

Regional Apprenticeships and Widening Participation Framework

North East and Yorkshire



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Contents

Regional Apprenticeships and Widening Participation Framework	1
North East and Yorkshire	1
Introduction	3
Ambition of the Framework	3
Working across Health and Adult Social Care	4
How to Utilise the Framework	5
Roles and Responsibilities	6
Roles	6
Responsibility	6
Regional Apprenticeship and Widening Participation Mission and Vision	7
Attract	8
Widening Access and Participation	8
Apprenticeships (Attract)	12
Retain	14
Apprenticeships (Retain)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Skills for Life (English, Maths and Digital Skills)	16
Reform	17
Apprenticeships to Reform and Transform	17

Introduction

This is the final version of the region's apprenticeship and widening participation framework. The document is published at a point in time and will be reviewed as national and local policy evolves.

NHS England would like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this framework.

Apprenticeships and widening participation activities are fundamental in ensuring that the health and adult social care workforce is representative of the communities they serve, and students gain the skills, knowledge and experience they need to deliver high quality care to a hugely diverse population.

The [Long Term Workforce Plan](#) (LTWP) outlines the clear requirement to expand apprenticeships and widen access routes to help address key workforce shortages.

Expanding apprenticeships and entry routes will help address key workforce shortages and particularly benefit those professions that historically lack a consistent route for training and career development, such as non-clinical professionals in corporate services, estates and facilities and general management. Enabling vital upskilling and progression to existing workforce to enhanced and advanced levels of practice. This supports not only retention but patient experience and care through skilled and experienced staff.

Equally apprenticeships are beneficial for clinical professions such as learning disability nursing, therapeutic radiography and operating department practitioners, which may not be as visible to school leavers, and may be of more interest to people with greater life experience.

This framework reflects the current national and NHS policy on apprenticeships. It is recognised that with a new Government there may be new policies which relate to apprenticeships, supporting people into employment and developing their careers. The NHSE team will regularly review and update the framework as the national policy emerges.

Ambition of the framework

This framework sets out the apprenticeship and widening participation activities that are core to building sustainable and high-quality routes into health and adult social care, for both the attraction of new talent and the development of existing staff.

This plan outlines the regional activities that will be supported by NHS England's regional North East and Yorkshire Workforce Supply, Planning, Innovation and Effectiveness (W-

SPIE) team. It sets out the framework for employers and systems to design and implement their own apprenticeship and widening participation programmes, identifying which activities are best placed to occur at national, regional and or ICB level.

Working across health and adult social care

It is important to recognise the interdependence between health and adult social care in the provision of apprenticeships and widening participation. Skills for Care published their Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy in July 2024, and this strategy recognises that people's careers can span health and adult social care and that adult social care sector staff are critical to the overall provision of NHS services and adult social care. Therefore, this framework acknowledges the need to the same interdependency and the need to build education capacity across both health and adult social care. This framework therefore champions collaborative and system led working for apprenticeships and widening participation activities across both health and adult social care employers to not only develop shared solutions and workforce programmes, but to also be mindful of not creating additional barriers to inclusion or attraction through competitive or conflicting strategies.

How to utilise the framework

The North East and Yorkshire apprenticeship and widening participation framework can be used by NHS Trusts and other adult social care providers, GP, Primary Care and Community Providers, Local Authorities, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) workforce and a wide range of public sector bodies.

Organisations should use the framework to:

- 1.** Understand and identify the key apprenticeship and widening participation activities that are core to building sustainable and high-quality routes.
- 2.** Assess their own use of these and the effectiveness of these activities.
- 3.** Identify areas of best practice that can be grown and shared.
- 4.** Identify key barrier or gaps in activities that require improvement.
- 5.** Develop or update existing apprenticeship and widening participation strategies to align with the LTWP and Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy ambitions, utilising this framework as a blueprint.
- 6.** Develop or update programmes which align to the framework to address key workforce and skill challenges.
- 7.** Work collaboratively to design and deliver activities at system or regional level where this adds value and generates benefits from working at scale.
- 8.** Identify the key roles and responsibilities for provider and system partners in designing and delivering of apprenticeship and widening participation activities.
- 9.** Develop processes for capturing and monitoring the impact and effectiveness of apprenticeship and widening participation activities.
- 10.** Empower and support strategic local and system conversations to embed apprenticeship across workforce plans and supply routes.

Roles and Responsibilities

This framework outlines where activities are best placed to be undertaken, either at regional, system or provider level, however this is not prescriptive and there is recognition that there will be local variance for some activities.

For the purposes of this framework the following definitions apply:

Roles

- **Region** – refers to providers and all four systems working collaboratively towards a single North East and Yorkshire programme or solution. Normally led by or supported by NHS England.
- **System** – refers to where providers work collaboratively across ICB footprints to provide system level solutions. This will often include adult social care providers, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.
- **Provider** - refers to single organisations that treat patients and service users in the health and adult social care organisations, including but not exclusive to: NHS Trusts care homes and other care providers, GP, Primary Care and Community Providers, Local Authorities, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and a wide range of public sector bodies. The framework recognises education providers are key to the framework, but here providers is restricted to employers.

