

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector:	Carolyn Brownsea, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Employer provider
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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.

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) is an employer provider based in Worthing, West Sussex. The Trust provides NHS care for people with mental health problems and learning disabilities in Brighton and Hove, East and West Sussex and Hampshire. In December 2019, the Trust became a prime contract holder to support the development of its staff. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 22 apprentices in learning. Apprentices currently study two standards. These include 13 on the level 3 business administrator apprenticeship and nine on the senior healthcare support worker apprenticeship. The provider does not subcontract any of its provision.

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 provide apprenticeships that equip the Trust's employees with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for their roles and careers in the health service. Apprenticeships form part of the Trust's wider workforce development strategy to address skills shortages in key areas within the Trust. Leaders have well-considered plans for the proposed delivery of T levels from 2023, providing additional career pathways and progression opportunities to an apprenticeship.

Leaders proactively promote the range of career options at the Trust by attending careers events at local schools and colleges. Managers work collaboratively with those responsible for staff's recruitment and communications, successfully integrating the promotion of apprenticeships into recruitment campaigns, induction programmes and staff's reviews. As a result, staff have a clearer understanding of the benefits of training, resulting in more staff applying for an apprenticeship.

The Trust has appropriate performance management arrangements in place. The workforce transformation manager meets regularly with assessor trainers and takes account of professional development in their appraisals. Observations of teaching are carried out for each trainer assessor annually. They do not identify the impact of teaching and assessment on the progress of apprentices. Consequently, development plans do not focus on the skills assessor trainers need to develop to improve their teaching practice.

Leaders, including members of the Trust governance board, understand the strengths and weaknesses of the provision in detail. Leaders provide highly detailed reports, including successes, causes for concern and recommendations. They understand the key priorities specific to apprenticeships and offer appropriate challenge and support to leaders. For example, they have supported the implementation of an informative apprenticeship toolkit for staff detailing the support apprentices can expect from the Trust and their managers.

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

Trainer assessors carefully check the prior learning and experience of apprentices at the beginning of the programme. They have a good understanding of apprentices' starting points and aspirations. They work in partnership with the apprentice and their line managers in the selection of optional units to ensure that apprentices are developing new skills and knowledge that will help them to make progress in their careers.

Well-qualified and experienced staff provide high-quality, off-the-job training for apprentices. Specialist experts work closely with staff to adapt and enhance the curriculum to develop apprentices' learning. For example, speech and language therapists help apprentices to understand how they can support clients with speaking and communication problems and those with eating and swallowing difficulties. Apprentices become more effective in their job roles.

Trainer assessors use effective strategies to check that apprentices remember what they have been taught. They assess apprentices through observing them at work, where apprentices demonstrate their knowledge and provide detailed responses to questioning on previous learning. The feedback they give supports apprentices to become more competent in their job roles. For example, senior healthcare support worker apprentices, providing mental health support to detainees in custody, quickly develop the skills and confidence to supervise healthcare assistants.

Trainer assessors support apprentices with additional needs with appropriate adaptations to support their learning. They identify this support at an early stage and implement it promptly. For example, apprentices and their managers have successfully been supported to apply for an 'access to work' grant. As a result,

employers and apprentices benefit from practical support and assistive technologies that enable them to be effective in their job roles.

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

Leaders have established an effective culture of safeguarding that enables staff to identify and protect apprentices who might need help. Safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty policies are carefully aligned to other trust policies such as the recently introduced 'domestic abuse' policy for staff who are victims or perpetrators of abuse. Apprentices know how to refer safeguarding concerns to appropriate services within the Trust setting.

Staff and apprentices complete mandatory safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training as part of their employment with the NHS. Apprentices with clinical roles complete additional safeguarding training to support them in their jobs.

Leaders are in the process of implementing a centralised system for the recording of safeguarding referrals and well-being concerns. Leaders expect to be able to monitor trends and put in place appropriate intervention and support strategies. It is too early to judge the impact of these changes.

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