

HCA Apprenticeship Scheme 2021-22

Information pack for practices

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1 Introduction

The Humber, Coast and Vale (HCV) Primary Care Workforce and Training Hub (PCWTH) on behalf of Health Education England (HEE) wishes to invite GP practices to participate in the **Clinical Healthcare Apprenticeship Scheme 2021/22**.

General practice is well aware of the many and varied workforce challenges that it faces; with an increasing workload, clinicians retiring early, the reduced popularity of general practice as a career choice and the huge retirement risk of an aging experienced workforce. In recent years many practices have begun reshaping their workforce, including increasing the number of **healthcare assistants (HCAs)** to alleviate pressures on already stretched nursing teams. This is part of a wider programme of primary care initiatives focussing on workforce development and multidisciplinary roles.

A 'HCA Apprenticeship Scheme' was introduced by HEE in 2015, to promote an expansion of the HCA workforce within primary care, enabling practices to increase their clinical healthcare support workforce through the use of apprenticeships. It is essential that practices have HCAs that are competent and consistently trained and previously there had not been a dedicated training package available that is tailored to primary care. The scheme has been coordinated locally by training hubs and run 5 successful cohorts between 2015/16 and 2019/20 - a total of 73 HCAs have taken part in the scheme in Humber, Coast and Vale over this time.

We're delighted to be running another cohort of this successful scheme, which includes a Level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Support, as well as a suite of 'bolt-on' clinical modules.

2 Scheme description

The scheme aims to promote a **standardised regional programme** to ensure HCAs in general practice have the knowledge and skills required to understand the role they are delegated. The apprenticeship training is designed as an educational development route to support HCAs and has been delivered in partnership with local education providers. It is expected that an apprenticeship will be completed in around 18 months.

The scheme will be locally co-ordinated by the HCV Training Hub. Practices will need to **employ** the HCA Apprentice to access the scheme.

2.1 Available Training

Individuals accepted on to the scheme will undertake and gain the following training. The approach taken is considered to minimise time away from the workplace.

The following certificates will be delivered in partnership with a further education provider/local college through a blended learning approach locally and on-site;

- Level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Support
- Care Certificate – employer led (*see Appendix 1 for further information*)
- Level 2 English and Maths (*if not already achieved*)

These Individuals will be assigned an apprenticeship assessor who will support them throughout the programme. They will meet regularly with the HCA and supervisor to support and monitor their progress. Additionally the HCA will need to attend an induction to the qualifications and requirements on commencement. This will include a short English and Mathematics assessment so that any support that is needed can be identified.

Further details about apprenticeships from the employer's perspective can be found on <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/>

In addition primary care specific 'Bolt-On' modules will also be provided by other education providers locally;

- **Venepuncture**
- **ECG**
- **Wound care**
- **Motivational interviewing and health promotion**
- **First aid** (*This is different from BLS which is already available within practices*)

Practices are expected to ensure that other key knowledge is covered during the time the apprentice is in practice (which will not be covered by either sets of training) and this should include:

- Requirements and risks when chaperoning patients
- Familiarity with necessary medical terminology
- Practices and procedures around cold chain

3 Eligibility for the scheme

A practice that is potentially interested in this scheme must be able to show evidence of;

- A defined role for the new member of staff to carry out
- Being able to provide a good quality learning environment which involves the whole practice team providing a positive supportive culture of learning
- The ability to allocate a named formal supervisor who is a willing and experienced who has the skills to support and will be allowed the dedicated time to support a guide a new member of staff.
- The ability to allocate a named professional to support the new member of staff and their supervisor
- The ability to provide the new member of staff access to a range of appropriate education/learning experiences in relation to their learning needs and for a career in primary care

If not already registered, the practice must agree to undertake an initial audit to be entered on to PARE (Placement Evaluation Record and Assessment – the digital platform used to quality assure placement providers for students and funded trainees). An initial audit can be done via virtual meeting and takes around 1 hour.

