

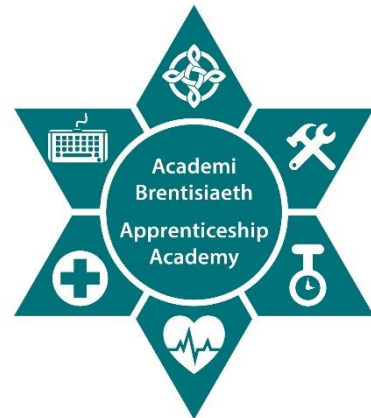


GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Hywel Dda
University Health Board

Apprenticeship Academy Evaluation 2019-2022

Date: January 2023



Introduction

This report will consider the holistic Apprenticeship Academy experience. The structured work-based programme provides apprentices with rich practical learning opportunities alongside experienced staff, earning whilst they learn. The Apprenticeship Programme is often the first step into professional training for young people, but also provides opportunities for those wanting to retrain or step into a career in the NHS. Whilst the health board and wider NHS are suffering with staffing shortages, underdeveloped talent in our communities is not being tapped into through lack of opportunity. Widening access was an integral part of the Apprenticeship Academy, the programme works to increase the number of young people and adults in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, and Ceredigion from underrepresented backgrounds to progress through the apprenticeship and into higher education. By promoting apprenticeship opportunities available within the health board, it is not only of benefit to the individuals and services users, but also to our organisation who will benefit from a wider, richer talent pool in which we can address shortages in vacancy applications.

In 2019, the launch of the Apprenticeship Academy was predominantly focused on the Healthcare Apprenticeship. In 2020 due to Covid-19, the apprenticeship offer was paused and re-launched in 2021, where further apprenticeships including Corporate Governance, Building Services, Patient Experience, Digital Services, Healthcare and Workforce Development. In addition to working alongside NHS professionals, apprentices also spend 20% of their time accessing external training.

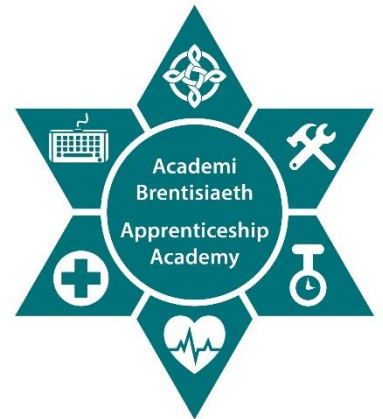
The Apprenticeship Programme is underpinned by a series of professionally recognised qualifications using local colleges and training providers, progressing to courses delivered through our local universities where appropriate.

This report will focus on the main Apprenticeship Academy themes to provide a holistic overview:

- Attraction and recruitment
- Apprentice demographics
- Achievement
- Retention
- What's new (including the Joint Health and Social Care Apprenticeship Programme)
- What's gone well
- What challenges were faced
- Next Steps

Attraction & Recruitment

As part of the initial launch of the Apprenticeship Academy attraction campaign, online marketing reached more than 41,000 social media users. In addition, information days were held in local communities to widen participation and raise awareness of NHS careers. Bespoke assessment processes included games, activities and discussions, providing the opportunity for applicants to relax and showcase their personality, focusing on value-based recruitment.



This resulted in 1011 applications for the Healthcare Apprenticeship alone to date, 217 apprentices being employed of which 21 will be starting early 2023.

Year	Applications	Offers
2019	187	55
2021	600	73
2022	224	89

Figure 1: Apprentice Applications and Offers

Although the majority are Healthcare Apprentices, the table below shows the diverse number of pathways developed, all of which lead to a minimum of a Band 3 permanent position.

