

Valuing learning in Primary Care

Homewell Practice Havant
Strawberry Health Primary Care Network

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Homewell Practice covers the geographical area of Havant and Leigh Park and supports 15000 patients.

The practice is committed to workforce expansion ensuring that good quality learning is at the heart of this. The practice supports students on placement and has been successful in training staff utilising the Apprenticeship opportunities.

This approach to workforce development has led to staff progressing from receptionist roles to Health and Wellbeing

Coach and Practice Nursing, improving staff retention.

Defined clinical competencies have been developed for each role giving clear direction regarding scope of practice. Apprentices and students are valued in the team, given an in-depth induction and supported to undertake clinical tasks to maximise their learning.

What are the benefits from employing an Apprentice within Primary Care?

Homewell started Trainee Nurse Associate (TNA) apprentices in 2020. The TNA apprenticeship has given a new dimension to development within the practice. It has facilitated staff to study at university level and gain experience during a wide selection of external placements. Apprentices have shared these experiences when they return to their homebase and this has been well received by practice staff opening up shared learning opportunities.

“The role was new to general practice and, as a practice that likes to be innovative, we were keen to be part of this new venture. As a mentor I take great pride in watching the Nursing Associate grow and develop. From not knowing how to research an article to gaining excellent marks for assignments, passing exams and pushing their academic level.” Sarah Harrison, Advanced Nurse Practitioner /Education Environment Lead.

What are the challenges faced when supporting Apprentices and students?

Estates– space is needed for the apprentice/student. **Resolution:** This is managed by offering longer days across the week giving more flexibility and ensuring each apprentice/student has a good learning experience.

Varying competency requirements depending on training providers. **Resolution:** The timely completion of competency reviews, setting clear expectations and addressing concerns quickly and in a supportive manner minimises these concerns for apprentices/ students.

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What are the challenges faced when supporting Apprentices and students?

Staff available to supervise. **Resolution:** Apprentices/students are encouraged to seek learning outside of the practice, offering them exposure to wider Primary Care services. Feedback ensures that this has been beneficial whilst guaranteeing that apprentices/students have the necessary supervision required for an effective learning environment.

Successes

Lelanie Vivier is undertaking her TNA Apprenticeship and is completing her first placement with the practice. Her healthcare career started as senior carer in the community and this led to embarking on her own professional development journey. Lelanie is loving her role in the practice, is well supported by all staff within the team and is excited to continue to develop further. There are challenges managing the travelling needed for placements and for university but she is committed to completing her apprenticeship and is already looking further ahead, expressing a passion to qualify as a Registered Nurse once she has consolidated her learning.



The practice is also supporting other TNA apprentices, one completed in July and starting as a Nursing Associate once registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Other students currently on placement with Homewell said “This is the best placement I have ever had” and would be sad to move on when their placement was completed.

Homewell have also supported Mental Health (MH) Student Nurses and employed a MH Nurse following her placement. This new role is already having a positive impact on patient care and highlights the benefits of supporting students within Primary Care.

Conclusion

Whilst Homewell recognise that supporting staff with additional qualifications does bring with it certain challenges, the practice has found the apprenticeship programme to be a huge success. They are recruiting a further two apprenticeship posts and are also making enquires into administrative apprenticeship programmes to support the development of non-clinical staff. A great example of a practice valuing their staff and helping to maximise their potential.