

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

1. Most apprentices enjoy their learning. They recognise the value of the resources they have been given to help them to study. As practising ophthalmic technicians, they are committed to their vocational area. However, the curriculum has not been designed to help them develop knowledge, skills, and behaviours beyond those that they had when they started the apprenticeship.

AHPO response

The curriculum has been developed from the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) set out in the Apprenticeship Standard for Healthcare Science Associates, see <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/healthcare-science-associate-v1-0> Apprenticeships may or may not include an accredited qualification and the National School for Healthcare Science (NSHCS) opted for an accredited qualification and commissioned Pearson to develop a specification for a work-based Level 4 Diploma in Healthcare Science. The Diploma is applicable for the more than 50 healthcare science specialisms and has 10 mandatory units that must be undertaken by all specialisms, and 146 optional units from which individual specialisms can choose units relevant for their apprentices. The Ofsted nominee [RH] worked with the NSHCS and Pearson to develop the course specification and has an in-depth understanding of domains of learning and Bloom's taxonomy that was used to determine of the standard of work learners must attain appropriate for educational level 4. There is no evidence to support the assertion that "the curriculum has not been designed to help [learners] develop knowledge, skills, and behaviours beyond those that they had when they started the apprenticeship". There is a wide gap between the apprentices' GCSE and A-level equivalent level 2 and 3 qualifications and the variable non-accredited and often undocumented in-house training they received (often quite minimal), and the Level 4 BTEC Diploma that is equivalent to the first year of a Bachelor of Science Degree.

Ofsted reply

Thank you for explaining your qualification. However, the inspection considers that there is a difference between gaining a qualification and developing knowledge, skills and behaviour. This evidence for this statement came from comments from apprentices and employers, who reported that apprentices did not develop significantly from their starting points.

2. Apprentices are motivated to study for a qualification which supports career progression and recognition of their technical skills within the NHS. However, for too many apprentices, particularly those for whom English is an additional language, they state that the volume and frequency of written assessment is too great, and they become demotivated over time.

AHPO response

There are four apprentices on our programme for whom English is a second language and all are making good progress. One has now reached the Gateway on schedule and is due to sit the End Point Assessment (EPA). English is a second language for two of the three apprentices who passed the EPA, all on first attempt, and both apprentices reached the gateway on schedule. We are replacing some written assignments with professional discussions and presentations, but that said,

there is no evidence that the number of written assignments has impacted on the progress of ESL learners compared with native English speakers. Indeed we have seen ESL learners develop and improve their writing skills markedly during their course, guided by their excellent assessors – so this is a useful skill which they develop (part of their developing KSBs) – and their self-confidence develops with it (showing their developing behaviour).

Ofsted reply

In this instance, the apprentices interviewed reported that they felt demotivated over time as a result of the volume of work they were asked to produce. This was more marked for those who also had English as an additional language. While they may still complete their apprenticeship, they report it is more difficult for them to do so and they must access additional support from outside sources.

3. Apprentices value the vocational knowledge of their assessors and work-based mentors. They recognise the support they receive from assessors and work-based mentors when they meet. However, too much reliance is placed on work-based support and independent learning as opposed to a clearly planned and sequenced curriculum which is taught effectively. Assessors do not meet with apprentices frequently enough to support their learning.

AHPO response

The learning and teaching approach for this course is independent learning, as is stated in the course specification: in Mandatory Unit 1, Learning Outcome (LO) 1 Be able to demonstrate the qualities and abilities required of an independent learner; and for Assessment Criteria (AC) 1.1 Discuss the qualities required of an independent learner. According to one definition "Independent learning is a process, a method and a philosophy of education whereby a learner acquires knowledge by his or her own efforts and develops the ability for enquiry and critical evaluation". We do have a clearly planned and sequenced curriculum. There is no fixed start date but each apprentice has an individual learning plan (ILP) that describes the sequence and timescale for the curriculum; we explain this is a guide and is not prescriptive, but the BTEC Diploma should be completed within the 2-year timescale. The assessment plans that are incorporated in the portfolio and in unit learning and assessment guides detail the sources of information and the work the learner needs to complete. We provide 13 eBooks on an iPad or tablet, that cover every aspect of the course except Anatomy, Physiology and Pathophysiology, for which we provide a Kindle eBook. Thus the learner has a reference source they can use in the workplace as well as for preparation of coursework. We also provide PowerPoint presentations with audio recording. Reflective practice is a key aspect of independent learning, and for Unit 1 LO 1 AC 1.8 the learner must Explain the importance of critical reflection to support personal development. Learners set up a reflective diary and we advise that they keep this on their tablet so they can make timely records of workplace experiences and reflections. In an independent learning context the role of the teacher changes from an imparter of knowledge to a facilitator of learning, that may include providing learners with resource materials, teaching learners how to learn, providing learners with opportunities to test out their learning (and there are abundant opportunities in the workplace), giving feedback on progress and helping them to make sense of what they have learned. Our approach is described in detail

