

Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Protocols

Document Details		
Title	Apprenticeship Policy	
Trust Ref No	2532	
Local Ref (optional)		
Main points the document covers	This policy details the process for managing apprentices and recruiting to an apprenticeship role.	
Who is the document aimed at?	This policy is aimed at all staff that have some responsibility for apprenticeships.	
Owner	Resourcing	
Approval process		
Who has been consulted in the development of this policy?	HR Team, Operational Managers, Joint Negotiating Partnership (JNP)	
Approved by (Committee/Director)	People Committee	
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Lead Director	Chief People Officer	
Category	Resourcing	
Sub Category	Resourcing	
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Who the policy will be distributed to	To senior staff as defined by Directors for cascading	
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Other	None	
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No	Date	Amendment
1	November	New policy



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Our aim is to be the best local provider of high quality, innovative health services near people's homes, working closely with partners so people receive well co-ordinated, effective care. The Trust is committed to providing opportunities for apprentices, valuing each person as an individual and their career prospects. Apprenticeships are a key component of career development and progression for both new recruits and our existing workforce, enabling them to acquire new skills and gain valuable qualifications.

Equality and Diversity

- 1.2 We are an equal opportunities employer and as such promote the efficient, effective, fair and consistent practices for all staff in the Trust. It is our policy to offer apprenticeships regardless of age, disability, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity or marriage and civil partnership.
- 1.3 As a Trust we value difference, and recognise the value that different backgrounds, skills, outlooks, and experiences of individuals bring to the Trust.

2.0 Purpose and Scope of the Policy

Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent approach to managing apprenticeships within the Trust. It aims to provide opportunities for career development and progression for both new recruits and existing staff through structured, work-based learning programmes.
- 2.2 This policy ensures that apprenticeships are conducted in a fair, transparent, and compliant manner, adhering to relevant employment legislation and Trust standards. It applies to all staff involved in the recruitment, management, and support of apprentices, fostering a diverse and skilled workforce.

Scope

- 2.3 This policy applies equally to all our employees and external candidates who are applying for permanent, temporary, fixed term and secondments.

3.0 Definitions

Apprenticeship

- 3.1 Apprenticeships are structured, work-based learning programmes that lead to a recognised qualification. Learning support is provided by a registered apprenticeship training provider that has been pre-approved by the Trust. Further information on apprenticeships, can be found on the Government website [Employing an apprentice: Overview - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/employing-an-apprentice).

Apprentice

- 3.2 Apprentices are aged 16 or over and combine working with studying to gain skills and knowledge in a specific job. Apprentices can be new or current employees.

Minimum working hours

- 3.3** An apprentice must spend at least 20% of their time on off-the-job training. Off-the-job training is defined as learning which is undertaken outside of the normal day-to-day working environment and leads towards the achievement of the apprenticeship. Apprentices must work a minimum of 30 hours per week to meet the Government requirements.

4.0 Responsibilities

Chief People Officer

- 4.1** The Director of People is directly responsible for facilitating the implementation of this policy to line managers. The Director of People will be accountable for the revision of this policy which will be necessary from time to time as a result of changes in law or in the light of experience when applying the procedure.

Directors and Heads of Service

- 4.2** Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring managers comply with Trust policies and procedures in relation to apprenticeships and safer recruitment and selection.

Resourcing Team

- 4.3** The Resourcing Team will ensure that managers are supported in the implementation of this policy and provide guidance on apprenticeships.
- 4.4** The Recruitment Team is responsible for ensuring that robust recruitment processes are in place and that managers comply with this policy, resulting in a workforce that has the capacity, skills, diversity and flexibility to meet the demands of the services we provide. This should be undertaken as effectively as possible whilst maintaining a high standard of customer service.
- 4.5** The Recruitment Team will ensure compliance with relevant employment legislation and best practice throughout the recruitment process from advertising vacancies, to undertaking pre-employment checks in accordance with the NHS Employment Check Standards and issuing accurate letters and contracts.