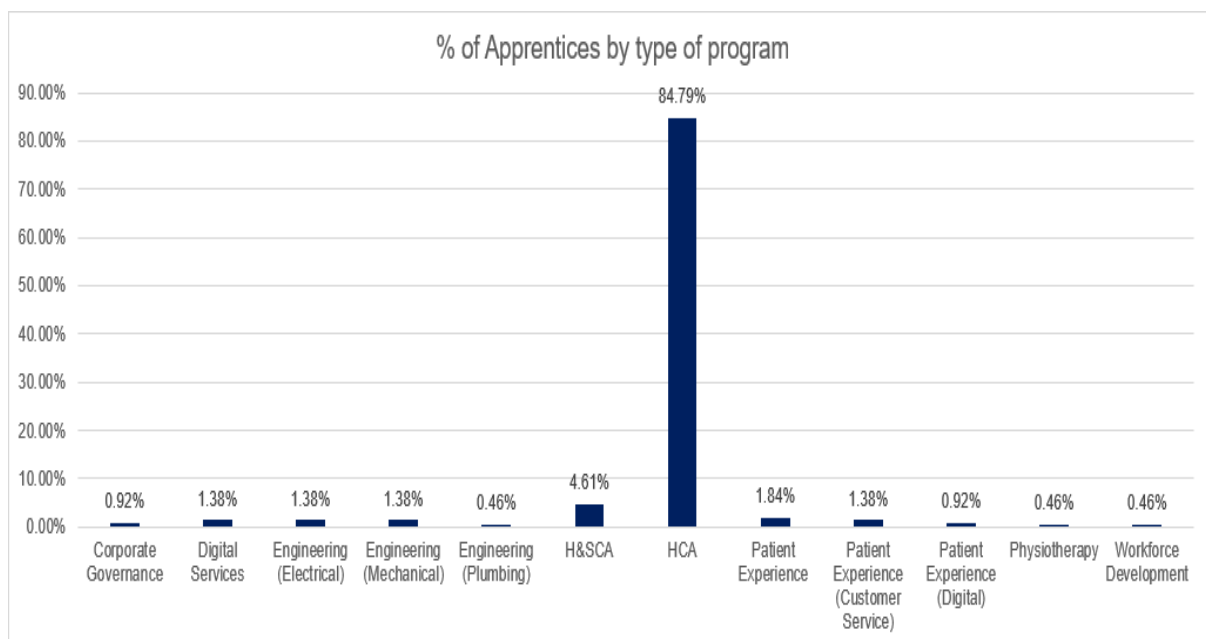


Figure 2: Breakdown of Vocational Area

Apprentice Demographics

Upon launch of the Apprenticeship Academy in 2019, the number of employees under 20 years of age has almost doubled from 0.82% in 2019 to 1.58% in 2022. For those under 25, this represented less than 6% of our workforce, increasing to 7.2%, compared to 5% from an All-Wales perspective. The apprentice age demographic highlights the appeal of these programmes to people of all ages as well as having a significant impact in attracting the younger workforce.

Under 20	21-25	25+
61%	21%	19%

Figure 3: Age Demographics of Apprentices

Gender

The gender demographic for the apprentices is very similar to that of the general health board, with approximately 80% being female. Following promotion of a 'Men in Nursing' campaign alongside Healthcare Apprentice recruitment, this attracted a higher proportion of male applicants, resulting in an increase of 5.18% within the Healthcare Apprentice programme, when compared with HDdUHB Nursing & Midwifery staff group.

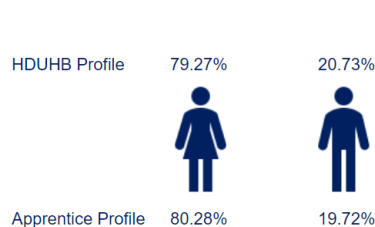


Figure 4: HDUHB Profile compared to Apprentices

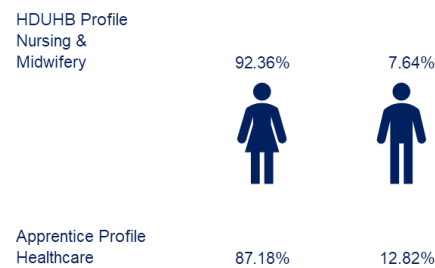


Figure 5: Nursing & Midwifery gender profile compared to Healthcare Apprentices

Ethnicity

In relation to the ethnic profile of the apprentices, it must be highlighted that there are 2.5% of apprentices identifying as BME compared to 6.7% within the health board workforce. Within the Hywel Dda footprint 5.8% of the population are BME, suggesting underrepresentation within the apprenticeship demographics.