in Chapter 2 Becoming a Successful Independent Learner in the Skills for Life-long Learning eBook. Our assessors have many years' of experience in delivering work-based independent learning. We are required to deliver the apprenticeship according to the course specification but there is always scope for improvement. We are introducing audio-recorded reflective reviews between the learner and assessor at the end of each unit and the start of the next to discuss the KSBs attained in the completed unit and the work that needs to be undertaken for the next. We also want to provide more online discussions and tutorials with groups of learners, but with small numbers of learners starting at different times, the scope for this is limited at present. We are introducing a Learning Management System to augment the resources available in the ePortfolio to facilitate these goals.

Ofsted reply

The Education Inspection Framework (EIF), under which we inspect, asks for judgement to be made on "the way that teachers teach and assess to support learners to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills" (paragraph 226). The acquisition of knowledge is different to teaching and a single learning outcome does not need to be tested across the entirety of a qualification. As a result, the inspection team judged that there was not enough interaction with assessors to consider that apprentices were learning enough through assessor interactions. Thank you for sharing the improvements you are making.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

4. Leaders do not ensure that the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship are met. Apprentices do not develop substantial new knowledge, skills, and behaviours as many have worked in the sector as ophthalmic technicians for more than 5 years. The knowledge that they do acquire is not sufficient to be claiming public funds for an apprenticeship and is more akin to continuous professional development (CPD) activities that should be funded by their employer.

AHPO response

What is the Ofsted inspectors' evidence for this assertion? The fact that apprentices have worked in the sector does not mean that they have well-developed KSBs in the areas of knowledge and practice; we know well that time and resource restraints mean that NHS employers frequently provide only the most basic instruction in the learners' role. Feedback from learners confirms this, and the fact that employers have selected these learners to undertake the apprenticeship shows that they are aware of these deficiencies. Staff working at levels 2 and 3 are supervised by more senior members of the team who are responsible for ensuring the quality of the test results. Supervised staff might know how to carry out the tests, but they are not aware, in any depth, of what are they testing and how the test is affected by the problem that patient may be suffering from. In case of ophthalmology they are not aware of what and how the eyes and nervous system work and what is possibly wrong that is leading to the abnormal or unusual result and how urgently it should be acted upon. They may also not know how the equipment works, and how artefacts can be identified and avoided. Staff at this level do not have knowledge or practice in quality assurance, and many are not even included in departmental audit

meetings. The apprenticeship provides the necessary knowledge and skills. Mandatory Unit 5 Technical Scientific Services includes: LO2 Be able to work within protocols and procedures in patient investigation, treatment or management; AC2.4 Undertake a range of activities with respect to HCS technical data including analysis, interpretation, recording, presenting; AC2.5 Demonstrate the ability to make reasoned decisions to initiate/continue/modify or cease using techniques/procedures; AC2.7 Recognise problems and seek technical solutions to them; LO5 Understand the terminology and process that underpins a safe, quality assured healthcare science service; AC5.2 Explain the principles and practice of quality control, external quality assessment and quality management in own work area; LO6 Explain the principles and practice of quality control, external quality assessment and quality management in own work area. Mandatory Unit 7 includes LO2 Understand the principles and practice of audit in healthcare science and LO3 Be able to participate in scientific and technical audit in own area of work. Unit 76 Anatomy, Physiology and Pathophysiology provides the apprentice with knowledge and understanding of the conditions that they are investigating, but builds on the general anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology units they have completed earlier in the course. Without this in-depth training, apprentices would not get the opportunity to progress from their very basic position that relies on a lot of supervision to a higher level where they can work more independently to the benefit of patients and their organisation.