Line Managers

- 4.6** Line managers will be responsible for managing appropriate learning and for the accurate maintenance of records in line with this policy.
- 4.7** Line Managers will be responsible for conducting a fair, transparent and timely recruitment process in accordance with the Trust's policies and procedures and within relevant employment legislation. In addition, line managers are to ensure that all applications are shortlisted and interviewed fairly and consistently in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.8** Establish the appropriate course and training provider to suit the needs of the role and the service to ensure the appropriate qualification is received on completion, and liaise with the Resourcing Team where required.
- 4.9** Ensure that any apprentice vacancies are recruited to in line with the apprentice guidance on the Trac system.
- 4.10** Oversee work and responsibilities to provide a positive learning experience for the apprentice, to develop their skills and experience and support them to achieve their apprenticeship.
- 4.11** Make sure the apprentice spends at least 20% of their time on off-the-job training. Off-the-job training is defined as learning which is undertaken outside of the normal day-to-day

working environment and leads towards the achievement of the apprenticeship.

- 4.12 Assume responsibility, together with the apprenticeship training provider on how the off-the-job training is delivered - this may include regular day release, block release and special training days/workshops.

Apprentices

- 4.13 Sign an Apprenticeship Agreement upon commencement of their apprenticeship. The agreement sets out the arrangements between the apprentice and the employer.
- 4.14 Ensure they complete their study within the timeframe provided by the apprenticeship provider.
- 4.15 Agree with their line manager and apprenticeship provider the scheduled visits to the workplace, exam dates and any other times they are required to undertake structured study, so that their absence from the workplace can be managed effectively.
- 4.16 Meet the assessment or examination requirements at the agreed level as set out in their apprenticeship learning agreement.

Training Providers

- 4.17 Provide support to apprentices, line managers and mentors to ensure successful completion of apprenticeships
- 4.18 Advise on the most appropriate type of apprenticeships for a role and keep the Trust up to date with developments in qualifications
- 4.19 Provide high quality learning provision that delivers timely and relevant qualifications relating to the apprenticeship framework or standard
- 4.20 Maintain regular contact with the Trust, the apprentice and their manager so that progress can be tracked, and concerns are dealt with efficiently and effectively
- 4.21 Ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations and Information Governance Legislation to protect staff members.

5.0 Policy Details

Recruiting Apprentices

- 5.1 Line managers are responsible for following the VRF process to authorise recruitment to an apprenticeship post.
- 5.2 The Trust's Apprenticeship Levy Fund pays the training provider costs for delivering the training and for the apprentices End Point Assessment.
- 5.3 **Internal employees** who wish to sign up to start an apprenticeship should discuss with their manager if this can be supported. This may also be identified as part of their Performance Development Review (PDR) process and both parties should ensure they understand both the apprenticeship rules and their responsibilities by referring to these documents. Line managers should take into account all team member requests. In cases of more than one member of staff identifying an interest in the same course method should be used, as defined in section 5.4.
- 5.4 Where internal employees are interested in a course in their field that would require a change in band and role to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship, the vacancy must be advertised internally as an apprenticeship position on Trac in line with the Trusts Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy.
- 5.5 **External applicants** are recruited into new apprenticeship posts on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition in line with the Trusts Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy. Vacancies are advertised on Trac and if required the Government's Apprenticeships website to attract a wide and diverse range of suitable candidates

Training Providers

- 5.6 Training providers should be approved by the NHS procurement frameworks as recognised providers of the apprenticeship qualifications. This includes Salisbury Framework and NHS Shared Business Services (SBS).

Managing Apprentices

- 5.7 Line managers must ensure apprentices are employed and managed in line with Trust HR policies. There are also certain additional contractual requirements that must be considered, see Section 5.8 below.

Contract of Employment

- 5.8 **Permanent employees** who commence an internal apprenticeship will continue in their employment with the Trust during and after their apprenticeship, or if employed on a fixed term contract, until the end of that contract. Their continuity of service will continue to accrue, and their pay will not be affected.
- 5.9 **Externally recruited apprentices** will be employed on a fixed term contract.
- 5.10 The apprentice will be issued an apprenticeship agreement setting out the requirements of the apprenticeship. Both the apprentice and their line manager must sign this agreement to ensure there is mutual understanding about how the apprenticeship will work and their respective obligations.
- 5.11 Where qualification leads to an opportunity for a change in post the golden ticket process can be used to retain the apprentice within the Trust. Please seek advice from the Resourcing Team.

