Introduction

Apprenticeships are changing. Recent policy developments will have a significant impact on how employers train, employ and fund apprentices in England. NHS Employers works with organisations across the health service to help them be the best employers they can be. We have developed this guide to help all those who have a responsibility for delivering apprenticeships in the NHS to get the most out of the changes ahead.
Understanding the changes

2016 saw the introduction of a number of apprenticeship policy reforms.

The government has made a commitment to working with employers to continue to improve the quality of apprenticeships and provide the skills the workforce needs. These changes apply to all sectors in England, and aim to improve the quality of training, as well as providing incentives to employers to train more apprentices.

Summary of the changes

- From May 2017, all employers in England with a pay bill over £3m will be required to invest in apprenticeships by paying into a central, government-managed apprenticeship levy pot every year.

- Levy-paying employers will be required to contribute 0.5 per cent of their pay bill (equal to their employees’ taxable earnings) towards a government-held apprenticeship fund.

- Employers will create a digital account and funds will enter this on a monthly basis, with a 10 per cent top-up paid by government and applied at the same time. Employers can use this funding to purchase apprenticeship training.

- Any funds not spent will expire 24 months after they enter the account.

- By 2020, all employers in England will use the digital apprenticeship service to pay for training and assessment of apprenticeships.

- Apprenticeship frameworks will be replaced by standards by 2020, which are developed by employer-led partnerships called trailblazers.

- Apprenticeship standards will set out the core skills and knowledge apprentices need to be fully competent in a role.

- Employers can apply to become training providers, or commission external training provision from a register of approved training providers.

- In a change to previous rules, individuals can undertake an apprenticeship at any level (this could be higher, equal or lower to a qualification they already hold), if it allows them to acquire substantive new skills.

- The government believes the public sector has a key role to play in helping to achieve the delivery of three million apprenticeships by 2020. Public sector employers of more than 250 people will have a target which they will need to report against annually.

“When we first estimated our levy contribution we gasped slightly. When we got together to address it, however, we thought we may be able to turn this into something positive and really start to grow our own workforce.”

Education and Development Advisor, Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Getting board commitment

Apprenticeship programmes alone cannot solve all of your workforce challenges, but when considered as part of a holistic workforce strategy they can be used creatively to help employers address some of the challenges they face.

As an apprenticeship lead you should feel confident to have conversations with your board of directors and senior managers.

The board should consider how to make apprenticeships an integral part of wider workforce plans.

Your organisation now has an opportunity to think about other changes affecting the workforce, such as the nursing shortage, the removal of student bursaries and the proposed new nursing associate role.

Top tips for engaging with your board

1. **Be assured** that you are the expert, and present yourself as such. You understand the new policy, its context and the rules.

2. **Prepare a strategic business case** which clearly explains the high-level benefits to the organisation.

3. **Present facts and figures clearly** and accurately. Use local data about your own workforce, and the government’s apprenticeship levy calculator to make your case.

4. **Remember that this is about people, and provision of care.** Frame your conversations with the board in these terms, without downplaying the financial implications.

5. **Organise a creative session** for board members and directors of departments to explore what the key workforce and service challenges are, and how apprenticeships might be used to help address them.

6. **Challenge current perceptions** about apprentices. Apprentices are not only young people, and apprenticeships are not low level qualifications. They can be used to develop the current workforce up to degree level.

7. **Tell a story.** Use our apprenticeship case studies to draw on effective practice happening in other areas, or invite a successful apprentice from your own organisation to meet the board.

8. **Coordinate an apprenticeship action plan** for your organisation.

9. **Get clear commitment** from the board and senior managers in writing for their support as champions, and for the necessary resources to implement the plan.

10. **Evaluate regularly,** make improvements and celebrate success.
Developing and implementing your strategy

Having commitment from your senior managers will help you to develop a wide-reaching and ambitious strategy.

The way in which health and social care is being delivered is changing. There are clear drivers for working in partnership with local organisations to streamline services and reduce pressure on the service. Many sustainability and transformation plans (STPs) are acknowledging a role for apprenticeships in areas across England.

Your apprenticeship strategy provides an opportunity to look beyond the workforce challenges faced by your own organisation. It should consider how you can work with health and social care providers in your area to address common issues with shared solutions. It should also assess how apprenticeships may be used to address any shortages or skills gaps.