4 Expectations for participating practices

Expectations of successful recipient practices

Pre-employment:

- Discussion within practice to employ apprentice HCA
- Define a clear role within the practice for the HCA apprentice (and communicate this clearly during the recruitment process)
- If not already on PARE, participate in an initial audit with the Training Hub to register
- Consider who in the practice is best placed to support the apprentice in terms of;
 - A named supervisor who will support the apprentice by signing off the apprentice's training as complete and providing pastoral support
 - A named registered professional who will take overall responsibility for the HCA and support the apprentice supervisor
- Commit as a practice to enable sufficient time for the HCA apprentice to complete their training
- Recruit an apprentice HCA to work in the practice (this could be an existing member of staff)

Employment commenced:

- Assign a named supervisor and named registered professional
- Develop a HCA induction and educational plan which states how the practice will educationally support the HCA within the practice. This is likely to include how additional skills and knowledge will be developed and the allocation of study time.
- Provide a local induction for the apprentice HCA including but not limited too;

- Statutory and mandatory training
- Chaperoning – requirements and risks
- Medical terminology
- Practice and procedure around cold chain

Overall responsibility:

- Employ the HCA for a **minimum of 30 hours per week** for the full duration of their training (around 18 months)
- Adhere to meeting national apprenticeship requirements for employers, including providing 20% off-the-job training (details on off-the-job training can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training>)
- Engage fully with the Training Hub and education providers
- Allow the Training Hub/HEE access to all information and requirements related to the scheme including;
 - Partaking in an initial audit to register on PARE, if not already
 - Supplying the names of the HCA, supervisor and named professional
 - Providing details of the induction and educational plan for the HCA
- Actively participate in audits and evaluation of the scheme as and when required
- Attend any Training Hub led activities related to HCA staff such as networking, education or information sharing events
- Actively participate in other widening participation / employability schemes where appropriate

5 Apprenticeship Funding 2021-22

The HCA Apprenticeship scheme is financed with Apprenticeship funding. If your organisation is an apprenticeship levy payer then the funding will come from that pot. If it is not, there are two options.

- 1) To pay 5% of the total apprenticeship cost.
 - The Senior Healthcare Support Worker full cost is £5000, 95% of this is funded. 5% = £250.00 to contribute over the 18months of the apprenticeship.
- 2) Request a levy transfer from a levy paying organisation.
 - This will cover the full cost of the apprenticeship. However, they are not always available and so the employing organisation should be prepared to pay the 5% if required.

The apprenticeship provider for the cohort will help with funding. There is also an excellent document linked below that will explain the process in detail. The Health and Social Care Consortium have a dedicated apprenticeship email address for enquiries about funding and levy transfers hyp-tr.hcv.apprenticeship@nhs.net



HCV-toolkit-V3-September-2021.pdf

6 Frequency Asked Questions (FAQs)

Benefits

Q: How could taking an apprentice through this scheme benefit my practice?

Apprenticeships provide a quality developmental route for new recruits or existing staff and a cost effective solution to recruitment and employment. They help organisations grow. There are many benefits to investing in apprenticeships. Some of these are listed below:

- *Taking an apprentice will allow you to build capacity and capability within your nursing team and to develop and train HCAs at an affordable cost*
 - Through this apprenticeship you are able to access funding/resources to support training
 - Training apprentices can be more cost effective than hiring skilled staff, leading to lower overall training and recruitment costs
 - This bespoke apprenticeship will deliver skills designed around your needs and help you to develop the skilled workers required for the future to achieve organisational objectives
 - The apprenticeship route is an ideal training route for current staff to gain competence and confidence to take on additional duties. For example practices can use the apprenticeship route to develop non-clinical practice staff (e.g. receptionists) so that they can take on HCA duties/roles
 - Current staff can also share their skills and knowledge through supporting apprentices
- *Investing in apprenticeships can reduce sickness and absenteeism through increased loyalty and motivation, and increase productivity*
 - Employers note that apprentices tend to be eager, motivated, flexible and loyal to the organisation that invested in them. Remember, an apprentice is with you because they want to be – they have made an active choice to learn on the job and a commitment to a specific career
- *Help develop home grown talent*

