

SEPTEMBER 2018

GREATER MANCHESTER MENTAL HEALTH NHS FOUNDATION TRUST EMBEDDING APPRENTICESHIP OFF-THE- JOB TRAINING

The organisation

Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (GMMH) employs around 4,750 members of staff who deliver services across over 130 locations. In a 12-month period, the trust supports around 53,000 service users, and provides inpatient and community-based mental health care for people living in and around Manchester. It also provides a wide range of specialist mental health and substance misuse services across Greater Manchester, the north west and beyond.

Background

Before the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017, GMMH delivered around 60 apprenticeships. Since the reforms, the trust has become an employer provider, delivering level 2 to level 7 apprenticeships in-house and externally across the north west, and in 2017-18 the trust delivered 108 apprenticeships. This financial year (2018-19) the trust is on track to deliver around 200 apprenticeships. With each apprenticeship requiring a minimum of 20 per cent off-the-job training, the apprenticeship team has worked in collaboration with line managers to ensure this can be accommodated, by understanding:

- what off-the-job training means
- what can be counted towards off-the-job training
- how the apprenticeship team and managers can work together to support and access off-the-job training.


How the trust did it

What off-the-job training means

A minimum of 20 per cent off-the-job training is a requirement of all apprenticeships. Apprenticeship leads at the trust refer to this as dedicated learning time as this is much better received from managers.

'As you would expect, with operational demands of services and the need to prioritise patient care, staff can't spend one day a week every week learning off-the-job, but we can make it work over the course of the year.'

Learning and development business and quality manager.



The leads are also conscious that managers feel pressure to release staff for one day a week and work with them to schedule in 20 per cent of dedicated learning time across the duration of the apprenticeship rather than 20 per cent dedicated learning time per week.

What can be counted towards off-the-job training

Any learning that is undertaken outside of the normal day to day working environment can be counted towards dedicated learning time. This could include dedicated learning time for coaching, mentoring, improvement projects, and shadowing other roles or in other departments for example.

GMMH has also developed tailored stretch and challenge projects for all apprentices, which incorporate skills they want to develop such as public speaking, IT skills, problem solving or reporting – and work with them to develop these skills in the context of their workplace. Each of these activities is then recorded as part of the dedicated learning time.

Some apprentices (starting at level 2) are supporting patient facing commissioning for quality and innovation (CQUIN) projects. They have done this by leading on the refresh of promotional materials for smoking cessation and breast screening.

Another apprentice, studying at level 3, identified a derelict piece of land onsite and pitched to the trust's dragons' den scheme to turn the area into a dementia garden for patients. The bid was successful, and as well as being counted towards dedicated learning time, the apprentice is leaving a legacy which improves patient care and services.

How the apprenticeship team and managers can work together to support and access off-the-job training

While the apprenticeship team runs reports each week to see if each individual apprentice is achieving their 20 per cent dedicated learning time, the apprenticeship team do not get fixated on the numbers as they know that some apprentices are delivering projects which take a period of time to complete. The apprenticeship lead is conscious to meet with managers and individuals to check this is being worked towards, and evidence is being organically collected.

The trust's health and care lead for apprentices works with managers to plan the dedicated learning time for each apprentice. This is usually done eight weeks in advance when staffing rotas are received, allowing both parties to work together collaboratively to schedule in dedicated learning time. While this can sometimes be a challenge, particularly in clinical areas as safe staffing numbers must be achieved and take priority, all parties work hard to ensure that the dedicated learning time is committed to. These conversations also give managers the opportunity to identify where they feel the apprentice could use the dedicated learning time to benefit services.

OUTCOMES AND SUCCESSES

- GMMT has embedded apprenticeships into its workforce strategy and sees the apprenticeship levy as a dedicated training budget which the trust can use to attract the local workforce, develop staff and improve retention.
- Managers see the value of dedicated learning time for all stakeholders and anecdotal evidence from managers states that the CQUINs would not have been achieved without the support of apprentices.
- Managers that host apprentices see the value of dedicated learning time, and now plan in advance with the apprenticeship team, when rotas are released. This makes it easier for managers and service areas to accommodate dedicated learning time.

Top tips

- ✓ Plan in advance with managers how you'll provide dedicated learning time across the apprenticeship programme.
- ✓ Discuss with managers where apprentices could use dedicated learning time to benefit services.
- ✓ Explore creative opportunities that you can expose apprentices to for example coaching, mentoring, and CQUIN projects.

Further information

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