A Guide to Apprenticeships

What is an Apprenticeship?

An Apprenticeship is a framework of nationally recognised qualifications that combine work-based training and formal education. An Apprenticeship consists of:

• a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ),
• a Technical Certificate, covering the underpinning knowledge to undertake a specified role, and
• Key Skills, such as literacy and numeracy.

Skills for Health are responsible for identifying the relevant Apprenticeship Frameworks for the NHS.

Levels and Length of Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are delivered at levels two and three. It is anticipated that a level two Apprenticeship may take up to one year to complete, and a level three, up to two years.

Entry Criteria

Apprenticeships can be undertaken by individuals at any age. There are no formal minimum entry criteria or previous experience requirements for Apprenticeships. However, generally the types of skills which are looked for include:

• Motivation to succeed within the sector
• Good interpersonal skills, especially respect for individual service users
• Good verbal and physical communication skills
• A suitable level of physical fitness may be necessary in order to perform some aspects of the job roles, for example, lifting and handling
• Willingness to undertake training and learning programmes and apply that learning in the workplace

Benefits of Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships offer a number of benefits to NHS employers, including:

• Promoting comprehensive programmes of learning on which to build a skilled and flexible workforce.
• Growing a sustainable pool of trained and motivated staff within clinical and non-clinical roles.
• Acting as a vehicle for delivering the Skills Pledge, by developing staff at bands two and three.
• Promoting NHS career opportunities in recruitment and retention priority areas.
• Developing the skills and competences of staff around current and future patient and service need.
• Developing a flexible, responsive workforce.
• Promoting career progression and development of the non-registered workforce.
The following benefits have been identified for Apprentices:

- Achieving a qualification which is nationally recognised, accredited and transferable.
- Improving access to quality assured education and training.
- Promoting career progression and development.
- Achieving qualifications which are fit for purpose and relevant to patient and service need.

**Frameworks**

Within the Health sector, Skills for Health have already identified that there are over 97 jobs that could be linked to an apprenticeship with over 80 frameworks to choose from; including health and social care, pharmacy support, dental nursing, administration, IT and engineering, amongst others.

Information about Apprenticeship Frameworks can be found at the following link: http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Partners/FrameworkSearch.aspx

**Priority Areas**

Across NHS South Central the following groups have been identified, in consultation with Trusts and PCTs, as priority areas for the introduction of Apprenticeships:

- Clinical support
- Estates and facilities
- Administration and clerical support

**Delivery**

Apprenticeship Frameworks are delivered by Education and Training Providers who are approved by the Learning and Skills Council.

**Costs and Funding**

The costs of Apprenticeship Frameworks vary dependant upon the age of an Apprentice and the type of Framework. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) fully fund Apprenticeships for young people aged between 16 and 18 years and co-fund those for adults aged 19 years and over.

The level of co-funding required to deliver specific Apprenticeships will be negotiated with training providers across NHS South Central. NESC has allocated funding to support development of 324 Apprenticeships by 03.03.10. for further information see the Funding Guide.

**Converting NVQs into Apprenticeships**

It is possible to convert an NVQ into an apprenticeship framework if you are newly enrolled onto the programme i.e. you have only completed one or two unit of learning. However you will need to consider the following factors:

- Does an apprenticeship framework better meet the needs of the business and individual?
• Does the provider currently delivering your NVQ have a contract to deliver apprenticeships and can support the delivery of the technical certificate and key skills.
• Is funding available to support an apprenticeship framework?

Talk to your Learning & Development Lead / SHA Apprenticeship Co-ordinator, and Skills Adviser for further advice.

Useful Links

National Apprenticeship Service - http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk

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