As well as encompassing the whole workforce, the strategy should look at the whole employment journey: pre-employment training, employability preparation, staff development and retention. It should consider creative ways in which learning can enhance the capacity and capabilities of individuals, teams and services as a whole.

Things to consider: a checklist

- ✓ Our payroll system is able to calculate the pay bill on a monthly basis.
- ✓ We have followed HMRC guidance and know how much the levy will cost.
- ✓ We have agreed who will have responsibility for ensuring payments are made to HMRC.
- ✓ We have looked at our training requirements and worked out our financial spending using the government’s indicative online tool for employers.
- ✓ We have identified who will manage the digital account and authorise payments to training providers.
- ✓ We know who will negotiate contracts with the training providers and those relationships are in place, or being developed.
- ✓ We have worked with our payroll teams to set up an online account with the Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) using the government’s guidance.

“If we don’t start to work with colleagues (providing other health and social care services) to help them develop their workforces, as well as ours, our own services will collapse under the pressure.”

Learning and Development Manager, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
A question of culture

A new approach to apprenticeships gives you an opportunity to look closely at your organisation’s culture and values. The following questions may help you and your colleagues to identify areas of the organisational culture which can be built on and improved to make your apprenticeship programme a success.

Further support

NHS Employers offers advice and guidance to help you – visit our website to access information on:

- Recruiting for values
- Recruiting young people
- Staff engagement
- Diversity and inclusion
- Widening participation

**LEARNING**

- Is there a culture of learning across the organisation?
- Do your staff have opportunities to develop their skills?
- Do all staff know about the opportunities available to them?
- How do you offer staff the support and resources to learn?

**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- Are you working with your local community? Or other partners?
- How are you making sure apprenticeships are used as an opportunity to diversify the workforce?
- Does your programme challenge preconceptions of apprenticeships being low-skilled or aimed exclusively at young people?

**ENGAGEMENT**

- How are you engaging with the current workforce so they understand the changes?
- Have they got opportunities to voice concerns and have them heard?
- Have they got access to a range of apprenticeships and career progression opportunities?

**LEADERSHIP**

- Are your leaders on board and positive advocates for the changes?
- Are your managers encouraged to be business-minded? Are they equipped with negotiating skills?
- Have they got opportunities to voice concerns and have them heard?
- How are you making sure the current workforce will welcome and nurture new apprentices?
Apprenticeship training

Once you know how much you have to spend on apprenticeships the next step is to consider whether you want to offer them to existing staff, new recruits or both.

Apprenticeships are real jobs that combine work and training. For information about pay and conditions visit our Q&A web page.

Selecting apprenticeship training

There are two different types of apprenticeship training to choose from.

- **Apprenticeship standards** – these relate to specific job roles and set out the core skills, knowledge and behaviours needed by an apprentice to be fully competent in that role. Standards are developed by employer groups known as trailblazers.

- **Apprenticeship frameworks** – these are work-related vocational and professional qualifications, combining workplace and classroom-based training.

The use of frameworks will be phased out by 2020 as apprenticeship standards are developed to replace them.

Purchasing the training

Apprenticeship training must last a minimum of 12 months and can only be delivered by approved training providers. At least 20 per cent of this time must be spent off-the-job. This does not necessarily mean attending college, or being away from the employer’s premises, but must be time spent away from their day-to-day job on a training or development activity.

As an organisation you can select a training provider to deliver this apprenticeship training on your behalf, or you may choose to deliver all, or part of this yourselves. To access the list of approved training providers go to the register of apprenticeship training organisations (RoATP).

Each standard will be allocated a funding band to help you assess and negotiate costs with training providers. Remember to think like a business - as a customer, don’t underestimate how much bargaining power you have.

Becoming a training provider

Employers wanting to deliver apprenticeship training must become a registered training provider.

- If you intend to provide 100 per cent of the training to your own staff only, or provide part of the training and contract an external training provider to deliver the rest, you will need to become a registered employer-provider.

- If you wish to provide training to staff employed by others, either as the main provider or as a subcontractor to another provider, then you will need to be registered as a provider. The exception is where the contract is valued below £100,000. In those cases providers will not have to join the register but they can if they wish.

