

## FORGING A NEW ALLIANCE BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE NHS

As demand continues to grow for health and social care services, the need to recruit enough of the right people to meet that demand becomes ever more pressing.

Two major initiatives from Health Education England (HEE) seek to respond to that situation. *Talent for Care* offers a range of education and development opportunities to support staff (usually from bands 1-4) while *Widening Participation* aims to expand the pool from which they are recruited.

represented,” she says. “One way of doing this is to tap into the local community more effectively.

“The partnership between HEE and The Prince’s Trust is about improving the quality of care overall but also enabling these people to further their own education and careers.

“Pretty well everyone has heard of The Prince’s Trust. It’s well known as a brand, it has unrivalled connections with young, disadvantaged people, and it’s now getting a name for itself within the health care sector. So in many ways it’s an easy sell.”

Labour market constraints and an ageing population mean there will be a growing demand for people to work in healthcare in the coming years, says Adrian Thacker, Senior Head of National Partnerships at The Prince’s Trust.

“That’s why we’re in the business of working with local NHS employers to identify what their needs are.

“So many people think the NHS is all about being a doctor or a nurse. *Talent for Care* lays out a

wide array of possibilities for working in the NHS from portering to phlebotomy, IT, clinical facing jobs and support roles.”

### THE RECRUITS

Recruits to the *Get into* programme are between 16 and 25 and are usually out of work. Many will be educationally disadvantaged and a number will have a past history of being in care.

The proportion of young people from BME (black and minority ethnic) communities is also much higher than average – as is the number who are disabled, educational under-achievers or single parents. Over a third (39%) had fewer than five A-C GCSEs, 14% were disabled and 5% were care leavers.

The results are impressive. In the last year, for instance, over 500 young unemployed people took the 4-6-week programme and 89%



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I have been involved with Prince’s Trust courses for over 30 years and the young people never cease to amaze me. Our future is in safe hands when you see their commitment and passion.

Jagtar Singh, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust

The innovative partnership between HEE and the youth charity The Prince’s Trust is a prime example of that approach. It gives disadvantaged, unemployed young people the opportunity of jobs or apprenticeships within health and social care.

Over the last six years the partnership has run around 200 *Get into* pre-employment programmes for more than 2,000 young people across the country and in the process has managed to find work in either health care or beyond for more than half that number.

### REACHING OUT

As Vanessa Convey, HEE’s National Project Manager for *Talent for Care*, says, the need for this type of initiative has never been greater. “Everyone is very clear that we need to be getting more younger people into the NHS. And the focus is particularly on bands 1-4 where they are under-

completed it. Of those 42% now have jobs in the health or social care sector (two thirds in apprenticeships) and another 17% are working outside healthcare. In addition 12% have gone on to further education or some kind of volunteering.

## THE PROGRAMME

The programmes now operate in 10 different regions across the country and have focused on a range of potential jobs, with business administration and service roles being among the most common.

A big part of The Prince's Trust work involves finding the young people in the first place and then persuading them they have what it takes to consider a job in health care, says Carolyn Mason, one of the scheme's national organisers. "The common experience for these young people is that they don't feel qualified or capable enough to do these jobs. In fact until we approach them they may not even know these jobs exist."

Once the Trust has contacted potential recruits, they will be invited to a one-day taster session which gives them a flavour of what will be involved. Around a dozen will then be selected to take part in the *Get into* programme. This consists of two classroom-based weeks covering topics such as employment skills, manual handling and health and safety, followed by two to four weeks of work experience in areas as varied as catering, hospital wards and clinical engineering.

"The programmes act as light bulb moments for young people who might have thought the NHS was not for them," says Adrian. "It gives them the opportunity to prove what they can do and gives the employer the opportunity to see if they are right for the job."



The programme increases self-esteem and young people's preparedness for work. Clinical teams and support services have offered work placements, resulting in apprenticeships and substantive posts.

Claire Martin, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust

It's also about recruiting people who understand and exhibit NHS values. "Our programmes are opportunities to demonstrate these values. They're also about giving young people the opportunity to make an informed decision."

At the end of the programme the organisers always hold a celebration day where family and friends gather to mark students' successful completion of the course, including the award of a certificate – and where, in some instances, recruits

are signed up for jobs or apprenticeships.

Once a young person has been recruited to the scheme they will be supported at every stage by The Prince's Trust team. This includes a programme leader who provides pastoral support throughout the course and a mentor who maintains contact over the following months.

"What we try to do is put these young people ahead of the field so they can go for any interviews much better able to present themselves in a more accomplished way," says Carolyn.

They also learn about public health, including exercise, diet and lifestyle. These are messages many of the youngsters will not have been exposed to previously, says programme organiser Jane Winter. This is the 'soft' side of the course's learning which will "make you a healthier person and less dependent on health and social care services in the future".

## LOCAL APPROACH

Setting this all up involves a huge amount of work behind the scenes between Prince's Trust staff, NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups to ensure the programme meets local needs and will produce the desired result.

Although the format for the programme remains fairly consistent, the detail will reflect the local situation, explains Carolyn. "We always start with



There is always a celebration day at the end of the programme. Pictured: a group of recruits from Norfolk with their certificates



The programme opens young people's eyes to new careers and gives them confidence and self-belief

the employer. What is the employer looking for and where are the vacancies?" Equally, The Prince's Trust seeks to deliver programmes where the host employer can offer the possibility of vacancies and apprenticeships for at least half the recruits.