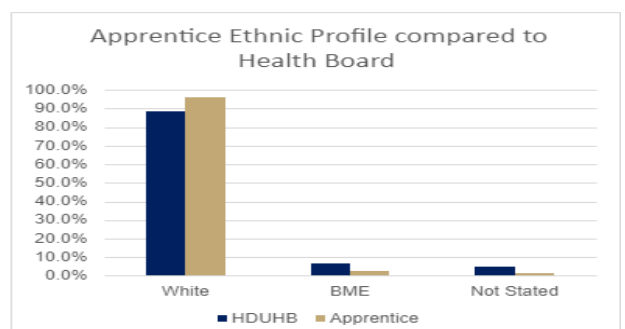


Figure 6: HDUHB Ethnic profile compared to apprentices

Welsh Language

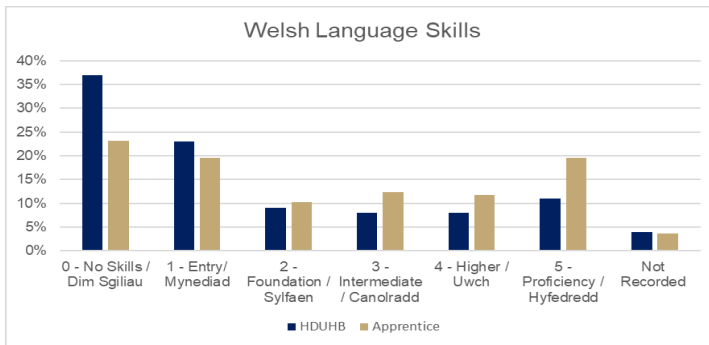


Figure 7: HDUHB Welsh language Profile compared to apprentices

Welsh language skills on commencement of the apprenticeship programme are higher than HDdUHB average. In addition, Healthcare Apprenticeship posts are also advertised with 'Welsh Essential' as part of the recruitment process.

Welsh language is also promoted throughout the programme, with introductory sessions during their induction and apprentices being encouraged to take up further lessons to improve their vocabulary and confidence. Welsh speaking apprentices are also matched up with placements where there are Welsh speaking mentors and provided with a Welsh speaking tutor and given the option to complete their qualification through the medium of Welsh if required.



'The apprentice has produced most of her assignments through Welsh medium. Pleasure to have as a learner, seeing her grow and develop. Claimed their award early.' (Pembrokeshire College)

Pembrokeshire College also raised awareness of the Welsh language within the health sector by supporting non-fluent Welsh speaking apprentices to complete the Prentis-laith e-module. Where apprentices were fluent, they supported to develop their knowledge of professional terminology bilingually, recognising differentiation amongst each cohort.

In 2021/2022 32% of fluent Welsh speakers were supported to complete either all or a portion of their assessments within their qualification through the medium of Welsh or bilingually.

Disability

The proportion of apprentices disclosing a disability is 4.3% higher than the health board disclosure of 3.5%, contributing to a more diverse workforce. The number of apprentices who did not want to disclose if they had a disability is less than 1%, against a health board profile of 19%, suggesting that the apprentices have greater confidence to disclose their disability. This has also allowed the Apprentice Academy to work with training providers and our services to ensure individual needs are met.