Employment providers will be subject to due diligence checks, be open to inspections by the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) and have to provide a range of information and data to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

More detail is available in the government’s guidance on becoming a provider of apprenticeship training.

Registration will open four times a year for new applications and providers will need to refresh their information every 12 months to maintain their registration.
Selecting an end-point assessor

All apprenticeship standards must contain an end-point assessment. This is a holistic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours which have been learnt throughout the apprenticeship. Apprentices must meet this requirement in order to achieve the apprenticeship standard.

Only organisations listed on the register of apprentice assessment organisations (RAAO) are eligible to carry out end-point assessments. Employers may wish to become a registered assessment organisation or select an organisation from the RAAO to conduct the end-point assessment of their apprentices.

While training providers may also be a registered assessment organisation, they cannot deliver training and undertake end-point assessments for the same group of apprentices.

For organisations thinking about applying to the RAAO or looking for an organisation to conduct assessments for the same group of apprentices.

Apprenticeship training - things to consider

- Undertake a skills gap analysis and identify potential areas for apprenticeships (for both existing staff and new starters).
- Develop career pathways for different services or departments across the organisation and at all levels, for example from porter to manager.
- Identify staff development needs through appraisals and think about how these could be met through an apprenticeship.
- Carry out a procurement exercise to engage training providers who can meet the organisation’s needs.
- Think about whether you need to develop apprenticeships which are specific to your business needs.
- Consider including e-learning elements in your training.
- Identify how you will support and monitor the progress of your apprentices.
- Contact Unionlearn (the learning and skills arm of the Trades Union Congress) if you need help to raise awareness of your apprenticeship programmes.

Procurement

Procurement rules govern the way in which public bodies purchase goods and services to ensure equal access and fair competition for public contracts. NHS bodies will need to comply with the Public Contracts Regulation 2015 when selecting a provider and an assessment organisation from the approved registers.

Changes introduced under the regulations can help NHS bodies to buy more smartly and broaden the possibility to conduct negotiations with bidders during the procurement process. A range of resources, including training material, handbooks and guides have been produced by the Cabinet Office to help public bodies become familiar with and understand the new rules.
Training apprentices - step by step

This flowchart shows a suggested approach for managers to take, and highlights the key decision points for you and your organisation.

**APPRENTICESHIP LEAD**
- Research and understand policy rules
- Inform board and senior managers

**BOARD**
- Commit to include apprentices in workforce strategy

**DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**
- Calculate costs of levy payments and available training

**DIRECTOR OF HR**
- Identify skills gaps in your organisation
- Decide whether apprenticeships can be used to fill your skills gaps
- Determine if the standards you need exist already
- Decide whether to establish/join a trailblazer group
- Have standards approved
- Develop standards
- Recruit apprentices
- Evaluate apprenticeship programmes
- Train apprentices
- Await development of standards
- Commission training provision
What others are doing

Several trusts are considering how to work with their local authorities to develop and deliver integrated apprenticeships in health and social care. Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is currently evaluating its pilot project which saw learners undertake placements in both settings, equipping them with skills to adapt to different environments.

The training and development manager at Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust met with staff-side representatives from across the organisation during the development of the organisation’s apprenticeship strategy. This gave them the opportunity to address the concerns they had, and to contribute to the plans from the outset.

All new band 1-4 vacancies at Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are offered as an apprenticeship unless managers can present a compelling case as to why they should not be. This puts apprenticeships at the forefront of managers’ minds.

The learning and development leads at Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust have set up an apprenticeship strategy and implementation group, engaging representatives from across the trust, including senior managers, business partners, nursing staff and colleagues from unions, to support the strategic direction for apprenticeships, and identify where they can be used to promote the workforce supply.

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Evaluating your apprenticeship programmes

As with any programme of work, it’s important to evaluate your new approach to apprenticeships. Be clear about what you want to achieve and make regular space throughout the life of the programme to assess progress against plans. You will be more likely to be able to identify risks and issues, and in a better position to change course if necessary. Having a clear evaluation plan in place will also help you recognise where you have done really good work, and encourage celebration and sharing of that success.

The evaluation process opposite can help you to think through how you will measure impact from the beginning.

1 DEFINE OBJECTIVES
Make sure they are clear, provable and relevant to your organisation’s role and activity. Getting your goals right at the beginning will make it easier to measure them.

