

# Royal Free London NHS Foundation 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 which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency 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 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

At the time of the monitoring visit there were 20 apprentices in training on standards-based apprenticeships. Five were studying at level 2 on the healthcare support worker apprenticeship and 15 were studying at level 3 on the team leader/supervisor apprenticeship.

Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) began teaching the team leader apprenticeship in January 2020. At the start of the pandemic, apprentices were deployed to support managing the increased demand on health services. Apprentices were put on a break in training. Their training resumed online in September 2020. The first cohort of healthcare support worker apprentices started in November 2020. The impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

### 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 training to meet the needs of the Trust so that their staff provide high-quality health care. The training builds the capacity of new managers to become effective leaders early on in their managerial career. The healthcare assistant apprenticeship provides an appropriate first step for those seeking a career in the healthcare sector. Healthcare assistant and team leader apprentices have good opportunities to progress within the Trust once they complete their training.

Leaders ensure that the requirements of the apprenticeship programme are met. Line managers are clear about their responsibilities towards apprentices. They routinely take part in reviewing the progress that apprentices make. This ensures that activities are planned in the workplace that help apprentices develop their skills, knowledge and behaviours. Line managers ensure that apprentices get sufficient

time to study as a part of their working week. In a minority of cases, apprentices struggle to get sufficient time to study because of the unpredictable demands of their jobs.

Senior leaders provide suitable oversight of the training. They have established a steering group to oversee the provision. They frequently review the provision with operational managers. Leaders and managers are establishing ways of systematically gathering a wide range of information on the training to give them a more detailed picture of the strengths and areas for improvement of the training.

Leaders and managers take action across the two training programmes to improve the quality of education that apprentices receive. However, manager's plans to improve the provision are too narrow and do not reflect all of the areas for improvement. As a result, there is some variation in the quality of education that apprentices experience. For example, tutors prepare healthcare assistants well for their final assessments. However, tutors do not begin team leader's preparation for these assessments early enough in their training.

**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 tutors ensure that the curriculum helps apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. As a result, apprentices are valued for their contribution at work. For example, team leader apprentices develop their organisational and time management skills, leading to greater efficiency in their department.

For healthcare assistants, managers plan and sequence the curriculum well. This enables tutors to teach apprentices the basics of the care, such as infection control, and the duty of care at the very start of their training. They then move onto more complex areas such as undertaking clinical tasks. While managers have revised the team leader apprenticeship curriculum, they have not yet considered how best to sequence the training so that it most effectively supports apprentices' learning.

The teaching team has good experience in nursing and management. They keep their professional skills and knowledge up to date. Specialist nurses contribute to the training. They provide apprentices with good insight into other areas of the Trust, such as the work of the dialysis unit.

Teachers use effective strategies to check that apprentices remember what they have been taught. For example, they assess apprentices through observing them at work. They ask apprentices to demonstrate their knowledge, use questioning well and frequently recap previous learning. The feedback they give helps apprentices become more competent in their job roles.

Healthcare apprentices are well prepared for their final assessments. For example, through repeated practice they grow in confidence in public speaking in readiness for their professional discussion. However, for team leader apprentices, managers do not plan preparation for apprentices' final assessments early enough in the training.

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

Apprentices know who to turn to if they have any concerns about their own or others' welfare. They have received effective support throughout the pandemic through, for example access to a mental health professional should they need it.

Leaders and managers have in place a comprehensive range of policies and procedures to safeguard apprentices and promote their welfare. These include a suitable safeguarding policy and 'Prevent' risk assessment.

Leaders and managers ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are in place so that staff are suitable for their roles. Managers who recruit staff are suitably trained to do so. They also carry out appropriate pre-employment checks for new staff.

Leaders and managers have put measures in place to ensure that apprentices attending classes can do so safely with, for example social distancing being maintained in classrooms. Health, safety and safeguarding are significant features of the curriculum and apprentices gain a good understanding of the safeguarding responsibilities they have in their roles.

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