

# NHS APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE NORTH WEST

## WHAT ARE APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships are work-based learning programmes that enable individuals to earn a wage whilst gaining on-the-job experience and skills that lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

Apprenticeships are for people looking for a job that enables them to carry on learning and for those already in employment who want to gain further qualifications.

There are Apprenticeships available in a wide range of job roles within the NHS, with over 30 different frameworks to choose from including; Health, Business Administration, Hospitality and Catering, Engineering, Accountancy, Plumbing, Management and Leadership etc.

Currently there are three levels of Apprenticeship available

- **Intermediate Level Apprenticeships**

Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as a Level 2 Competence Qualification (equivalent to 5 GCSEs grades A\*-C), Functional Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification.

- **Advanced Level Apprenticeships**

Apprentices work towards work-based learning such as a Level 3 Competence Qualification (equivalent to 2 A Levels), Functional Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification.

- **Higher Apprenticeships**

Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as a Level 4 Competence Qualification Certificate, Functional Skills and, in some cases, a knowledge-based qualification such as a Foundation Degree.

Dedicated Brokerage support is provided by Skills for Health Academy North West (SfHANW) and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to align all Trust Band 1 to 4 job roles to Apprenticeship Frameworks and levels, where available and relevant, whilst also providing support to identify the most suitable education provider.

## BACKGROUND

The national agreement between SHAs, the former Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Skills for Health, to support and deliver the learning and skills needs of NHS staff in Agenda for Change bands 1-4, ran between 2007/08 and 2009/10 and resulted in an unprecedented level of investment and attention to vocational learning.

Despite the investment agreement coming to an end in 2009/10, the reorganisation of the LSC into the Skills Funding Agency and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) in 2009 has ensured continued commitment and investment in skills development and kick started a particular focus on career development rather than single qualifications. In 2009/10 the government set a clear target to increase the number of apprenticeships in the public sector with a specific growth target within the NHS.

Building on the existing working relationships NHS NW has worked in partnership with the Skills for Health Academy North West and the National Apprenticeship Service to provide a dedicated brokerage service to support implementation of the Apprenticeship Agenda across the health economy.





# HOT TOPIC

Marketing initiatives, relationship building and partnership working have been paramount to the North West's success by:

- Engaging employers in the Apprenticeship Agenda
- Exploring employment solutions to overcome Trusts' reluctance to increase headcount long term
- Overcoming myths and maximizing the 25+ age group
- Establishing Preferred Education Provider arrangements on behalf of Trusts

Activity has focused on:

- **Developing the level 2 status through Apprenticeship uptake** In response to the Leitch Review (2006) and supported by the Labour Force Survey (2009) which indicated that approximately 20% of the health sector workforce do not hold a level 2 qualification there is a real need to develop the level 2 status of the workforce.
- **Increasing the number of 16-18 year olds in the NHS through Apprenticeships** With over a million 16-24 year olds unemployed, youth unemployment is one of the greatest challenges facing the country and high on the Government agenda. 19% of the North West's working age population is aged 18 to 24 (ONS 2011) yet only 7% of the health sector workforce in the Northwest (Labour Force Survey) is within this age group.
- **Workforce priority areas** Apprenticeships have been identified as workforce solutions as part of modernisation and service re-organisation plans, leading to demand for greater variety including Maternity Services, Healthcare Science, Leadership & Management, Health Informatics, etc.
- **Academic/qualification progression** (i.e. level 2 to level 3 apprenticeship framework)

## KEY OUTCOMES IN THE NORTH WEST

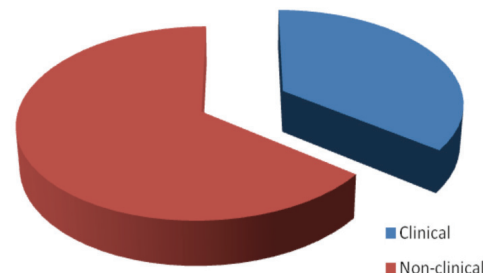
This strategic approach has resulted in over 5000 apprenticeships delivered in the North West since the initial government drive in 2009, equivalent to 5 apprentices a day and the highest across all SHA areas.

Despite the current challenges, 93% Trusts across the North West are engaged with apprenticeships, with year-on-year activity increases evidenced.

