

Inspection of Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Inspection dates: 27–29 October 2021

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

Information about this provider

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) began to deliver levy-funded apprenticeships as an employer provider in 2017. At the time of inspection, the Trust had 41 apprentices in learning and three apprentices on a break in learning. Of these, 17 were on level 3 business administration apprenticeships, nine on level 2 healthcare support worker apprenticeships, eight on level 2 pharmacy support worker apprenticeships, six on level 2 healthcare science apprenticeships and four on level 3 lead adult care worker apprenticeships. Approximately half of all apprentices are aged 16 to 18. Nine apprentices are studying functional skills mathematics and four are studying functional skills English as part of their apprenticeship; these are subcontracted to Activate Learning and Dynamic Training Ltd.

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

Apprentices are very strong advocates of their apprenticeship study. They articulate clearly their new learning and are proud of their contribution to the teams they work with. They understand and model the Trust's values well. They support each other successfully. They understand their roles and the importance of effective team working. They apply themselves to their work well. They participate enthusiastically when learning new skills.

Apprentices are extremely positive about their learning and the support they receive from staff. They become more confident, resilient and independent because of their thorough training and the supportive environment in which they learn and work. They develop the confidence to work with patients and their families as well as colleagues at all levels.

Apprentices are well prepared for their next steps. Many progress to permanent roles in their ward or hospital setting when they have completed their apprenticeship. For other apprentices, working as part of a multidisciplinary team opens their eyes to wider career opportunities, and they are well supported to make successful applications.

Apprentices feel safe and well supported. Apprentices learn a range of strategies to deal with difficult situations. They feel confident seeking help from tutors, line managers and colleagues if needed. Consequently, apprentices feel surrounded by a network of support that enhances their feeling of safety.

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

Leaders and managers value the role of apprentices and their contribution to the Trust and its work. As part of the Trust's workforce planning, key managers work with the local integrated care service. This results in a good awareness of the needs of the region, and its population, as well as the needs of the Trust.

Managers have established a provision that explicitly reflects the Trust's values of 'excellence, compassion, respect, delivery, learning and improvement'. Managers and tutors have high expectations and are ambitious for their apprentices and for themselves. They are passionate about the opportunities that apprenticeship study can bring to local people, particularly those who may be local school leavers. Managers monitor apprentices and their progress thoroughly. They make swift interventions if any apprentice is falling behind. Tutors work very effectively with line managers to make sure all apprentices thrive on the programme.

Apprentices in both clinical and non-clinical apprenticeships benefit from a well-structured curriculum. This integrates on- and off-the-job learning effectively in order to develop theoretical knowledge and practical skills. For example, level 3 lead adult care apprentices learn about roles and responsibilities before moving on to

duty of care and then person-centred care. Business administration apprentices undertake rotational placements to build understanding of their employer and its administrative functions across varied departments, including patient facing and non-patient facing. Apprentices who initially feel shy learn practical techniques to support them by shadowing peers. They quickly develop the skills that allow them to talk with patients and put them at ease when providing care. Business administration apprentices can articulate with confidence the new skills and knowledge they have developed, for example confidently communicating with more senior staff using the telephone and emails.

Tutors are very clear about their roles and the importance of a focus on continuous improvement. They benefit from regular meetings with their manager, including away days, where they review the quality of their provision. They identify priorities for improvement and implement appropriate actions. Reviews of performance at a team level are concise, detailed and focused.

Tutors are well qualified, experienced and are highly skilled. They feel valued and well supported to carry out their role well. For example, two tutors are currently studying for a higher-level teaching qualification. Tutors share good practice. For example, all tutors now promote wider reading so that apprentices can explore topics in greater depth. Through reading widely, business administration apprentices deepened their understanding of how legislation such as the Equality Act applies to their roles.

Apprentices benefit from frequent and very helpful feedback on their progress. They have a very good understanding of their end-point assessment and how to achieve a high grade. Good involvement from line managers at the tripartite review meetings means that the majority of managers also have a good understanding and so can identify opportunities for additional learning or experiences to expose apprentices to wider relevant learning. However, a minority of managers do not have access to sufficient curriculum information so that they can plan and implement appropriate on-the-job learning opportunities.

Tutors support apprentices with additional needs with appropriate adaptations to support their learning. They identify this support at an early stage and implement it promptly.

The relatively small number of apprentices who study functional skills English or mathematics benefit from helpful online lessons. Those who cannot attend due to work shifts or caring responsibilities can access these recorded lessons at a time of their choosing. The majority of apprentices are successful in these examinations at their first attempt. Although tutors are informed if an apprentice is not making good progress in English and/or mathematics, they are not routinely informed of ongoing progress. This limits their ability to support apprentices outside of their English or mathematics lessons.

Apprentices learn about healthy relationships and consent as part of the wider curriculum training sessions. This helps them in their personal lives but also in their

professional roles. For example, health and care apprentices can make clear links between this and the importance of person-centred care. They understand the importance of consent and respect when entering patients' homes and providing personal care.

A minority of apprentices benefit from a range of wider enrichment opportunities. For example, three apprentices became 'OxLEP ambassadors' for the county. This involved meeting school children and promoting apprenticeships. As a result, they became more confident public speakers. They are now able to speak with confidence to a wide range of different patients and other stakeholders on a daily basis. However, the majority of apprentices do not benefit from participating in such opportunities, and this limits their wider learning and development of new skills.

Managers set up a Young Apprentice Network for their many younger apprentices. Apprentices speak very positively about this group and feel their voice has real impact. Through a series of events, including 'tea and talk' with senior Trust executives, they become more aspirational and ambitious for their future careers. This also allows senior leaders to hear directly from apprentices.

Senior leaders have not implemented in full their strategies for oversight and scrutiny of the quality of their apprenticeship provision. Although there are plans in place to align the apprenticeship strategy with the wider workforce strategy, the pace of implementation is too slow. This means that senior leaders do not provide sufficient support and challenge to ensure that the high quality that current apprentices enjoy continues to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices benefit from a strong culture of safeguarding and well-being. The designated lead is appropriately trained. All tutors benefit from frequent training and opportunities to share and discuss their practices. Tutors provide high levels of support for apprentices and plan carefully how to ensure apprentices continue to feel safe. For example, tutors make sure that apprentices think about their journeys to work for early and late shifts during the darker winter months. Apprentices benefited from talking through strategies to deal with protestors who may come onsite at the hospital as part of the anti-vaccines protest. They were able to explain the importance of identifying changes in behaviour which would alert them to extremist views.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Senior leaders must implement appropriate arrangements to ensure that they can more effectively and frequently scrutinise the quality of apprenticeship provision.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that the few apprentices who do not have appropriate on-the-job learning opportunities in a timely way do so. They must

ensure that all line managers have access to curriculum plans so they can identify suitable opportunities for their apprentices to build on their off-the-job learning.

- Leaders and managers should identify and implement appropriate plans for all apprentices to benefit from a personal development programme, including enrichment opportunities, so that they develop beneficial knowledge and skills beyond their specialist learning.
- Leaders and managers should review feedback on progress for those apprentices studying functional skills English and/or mathematics so that tutors have a more detailed knowledge of their progress.

Provider details

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Principal/CEO	Dr Bruno L Holthof Chief Executive Officer
Provider type	Employer provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Activate Learning Dynamic Training Ltd

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the apprenticeships business manager, 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 visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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