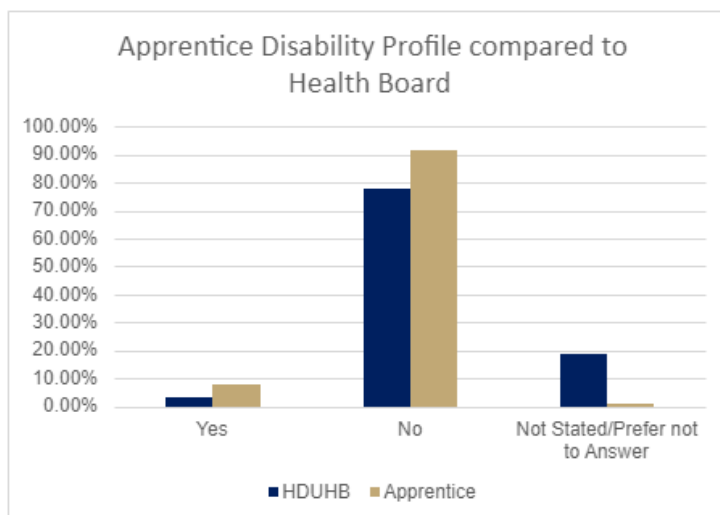


Figure 8: HDUHB disability profile compared to apprentices

Achievement

As HDdUHB offer is unique compared to other organisations in terms of progression through a career pathway, it is very difficult to benchmark overall apprentice retention in line with a standard fixed term apprenticeship journey as each person will complete a minimum of three apprenticeships/qualifications as shown in figure 9. If retention was calculated overall by apprentice, without recognising multiple programmes, the overall retention is 77%. This is still above the Welsh Government contractors expectations, delivering foundation, intermediate and higher apprenticeship programmes, who must achieve a minimum framework success rate of 75 %.

If retention is calculated using Welsh Government programme benchmarking criteria, the achievement rates are as follows:

Cohort	HDUHB Achievement Rates L2	Welsh Government Benchmark
2019	78%	75%
2020	No data available for 2020 due to paused recruitment.	
2021	77%	75%
2022	No data available for 2022 due to apprentices not completed programme	

Figure 10: Level 2 achievement rates

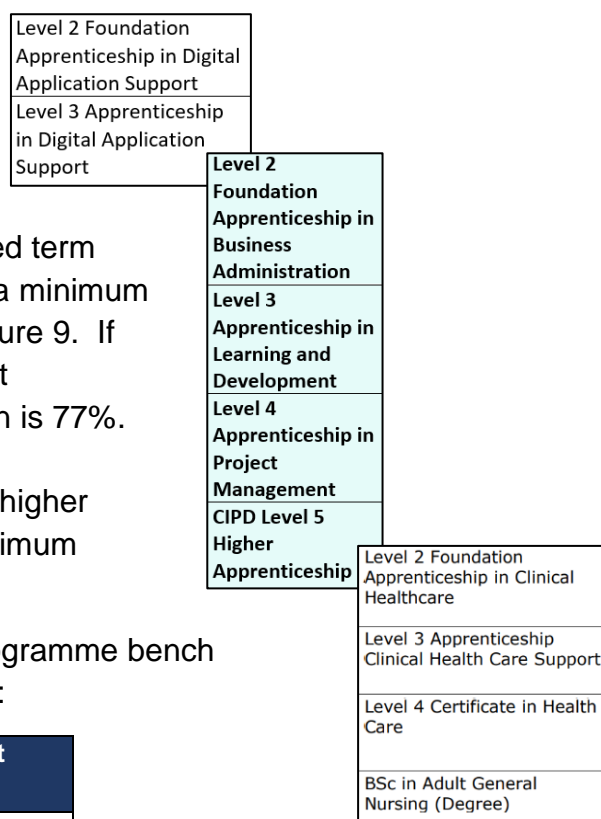


Figure 9: Example of career pathways

Cohort	HDUHB Achievement Rates L3	Welsh Government Benchmark
2019	65%	75%
2020	No data available for 2020 due to paused recruitment.	
2021	No data available for 2022 due to apprentices not completed programme	
2022	No data available for 2022 due to apprentices not completed programme	

Figure 11: Level 3 achievement rates

Despite no achievement data being available for the level 4 programme, flexible pathways have been created, recognising the transition between Work-Based Learning (WBL) at levels 2 and 3 and entering university education and the academic study skills has been a challenge.