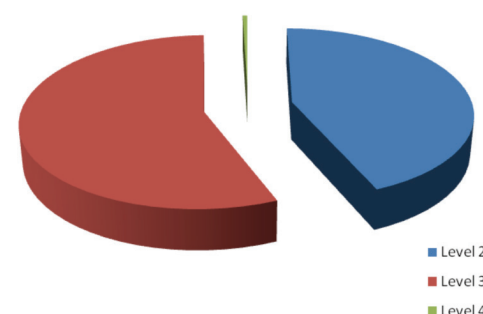
As anticipated, the most popular apprenticeship frameworks have been Business Administration, Health, Pharmacy Technician, Dental Nursing and IT User, however there has been a breadth of apprenticeships undertaken across both clinical and non-clinical frameworks

There is evidence of framework progression, with apprentices going on to undertake Advanced Apprenticeships. Apprenticeships have also been used as a platform for individuals to go on to pre-registration training or trainee Assistant Practitioners as evidenced in the [Apprentice case studies](#) on eWIN. Further work is being undertaken to provide educational resources to support workforce learners to study for higher education where appropriate, as part of the widening participation strategy.

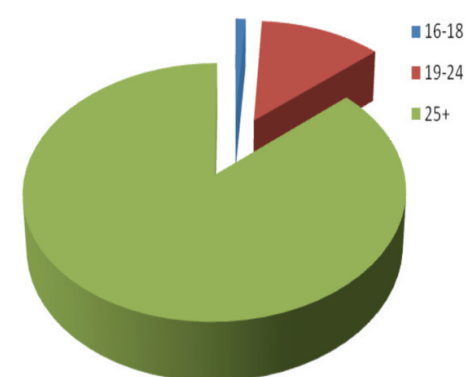
Whilst there has been some increase in the number of 16 to 18 year olds over 85% of current apprentices are aged over 25, which is attributed to the high uptake by existing members of staff.



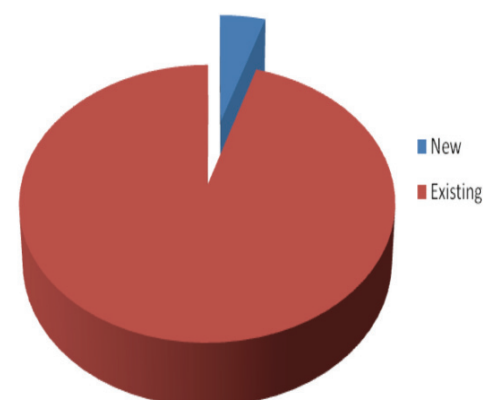
**Graph 1: Percentage of Apprenticeship Starts: Clinical Vs Non-Clinical**



**Graph 2: Percentage of Apprenticeship Starts: Academic Level**



**Graph 3: Percentage of Apprenticeship Starts: Age Group**



**Graph 4: Percentage of Apprenticeship starts: New Vs Existing staff**



Alongside supporting our local Trusts' diverse workforce needs, apprenticeships also contribute to maximising employment opportunities for our local North West population and with this in mind, NHS NW jointly with NW NAS colleagues and the Skills for Health Academy North West (SfHANW), have introduced a number of initiatives to support continued apprenticeship success into the future;

- **An NHS Apprenticeship Resource Pack**, aimed at raising awareness of those about to leave school, of the range and breadth of apprenticeship opportunities in the NHS leading to rewarding careers.
- **A Cadet to Apprenticeship model**, enabling those training on the job a first step on the career ladder and an appropriate salary to match.
- **An Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA)** has been commissioned by NHS NW, through SfHANW, to provide access to health sector experience and vocational qualifications for those aged 16-18 year olds with a number of North West Trusts offering placements.
- **An Employment Progression Programme**, supporting those due to complete pathways, additional job application and interview support, safeguarding the investment made.

## NHS NORTH WEST'S APPRENTICESHIP PROMISE

Whilst the financial and employment challenges look set to continue, NHS North West is keen to recognise Trusts' corporate social responsibility as employers.

To help signify their commitment and contribution to the regeneration of the region, NHS North West launched their Apprenticeship Promise on the 3rd February, which coincided with the fifth National Apprenticeship Week.

With high apprenticeship engagement/activity in the North West the aim of the Apprenticeship Promise is to embed apprenticeships as a core element of workforce and education practice, recognising the impact not only to service and patient care but also on the wider community.

Aligned to the NHS constitution and the need to provide development and access to training to maintain the health, wellbeing and safety of the workforce, the Apprenticeship Promise provides Trusts with a structure to establish accurate details of need, leading to targeted skills development, aligned to current apprenticeship strategy.

NHS North West, in partnership with Skills for Health Academy North West and the National Apprenticeship Service have pledged their commitment to drive this agenda forward by supporting Trusts to achieve the 5 pledges of the Promise, and specifically:

- Work with HR teams to align all Trust band 1-4 vacancies with Apprenticeship Frameworks where available and relevant
- Develop and test an organisational toolkit to establish and monitor level 2 status across non-registered staff groups
- Facilitate workshops in partnership with NAS, aimed at building case study development capacity

Further information including how to sign up to the Apprenticeship Promise along with apprentice case studies can be found [here](#) on eWIN.





## THE BENEFITS

With such high activity in the region, we are now able to gain momentum as to the evidence-base of how supporting Apprenticeships not only improves organisational quality and productivity, but importantly, boosts individual confidence, employability and health.

A study carried out by the University of Warwick Institute for Employment Research (IER) demonstrated that Apprenticeships are an investment by employers and where the investment is nurtured, the returns to the employer are significant.

The study showed that the costs of training are quickly recouped upon completion of the Apprenticeships. Other benefits include; retention within the organisation, understanding of organisation values, and progression to become managers and supervisors. For details of the research please visit <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers/The-Benefits/IER-Research.aspx>

Further research has been commissioned in 2012 to specifically focus on the organisational impact of apprenticeships within the health sector, with the report anticipated for late 2012.

The impact of apprenticeships on individuals is clearly evidenced in the recent [apprentice case studies](#) on eWIN.

## WHAT APPRENTICESHIPS MEAN TO OUR TRUSTS

- "Apprenticeships have become a fundamental part of the way we develop staff within the Trust, and a great opportunity for those at bands 1 to 4. Whether staff are enhancing their skills or moving onto new roles, Apprenticeships add up to a more competent workforce – one that's more efficient, productive, confident, and able to provide a better quality of care and service. The number of Apprentices we have is constantly growing, which is seen as a real positive throughout the Trust." **Steven Hughes, Vocational Training Manager, Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust.**

- Our Apprenticeship scheme is well embedded at the Trust and has the full support of the Executive Team and every departmental Manager. It is seen as a key factor in training the full range of clinical, non-clinical and ancillary staff – so they are supported in developing the key skills and attributes required for their roles, and also rewarded with a range of essential qualifications. As a trust, Apprenticeships ensure that we can achieve our patient experience vision by offering the best possible quality of care." **Steven Colfar, Clinical Education Manager, Liverpool Heart & Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.**

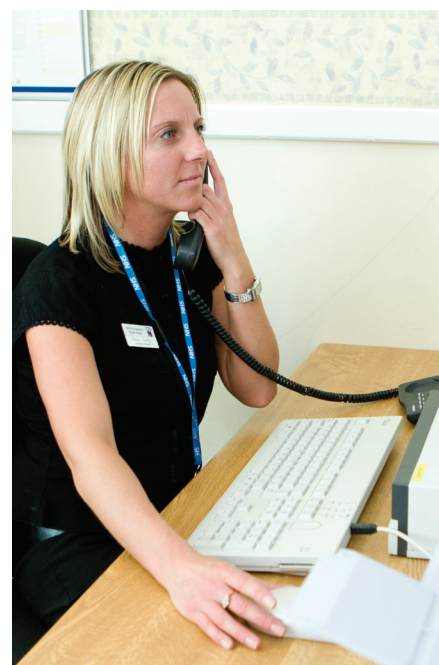
- Apprenticeships offer us a complete framework to support our staff on many different levels – from competency in the workplace to literacy, numeracy and other transferable skills. In one respect, Apprenticeships are a good boost to morale, providing a real sense of achievement and helping to open doors to new roles and higher learning. They also translate directly to a better level of patient care, so that the community we work in can be confident in the skills and commitment we have in place to look after its needs. **Fiona Chapman, NVQ Coordinator, Aintree University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.**

## USEFUL LINKS/RESOURCES

- [NHS Apprenticeship Resource Pack](#)
- [NHS North West Apprenticeship Promise](#)
- [National Apprenticeship Service](#)
- [Skills for Health Academy North West](#)
- [Apprenticeship Case Studies](#)

## REFERENCES

[www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)



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