Ofsted reply

This statement has been made because of interviews with both apprentices and employers who could not describe a positive impact of the additional knowledge taught within the apprenticeship on the work-based skills shown by the apprentice. Apprentices were not able to effectively explain what they had learned and how this was used within their professional practice.

5. Leaders ensure that the taught curriculum is logically sequenced, allowing those who have been out of education for some time to start with a focus on study skills before moving on to vocational knowledge, underpinning work in an ophthalmic clinic.

AHPO response

This contradicts the statement in paragraph 3 that the curriculum is not clearly planned and sequenced.

Ofsted reply

This statement refers to the taught curriculum, which is the order of the assessments sent out by the assessors. Rather than the overall curriculum, which includes on and off-the-job learning. Planning of the taught curriculum was logically planned but did not link to other aspects of learning.

6. Leaders have not created effective assessments that link to the apprenticeship.

AHPO response

It is difficult to understand how the Ofsted inspectors came to this conclusion. The BTEC specification is derived from the KSBs in the apprenticeship standard and the assessment criteria are appropriate for a work-based programme of independent

learning. Apprentices are asked to provide evidence that they know and understand a subject, presented in formats that include assignments, presentations, professional discussions and question and answer sessions, and are then asked to demonstrate that they can apply their knowledge and understanding with work products and reflective accounts. This is confirmed by witness statements from senior members of staff. Competence in performing diagnostic tests and procedures is assessed by Direct Observation of Practical/Procedural Skills (DOPS).

On too many occasions, apprentices are asked to complete additional work which increases their already high workload and causes anxiety. For example, in completing additional assignments that are not required for their apprenticeship, when they already have the skills.

AHPO response

It is difficult to know what is meant here. We undertake a comprehensive skills scan at the start of the apprenticeship but few apprentices have evidence that demonstrates they have the skills required for a level 4 healthcare science associate and there is thus little scope to grant accreditation for prior learning. The apprenticeship requires a minimum of 100 credits but we offer a programme with 125 credits. If an apprentice is struggling we can remove selected units but the full programme offers the best prospects for expansion of their work role and progression to higher academic levels. Other healthcare science specialisms offer programmes of 120 credits and more; we are not out of line here.

Ofsted reply

These 2 points are made within one paragraph as they are linked together, so I have also done this within my response, for clarity. Apprentices interviewed considered the volume of written assessment work to be onerous and were anxious about completing this alongside their full-time jobs. In some assessments, learning outcomes were being assessed separately, such as presentation and research skills, where they could have been logically grouped with other outcomes to reduce workload for apprentices. Where apprentices already have experience of higher-level study, they do not need to develop these skills, only to evidence them. As a result, the assessments are not effective.

7. Apprentices do not receive any teaching as part of their apprenticeship and learn very little. Apprentices are provided with learning resources to study, which they subsequently pass, due to their extensive experience and knowledge of the sector.

AHPO response

Apprentices are being trained to become independent learners and are provided with more learning resources in the form of 13 eBooks than most comparable courses at this level. They do NOT have prior "extensive knowledge" – if they did, they would not sometimes struggle with learning new concepts. As stated above, assessors identify from learners' work when they're having difficulty and give feedback via the ePortfolio or via direct contact helpfully and constructively to assist a learner's understanding. To illustrate this point, here is an extract from an apprentice's work for Unit 11 Clinical Science:

The physiological understanding of eye disease took a lot longer for me to comprehend as for a long time I saw the eye as a singular structure functioning alone unattached to other body systems. Without knowledge of systems and how they interact, it can be difficult to comprehend why a diabetic patient may attend an eye clinic in a wheelchair with poor vision. With a better understanding of both anatomy and physiology, I can improve the quality of patient experience and care as well as improve the clinical experience for both patients and staff.

The apprentice, who had a Level 3 NVQ in Health and Social Care, had limited prior knowledge of general anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology before starting the apprenticeship. She can now demonstrate that she has this knowledge and can apply it in her practice.

Ofsted reply

In interviews with both employers and apprentices it was reported that apprentices learn very little new information. No apprentices could describe how they were taught any of the knowledge content of their apprenticeship. Very few could recall any of the content of the resource e-books or describe how they were using this new information in their practice.