Retention

Leavers have been analysed from September 2019 to December 2022, including all apprentice pathways. Retention varies considerably across the acute sites, with the trend showing that BGH overall has the highest attrition. When overlaying the leaver data with attraction and recruitment, BGH also had significant challenges with the 2022 offers only contributing to 6% of the overall offers made within the Hywel Dda footprint. Feedback from the apprentices, internal and external stakeholders play a critical role if we are able to attract greater numbers recognising the ageing workforce.

Although the data below (figure 12) suggests that overall there has been significant improvement, consideration also needs to be given to the apprentices length of service which impacts the overall results and therefore cannot be compared year on year, except at incremental points within programmes.

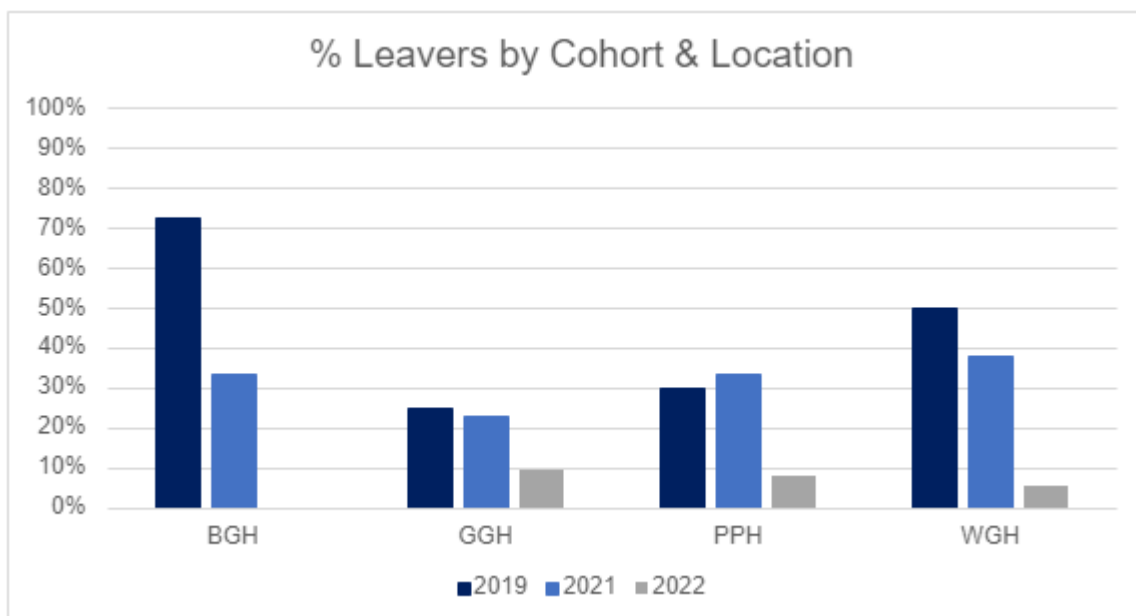


Figure 12: Leavers by cohort and location

Apprentice exit questionnaires are evaluated to identify good practice, raise concerns, allowing the Apprenticeship Academy to identify trends and inform improvement. Figure 13 highlights the reasons for leaving and considers the stage in the programme.

