

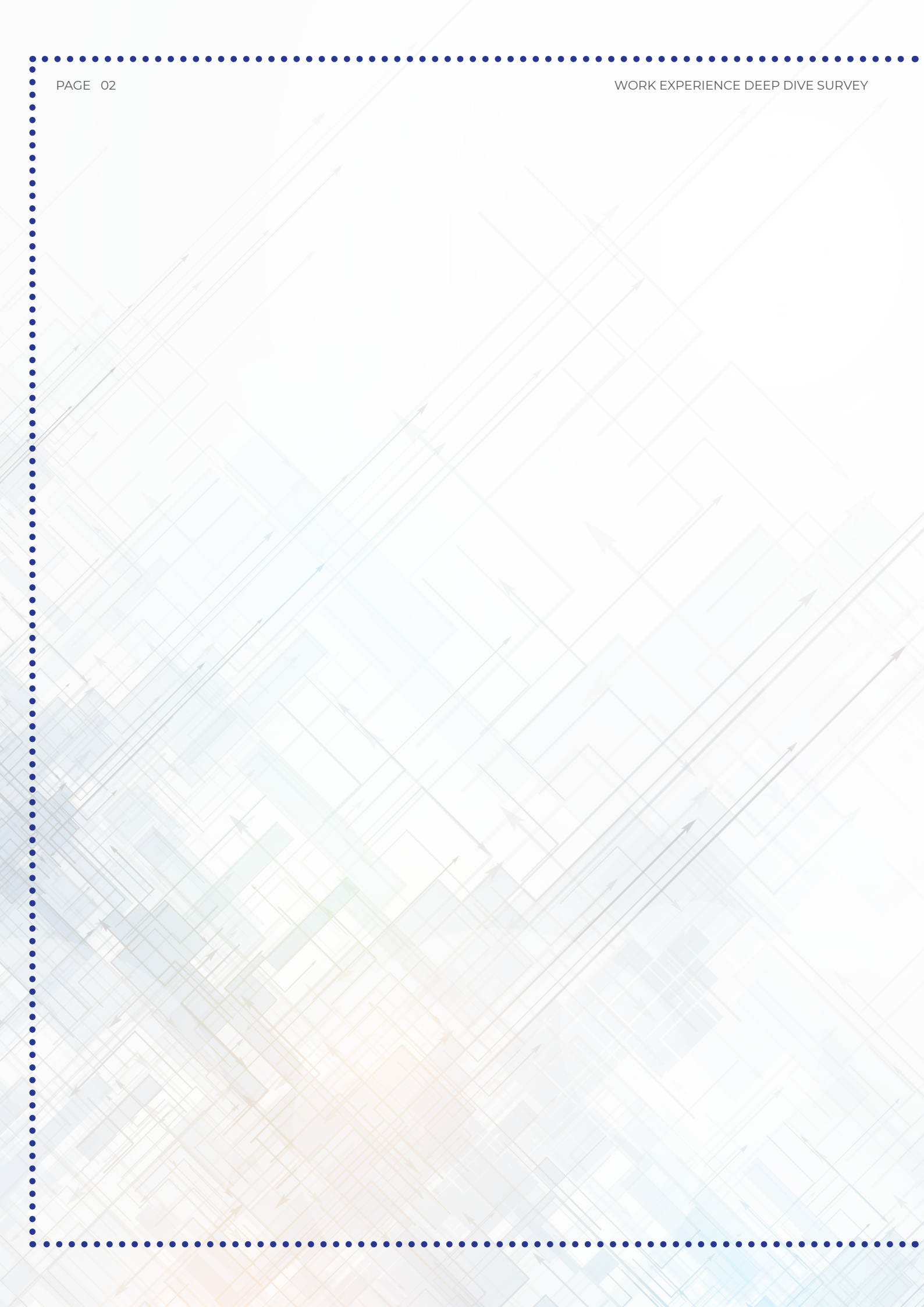
WORK EXPERIENCE DEEP DIVE SURVEY

NHS
Health Education England

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Recruitment into healthcare professions by employers, and higher education institutions responsible for training and development, require applicants to have an understanding of what a career in healthcare involves.

Outline of research

Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust (LTHT) has been identified by Health Education England, who are funding this research, as a provider of wide-ranging work experience opportunities. The trust holds Gold accreditation through the national body Fair Train who apply quality standards across the sector.

An online questionnaire was developed using Organisational Learning's understanding of current activities within the trust along with previous national survey results. The survey was distributed to individual members of staff across multiple departments and grades. We received 64 responses to our survey between the period October and December 2020.

Work related learning / employability events

Involvement

Just under half of all respondents (48%) indicated that they had been involved in such programmes. The most frequent activities they took place in were the support of careers and skills fairs, cited by 71% of respondents, and tours of departments (cited by 55% of our respondents).

Target group of activity

Many of the activities (45%) supported by our respondents had no specific target group indicating the events were general work related or employability initiatives.

Barriers to offering work relation opportunities

By far the biggest barrier to engagement in activity in this area was lack of time (68%), followed by limited capacity within the trust (45%), and limited support from others (35%).

Collaborative arrangements with other providers

Around two-thirds of respondents (61%) indicated that they did not work with organisations outside of the trust to support work related learning or employability opportunities indicating that they were either initiatives of the trust or ad hoc initiatives either initiated by the participant or the member of staff.

Preparedness for work related learning or employability provision

Around two-thirds of respondents (61%) indicated that participants for work related learning or employability programmes were very/quite prepared for such provision when they came to the trust.

Work experience programmes or initiatives

Involvement

Less than half of all respondents (44%) had been involved in work experience provision, or supported such provision. Of those who did provide direct support for work experience provision, most (61%) provided between 1 and 5 opportunities prior to Covid-related restrictions; 18% provided multiple opportunities (between 6 and 15).

Length of placement

Most work experience placements (75%) supported by respondents are 3-5 days in duration. They are also, in the main, offered as consecutive days delivery.

Organising work experience

The majority of work experience placements supported by respondents (79%) are organised by themselves and colleagues in their departments, in response to individual enquiries.

Target group of activity

Most of the activities (60%) supported by our respondents were targeted at year 12 or year 13 (aged 16 and above).

Selecting/recruiting participants

By far, the most popular method of selecting/recruiting participants for placements (69%) was via direct enquiries from students/schools.

Views on the value of work experience in the trust

Three quarters (75%) of respondents agree/strongly agree that work experience benefits others who work in the trust.

Barriers to providing work experience

By far the biggest barrier to engagement in activity in this area was limited capacity in the trust (61%), followed by lack of time (54%).

Collaborative arrangements with other providers

Almost three-quarters of respondents (71%) indicated that they did not work with organisations outside of the trust to support the work experience offer provided.

Preparedness for work related learning or employability provision

Slightly less than three-quarters (71%) indicated that participants for work experience provision were very/quite prepared for such provision when they came to the trust.

Planning for the future

We asked respondents to think about the next 12 months (in light of Covid restrictions) and to anticipate the support they may need in order to realise their work experience offer. The most cited response (55%) was to invite respondents to participate in work experience workshops where the topic could be discussed

Importance of work related learning and work experience programmes

Almost all respondents (93%) thought that it was very important/quite important for the trust to continue to offer work experience or work related learning/employability programmes.

BACKGROUND

Recruitment into healthcare professions by employers, and higher education institutions responsible for training and development, require applicants to have an understanding of what a career in healthcare involves. Applicants are selected based on demonstration of the values, skills and attitudes required by the NHS¹. There are numerous ways of obtaining these experiences which can be grouped into the two basic types:

1. Working with other people in a caring or service role, and in particular with people who are ill, disabled or disadvantaged. (Strongly recommended)
2. Direct observation of healthcare².

Whilst there are some beacons of best practice in work experience both within secondary and primary care including local initiatives, national schemes and accreditation³ the majority of work experience activity still occurs ad hoc which could result in reduced infrastructure to support it. Additionally, less formalised provision can reduce equity of access to activities which can support recruitment. Access to the medical profession for students from non-privileged backgrounds has been criticised for several years⁴. A Sutton Trust report stated that “although there had been substantial improvements in university participation among students from disadvantaged backgrounds in recent years, the gap between disadvantaged students and their advantaged peers remains significant, particularly at the most selective universities”⁵. Limiting factors generally include lack of information and awareness of opportunities available beyond immediate family or social circles, and restricted evidence-based reference points (parents or siblings’ positive personal experiences of progression.