The programme is beginning to incorporate the Care Certificate for support workers as well as using HEE's values-based recruitment tools. The Prince's Trust also works with other local employers and supply chains, which encourages integrated working across sectors.

East of England has also introduced rotational apprenticeships that enable recruits to work in both hospital and community settings. Some courses involve health and social care employers that have not in the past had much to do with each other. As Carolyn says: "We are starting to see really good partnerships growing up between organisations that didn't communicate with each other."

## OUTCOMES

Some of the participants are offered a job or an apprenticeship almost as soon as the programme has concluded. And most do eventually find what they've been looking for.

In the East of England, for example, over 1,000 young people have completed the training and work experience over the past six years with nearly two thirds ( 64.22%) obtaining a job or apprenticeship and another 12% going on to education or volunteering.

Each one of those success stories is effectively a story of a life transformed. "Some of these young people have had awful hurdles to overcome before they got to this point," says Carolyn. "They would never have dreamt they'd be eligible for this sort of opening – and you see that on every programme.

"It's given them a purpose in life. They often say they've made new friends, which is really important for youngsters who may often have been very isolated. It opens their eyes to new careers – things they wouldn't have known they were capable of doing. It gives them confidence, self belief and self esteem.

"Many of these young people have had such a bad start in life but they're no less talented. They just need the opportunity or start that maybe other people might have had."

Healthcare managers who have come on board are almost as enthusiastic. "Anyone who's been involved will have a very positive message to give back," says Carolyn. "These days health and social care managers have to do a lot of work to attract people into their industry – and that's exactly what The Prince's Trust offers. It's an effective and relatively cheap way of hitting their targets and it makes such a difference to the individuals recruited."

## THE FUTURE

But although successful, there is still a long way to go – and the partnership is keen to expand its reach. "This is a tried and tested programme and its success is underscored by the number of trusts that have signed up and keep coming back for more," says Vanessa. "They feel they're getting the right kind of trainee. It's also very cost effective.

"This is all about widening participation and diversity and inclusiveness and pulling in local people who live in the community where the trust is based. These people are potentially on the trust's doorstep and often the trust doesn't know they're there. It's also the case that if you recruit from the local population you're more likely to get someone who will stay."

## TALENT FOR CARE & WIDENING PARTICIPATION

*Talent for Care* and *Widening Participation* are two HEE programmes working together to improve education, training and development opportunities for those in NHS support roles (bands 1-4) and to ensure the whole workforce is representative of the communities it serves.

The main themes of *Talent for Care* are: Get In (opportunities for people to start their careers), Get On (supporting people in their jobs) and Go Further (providing opportunities for career progression).

# WHAT IT MEANS FOR EMPLOYERS

## 1. WHAT'S THE BENEFIT FOR ME?

- *Get into* and traineeships give employers time to see recruits first-hand and select the most suitable candidates.
- It's an effective way of employing people from non-traditional routes, widening participation and meeting apprenticeship targets.
- It's a great opportunity to develop existing staff and identify talent in mentoring and team building roles.

- Preliminary interviews are then usually conducted in a local Jobcentre by a Prince's Trust staff member. These interviews can also be attended by prospective line managers or employer representatives. Employers can continue to be involved during the classroom phase of the course and will certainly be involved during the work placement.



We weren't really sure what to expect but were very pleased with how quickly the young people became productive team members. We are now developing an apprenticeship scheme.

Colin Hurst, Hull CCG

## 6. HOW ARE VACANCIES FILLED?

- Advice on how recruits can apply for vacancies with employers will be given during the final phase of the course. Although young people are not guaranteed employment, participating employers would be expected to offer participants an interview.

## 7. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO ORGANISE AND WHAT SUPPORT CAN I EXPECT FROM PRINCE'S TRUST?

## 2. WHAT ABOUT THE WIDER HEALTH ECONOMY?

- It builds links with the local community and promotes wider public health outcomes among young people.

## 3. WHAT WILL IT COST ME?

- The Prince's Trust has access to charitable and other funding which can substantially reduce costs or even make programmes cost neutral. Some employers offset costs against recruitment budgets.

## 4. WHAT ABOUT APPRENTICESHIPS?

- *Get into* and traineeship programmes are an ideal feeder for apprenticeships and can reduce attrition rates by giving young people a taster of what the job is all about.
- Apprenticeship training costs are paid for by the Skills Funding Agency, whether they are on an apprenticeship wage or a main scale salary. For more information see [www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers)

## 5. HOW ARE RECRUITS SELECTED?

- The programme and employment opportunities are advertised through flyers and contact with agencies working with The Prince's Trust.

- Most courses can be planned, recruited and started within six weeks. If DBS checks are required, then three weeks need to be added. This is all part of the service offered by The Prince's Trust.
- Prince's Trust will organise the programme following discussions with employers, recruit young people to attend a taster day, help to select suitable participants with the employer and support the young people throughout the training.
- The advertising for the course will reflect areas of work on offer and the course content will prepare the young people for this work.

## 8. WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

- Once you have identified an employment opportunity for a young person, or want to discuss how you can create entry level jobs in your organisation, you should contact the Outcomes Manager of The Prince's Trust.

## WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

For more information contact the partnerships team at The Prince's Trust on 020 7543 1429 or visit [www.princes-trust.org.uk](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk)