

## **BASILDON AND THURROCK UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

### **The organisation**

Apprenticeships are integral to the recruitment and development of staff at Basildon and Thurrock NHS Trust and help shape the workforce to meet future skills needs. The Trust currently has over 100 individuals on an apprenticeship programme, around half of whom are existing staff. This overall number will increase following the introduction of the public sector target and the offer will be expanded to include higher level apprenticeships.

Outcomes for new starter apprentices have been positive, and to date, the majority who have completed their apprenticeships have been recruited into permanent roles or progressed onto the next level of apprenticeship.

### **The approach**

Recruitment of new apprentices and identifying opportunities for converter apprentices is informed by both workforce planning needs and seasonality e.g. recruiting external apprentices in the summer when students receive exam results. Higher-level apprenticeships will be introduced in the future to address a current shortage of staff in leadership and management, Healthcare Science and other roles.

In order to attract new apprentices, the Trust focuses its marketing and communications activity on breaking down misconceptions (e.g. age profile and roles suitable for apprenticeships). Roles are advertised on the National Apprenticeship Website and NHS Jobs. In recognition of the value that the local community has in shaping and developing the organisation, the Trust conducts extensive work with schools and colleges, alongside recruitment days in shopping centres.

Managers work closely with the Trust's Talent For Care team to ensure that the most appropriate apprenticeship framework or standard is selected. They are then guided through the process to ensure they can effectively support the apprentice.

Where possible, training is delivered on-site and staff can coincide their training with the start and end of their shift. The Trust is planning on becoming an employer provider, which will enable them to match provision to their requirements and help recoup some of the levy funds.

### **The challenges**

Any negative views of apprenticeships – whether from previous poor experience, bad press or simply a need to redefine the understanding of what an apprentice is - have been challenged by the Trust. Whilst acknowledging there are risks, and the need for added investment of time and commitment, the Trust believes that

investment will be worth the input. Success is celebrated through awards, case studies and internal magazine articles. Clarity around the levy and target as “Career and Talent Development” help staff understand appreciate the value and impact of the programme.

A flexible and creative approach is required to balance the staffing needs of the ward with apprentices' needing to fulfil the 20% 'off-the-job' learning requirement. To help meet this, the Trust plans to enable apprentices to spend one day a week shadowing on a different ward.

The Trust sees a challenge in spending the levy amount as they do not think there is a sufficient range of health related standards currently available to meet their needs. The Trust is aware of more standards being developed and is hopeful that this challenge will be reduced in coming years as they become available.

### **The benefits**

Apprenticeships allow the Trust to 'grow their own' workforce in a way that suits their needs and organisational culture. They also offer a great opportunity to upskill and develop existing staff. The levy will allow the Trust to have more control over the commissioning of external providers, which will ensure a rigorous standard is upheld. Apprentices also enhance diversity across the Trust - ensuring new ways of thinking and enthusiasm, and extending the range of experiences to draw on.