2 DEFINE STAKEHOLDERS
This will be all the people and organisations affected by your programme. Consider all your partnerships and identify the benefits you hope to achieve for each.

3 MAP TASKS & ACTIVITIES
Think about how your programme is expected to meet its objectives, what tasks and activities it will include, and how each of these is expected to influence the behaviour of your stakeholders.

4 DEFINE PERFORMANCE MEASURES
To assess performance against programme objectives, you will need to identify which elements of the programme worked well, and which worked less well. Think about impact and outcomes as well as financial/countable targets.

5 IDENTIFY DATA SOURCES
Identify, for each performance measure, what data you will use and how you will source it. Make use of tools, such as the government’s levy calculator and the NHS electronic staff record (ESR).

6 IDENTIFY RISKS & CONSTRAINTS
These will include financial risks and penalties for not meeting imposed targets and the risks to the workforce and patients of not training the right people in the right place at the right time.
Tools and resources

Key resources from NHS Employers

**Apprenticeship hub**
A go-to info source on NHS apprenticeships, including policy updates and key resources.

**Briefing for board members**
A briefing document for boards highlighting the financial implications of the policy changes surrounding apprenticeships.

**Apprenticeship levy factsheet**
Key facts on how the apprenticeship levy will work in practice.

**Apprenticeship Q&A**
Responses to a range of questions raised by employers about apprenticeships and the apprenticeship levy.

**Apprenticeship myths**
The truth behind many common misconceptions about apprenticeships.

Case studies

**Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust: Using apprenticeships to support staff development**
Aintree University Hospital’s apprenticeship programme has enabled the trust to ‘grow its own’ qualified nurses. Almost 38 per cent of health care assistants who started as apprentices are now employed as fully qualified nurses.

**The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust: How peer and learning mentors help apprentices succeed**
Leeds Teaching Hospitals provides young people with both a peer mentor and a learning mentor which has greatly helped their apprenticeship programmes succeed.

**Central and West London NHS Foundation Trust: Changing approach to recruitment attracted some talented individuals**
By changing their approach and style of interview questions, Central and West London has brought more young people onto its apprenticeship programmes.

Blogs

**Mature apprentices bring more than just skills**
Alison Drage, Head of Integrated Education at Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust

**Trust gains from key skills**
Carol Forde-Johnston, Nurse Education Lead at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

**Apprenticeships having a positive impact**
Theresa Nelson, Chief Officer for Workforce Development at Birmingham Children’s Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Access these resources at www.nhsemployers.org/apprenticeships
Useful links

Funding and the levy

Apprenticeship funding
Information about how apprenticeship funding will work from May 2017.

Draft legislation
The regulations for the calculation, payment and recovery of the apprenticeship levy.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) guidance
Help for employers on how to calculate, pay and report on the apprenticeship levy.

Skills Funding Agency funding rules
Rules for publicly funded colleges, training organisations, local authorities and employers that offer education and skills training.

Indicative online tool for employers
Use this tool to plan your training requirements and work out your financial spending.

Training and assessment

Apprenticeship employer-provider guide
Information on how to become an apprenticeship training provider.

Register of apprenticeship training organisations (RoATP)
The list of approved training providers.

Apprentice assessment organisations
For organisations wanting to find or become an apprentice assessment organisation.

Developing apprenticeship standards

Skills for Health’s trailblazer web pages
For any questions relating to developing a healthcare standard, please contact Healthcare.Trailblazer@skillsforhealth.org.uk

Government Consultation Hub
Search for proposals and draft standards submitted for approval.

Procurement

Public Contracts Regulations 2015
Rules and directives that apply to the procurement of services for the public sector.

Procurement resources
Guidance and training materials on the Public Contracts Regulations.

Developing the future workforce

Directory of Widening Participation
Best practice initiatives from Health Education England.

ThinkFuture
NHS Employers’ campaign to support organisations to recruit more young people into the NHS workforce.
The NHS Employers organisation is the voice of employers in the NHS, supporting them to put patients first.

We actively seek the views of employers on key workforce issues and use our expertise to support them to develop a sustainable workforce, improve staff experience and provide high quality care to patients. We influence workforce policy at regional, national and European levels and turn policies into practical workable solutions.

NHS Employers is part of the NHS Confederation.

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