Responsibility

- **Support** – provide oversight, resource or intelligence to encourage and support the delivery of regional and system apprenticeship and widening participation priorities.
- **Design** - identify shared goals, and design activities and interventions which enable the delivery of this framework and meet regional and system apprenticeship and widening participation priorities.
- **Deliver** – operationally deliver the activities and interventions to meet the expected apprenticeship and widening participation benefits at regional and system level.

Regional apprenticeship and widening participation mission and vision

Mission and vision:

Enabling employers to maximise the opportunities of apprenticeships and widening participation across North East and Yorkshire to deliver the ambitions of the LTWP



Attract

Widening access and participation

Widening participation, diversity and inclusion runs throughout the work of NHS England. With a particular emphasis on increasing social mobility for people of disadvantage and under-represented groups.

Employers in the region currently support widening participation through programmes such as pre-work activity, work experience, apprenticeships, T-levels and access to volunteering.

Regional widening participation objectives:

	Objective	Desired outcome	Examples of we achieve this	Responsibility (Support / Design / Deliver)		
1. Pre-work activity	To embed pre-work activity as a key part of workforce supply solutions. With a focus on attracting underrepresented groups.	Providers use pre-work activity as a key part of their workforce supply solution and design opportunities with widening participation in mind. Increase in pre-work activity across the region,	1a. Collecting and utilising information on cost vs. benefit of pre-work activity. 1b. Share and adopt examples of good practice.	Region	System	Provider
				Support	Design and deliver <i>(in collaboration with providers)</i>	Design and deliver <i>(utilising economies of scale at</i>

		with participants reflecting the local population.	1c. Systems and providers link pre-employment programmes to existing workforce plans.			<i>system level)</i>
2. Work Experience	To provide high-quality work placements, particularly those aimed at underrepresented groups within the workforce.	Providers and systems develop high quality work experience options that attract underrepresented groups.	2a. Sharing and adopting best practice, including innovative models of work experience including simulation.	Region	System	Provider
		Providers and systems have a workforce that better reflects the communities they serve. Work experience opportunities showcase more marginalised careers within health and adult social care.	2b. Reviewing work experience to ensure it is accessible to all, including disadvantaged groups and those at risk of digital exclusion. 2c. Contributing to the National Work Experience Network and maximising system and provider use of this resource.	Support	Design and deliver <i>(in collaboration with providers)</i>	Design and deliver <i>(utilising economies of scale at system level)</i>

3. T levels	Ensure good quality T-Level placements to facilitate future talent pipelines into health and adult social care.	Providers offer high quality industry placements, offering a valuable insight into the sector and supporting the development of the skills needed to enter the workforce.	<p>3a. Providing up to date information about T-Levels to stakeholders.</p> <p>3b. Proactively linking T-Level providers and employers.</p> <p>3c. Share case studies and best practice in relation to T level placements.</p> <p>3d. Share and adopt learning from HNY T level DFE funded pilot.</p>	Region	System	Provider
				Support	Support	Deliver <i>(utilising economies of scale at system level)</i>
4. Volunteering	Support volunteering opportunities which offer insight and entry to future health and adult social care careers.	For there to be an increase in the number of volunteers working in Health and Adult Social Care settings across the region.	<p>4a. Share good practice, focussing on the value volunteers bring.</p> <p>4b. Provide information and resources on volunteering and encourage links with volunteering networks.</p>	Region	System	Provider
				Support	Support and deliver <i>(in collaboration with providers)</i>	Design and deliver <i>(utilising economies of scale at</i>

						<i>system level)</i>
5. Focus on collaboration and partnership	Develop links with local communities (including education providers) to ensure a joined-up approach to attraction and recruitment activities.	<p>For there to be cohesive links between communities and pre-work activity options across Health and Adult Social Care, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King’s Trust • Supported Internships (e.g Project Choice) • Universal Families • Care Leavers Covenant • NHS Cadets • Step into Health (army leavers and career changers) • Work Experience • T levels 	<p>5a. Share information and resources with local communities about attraction and recruitment activities.</p> <p>5b. Sharing information about relevant live job opportunities.</p> <p>5c. Gather system level monitoring data to evaluate the reach of attraction and recruitment activities, to ensure that hard to reach groups are actively supported to engage.</p>	Region	System	Provider
				Support and design	Support and deliver <i>(in collaboration with providers)</i>	Design and deliver <i>(utilising economies of scale at system level)</i>

Apprenticeships (attract)

Apprenticeships are a vital part of workforce supply within the health and adult social care, both in terms of recruitment and the development of existing staff – but are particularly powerful when used to attract new diverse talent into the workforce.

