

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Employer

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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 that are funded through the apprenticeship levy. Ofsted's intention to carry out monitoring visits to these new providers was first announced by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in November 2017. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) was established in 2006 following the merger of County Durham and Darlington Priority Services and Tees and North East Yorkshire NHS Trust. It provides mental health, learning disability and eating disorder services. The Trust started to deliver levy-funded apprenticeships in June 2017.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 218 apprentices enrolled on programmes, 191 of whom were enrolled on standards-based apprenticeships, with the great majority on the senior healthcare support worker programme at level 3 and the operations departmental manager programme at level 5. The remaining apprentices on standards-based programmes were on customer service programmes at level 2 and business administrator programmes at level 3. A small number of apprentices were on business administration frameworks at level 4. A third of apprentices are on programmes delivered by subcontractors.

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 the apprenticeship programme successfully as a key means of meeting the objectives of the Trust's workforce development strategy. They use the levy funding appropriately for those employees who are new to the Trust or to support existing members of staff to develop the knowledge and skills they need to progress within the organisation. For example, all new recruits to the position of healthcare assistant have to complete an apprenticeship at level 3 before they can be confirmed in their role. The apprenticeship in operations departmental management at level 5 is used to equip newly promoted managers with the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need for the position.

Leaders and managers ensure that the great majority of apprentices receive sufficient time to complete their off-the-job training, including those with subcontractors. A small number of apprentices in the first group on the senior healthcare worker programme at level 3 did not receive sufficient time off the job to undertake their studies due to work demands and shift patterns. Managers identified

this quickly and now ensure that subsequent cohorts of apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training within working hours.

Leaders and managers have recruited appropriately qualified trainers and assessors to deliver all components of the apprenticeship programmes. Trainers and assessors have relevant vocational experience in nursing, mental health and learning disabilities. A group of mentors, all of whom are serving practitioners, are assigned to the apprentice healthcare assistants to provide them with support and guidance as they complete their compulsory certificates in care. For the very small number of apprentices who need to achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics, leaders and managers have secured provision through a subcontracting arrangement with a local further education college.

Senior managers within the human resources and organisational development directorate monitor the progress of apprentices on the Trust's directly delivered programmes effectively. They provide regular reports to the apprentices' line managers about attendance on study days, the completion of assignments and the apprentices' attitudes towards their studies. Line managers use this information effectively to support those apprentices who are falling behind on their programmes to catch up. As a result, the great majority of apprentices are making the expected progress.

Managers do not monitor rigorously enough the performance of a minority of subcontractors. They do not scrutinise the reports they receive from these subcontractors on the progress of apprentices, and they do not assure themselves adequately of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, the observations that Trust staff undertake on the assessors at these subcontractors do not evaluate sufficiently the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on the progress of apprentices.

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**

Managers and assessors plan programmes effectively to ensure that apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. All new employees complete a thorough induction programme where they learn about the Trust's ethos, policies and procedures. Before starting their apprenticeship, health care assistants spend five to six weeks on wards and in day-care settings where their current levels of knowledge and skills are established. Their starting points are then formally assessed, including their English and mathematical knowledge and skills. Managers' participation on the operations departmental management programme is based on their appraisal objectives and their line managers' assessment of their professional development needs.

Apprentices attend regular off-the-job study days where they develop new knowledge, skills and behaviour. Assessors on the senior healthcare support worker

programme at level 3 support apprentices to use professional discussions and established models of reflective practice to review the appropriateness of their actions and behaviours on wards and in day-care centres. Departmental managers practise their coaching skills so they can improve the way they supervise and motivate their staff. All apprentices benefit from the extensive range of online resources and e-learning packages available to them.

The impact of the off-the-job training is enhanced by good on-the-job training. Healthcare assistants are supported effectively by their workplace mentors who ensure that they are proficient in the practical skills that they need to work alongside nursing staff, such as taking and recording accurately blood pressure and temperature readings. Apprentice managers who are unfamiliar with finances receive additional support from the Trust's accountants to help them to prepare and manage their departmental budgets.

In a few instances, assessors are not explicit enough at referencing the new apprenticeship standards when they plan learning activities, particularly on the senior healthcare support worker and business administrator standards. They are still too focused on tracking the apprentices' progress against the specific assessment requirements of the qualifications within these standards rather than against the wider milestones for the development of the required knowledge, skills and behaviours. As a result, too many apprentices on these programmes are unaware of what they need to do to achieve a merit or a distinction at their end-point assessment.

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

Leaders and managers place a very high priority on developing a strong safeguarding culture among all the staff in the Trust. Apprentices develop a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves and their clients and patients safe through the induction when they start with the Trust, followed by the completion of mandatory safeguarding training, including on the 'Prevent' duty.

All employees of the Trust, including apprentices and assessors, undergo extensive pre-employment checks before they are recruited into posts due to the work they do with vulnerable children and adults. Managers on the operations departmental management programme at level 5 are specifically taught how to apply the Trust's rigorous new safe recruitment procedures.

Assessors are highly proficient at reinforcing apprentices' knowledge and understanding of a wide range of safeguarding concerns through regular review meetings. For example, apprentices learn how to identify the possible signs of child sexual exploitation and forced marriage, and how to report their concerns through the appropriate channels.

Managers have developed an effective range of services to support apprentices with any of their own personal concerns and to keep them safe, such as counselling, domestic abuse advisers, and workplace mentors.

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