Advertising vacancies as apprenticeship opportunities can attract younger applicants and, as it offers a training and career pathway, can widen the range of applicants applying for vacancies, particularly from within the local community

- *Accessing the apprenticeship as part of the cohort in the scheme fosters a peer-support group, helping apprentices to be able to share experiences with others on the same course.*

Understanding apprenticeships

Q: What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is not a qualification in itself, but a combination of separate qualifications and courses known as a framework. A framework would normally consist of:

- Competence qualification - a work related competence-based qualification assessed in the workplace by a college or training provider.
- Knowledge qualification - Such as BTEC or City and Guilds, relevant to the specific occupation and usually delivered by the training provider.
- Functional skills – qualifications in English, maths and ICT that equip learners with the basic practical skills required in everyday life, education and the workplace.

- Employment rights and responsibilities - to develop knowledge and understanding about the world of employment.

This scheme uses an apprenticeship framework as the key learning component alongside additional training 'bolt-ons' to enable the achievement of primary care specific skills. Using the existing national standards has a number of advantages:

- The qualifications in the standards have been developed by Skills for Health. Based on national occupational standards the apprenticeship supports the requirements of The Care Certificate and is aligned to the Code of Conduct for HCAs.
- HCAs will achieve transferable and nationally recognised vocational qualifications on a par with HCAs in other settings.
- National Government funding can be accessed to support sustainability and reduce costs.

Quality assurance processes for the delivery and assessment of the apprenticeship are established.

Link to the Senior Healthcare Support Worker standards: -

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/senior-healthcare-support-worker-v1-2>

Q: Who can do an apprenticeship?

This scheme requires a **minimum age of 18**.

Government funding priorities for apprenticeships tend to favour younger people and those who would benefit from gaining higher national qualifications. In the NHS we are keen to recruit staff to posts that have the qualities, values and potential needed in the workforce. This scheme is open both to employed staff who may be taking on new roles as a development opportunity and new staff, of any age, to increase the workforce. To undertake this apprenticeship the HCA should be in paid employment for a **minimum of 30hrs per week**.

It is important to note that candidates who have already undertaken a previous apprenticeship or level 4 qualifications may incur a financial employer contribution to the FE provider. This should be discussed with the FE provider during the recruitment process.

Q: What are the different levels of apprenticeships?

Q: Why has the level 3 (advanced apprenticeship) been chosen as the apprenticeship for this scheme?

There are three levels of apprenticeships:

- Intermediate apprenticeships (broadly equivalent to achieving 5 GCSEs A* - C)
- Advanced apprenticeships (broadly equivalent to achieving 2 A Levels)
- Higher apprenticeships (broadly equivalent to a Certificate of Higher Education)

Although the level 2 apprenticeship is often chosen as the entry level for HCAs, the advanced (level 3) **apprenticeship in clinical healthcare support** is the framework that has been agreed for the HEE working across Yorkshire and the Humber standardised scheme. Because it best meets the needs of the HCA role in general practice settings, and will equip those new to the role with the required knowledge and skills to meet the RCGP Competency Framework and District Nursing and General Practice Education and Career Framework and to carry out the role they are delegated safely and competently.

Recruitment

Q. What is the process for recruitment?

Through this initiative practices will be responsible for recruiting to their own HCA vacancies, but will be supported through the process. Exact details of how this will be managed will be agreed locally once practice involvement in the scheme has been confirmed, The Training Hub can support apprentice recruitment where necessary and FE providers will be utilised to support elements of the process but ultimately this is the practices' responsibility.

A generic job description and person specification are available for practices to use. There is a requirement for all apprenticeship vacancy adverts to be advertised on the government "Find an Apprenticeship Service" free of charge <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>.

To attract as many potential applicants as possible, a range of advertisement channels should be utilised. These will be agreed locally so as to appeal to any specific target groups practices may be looking for.