8. Assessors do not meet with all apprentices regularly enough. For some apprentices the gap between progress reviews is too long.

AHPO response

Apprentices are in regular contact with assessors via the ePortfolio feedback and messaging systems. During the Covid emergency progress reviews were disrupted as apprentices had breaks in learning and were relocated to other departments. With the return to normal working service pressures have been severe, leading to postponements of review meetings by learners and mentors. We have been addressing these issues and have a Learner Support Protocol to clarify action to be taken in such circumstances. Learners who are falling behind are discussed at length at every assessor/IQA meeting. At the time of the inspection, all learner reviews had been undertaken within three months except for one that had been undertaken 6 months before the inspection. We accept we need a better audit trail for the reviews and are putting this in place.

Ofsted reply

Thank you for explaining the improvements you will be making to your processes. In the inspection evidence those apprentices interviewed reported long gaps between progress reviews both at the current time and during the last year. As a result, the team considered that the gaps between these meetings were too long.

9. Progress reviews are too brief and place a disproportionate focus on assessment completion as opposed to developing the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that they need to make a greater contribution at work.

AHPO response

We have a template for our learner reviews which is comprehensive and all areas are

discussed. Some assessors audio-record the reviews in addition to documenting responses in the form, and in future we will ask all assessors to do this.

Ofsted reply

Thank you for explaining your process.

10. Too many apprentices do not benefit from enough assessor support to make the rapid progress of which they are capable. For example, a few apprentices have not spoken to their assessors in over 7 months.

AHPO response

This is not correct, please see our previous response re progress reviews. Apprentices are in regular contact with their assessors via the ePortfolio and, with the one exception mentioned above, all had reviews within three months.

Ofsted reply

In interviews with apprentices the duration of the gap between assessor meetings was identified as a concern, both at the present time and over the last year. The length of this gap was identified by apprentices.

11. Leaders do not ensure that employers and workplace mentors attend apprentices' progress reviews regularly. In too many cases, employers are not involved in the planning of learning to create opportunities for apprentices to practise the knowledge and skills they are learning. Workplace mentors are not effectively supported by the provider to understand their role in supporting apprentices at work. As a result, the quality of on- and off-the-job learning is inconsistent and depends on the enthusiasm, availability and understanding of the apprenticeship of the workplace mentor.

AHPO response

Extensive efforts are made to include mentors and managers in progress reviews but this often proves difficult owing to their heavy workload, especially in the rather frenetic post-pandemic NHS. We would love to get more involvement of these staff members. However where the portfolio red/ amber/ green (RAG) rating system identifies learners falling behind our Learner Support Protocol requires managers to be contacted and involved. We ask mentors and line managers who are unable to attend review meetings to add comments to the Learner Review document, but they do not always respond to this request (and our attempts to obtain employer input has been a reason for the delay in uploading learner reviews into the portfolios).

Ofsted reply

Thank you for clarifying your process with regards progress reviews. While we recognise that the involvement of employers is a challenge this is a requirement of the apprenticeship. As a result, the lack of engagement is problematic.

12. Apprentices with English as an additional language and those who require English and mathematics functional skills to complete their apprenticeship are not offered enough support to help them to achieve their apprenticeship. Leaders and assessors do not ensure that apprentices complete an assessment of English

and mathematics skills at the start of their apprenticeship to identify gaps in their knowledge. Many apprentices seek additional English support from their colleagues, family and attend classes at other providers to be able to complete their assessments. These apprentices do not make the rapid progress for which they are capable.

AHPO response

We ask but cannot insist that employers ensure apprentices attain level 2 maths and English prior to the apprenticeship. If this is not possible, we subcontract this with an external training provider. As stated previously the progress of ESL apprentices does not fall behind that of native English speakers. If apprentices have level 2 English there is no additional funding available to support development of their language skills. Our assessors provide advice and support in their feedback to apprentices and recommend tools that they can use to improve their English, and there is good evidence in the portfolios that their written English improves as they progress through the apprenticeship.

Ofsted reply

This statement was made because of interviews with apprentices who have English as an additional language who reported that they needed to do additional work around their language skills in order to complete their assessments effectively. As a result of having this additional work they are not able to complete their apprenticeship work as rapidly as they would otherwise be capable. The EIF specifically recognises the need for apprentices to develop their English and maths skills regardless of their entry points. This development should be as a result of your work with them.