Pay (externally recruited employees)

- 5.12 The Trust's apprenticeship levy can only be used to cover the training and assessment components of an apprenticeship and only through an approved apprenticeship training provider. Salary, expenses, and other costs for apprenticeships are not eligible.
- 5.13 Apprentices will be paid in accordance with the Government National Minimum Wage Rate for apprenticeships. The wage may vary dependent on age as per the Government guidance which can be found [here](#).

Pay (existing employees)

- 5.14 **Existing employees** who undertake an apprenticeship whilst in their substantive post will continue to be paid on their existing terms and conditions, incremental progression will not be affected.
- 5.15 **Existing employees** who apply for and secure an apprenticeship position at a higher grade will be seconded to the position for the duration of the apprenticeship and be paid on the first point of the band. Incremental progression will take place in line with Agenda for Change terms and conditions and the Trust's Policy and procedure for Personal Development Review and Pay Progression.

Change of Job Role

- 5.16 During the term of the apprenticeship, an individual may secure a new position elsewhere within the Trust. In this instance, the apprenticeship qualification may be continued if the new job role has a similar function and duties that allows on-the-job assessment to take place. The training provider will be able to provide advice as to the suitability of the apprenticeship for the new post.

Failure to achieve an Apprenticeship

- 5.17 All apprenticeships must have clear objectives, goals and timescales agreed in order to meet the standards required and ensure progress is on track.
- 5.18 Any re-takes to assessed learning and extensions to the apprenticeship to cover this are at the line manager's discretion, having first taken advice from the learning provider regarding the likelihood of future success. As a guiding principle, if future success is deemed likely, a retake and / or reasonable extension for completion should be considered. Please seek advice from the Head of Resourcing in these circumstances.
- 5.19 Line managers should fully support and encourage apprentices to fulfil their learning and development requirements and work duties. If there are capability, performance or conduct issues with an apprentice, the relevant HR Policies must be applied and the training provider notified of the situation. Please seek advice from the Head of People Services.

Successful completion of an Apprenticeship and Talent Retention

- 5.20 When an existing employee who was already employed on a **permanent** contract completes an apprenticeship, they remain in their post with the same terms and conditions of employment.
- 5.21 For existing employees who were already employed on a **fixed term** contract, they will remain in post for the duration of their existing contract, having completed their apprenticeship. Their terms and conditions of employment remain the same as they would have been had they not undertaken an apprenticeship.
- 5.22 **Golden tickets** may be presented to newly qualified registered apprentices with the hope to offer them a permanent post in the role they have trained for, should a vacancy become available. Please refer to the Golden Ticket process for more information.

Resignation of an Apprenticeship

- 5.23 If an apprentice resigns, they need to fulfil the notice period specified in their contract.
- 5.24 Line managers should try to establish the reason for the resignation and ensure that they have provided an appropriate level of support.
- 5.25 Line managers are responsible for informing the Resourcing Team of the termination in order to end the funding for the apprenticeship.

6 Related Documents

- 6.1 The following Trust documents can be found in the policies and procedures section of the Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust website and should be read in conjunction with this:
 - Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy
 - Golden Ticket Recruitment Process
 - Policy Statement on Ex-offenders
 - Professional Registration Policy
 - Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
 - Equality and Diversity Policy
 - Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Response Policy
 - Anti-Bribery Policy and Procedure



7.0 Review and Compliance Monitoring

Review of Policy

- 7.1 The rules and operation of this policy and procedure will be periodically reviewed (at least every 3 years) in light of any developments in employment legislation or employee relations' practice and, if necessary, revised in order to ensure their continuing relevance and effectiveness.
- 7.2 The Resourcing Team will monitor the processes that underpin this policy, identifying any issues and amend any forms and processes as necessary. These amendments to the policy and relevant supporting documentation will be communicated to managers who are responsible for implementing improvements where identified.