Q. Can we 'recruit' an internal member of staff?

Yes, if you have an existing member of staff in another role, such as reception or admin, who would be an ideal candidate for the HCA Apprentice role this is fine. As per a candidate recruited externally, they would need to commit to the HCA role for at least 30 hours minimum, including attendance on the study days. If you have an existing HCA wanting to develop their skills via the apprenticeship, they will need to evidence with the FE provider that they will be gaining sufficient new learning via the apprenticeship, taking into account their existing skills.

Q: How much should we pay our HCA?

All apprentices must be employed, have a contract of employment and receive at least minimum wage from their employer. Please see the following link for the current rates.

<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

Q. What is meant by the apprentice supervisor?

Practices engaging with this initiative will be required to designate an apprentice supervisor. The person undertaking this role will be involved with recruitment and will have overall responsibility for the apprentice HCA.

They will be:

- A member of practice staff who has the skills and qualities to provide guidance to the HCA apprentice within the workplace
- A familiar face, that helps make the apprentice feel at home, advises them about what to look out for and supports them in the workplace
- Someone who can help the apprentice with issues they may have and who will be there for the apprentice to go to on a day to day basis.
- A person who is familiar with the practice environment and HCA role
- Someone who is willing to provide constructive feedback to both the apprentice and those providing assessment on day to day progress
- Suitable practice staff such as experienced HCAs looking for developmental opportunities and/or their first experience of supervising others

The intention is that the role is formally recognised in the practice; no previous mentorship/supervisory qualifications are necessary. In addition to the apprentice supervisor, the practice should identify a named registered professional to have overall professional responsibility for the HCA and support the supervisor with any issues.

Education and Training

Q: When does the education begin?

Enrolment on the apprenticeship will take place at the end of March 2022, with education beginning early April, the new member of staff will need to be in post at this time. As all HCAs taking part in the scheme will attend a programme of study days together candidates will need to be in post before the first study day. A full study day programme will be shared prior to starting.

Q: How long does the level 3 (advanced) apprenticeship in clinical healthcare support take?

As a guide this apprenticeship usually takes around 18 months, with a minimum of 12 months. It is likely that due to the additional primary care specific elements, this scheme will require the full 18 months. It is therefore suggested that practices offer at least a fixed term apprenticeship contract for 18 months to allow the staff member adequate time to complete all components of the proposed programme. If the apprentice completes the learning programme before the 18 month period the employer can offer substantive or permanent employment at that point.

Q: How will the training on this scheme be organised and delivered?

The training for the scheme is delivered by a range of providers via a collaborative approach. HEE YH source the training providers and work with employers and practices (via the Training Hub) to agree a model for delivery that best meets the need of the local community of practices.

Further education providers i.e. colleges will work with employers to provide quality assured training in line with the pathway defined by the scheme. They will have responsibility to deliver the national apprenticeship framework and will undertake the assessment of learners in the workplace to achieve this. Providers with primary care specific expertise will provide 'bolt-on' training enabling the HCAs to gain primary care specific knowledge and skills required for their role and to support the practice nursing team.

Employers will be required to provide the HCA with opportunities to learn with other healthcare professionals and commit to specified regular time for them to complete the apprenticeship qualification and 'bolt-on' training.

Most of the training is 'on the job'; however, there will be as part of the programme day-release training meaning that apprentices will be required to be out of the workplace on occasions. Many of the training days will take place virtually, practical training will be face-to-face and will be arranged at a local venue to minimise travel and will be agreed in advance. Where possible a blended learning approach will be promoted. To meet government apprenticeship requirements apprentices must spend 20% of their contracted hours on off-the-job training, this can take place in the apprentices normal place of work or at an external location (for instance at the study days). The following simple guide illustrates what does and doesn't count as off-the-job training:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/769721/Off-the-job_training_FLOWCHART.pdf

For more information visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training>

The training will require venues to be sourced; it is expected that practices who are successful in joining the scheme offer the use of their available rooms where appropriate – no extra funding will be provided for this.

Q: What is The Care Certificate?

The Care Certificate is an identified set of induction standards that health and social care workers adhere to in their daily working life. Developed as a result of the Cavendish recommendations, all non-regulated healthcare support workers are now required to demonstrate 15 standards that cover the requirements of a caring role. The certificate is completed with the employer.