13. Leaders and assessors do not make appropriate use of apprentices' prior learning and experience to plan a challenging curriculum. Most apprentices have worked for many years in the ophthalmic technician roles, but this is not considered when planning their learning.

AHPO response

This is not the case. We do undertake an extensive skills scan at the start of the apprenticeship, as mentioned previously.

Although apprentices are successful at end-point assessment (EPA) this is due to their extensive experience prior to them starting the apprenticeship.

AHPO response

This is pure speculation and we know it is not true. The skills scan determines whether or not apprentices have the experience required of a level 4 practitioner and for all our apprentices we know this is not the case. If they could pass the EPA without the knowledge and skills required at Level 4 the validity of the EPA should be called into question.

Ofsted reply

As these 2 points are within one paragraph, I have responded to them together for clarity. While the inspection team could see a skills scan, this statement is made from the comments of those employers and apprentices interviewed. The skills scan could not be seen to individualise the curriculum, taking into account the experience

of the apprentices. Many considered that they were not developing new skills. There is a difference between having the entry requirements of a level 4 programme of study and the appropriate skills and behaviours developed by an apprenticeship programme. While apprentices did not have a level 4 qualification in their area of work both they and their employers reported that the apprenticeship did not further develop the skills and behaviours identified within the standard.

14. Leaders have not planned or taught a personal development curriculum as part of the apprenticeship. While apprentices complete reflective assessments on mental health, they do not have the opportunity to discuss this further.

AHPO response

These are covered in Unit 1 LO4 Be able to maintain own health and well-being; Unit 2 LO8 Be able to promote mental health and well-being; Unit 6 LO7 Understand how to deal with confrontation and difficult situations in own area of work; and Unit 10 LO1 Be able to critically reflect on own practice to support continuing personal and professional development (CPPD) and LO2 Be able to demonstrate continuing personal and professional development (CPPD).

Ofsted reply

Thank you for clarifying where there is a personal development element within the qualification. As I have stated, apprentices do complete reflective assessments. However, this does not represent a personal development curriculum as identified in the EIF, paragraph 267.

15. They discuss fundamental British values within the context of their work but have no wider understanding of areas such as democracy or rule of law. As a result, apprentices do not develop their broader understanding of life in modern Britain throughout their apprenticeship.

AHPO response

We are surprised that the inspectors concluded that our apprentices who are mature adults lack a wider understanding of areas such as democracy or rule of law. This can be interpreted as being directed towards learners from abroad and we fear it could be construed as making racist assumptions. Issues concerning life in modern Britain will be discussed with the assessor in the reflective reviews. In such discussions we feel issues of sustainability should be considered, particularly as healthcare makes a significant negative environmental impact.

Ofsted reply

During interviews with apprentices and following reviews of assessor review paperwork there was very little evidence of conversations and development of the principles centred in fundamental British values. These principles are not only British values but values important to the education system within Great Britain and do not have any racist assumptions associated with them.

16. Leaders do not ensure that apprentices receive any careers education, information, advice or guidance. Too many apprentices do not have a clear understanding of the opportunities available to them once they have completed

their apprenticeship.

AHPO response

This is not the case. Unit 10 LOs 2.10 & 2.11 specifically relate to career opportunities where the apprentice is asked to research this and write an account, following which they are advised to "*Discuss your career plan with your assessor, mentor and other relevant colleagues in your workplace*"; and in Unit 10 LO3 their role as a future teacher/trainer is covered.

Ofsted reply

Thank you for clarifying your process with regards careers education. However, discussing previously considered career pathways is not the same as independent careers guidance, which is specifically recognised as important within the EIF (paragraph 267). Few apprentices interviewed could recall any conversations about careers where they had been given independent advice and guidance.

17. A few apprentices are not interested in progression but are focussed on gaining the accredited qualification incorporated in the apprenticeship that demonstrates their prior skills and will give them UK certification.

AHPO response

We wonder what exactly this is intended to imply. Does it refer to non-UK citizens who want a UK qualification so they can pursue a career in the UK? We presume so as the inspectors appear to have concluded that the qualification makes no contribution to career progression.

Ofsted reply

This statement is written as a result of comments from apprentices that this was the purpose of their studies. There is no implication from the inspection team, only a factual report.

