NHS South Central Apprenticeship Steering Group  
West Berkshire Community Hospital, 22nd April 2009

Minutes

Present
Allan Jolly (AJ), NESC
Anita Esser (AE), Southampton University Hospitals Trust
Chris Wintle (CW), Skills for Health
Claire Evans (CE), Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Programme
David Slingo (DS), Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Foundation Trust
Emma Wilton (EW), NESC
Jane Fox (JF), Skills for Health
Julie Abdalla (JA), Hampshire Community Health Care
Julia Bateman (JB), NESC
Madeleine Watters (MW), National Apprenticeship Service
Ruth Sear (RS), Skills for Health
Sam Donohue (SD), Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Programme

Apologies
Bridget Herniman, Skills for Health

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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>EW welcomed everyone to the first NHS South Central Apprenticeship Steering Group. Introductions were made and apologies given.</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>The purpose of the Steering Group is to facilitate development of Apprenticeships across NHS South Central. Apprenticeships are Frameworks of learning which constitute an NVQ, a Technical Certificate and Key Skills training, and are delivered at levels 2 and 3. The objective of the first meeting is to agree a strategy for increasing the number and range of Apprenticeships over the next three years within NHS South Central.</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>In March 2009 an announcement was made regarding the creation of 5,000 more Apprenticeships across the NHS, equating to 350 additional Apprenticeships within NHS South Central by 31 March 2010. The Department of Health will monitor achievement of this target.</td>
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2 **Review national target and funding streams**

2.1 JB outlined that £25 million has been agreed by the Department of Health to support the development of Apprenticeships nationally, this equates to approximately £1.7 million across NHS South Central.

2.2 Funding for Apprenticeship qualifications is partly funded by the Learning and Skills Council (soon to become the Skills Funding Agency). Funding for Apprentices aged 16 – 18 is provided at no cost to the employer. However, a cost is attached for those aged over 19 years. It is expected that the majority of Apprentices within NHS South Central will be older than 19. Employer contributions will therefore be expected at 42.5%, increasing to 50% by 1 August 2009. In her role as Joint Investment Framework Partnership Manager, JB will negotiate with training providers regarding costs of Apprenticeships. It is anticipated that some provision will be accessed at no cost to employers.

2.3 Any funding allocated from the Department of Health to NESC will be available to staff employed by the NHS, a separate source of funding will be available to Social Care staff. Clarification was requested regarding this. **CW** to circulate a paper regarding Apprenticeship provision for Social Care.

3 **Discussion regarding Apprenticeship Frameworks**

3.1 JF explained that the purpose of Apprenticeships is to enhance the workforce, to enable better skilled staff to meet changing service need. The NHS is currently under-represented in terms of its Apprenticeship activity. A cultural change is needed within the NHS to value Apprenticeships.

3.2 The Department of Health asked Skills for Health to lead on Apprenticeships and as a result a small team of staff have been appointed to support this agenda, alongside Regional Directors. Bridget Herniman is the NHS South Central contact.

3.3 In mid June/early July Skills for Health will launch their Apprenticeship Toolkit for employers, followed by a Toolkit for Apprentices and Learning Providers. The Toolkit will contain a web-based tool to explore the different Apprenticeship Frameworks and their fitness to NHS job roles at bands 2 and 3. The Framework Signposting Tool will be available in draft form from 23 April.

3.4 Regional events are being planned to promote Apprenticeships, these will help to inform a national conference in the Autumn. Skills for Health will work with employers to identify Apprenticeship hotspots, suitability of Frameworks and gaps in provision.

3.5 Skills for Health, in partnership with the Department of Health, chair a National Apprenticeship Steering Group. This is represented by each SHA, EW is nominated as the Apprenticeship Lead for NHS South Central and is a member of the Steering Group.
| 3.6 | Currently the Department for Innovations, Universities and Skills are leading a consultation regarding the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England. This proposes that greater flexibility exist locally to design Apprenticeship Frameworks around local need, which could include, for example, VRQs. | EW to circulate the consultation document and collate response on behalf of the Steering Group. |
| 3.7 | At the next meeting Bridget Herniman will be asked to present information regarding the Employer Toolkit. |
| 4 | Development of NHS South Central Apprenticeship Strategy |
| 4.1 | EW provided an overview of the draft NHS South Central Apprenticeship Strategy which aims to set the strategic direction for development of Apprenticeships over the next 3 years. In line with the NHS Next Stage Review, a High Quality Workforce (2008), plans are outlined to increase both the number and range of Apprentices. The Strategy is focussed upon developing members of the existing workforce at bands 2 and 3 and converting vacancies at these bands into Apprenticeships. The ultimate objective is to develop a workforce which is fit for purpose, competent and able to deliver high quality patient care. |
| 4.2 | Within the Strategy, an Apprenticeship model is proposed for NHS South Central which is based upon the NHS Next Stage Review 8 clinical pathways. The model will support development of generic skills and competences which are common to all Apprenticeship Frameworks, such as literacy, numeracy and communication skills. More specific learning and development will be based around the 8 pathways. This model was considered to be of high relevance to Trusts and PCTs and would therefore help to promote the uptake of Apprenticeships. |
| 4.3 | It was suggested that more detailed information is required regarding funding for Apprenticeships across NHS South Central, particularly regarding expected employer contributions. | EW to write financial options appraisal paper. |
| 5 | Review and agree NHS South Central Apprenticeship Action Plan |
| 5.1 | EW gave an outline of the NHS South Central Apprenticeship Action Plan. The South Central SHA Executive Team recently approved an Apprenticeship paper, presented by AJ, which included a copy of the Action Plan. Achievement of objectives within the Plan will enable the 350 target to be met and will support development of staff in a way which is fit for purpose, relevant and appropriate to current and future patient needs. |
| 5.2 | It was felt that labelling existing staff as Apprentices could deter uptake. It was agreed that names could be determined locally, but learning must be delivered in accordance with the specified Frameworks, to enable an Apprenticeship certificate to be awarded upon completion of the course. |
5.3 Progression into and from Apprenticeships should be mapped and linked to Foundation Degree commissions and access to pre-registration training across NHS South Central. AJ explained that a high level workforce planning group is being established within NESC and this will form part of the agenda.

5.4 It was agreed that a paragraph should be added to the strategy to explain that Apprenticeships are not linked to pay progression, but are about developing the skills and competences of staff within their current roles.

Comments regarding the strategy and action plan to be emailed to EW by 15 May.

6 Plans for NHS South Central Apprenticeship Event

6.1 Plans for an NHS South Central Apprenticeship Event will be discussed further once dates have been set and further details agreed for the regional Skills for Health Events.

7 Next Steps and Priorities

7.1 The following next steps and priorities were agreed:
- EW to collate responses to the SASE consultation document and submit a collective response on behalf of the Steering Group.
- EW to circulate the draft Apprenticeship Strategy for comment.
- EW to develop a financial options appraisal paper.
- Priority areas for Apprenticeships to be agreed. JB to facilitate working groups focussed around these priority areas.
- Learning and Development Leads to be consulted regarding the viability of developing staff using Apprenticeships instead of NVQs.

8 Review Steering Group membership

A representative from Social Care to be invited to join the Steering Group CW to nominate representative.

9 Date of Next Meeting

9.1 The Steering Group will meet again in one month. EW to circulate date.