The standards that make up The Care Certificate are based on occupational standards and units in apprenticeships. This provides assurance for practices that these HCAs have the same introductory skills, knowledge, behaviours and confidence to provide compassionate safe high quality care and support to patients.

For more information on the Care Certificate standards see:

<http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/standards/item/216-the-care-certificate>

Q: What are the RCGP competencies for HCAs and how do they fit in with the proposed apprenticeship?

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Competency Framework for HCAs in General Practice provides a competence model that articulates the role of HCAs working in general practice environments. As the framework was devised using current quality training and standards for healthcare support workers it has been used to design the content of this scheme.

A copy of the framework document can be accessed from:

http://www.rcgp.org.uk/membership/practice-team-resources/~media/Files/Practice-teams/HCA%20Competencies_02.ashx

This scheme also maps to the HEE District Nursing and General Practice Education and Career Framework. This can be accessed here:

https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Interactive%20version%20of%20the%20framework_1.pdf

7 Appendices

7.1 APPENDIX 1: Certification standards

Care Certificate Standards

The Care Certificate is an induction programme based on 15 standards which link to National Occupational Standards and units in qualifications. This scheme will be delivered to ensure that apprentice HCAs in primary care undertaking this route can demonstrate that they have achieved the introductory skills, knowledge and behaviours to provide passionate, safe high quality care and support to patients and service users. They will do this by completing all 15 standards (detailed below).

- Understand your role
- Awareness of mental health, dementia and learning disability
- Your personal development
- Safeguarding adults
- Duty of care
- Safeguarding children
- Equality and diversity
- Basic life support*
- Work in a person centred way
- Health and safety
- Communication
- Handling information
- Privacy and dignity
- Infection prevention and control
- Fluids and nutrition

** Please note that some further education providers are unable to provide basic life support training; where this is the case the training will be provided externally and funded by HEE via 'Bolt-on' modules from other education providers.*

Additional information on The Care Certificate and how this applies to employers can be obtained from the Skills for Health website: <http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/standards/item/216-the-care-certificate>

Level 3 Diploma in Clinical Healthcare Support

This qualification is the main constituent of the scheme and develops the knowledge and skills for all those working in a support role within clinical healthcare workforce settings.

The qualification is made up of the following units, to ensure a consistent qualification across the region:

- Health and wellbeing
- Duty of care and candour, safeguarding, equality and diversity
- Person centred care, treatment and support
- Communication
- Personal, people and quality improvement
- Health, safety and security
- Assisting with clinical tasks/delegated tasks
- Supporting individuals

Further details of the related tasks within each unit can be found via the following links;

<https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/L3-Senior-HCSW-Standard.pdf>

<https://www.nsahealth.org.uk/apprenticeships/quality-principles-for-nhs-apprenticeships>

7.2 APPENDIX 2: Suitability Assessment

To enter onto PARE, if not already, evidence/demonstration of the following will be required as part of the practices suitability assessment for the scheme.

- Care Quality Commission (CQC) registration
- A philosophy of care/mission statement and appropriate policies, procedures and guidelines
- Education/training intention present within its ethos
- Team are committed to working effectively together and respects each other's values and contribution to patient care
- Participation in the scheme is supported by the full practice team
- Intended supported position is linked to current vacancy or workforce plan
- Suitable supervisor/preceptor has been identified (who can sign off the training completion and provide pastoral support)
- Suitable named registered profession has been identified (who will overall responsibility for the new member of staff and support the supervisor/preceptor)
- Can ensure that sufficient learning/education opportunities will be available to meet the learning needs of the learner including opportunities to learn with other healthcare professionals

7.3 APPENDIX 3: Other roles within the scheme

Training Hub

- Act as first point of contact for the scheme, including promoting and marketing the scheme to potential practices and supporting practices involved in the scheme
- Undertaken a suitability assessment for new participating practices not already on PARE
- Co-ordinate local delivery of education, working with providers of apprenticeship and 'bolt-ons'
- Monitor and identifying overall delivery of the programme
- Liaise with education providers where appropriate
- Ensuring all information requests are submitted to HEE in a timely manner