18. Leaders have recruited highly knowledgeable and experienced practitioners as assessors. However, they do not encourage or support assessors to complete continual professional development (CPD) related to their teaching practice. As a result, apprentices do not benefit from effective design and assessment of the curriculum to help them learn.

AHPO response

All assessors must have a TAQA diploma which we provide as needed. The majority of our assessors have decades of experience teaching, training and assessing professionals working in eye clinics who undertake CPD as independent learners. We require assessors to produce an annual PDP and undertake continuing CPD. An area of weakness is delivery of online education and training and, with the setting up of our learning management system, we are supporting assessors to undertake CPD in this area. Resources permitting, we will employ a tutor and would support their training in digital learning.

Ofsted reply

Thank you for clarifying the experience of your assessors. In interviews with assessors and during the review of CPD logs there was no mention of any recent

CPD related to the craft of teaching.

19. Leaders do not ensure that they have quality assurance process that extends beyond the requirements of the awarding organisation. They do not routinely gather or use data effectively to be able to identify strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeships that they provide. For example, in using attendance data to identify when assessor reviews have been missed. Those responsible for governance do not have effective information to be able to hold leaders to account and improve the quality of training that apprentices receive.

AHPO response

Our quality improvement processes and procedures including our 13 KPIs are described in the AHPO Vision Statement. Our KPIs are: 1.Apprentices progress rated amber or red, and these presented as a proportion of the apprentice cohort; 2.Apprentice retention and reasons for withdrawal; 3.Absence, break in learning; 4.Apprentice feedback and satisfaction; 5.Employer feedback and satisfaction; 6.Apprentice complaints and compliments; 7.Employer complaints and compliments; 8.Achievements versus planned outcome including QARs (Qualification Achievement Rates); 9.Compliance requirements are met and are of the quality required (including tripartite reviews, OTJT, action plan achievement); 10.Employer engagement pipeline and conversions; 11.Employer repeat business; 12.ILR error rate / lost and late funding;13.Apprentice destination and outcomes - including outcomes occurring on programme (promotions, awards etc). The Vision Statement and KPIs were agreed in July 2022 and outcomes assessed against the KPIs will be included in the annual report that will be presented to the Trustees' Board meeting in July 2023. Interim data is included in the Head of Centre and Lead IQA reports presented at the four-monthly Trustees' Board meetings and in the regularly updated SAR, and is also discussed and actions agreed at AHPO Executive meetings and Assessor & IQA meetings. Our data collection has not been perfect, a problem exacerbated by difficulties of recruitment and retention of administration staff which is a current and well-recognised problem for businesses and organisations throughout the UK. Data collection for KPIs 1 to 7 has been good; with regard to employer feedback (KPI 5) there are 19 employer reviews on Find and Apprenticeship, a good sample size for our small numbers, and the average rating is good. Regarding KPIs 8 to 13, we recognised that learner reviews had not been conducted as frequently as they should (KPI 9) and have been addressing this issue such that, by the time of the Ofsted inspection, all but one was within date although some had not been uploaded into the ePortfolios.

At the time of the inspection we had not collected data on apprenticeship outcomes (KPI 13) from the three (now four) apprentices who passed the EPA, and one who will shortly take the EPA. We have now obtained this feedback. Four of the five apprentices have been promoted; two from a senior healthcare assistant to assistant practitioner in ophthalmology; one from a Band 3 ophthalmic technician to Band 4 senior ophthalmic technician (during the apprenticeship) and now a Band 5 ophthalmic photographer (since completing the apprenticeship). One has been promoted to a senior ophthalmic technician and will be upgraded to Band 5 this summer. Four said their job roles and responsibilities had increased including

management responsibilities, training other staff, undertaking new skills and procedures and working in virtual and nurse-led clinics. Additional comments included the following: "Hugely proud of what we have achieved. Will always be grateful to [named AHPO staff] for all their enthusiasm during the course, and continued help and support"; "The apprenticeship course has definitely made me think more about reflecting on my everyday activities in and outside of work and given me more scientific knowledge and basis to my role... It has been a journey of personal and professional development for sure and I would recommend anyone starting it to really commit to it 100% and keep plowing through, there were moments when i felt overwhelmed by the amount of work to complete but i kept on track and found the layout easy to follow and it is in manageable chunks and reflection is a big part of looking at how far you have come and being willing to step outside of your comfort zone"; "The course is very informative and there are plenty of materials provided to learners and you have a mentor in your department assigned to you". A line manager provided the following comment about one of the apprentices "During the course period, I saw lots of changes in __, She has developed a lot of confidence and considers minor details and works on them very carefully. Her quality of work has improved a lot and her self-esteem too. I think this course has made her grow professionally. I have seen her taking more interest in the policies and protocols and SOP. She now voluntarily takes interest in management issues and tries to solve some problems by giving suggestions".

