

COLLABORATING REGIONALLY ON APPRENTICESHIPS



**More
and more
organisations
across England have
seen the benefits of
working collaboratively
to address workforce
challenges through
apprenticeships.**

Apprenticeships bring many tangible benefits to NHS organisations. They can develop and upskill new and existing staff, build career pathways and, when included within workforce planning, can help to address skills shortages across the workforce. The latter is something that more organisations are approaching collaboratively to address skills shortages and increase the amount of apprenticeship levy spent across sustainability and transformation partnerships (STP) or integrated care systems (ICS).

This briefing sets out examples of where systems are working collaboratively to deliver apprenticeships, the factors that enable this approach, and the strategic outcomes this has achieved.

APPRENTICESHIPS AS PART OF THE WORKFORCE SOLUTION

HR directors in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough STP recognised that collaborative action was required to reduce the projected collective underspend of the apprenticeship levy.

A dedicated STP lead was appointed in 2018 and tasked with undertaking a scoping exercise across the system to understand how much levy was being spent, what standards the levy was being spent on, and recommendations for making effective use of

the funds moving forward. The findings and recommendations were then presented to HR directors within the STP region, to gain their buy-in for utilising the apprenticeship levy and apprenticeships across the region. Recommendations have included transferring funds to other healthcare employers and increasing placements across the STP for apprenticeships, such as the nursing associate apprenticeship to fill skills and workforce gaps.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE TO SUPPORT APPRENTICESHIPS

The local workforce action board and Health Education England (HEE) identified that there was unused apprenticeship levy within the West Yorkshire and Harrogate STP. Following this, HEE brought together the largest health and social care levy payers and local authorities to create a virtual levy transfer pot of £884,000, which is being used to help organisations such as GP practices and care homes to deliver apprenticeships.

The West Yorkshire and Harrogate Excellence Centre was asked to broker this money to support these organisations. This has been facilitated through conversations with HR directors, employer networks and apprenticeship leads in the local community, and building good relationships to get buy-in and advocate change. Through building relationships and networks, the project team leads have also been able to build knowledge and promote cross-working to develop and retain staff through apprenticeships.

In the last three months, the team has identified 197 apprenticeships to start by April 2020. Three nursing associates, three adult care workers and ten adult care workers have already started apprenticeships or have a start date.

A COLLECTIVE VISION AND PRINCIPLES

Since 2018, North East London has worked as an STP area. This has created commonality around education and apprenticeship policy and core principles across the system.

As part of the STP work there is a task and finish sub-group that specifically focuses on the apprenticeship agenda. The overarching aim of the collaboration is to get every employer within the STP to a position in which they're spending all of their apprenticeship levy, unless there's a strategic priority to give to non-levy paying organisations.

To achieve this, the group has set out a shared vision and agreed to a set of key principles:



- Consider apprenticeships to address workforce needs and development.
- Ensure return on investment by encouraging progression into posts on completion of the apprenticeship.
- Maximise apprenticeship funding to meet provider and system-wide workforce development.
- Support apprenticeship programmes through redefining and remodelling the workforce to accommodate new roles, trainee roles and training posts required and support career progression through apprenticeships.
- Review apprenticeship levy transfers in short term as the apprenticeship system matures.
- Commit to using levy transfer and supporting patient care.

The sub-group has agreed that all apprenticeship programmes, where possible, will be procured collaboratively to ensure that sufficient numbers can be achieved to run the programmes. This, in turn, will enable trusts to spend the levy, fill workforce gaps and provide a better experience for the learner and patient.

The priorities for the sub-group have been shared (via an STP lead) with HR directors in the region to ensure they have oversight and agree with the priorities.

To further engage HR directors, the sub-group is developing a dashboard that will include levy spend, forecast for levy spending, diversity of apprentices and attrition rates. This will allow HR directors to see what's working well across apprenticeships in the region and what learning is still ongoing. This will continue to be shared at monthly meetings so actions can be progressed.

As a result of this collective effort, the trust's leadership team has a stronger understanding of the different types of apprenticeships available and the investment required for different apprenticeships to support workforce vacancies. This enhanced knowledge has helped them to better use apprenticeships.



Further Information

www.nhsemployers.org/apprenticeships

[Trustworthy collaboration report](#)

Contact us

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