Further Education providers

- Promote scheme, advertise vacancies and assess suitability of candidates
- Register learners onto apprenticeship scheme
- Undertake and complete pre-employment assessment of functional skills for short-listed candidates
- Deliver apprenticeship
- Provide support to apprentices throughout

7.4 APPENDIX 4: Recruitment Notes

- All apprentices must be employed, have a contract of employment and receive at least a minimum wage from their employer. <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>
- The candidate must be employed for a minimum of 30 hours on an 18 month contract to complete the level 3 NVQ requirement.
- **Minimum age is 18** - those under the age of 17 cannot work alone or independently as a HCA.
- The right to work, disclosure and barring will be the responsibility of the employing Practice.
- Sickness management will be as per the Policy of the employing Practice.
- The practice must sign an Apprenticeship Agreement with the candidate upon commencing employment. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-agreement-template>
- **The candidate must be released to complete an induction programme and regular training days.** A timetable will be provided in advance to allow for planning.
- **The candidate must commit to completing set work and assignments within the time frame set by their assessor.**
- The candidate must be available to commence the role from late March 2022.
- Practices will need to designate a supervisor with overall responsibility for the candidate.
- The supervisor will need to sign off elements of the care certificate – Connect2Care can provide guidance on this. Care Certificate Standards and documentation can be found here: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Learning-development/Care-Certificate/Care-Certificate.aspx>
- The candidate is required to have both English and Maths equivalent to Grade C at GCSE. If the candidate does not currently have these qualifications they will be required to undertake assessments as part of the level 3 qualification. The candidate will be given support and opportunity to repeat the tests if they do not achieve the required standard initially. If the required standard cannot be achieved the candidate will not be able to complete.
- To meet government apprenticeship requirements apprentices must spend 20% of their contracted hours on off-the-job training, this can take place in the apprentices normal place of work or at an external location (for instance at the study days). The following simple guide illustrates what does and doesn't count as off-the-job training: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/769721/Off-the-job_training_FLOWCHART.pdf
For more information visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-off-the-job-training>
- Further Education providers will provide assistance with advertising and recruiting if desired, further information and contact details will be provided separately.

7.5 APPENDIX 5: Apprenticeship Agreement

Apprenticeship Agreement – recognition the employee is undertaking an apprenticeship.

An Apprenticeship Agreement is an agreement between an employer and an apprentice under which the apprentice undertakes to work for the employer and is in the form prescribed by S32 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (ASCLA)¹ and states that the agreement is entered into in connection with a qualifying apprenticeship standard. The agreement is used to confirm

individual employment arrangements between the apprentice and the employer. The apprenticeship agreement must also include a statement of the skill, trade or occupation for which the apprentice is being trained under the qualifying apprenticeship framework. Both staff currently employed by practices and accessing the apprenticeship training to support their development and successful external applicants to apprenticeship posts will be required to sign an Apprenticeship Agreement at the commencement of the apprenticeship. The document can also be accessed from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-agreement-template>

7.6 APPENDIX 5: Sample Job Specification

A sample Job specification can be found embedded below:



.HCA Apprentice
level 3 Job Spec v2.d

7.7 APPENDIX 6: Sample Timetable

Several study days will be clustered in the initial few weeks to ensure initial key learning is accessible early. Following this study days will be approximately one per month. A sample timetable can be found embedded below to give an idea of what to expect. A complete timetable will be shared prior to starting.



.NHS GP HCA
Programme SAMPLE

Many of the training days will take place virtually, practical training will be face-to-face and will be arranged at a local venue to minimise travel and will be agreed in advance.

Between sessions apprentices will also have 1-1 contact with their apprenticeship assessor.

7.8 APPENDIX 7: Application Form

If you would like to apply please return the below attached form to training@haxbygroup.co.uk



HCA
Apprenticeship App

Queries & Contact

If you have any queries or would like to discuss the scheme please contact us on training@haxbygroup.co.uk / 01482 303986