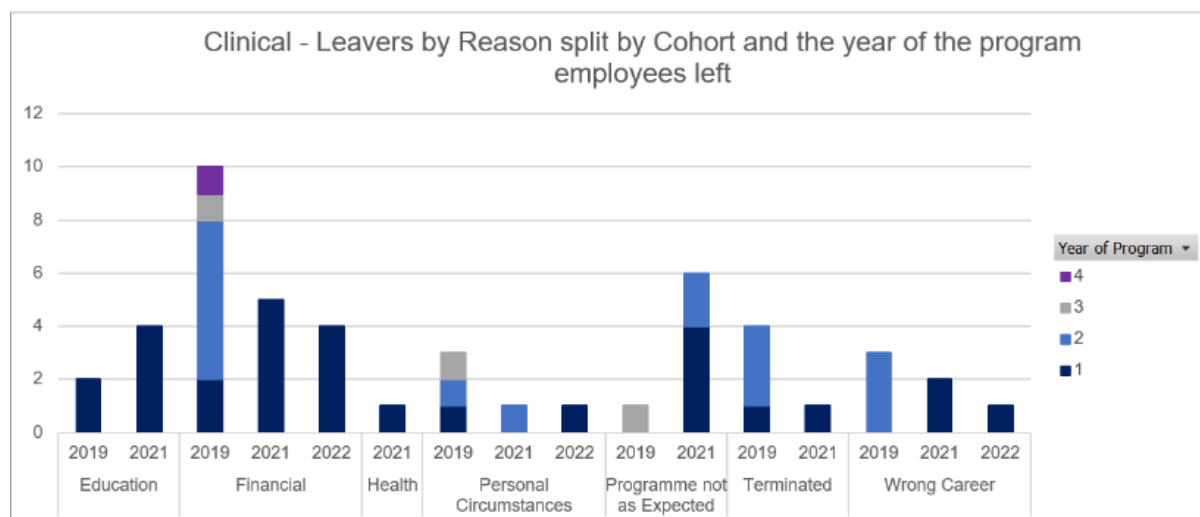


Figure 13: Reason for Leaving compared with average length of stay

Financial reasons were cited most frequently in the data between 2019-2022. Households across the UK are struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis and our apprentices are no exception. The current apprentice salary is highlighted below.

Qualification Level	Average duration	Apprentice Salary	£
Level 2	12 months	National Apprenticeship Wage	£9,379
Level 3	6 months	Annex 21 Band 3 70%	£16,224
Level 3	12 months	Annex 21 Band 3 75%	£17,383
Level 4	12 months	Annex 21 Band 4 70%	£18,397
Level 4 (year 2)	12 months	Annex 21 Band 4 75%	£19,712

Figure 14: Current apprentice pay scales

Although the apprentices recognise that they are earning whilst they are learning and that there are no academic fees for completing their educational journey, many are facing significant hardship and as a result 10% of the 2021 cohort have accessed the hardship fund through the college to support their financial situation. In addition, support has been provided by the Apprenticeship Academy team through listening and signposting to additional services including third sector organisations including

food banks. Recognising these concerns, the Apprenticeship Academy are currently carrying out a review of the current pay structure to present to the Executive Team in early February.

Considering the financial hardship, both colleges and universities have supported apprentices through the use of a laptop loan service, impacting 21% of apprentices since 2021.

A growing number of apprentices are leaving as a result of academic ability. Apprentices have cited the academic commitment, particularly alongside placement hours, is a challenge and some apprentices reach a point where academic requirements are difficult to fulfil. Swansea University offer support to apprentices including the guidance from an Academic Mentor; however, the programme allows for a finite number of resubmissions. At this stage, conversations are focused on the next stages for the apprentices in their career choices. The Apprenticeship Academy need to design exit strategies which will retain talent, allow for pauses in academia to support differentiation, rest and recovery. Opportunities to re-engage in development as they increase confidence and ability need to be created in light of the number of apprentices who are struggling with the transition between work-based learning and academic qualifications. Moving forwards, a research and study skills module has been added to the work-based learning qualifications to overcome barriers.

Where apprentices felt that they had made the wrong career choice, the Apprenticeship Academy used the support of external agencies including Careers Wales and colleges to identify suitable pathways, provide employability skills, references and support to transition into positive outcomes. This has resulted in retaining apprentices as employees within facilities and administrative roles. Where others have decided to access full-time provision to become a nurse or other healthcare professional, the Apprentice Academy have worked with universities to support the application process.

Other leave data includes health, personal reasons and termination. Where intervention is needed, the Apprenticeship Academy team draw upon the support of Workforce HR, Occupational Health, wellbeing services, third sector and other external agencies to ensure a smooth exit.

What's New?

Joint Health and Social Care Programme

The Joint Health and Social Care Apprenticeship is the first in Wales, with HDdUHB and Pembrokeshire County Council working in collaboration to provide opportunities to local people to gain experience and skills across the Health and Social Care Sector. Funding was secured through the Regional Investment Fund (RIF), with ten candidates starting in October 2022.

