Wigan Borough CCG grows its own workforce through apprenticeships

Wigan Borough CCG is planning its workforce for the future by taking on apprentices in Business Administration and Finance.

The CCG wants to recruit and retain younger, highly trained individuals in its support areas, and is also keen to encourage local people into the local NHS workforce and build links with the local schools and colleges.

Apprentices are at the heart of the Group’s workforce planning and are seen as an excellent way to ‘grow their own’ workforce.

How they did it

The CCG worked in close partnership with the National Skills Academy for Health and Wigan and Leigh College to plan the apprenticeship pathways. This partnership was instrumental in helping the CCG develop its programme, which aimed to align the business needs of the organisation with each apprentice’s personal development needs, ensuring relevant and robust training and mentoring.

By using the NSAH Apprenticeship Training Agency to employ the apprentices on the CCG’s behalf, the apprentices became supernumery members of the workforce, being prepared to take on appropriate roles once they achieved their apprenticeship.

A member of the National Skills Academy provided external support. Each apprentice needed a workplace mentor, a challenging work plan, and the opportunity to rotate between teams to gain a better understanding of the roles within the CCG and its partner organisations. There were also practical considerations such as where the apprentices would sit, what equipment was required for each; and how much protected time would be provided for study.

The HR team set up a monthly meeting for the apprentices where they could share ideas and experiences, and make suggestions. It proved to be a good forum for identifying skills other than those used in their roles. For example, the meetings led to the production of a web page where the apprentices could put ideas forward and use their social networking skills to develop the page and bring it to life.

Wigan Borough CCG has a culture of supporting and developing its workforce. Apprentices who move into a full-time role continue to receive mentoring and training, enabling them to achieve further qualifications and reach their full potential.
Our vision, and that of the employers with whom we work, is to create a qualified and transferable workforce, with every individual recognised and valued for the skills they have, and encouraged and enabled to develop the skills they want and need.

To find out more about the National Skills Academy for Health and how we can help you, please contact us today.

www.nsahealth.org.uk  information@nsahealth.org.uk

CASE STUDY

“I would recommend anyone thinking of taking on apprentices to plan ahead and make sure that they identify genuine roles – apprentices should feel that they are valued members of the workforce and are able to contribute fully to the organisation in order to achieve their potential. It takes time and effort but the reward of seeing a young person develop and acquire skills that benefit all parties is magical.”

Kathryn Ball, Wigan Borough CCG’s HR Senior Project Manager:

Benefits

- The apprentices have brought a vitality and energy to the CCG, along with new skills and ways of working.

- With assistance, they have been able to undertake tasks and activities that support other members of the team – genuinely adding value to the CCG’s work.

- The scheme is now in its third year, and all of the apprentices have moved into jobs either in the CCG itself, or in the health sector.

- Apprentices subsequently employed by the CCG are familiar with how the organisation operates, and the people around them, and they in turn are known by their colleagues.

- Their induction period is significantly reduced and they are able to have an immediate impact – even when the full time role is in a different directorate to the one that they completed their apprenticeship in.

- The departments benefit enormously from having highly trained and motivated individuals who can ‘hit the ground running’.

- Apprentices who subsequently become part of the workforce can be further developed to maximise their potential.

Sam Platt, former apprentice and now Continuing Healthcare Support Officer

Sam joined Wigan Borough CCG as a Finance apprentice and undertook Level 2 and 3 AAT Introduction to Accounting qualifications.

‘The apprenticeship scheme is a great starting point for gaining professional qualifications and gaining job prospects for the future. Learning all day at work and then studying at night at home is hard work, but the apprenticeship has helped me to develop the skills and confidence to take on a job in a big team with tight deadlines and a large workload. I know that every day the work I do helps to improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable patients.’

Suzanne Byron, Continuing Healthcare Support Manager, who manages Sam

‘There are so many benefits when you are able to take on someone who has a thorough grounding in your business. As Sam had worked with the CCG as a Finance apprentice, we were completely confident of his abilities. He has been like a breath of fresh air in the team, bringing new ideas and ways of working. Having Sam in the CHC team managing the day-to-day administrative tasks allows the more senior members of the team to concentrate on the more complex, patient focused tasks. Sam’s input enables us to meet our targets. We are continuing to support and develop him in his current role.’

Kathryn Ball, Wigan Borough CCG’s HR Senior Project Manager: