical or extremist views.

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