Moving towards a 'Healthier Mid and West Wales' requires transformation of services, including a greater emphasis on prevention and community-based care. Establishing partnerships with health, social care and third sector organisations is a key contributor in the success of the Healthier Mid and West Wales strategy. The programme offers the opportunity to demonstrate how health and social care work together to ensure quality care for patients, with a focus on community care. With a range of placements, including both social care and community healthcare settings, apprentices gain many experiences including working across both sectors and working in multi-disciplinary teams, developing through work-based and off the job experiences. This programme provides support with employability skills, Welsh language development and understanding the range of careers across community and social care. This provides the flexibility to select their chosen career following completion of their level 2 and 3 programmes. Part of the educational journey involved registration within social care and completion of the All-Wales Induction Framework.

The Joint Health and Social Care Apprenticeship leads on to range of development options including Social Services Practitioner Pathway, Management in Care and Independent Advocacy Pathway to name a few, designed to improve young persons engagement into the Health and Social Care sector. A clear objective of the programme is to create a sustainable pipeline of young people entering the sector to provide employment opportunities for the local population in line with the Healthier Mid and West Wales strategy. The intended outcome is 66% of Joint Apprentices work in Social Care and 33% work within the community care setting.

What's gone well?

New Apprenticeship Pathways



"I love working for the health board. It's an unique job and everyone here is kind and we all work as a team.

I'm currently with the patient experience team. I feel I have settled in very well and have become good friends with my team, so hopefully it's just up from here!

On a typical day, as I'm on the computers a lot, I help with the surveys TBTY, THINKING OF YOU and dealing with patient complaints."

KIERAN HOOPER
PATIENT EXPERIENCE
APPRENTICE



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Despite the main programme promoted through the Apprentice Academy being the Healthcare Apprenticeship Programme, other career pathways have been developed including:

- Patient Experience
- Workforce Development
- Corporate Governance
- Digital Services
- Engineering
- Building Services
- Resourcing and Utilisation
- Physiotherapy (pilot)

Engagement with Allied Healthcare Professionals

Following the evaluation of the 2019 Healthcare Apprenticeship Programme, apprentices and placements reported a greater awareness of multi-disciplinary working where there was the ability to provide placements in therapies. Although this was not possible in other cohorts due to the changing pressures, it remains a part of the induction processes. This provides the Healthcare Apprentices with a holistic view of the wider healthcare system.



The Voice of the Apprentice

Reflection is an integral part of the apprenticeship programme. Discussing best practice, challenges and steps moving forward takes place during regular reviews with each apprentice. Where apprentices have voiced their thoughts, these are

evaluated and improvements are made to accommodate new ways of working where possible.

Bespoke Inductions

Apprentices have noted how the bespoke and detailed induction appropriately prepares them for the professional expectations on placement, this includes team building, communications skills, professional practice and placement preparation.

Positive placement experience

“It is very hard working on the ward, but the sister and staff are really supportive considering the pressure they are under.” (Healthcare Apprentice)

Apprentices comment on how placement staff are supportive, teach them new skills and demonstrate best practice. This greatly impacts the overall apprentice experience. Rotations are a core part of the apprentice participation, having the opportunity to experience a range of settings is critical in giving comprehensive exposure to the range of opportunities and supports multi-disciplinary working.

‘It’s amazing. I am loving Endoscopy. I am being shown new things and different ways to work.’ (Healthcare Apprentice)

“We are so grateful for the apprentices, we need them!” (Ward Sister)

Gateway reviews

The gateway review provides a holistic understanding of the apprentice performance prior to the next stage in their programme, assessing whether the apprentice has met the standards expected within the workplace, their studies and general behaviour. This allows services to provide feedback, plan any training needs and identify where issues need to be addressed, providing assurance.

National Training Federation Wales Awards



Two apprentices were nominated for the for the National Training Federation Wales Awards. The awards celebrate the achievements of those who have shown a deep commitment to the development of their skills, who have exceeded expectations and gone above and beyond to learn and grow as an apprentice.