Regional apprenticeship objectives for attraction:

	Objective	Desired outcome	Examples of we achieve this	Responsibility (Support / Design / Deliver)		
				Region	System	Provider
6. Apprenticeships to attract	Target underrepresented groups and ensure apprenticeships are accessible and appealing to all.	Providers offer apprenticeships that attract underrepresented groups. Providers have a workforce that better reflects the communities they serve.	6a. Work with training providers to build holistic and flexible entry processes. 6b. Build links with pre-employment programmes for diversified pipelines for apprenticeships. 6c. Systems and providers run an annual scheme of engagement with their local population, schools and colleges to improve access to apprenticeship	Region	System	Provider
				Support and design	Support and design	Deliver

			programmes and maximise innovative approaches to delivery.			
7. Apprenticeship levy	Systems maximise their apprenticeship levy spend, including to share levy, ensuring wider access to apprenticeship opportunities. Utilising levy to target underrepresented groups to ensure apprenticeships are accessible to new entrants whilst also	Levy spend maximised in all four systems. Including levy sharing across PIVO and private sector organisations.	7a. Maximise levy transfer options so systems can implement a joined-up approach to levy spend. 7b. System leads understand levy utilisation and can profile and influence areas of future levy spend with provider partners.	Region	System	Provider
				Support and deliver regional transfer service	Design and support	Deliver

	supporting progression for existing staff.					
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Retain

Apprenticeships not only support the recruitment of new talent but also offer a strong progression pathway for the development of existing staff. Apprenticeships for existing staff support greater retention, as staff are given access to apprenticeship training which leads to rewarding role progression and the development of their skills and expertise.

Regional apprenticeship objectives for retention:

	Objective	Desired outcome	Examples of we achieve this	Responsibility (Support / Design / Deliver)		
8. Apprenticeships to retain	Providers identify opportunities for career changes and progression for current staff. Using apprenticeships to recognise previous experience and build strong sustainable progression pathways for staff.	Staff feel valued and supported to progress and learn new skills, leading to greater wellbeing and job satisfaction. Improved staff retention.	8a. Providers build apprenticeship career pathways for existing staff. 8b. Champion the use of enhanced and advanced practice apprenticeships. 8c. Promote the use of leadership apprenticeship to develop emerging and aspiring leaders with key skills for workforce transformation and service redesign.	Region	System	Provider
				Support and design	Support and design	Deliver

Skills for Life (English Maths and Digital Skills)

Functional Skills, also known as Skills for Life include Maths, English and Digital Skills. Holding these skills at level 2, equivalent to GCSE grade 4-9 (or A*-C), is a completion requirement of apprenticeships at level 3 and above.

Holding these skills is also crucial for all staff, both for confidence and career progression, as well as unlocking new talent pipelines in the community which providers work in partnership to address pre-employment English and maths skills for new entrants.

Regional skills for life objectives:

	Objective	Desired outcome	Examples of we achieve this	Responsibility (Support / Design / Deliver)		
9. Skills for Life	English, maths and digital skills are embedded across all education and training opportunities and provide improved progression and confidence for staff – this includes unlocking barriers faced by new entrants whose English and maths skills prevent them from gaining access to employment.	Staff feel secure in their everyday use of English, Maths and digital skills. Providers provide English, Maths and digital skills learning which supports skills development, progression and attraction of new talent.	9a. Providers embed English and Maths skills development across all learning activities.	Region	System	Provider
			9b. Providers work with local colleges to access functional skills training. 9c. Regional utilisation of the funded NHSE functional skills support offer.	Support	Support	Deliver

		Greater confidence in these skills allow for greater career progression of staff.	9d. Providers work with local partners to tackle pre-employment English and maths skills which prevent new entrants gaining access to employment.			
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Reform

Apprenticeships to reform and transform

Apprenticeships are a strong tool when building multidisciplinary teams with the right skills mix for the future, as well as support staff to advance in their careers by opening routes into enhanced and advanced practice roles.

By utilising apprenticeships to change skill mix and introduce new roles there is the opportunity to improve productivity by working and training in different ways, building broader teams with flexible skills, changing education and training to deliver more staff in roles and services where they are needed most.

Regional apprenticeship transformation objectives:

	Objective	Desired outcome	Examples of we achieve this	Responsibility (Support / Design / Deliver)		
10. Apprenticeships – new roles	Expand apprenticeship routes to include new roles designed to better meet the changing needs of patients and support the ongoing transformation of care.	Apprenticeships support workforce transformation and innovation. Providers can access apprenticeship programmes which align to new roles.	10a. Work with national team and the trailblazer process to ensure apprenticeship programmes are available to support new and emerging roles.	Region	System	Provider
			10b. Map existing apprenticeship standards to new roles.	Support	Support and design	Design and deliver
	Apprenticeships are utilised to support	Providers factor apprenticeships into their	11a. Promote the use of leadership	Region	System	Provider

<p>11. Apprenticeships – upskilling and skill mix</p>	<p>identified workforce needs, such as a specific skills shortage or difficult to recruit to roles.</p>	<p>plans when reviewing skill levels in their workforce.</p> <p>Greater use of enhanced, advanced and leadership apprenticeships which support upskilling and skill mix.</p>	<p>apprenticeship to develop emerging and aspiring leaders.</p> <p>11b. Support providers to map apprentice routes into their workforce and their plans which support them to build multidisciplinary teams with the right skills mix for the future.</p>	<p>Support and design</p>	<p>Support</p>	<p>Deliver</p>
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