For KPIs 8 and 10 – 12 data, if not yet formally documented, is readily accessible for the annual report.

Ofsted reply

All the reports given to the inspection team were considered during inspection, including the SAR and minutes of board meetings. Tracking of KPI was not visible through these documents, nor presented additionally to the lead inspector and during the governance meeting governors themselves identified that they did not have the data available to enable effective support and challenge. Unfortunately, you are not able to present additional information after the end of the inspection to be considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff receive safeguarding training, through their work with the NHS as well as with the provider. They have put in place appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that staff know how to keep apprentices safe. They follow safer recruitment checks to ensure that staff are safe to work apprentices.

Leaders have appropriate links to safeguarding services in the local area, however they have not yet developed these links to cover the regions in which apprentices work.

Minor administrative errors in safeguarding documentation were rectified during the inspection.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should develop robust processes to enable them to monitor the quality of education that apprentices receive and the progress that all apprentices make.

AHPO response

Progress monitoring is already quite robust but we plan to institute learner/assessor discussions in the form of reflective reviews at the end of each unit that will contribute to the monitoring of the quality of the education, and to discuss progress with employers at 12 week reviews.

- Leaders and assessors should use assessed starting points effectively to ensure that apprentices develop substantial new knowledge skills and behaviour throughout their apprenticeship.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices are given support to develop their English and mathematics skills throughout their apprenticeship.

AHPO response

Any issues with English and maths will be discussed and addressed in reflective reviews at the end of each unit and in the 12 week reviews, and measures to address issues will be considered and acted upon.

- Leaders should ensure that apprentice progress review meetings are frequent, regular and support all apprentices to make swift progress on their apprenticeship.

AHPO response

Progress monitoring is already quite robust but we plan to institute learner/assessor discussions in the form of reflective reviews at the end of each unit that will contribute to the monitoring of the quality of the education.

- Leaders should ensure that communication with employers to review apprentices' progress is frequent and includes planning and reviews of on- and off-the-job learning.

AHPO response

Employer engagement has proved difficult but in future if we say that this is an Ofsted requirement we might get a better response.

- Leaders should ensure that those responsible for governance are given appropriate and effective information to allow them to hold leaders and managers to account to swiftly improve the quality of training that apprentices receive.

AHPO response

We do this already at the Trustees' Board meetings but we plan to enhance the process with additional data, in particular from 12 week reviews.

- Leaders should ensure that all teaching staff develop their teaching skills through planned training.
- Leaders should ensure all apprentices receive impartial careers education information, advice and guidance to understand their next steps.

AHPO response

As mentioned above LOs 2.10 & 2.11 Unit 10 specifically relate to career opportunities where the apprentice is asked to research this (and we direct them to

“Discuss your career plan with your assessor, mentor and other relevant colleagues in your workplace. In addition we will ask employers to state what career advancements they anticipate providing for apprentices once they’ve completed the apprenticeship. We will also provide advice and guidance in the reflective review with the apprentice that is undertaken when they complete the BTEC Diploma.

- Leaders should ensure all apprentices have sufficient opportunities to help them develop their knowledge of healthy lifestyles, well-being and to understand local risks.

AHPO response

In addition to work undertaken in Units 1, 2 and 10 mentioned elsewhere, this will be a standard item discussed in the reflective reviews at the end of each unit. It is also discussed in the 12 week reviews.

We trust that other areas of improvement have been sufficiently addressed in previous discussion/comments above

Ofsted reply

This statement is in relation to your comments against the report recommendations. Thank you for explaining the changes you will be making to your processes. Unfortunately, we are not able to consider these within this inspection report as they fall outside of the inspection time frame.