

Themed Topic – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020:

**“How to employ a new HCA on an apprenticeship and offer a career pathway”**

Hosted by Annette Farrell.

- ***Who is your provider for the apprenticeship programmes?***

Across Wessex, the Primary Care Training Hubs (PCTH) team up with Hampshire Hospital Foundation Trust (HHFT). They have their own apprenticeship centre and offer several apprenticeships, including level 2 support worker and level 3 senior support worker apprenticeships. HHFT apprenticeship centres are also run by practice educators, so they offer a very good quality of teaching / training.

- ***How long are the Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeships?***

Level 2 apprenticeships are 12 months with 8 days attendance over the year. Level 3 apprenticeships are 18 months with 14 days attendance over the year.

- ***How much learning time do apprentices need?***

Apprentices on a whole get 20% learning time. This includes attendance at apprentice centre, shadowing, additional learning and so on. Mandatory training, such as up-to-date infection control, fire safety etc, does not count towards learning time.

- ***What are the minimum hours to achieve an apprenticeship?***

There are caveats around the minimum hours required to achieve an apprenticeship and these can sometimes be negotiable. The minimum number of hours is expected to be 22 and a half hours. Employing someone new may be higher i.e. 30 hours. It is important that an apprentice is doing enough hours.

- ***Can you explain the funding for a GP practice?***

As for funding, this is made through a levy transfer to HHFT, which is drawn down by the Government. GP practices may have to pay 5% fee but PCTH are able to refund this normally. Hence from a GP point of view, education is paid for so practices have the salary left to pay (including when an apprentice is on a study day or on 20% learning).

Please note: we do expect practices that put people forward for the apprenticeship to do so with good will and have the ability to support them throughout the programme.

- ***Can I decrease an apprentice's wage after they are employed?***

No. For those already employed within a practice who wish to become an apprentice, their wage should never go down.

- ***What if the apprentice does not have Level 2 English and/or Maths?***

If this is the case, then apprentices will have to do this alongside their apprenticeships. However, through a Government initiative, colleges are currently (as of July 2020) delivering these courses for free.

- ***When can an apprentice start?***

Although there has been delays due to Covid-19, HHFT are still planning to go ahead for enrolments every couple of months so could start as soon as needed.

- ***How will apprenticeships differ because of Covid-19?***

This is yet to be confirmed but there might be some changes in the attendance days; they may become virtual learning or live lessons via Microsoft teams. Whichever capacity this learning is, GP support would be the same.

- ***Can an individual pause their apprenticeship for a period of time?***

The normal process would be they have to put in exceptional circumstances to pause. However, the Government have made pausing the programme possible due to Covid-19. However, if an employee is asking this before the apprenticeship, it is probably best not to start it yet.

- ***Is Phlebotomy included in the apprenticeship?***

No, this would be an add on. The LMC often advertises these courses or sometimes local providers. If this would be of interest to you, please contact Annette Farrell, one of the PCTH team, and she can put you in touch with them.

- ***If the phlebotomist does not undertake the apprenticeship, are they able to be trained in-house to do BP monitoring, 24 hr BP or urinalysis etc (if there are policies in place to cover them)?***

Yes, you would be able to do inhouse. For injections or anything named as a level 3, this would need to be external training. However, can certainly do vital signs and urinalysis in house. Julia O'Mara offering HCA study days for those sorts of basic training and also putting together a pack with competencies and guidance...

**Next meeting:**

The Microsoft Teams links for upcoming meetings will be sent via the weekly PCTH newsletter, or you can contact Molly ([Molly.McCallum@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:Molly.McCallum@hee.nhs.uk)).

*Also don't forget our Drop-in Surgery are held every Tuesday between 1-2pm.*