Outstanding Contribution Award

Careers Wales business engagement advisers nominated the Apprenticeship Academy for their outstanding contribution to delivering an innovative and impactful engagement programme. The award recognised the support, presence, and work on a number of pathways within the organisation to enable widening participation.



S4C Television Appearance



Welsh speaking apprentices went on S4C to talk about their experience and how we have turned to Grow Your Own approaches to help support nursing shortages.

Partnership Working & Collaboration



Collaboration with colleges and universities has enabled the design of new qualifications to bridge the gap in career pathways, providing a firm platform for future growth.

Despite significant challenges since the commencement of the Apprenticeship Academy programme, the academy has continued to work alongside internal and external partners to ensure a rich learning experience for apprentices. Apprentices have gained a plethora of skills and continue to change the face of nursing recruitment.

What challenges were faced?

Covid-19

It cannot be underestimated that an unforeseen pandemic changed the shape of the Apprenticeship Academy service entirely, and what had been planned for the first year of the programme had to be quickly altered to respond to the needs of the health service. Apprentices were mobilised to support the health board during the pandemic. Although this was a phenomenal experience for most, this did impact on the apprentice journey, which was a lesson in how unexpected change impacts young people who may not have the resilience and require intense support. This impacted the capacity within the Apprenticeship Academy to provide support and increased the reliance on service managers to provide day to day support.



“Most apprentices are vaccinating, and they are making a real contribution to the vaccination programme. The apprentice is too young to vaccinate but she is making herself very useful however I am concerned that the centre isn’t providing enough of a learning experience for her.” (MVC Manager)

Rapid growth of the Apprenticeship Academy

Under-estimating the pastoral needs of apprentices provided challenges, and due to capacity, this meant that some apprentices felt they needed additional support from alternative sources. To overcome this, the Academy have since recruited staff to provide local support for apprentices and other future workforce participants including local inductions, pastoral support, signposting and liaising with placements. This will allow easy access to communication via placement and mentor meetings and one-to-ones with apprentices. Further evaluation will be required of the impact these posts have on the apprentice journey.

Differing placements experiences

The placement experience for apprentices can differ considerably, due to several reasons. In some cases, mentors lacked an understanding of what apprentices were able to do within their scope of practice. Recognising this, for the 2023 cohort, a suite of resources is being developed to increase understanding of delegation,

collaboration with mentors and supporting how the apprentice and placement can have a beneficial and rewarding experience.

“Although my current placement in theatre has been a good experience, the staff haven't really been sure what to do with me in the time I have been there. I've been taking the lead myself on my day to day.”

(Healthcare Apprentice)

Framework Changes

For the 2021 cohort, the level 2 framework was changed midway through their qualification which caused disruption for apprentices. This was unavoidable due to the requirements of the awarding bodies and the framework standards. The result of the change directly impacted the duration of unit completion meaning additional study time was required for the apprentices at short notice. Moving forward relationships with external providers will continue to be strengthened and communication regarding framework amendments can be shared in a timely manner.

“In my opinion, the quality of the work I produce, has improved tremendously” (Patient Experience Apprentice)

“I have learnt more than I thought, enjoying new experiences and find the ward really interesting” (Healthcare Apprentice)

Next Steps

Pay review

A paper is currently being prepared for the executive team regarding a new pay structure for apprentices, based on several factors including changing financial pressures and other external apprenticeship offers.

Targeting Recruitment

Plan needed to identify how to improve participation with underrepresented groups including BME, traveller community and those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).

Building Career Pathways

Work with colleges, HEIW and universities to bridge the gaps in the curriculum, creating a career pathway into registered professional status for clinical and non-clinical roles.

Attracting local talent

Continue to build on the new Valued Partner Initiatives in schools and work with the RLSP to gain funding and support to launch a new “Talent for Employment” Programme. This will be done in collaboration with colleges and target those currently Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET), influencers (including parents and school workers).