

Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision that began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust (the trust) has offered NVQs and apprenticeships as a subcontractor since 2000. In May 2017, the trust became a prime contract holder to support the development of its staff: 54 apprentices have been enrolled on programmes covering healthcare support services, business administration, and health and social care. Currently, 40 apprentices are on level 2 and level 3 frameworks, and 12 apprentices are on standards-based apprenticeships. The trust has one subcontractor that delivers the English and mathematics component of the apprenticeship programme.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Senior leaders and managers in the trust have a clear rationale for the apprenticeship programme: they aim to build the capacity and skills of their workforce. The current programmes, particularly the healthcare support apprenticeships, are helping to meet regional and national health service priorities. The programme is well thought through. New apprentices and existing employees are recruited with integrity and have a clear pathway to develop skills and progress in their career.

The trust has put a new management team in place since becoming a prime contractor. A new apprenticeship manager has been appointed to lead a team of four assessor/trainers and 10 work-based assessors. The team has the experience and expertise to deliver the programme and support apprentices well.

The trust has appropriate performance management arrangements in place. The apprenticeship manager meets regularly with assessor/trainers and takes account of observations and work audits in their appraisals.

The self-assessment report is a live document that managers update on a quarterly basis to improve the quality of provision. The apprenticeship team is involved in the

process. Managers are seeking to improve employers' and the subcontractor's engagement in the process. They are aware of the need to have a greater focus on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the impact on learners in the report and the quality improvement plan.

Observations of teaching and learning are carried out for each trainer/assessor annually. Observations focus too much on the requirements of examination boards and do not identify enough the impact of teaching and assessment on the progress of apprentices. Once observed, assessor/trainers receive feedback and action plans for improvement. Managers ensure that most actions are completed.

The trust has appropriate arrangements in place to manage its subcontractor. They have a clear agreement and meet regularly to review the progress of learners. The trust undertakes regular spot checks to assure itself of the quality of provision.

The trust has governance arrangements in place for the apprenticeship programme. Leaders acknowledge the need to improve them further. Currently, the apprenticeship manager reports to the workforce delivery group, which has oversight of the provision and reports to the executive board. The reports focus on how well the programme is meeting its recruitment and achievement targets. Leaders and managers are in the process of developing key performance indicators that are more focused on the quality of education and training. These are intended to hold the apprenticeship manager and team to account better. It is too early judge the impact of these changes.

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

Apprentices receive effective advice and guidance throughout their programme, including advice about careers and next steps. As a result, most apprentices feel that they are on the right programme for their job role and are clear about their next steps and progression opportunities. Very few apprentices withdraw from the programme. Apprentices value the training and support they receive from their assessors and employer to achieve qualifications that offer them the opportunity to advance their careers.

Managers are committed to the professional development of staff. The apprenticeship programme has clear links to workforce planning and meeting the needs of the organisation. Many apprentices gain additional qualifications by taking part in an 'added value' learning programme comprising short courses in food safety, health and safety for supervisors, and fire warden training. The programme enables apprentices to develop new skills and knowledge beyond the apprenticeship framework/standard that enhance their progression opportunities.

Leaders and managers have designed the programme to meet the requirements for on- and off-the-job training. The vast majority of apprentices are receiving their full entitlement as a result of careful planning and monitoring by their line managers.

However, in a very few instances, line managers plan the off-the-job element less effectively and do not monitor its impact closely. Occasionally, apprentices with patient-facing roles find it difficult to juggle the demands of their role and their training. Most apprentices are making at least the progress expected of them.

The apprenticeship team reviews the prior learning and experience of apprentices at the beginning of the programme. They have a good understanding of apprentices' starting points. They involve apprentices' line managers in the choice of units to ensure that apprentices are developing new skills and knowledge. However, most apprentices who are exempt from taking English and mathematics do not receive sufficient support to develop these skills further in their current roles.

Managers monitor the progress that apprentices are making towards completing their frameworks regularly. However, for those on standards-based apprenticeships, the monitoring of progress in their development of knowledge, skills and behaviours requires further improvement.

Most apprentices find their learning appropriately challenging. They are able to apply new knowledge to their current roles and many take on new tasks and increased responsibility, including promotion. Almost all apprentices comment that they develop their interpersonal skills and develop in confidence as a result of their training. Only a very few apprentices do not take on new or extended responsibilities as they progress through their apprenticeship.

Apprentices receive constructive feedback on their work. Assessors offer them clear guidance on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. The vast majority of apprentices are making at least the progress expected of them. The few that are making slower progress have plans in place to support them.

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

The trust has appropriate safeguarding policies, including in relation to the 'Prevent' duty. All staff undertake mandatory training on safeguarding annually. The apprenticeship programme has a designated safeguarding officer. Managers have very good links with external agencies, including the Local Safeguarding Board and the 'Prevent' duty liaison officer.

Managers have appropriate processes in place to record and act on incidents. To date, no incidents have been recorded.

All apprentices receive information on safeguarding, British values and keeping themselves safe from radicalisation and extremism at the beginning of their programme. These are reinforced by assessors/trainers throughout the course. As a result, apprentices have a good understanding of safeguarding themselves and those in their care.

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