Inspection of South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Inspection dates:	30 June–2 July 2021

Overall effectiveness	**Requires improvement**
The quality of education	**Requires improvement**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Requires improvement**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (the trust) serves the people of Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Hambleton and Richmond. At the time of the inspection, there were 93 apprentices with almost all enrolled on six standards-based programmes. Of these, 33 are following the healthcare support worker standard at level 2, and 21 are following the customer service practitioner standard at level 2. There are 19 apprentices on the team leader/supervisor standard at level 3, and 12 on the business administrator standard at level 3. A further five apprentices are on the operation/departmental manager standard at level 5. Fewer than five apprentices are on the senior healthcare support worker standard at level 3 and the healthcare support services framework at level 2. The trust works with one subcontractor, Learning Curve Group, which provide functional skills training in English and mathematics.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices take pride in their work. They become valued team members and contribute well to the smooth running of the departments in which they work. They develop professional skills and attitudes that their line managers value. For example, business administrator apprentices contribute to project planning, and host meetings confidently.

Apprentices learn how to establish effective working relationships. Team leader apprentices can explain how they have learned to involve their team members in decision-making and how to use appropriate professional behaviours when dealing with conflict within their team. As a result, they develop their confidence well.

Apprentices appreciate the skills they gain through shadowing clinical experts across a range of settings. For example, healthcare support worker apprentices who work in ophthalmology learn how to administer eye drops for patients undergoing eye examinations.

Apprentices follow safe working practices and feel safe in their learning and work environments.

Apprentices do not develop well enough their knowledge and skills in English and mathematics. Staff do not take enough account of apprentices' starting points or ambitions in English and mathematics when planning learning. Apprentices who already have a very high standard of English are placed on level 2 functional skills courses, but no further systematic development of their English occurs. Apprentices who need to develop their mathematical skills to prepare for careers in healthcare and nursing do not receive appropriate teaching.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers provide apprenticeships that equip the trust's employees with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they need for their roles and careers. The apprenticeships form part of a wider workforce development strategy to address skills shortages in key areas within the trust.

Leaders have put in place an extensive recruitment and careers programme that promotes positive personal development and provides helpful advice and guidance for potential apprentices. For example, unemployed people can participate in a 12-week placement through the trust's 'Prospect' programme to develop knowledge about careers in the NHS. Participants learn how to provide one-to-one support for patients with challenging behaviours while working alongside experienced health professional staff in the trust. Following successful placement, participants can apply for an 18-month apprenticeship at level 2 in either the healthcare support worker or customer service practitioner standard.

Leaders ensure that staff and apprentices benefit from professional updating and training that develops their understanding of well-being, equality and safeguarding. Staff and apprentices gain knowledge about a wide range of issues relevant to their roles including infection control, diversity, safeguarding adults and children, the 'Prevent' duty and fundamental British values.

Leaders have recruited training advisers with appropriate qualifications and experience for the apprenticeships they teach. Senior leaders have committed to funding external training for those training advisers who wish to develop their teaching skills further, but this training is not yet in place.

Managers do not consistently or thoroughly enough check that training advisers teach effectively or include appropriate content or subject knowledge in training sessions. Training advisers for customer service practitioner and business administration apprentices sequence the curriculum and teach in a way that helps apprentices remember and use what they have learned. However, in programmes for healthcare support worker and team leading apprentices, the curriculum focuses too heavily on outcomes specified in the apprenticeship standard, rather than a carefully sequenced plan of the component parts needed to build expertise over time. As a result, apprentices on these programmes find it hard to embed what they have learned into long-term memory, so that they can easily recall it.

Managers do not have clear enough oversight of the progress apprentices make or of actions that staff take when apprentices fall behind. Staff know which tasks and modules apprentices have completed, but, too often, do not know how well apprentices are developing their underpinning knowledge, skills, and behaviours. As a result, where apprentices have gaps in their knowledge, skills and behaviours, managers do not consistently identify or promptly address these. In cases where apprentices are left to identify and remedy any gaps themselves, they do not make progress as quickly as they could.

Non-executive directors know the trust well and support and contribute to shaping its strategic direction. Non-executive directors understand their responsibilities. They are aware of key priorities specific to apprenticeships and offer appropriate challenge and support to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established an effective culture of safeguarding that enables staff to identify and protect apprentices who might need help. Apprentices know how to refer safeguarding concerns to appropriate services within the trust setting. For example, they can explain how to make a referral through the staff intranet to the safeguarding team. Managers work in partnership with external agencies to support apprentices.

Managers ensure apprentices undertake helpful training in safeguarding and that is reinforced by training advisers in training sessions and reviews. Apprentices have a good understanding of how to stay safe including online, and of the risks related to the pandemic including online and telephone scams.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that leaders and managers have clear oversight of the progress apprentices are making, so that they can quickly identify and put measures in place for any apprentices that fall behind in the development of knowledge, skills, or behaviours.
- Ensure that all training advisers have the skills and training that they need to teach effectively, and to plan and sequence the curriculum in a way that ensures apprentices develop their knowledge, skills, and behaviours over time.
- Ensure that the staff teaching functional skills courses plan the curriculum effectively and use apprentices' starting points to swiftly develop the English and mathematics skills that apprentices need for their chosen careers.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1276376
Address	Marton Road Middlesbrough TS4 3BW
Contact number	01642 854615
Website	www.southtees.nhs.uk
Principal/CEO	Sue Page
Provider type	Employer
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Learning Curve Group

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the training and development lead as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the further education and skills inspection handbook and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of apprentices, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Cath Jackson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chloe Rendall	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonny Wright	Her Majesty's Inspector

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