The benefits to organisations allowing individuals access into their environment are not all one way. Prospective employees are increasingly seeking more meaningful workplace experiences to help them determine whether their values align with their own and therefore they would like to work within that organisation⁶. Scoping in depth in one trust will help to identify need, share good practice and inform development of future resource.

Due to Covid-19 related restrictions, the types and range of opportunities have significantly changed. Employers, Higher Education Institutions have adapted with a significant change to online provision and the expectation of the level of insight into the NHS and roles within it have also changed. Those wishing to enter healthcare professions have been voicing concern around the lack of opportunities that have been available and anxiety about the impact of this on their career pathway.

OUTLINE OF RESEARCH

Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust (LTHT) has been identified by Health Education England, who are funding this research, as a provider of wide-ranging work experience opportunities. The trust holds Gold accreditation through the national body Fair Train who apply quality standards across the sector. They are one of the largest NHS Trusts in the UK employing more than 17,000 people across city providing work experience and alternatives to traditional work experience including department open days and careers events. Work Experience at LTHT is defined as "A placement in a health related work environment providing Direct Observation of Healthcare"¹³.

A 'deep dive' approach was used to identify the range of experiences already on offer throughout all areas of the trust, covering the range of trust roles. The results can help inform the trust's own employment strategy and interventions.

An online questionnaire was developed using Organisational Learning's understanding of current activities within the trust along with previous national survey results. The survey was distributed to individual members of staff across multiple departments and grades.



SURVEY

The survey asked participants questions about the work experience and preparedness for work interventions that they have taken part in during the previous 36 months, barriers and facilitators to providing these interventions and motivation for being involved. The trust organised the delivery of the survey to those members of staff who would mostly likely have responsibility or engagement in work experience or preparedness for work initiative. Circulation channels therefore included the following groups (resulting in over 1000 staff receiving our request for data):

- Clinical Directors
- Clinical Educators
- Heads of Nursing
- Matrons
- Business Managers
- General Managers
- Healthcare Career Ambassadors
- Training Leads Forum members
- Learning and Development Group members

To ensure representation and coverage in responses, the trust also advertised the survey through the Staff Connect and In Touch, which go out to all LTHT staff members.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

We received 64 responses to our survey between the period October and December 2020*.

Respondent location and role

Most responses came from staff based at St. James Hospital (56%) and Leeds General Infirmary (22%). In terms of Clinical Service Unit (CSU), our survey secured a good spread of responses, with some concentration of responses from Corporate Services (20%) and Abdominal Medicine (16%). 'Other' responses included those based in Estates and Finance, Research and Innovation and the Medical Directorate. Analysis by NHS role indicates that almost one third (30%) of respondents came from roles linked to nursing, with a further 12% from Allied Health Professionals.

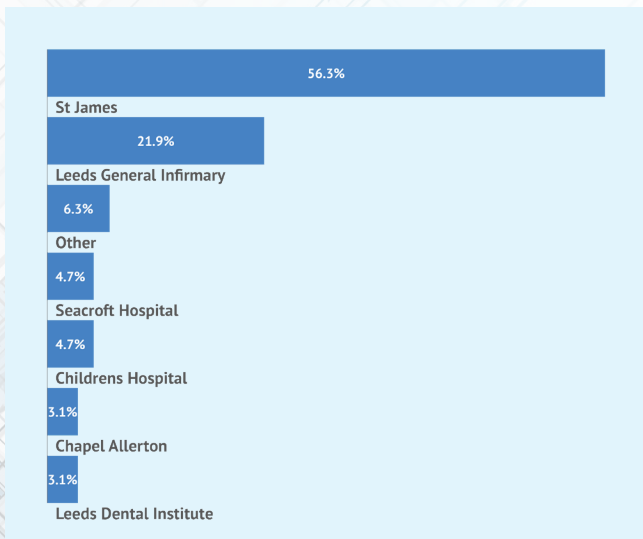


Figure 1: Which site do you work at?

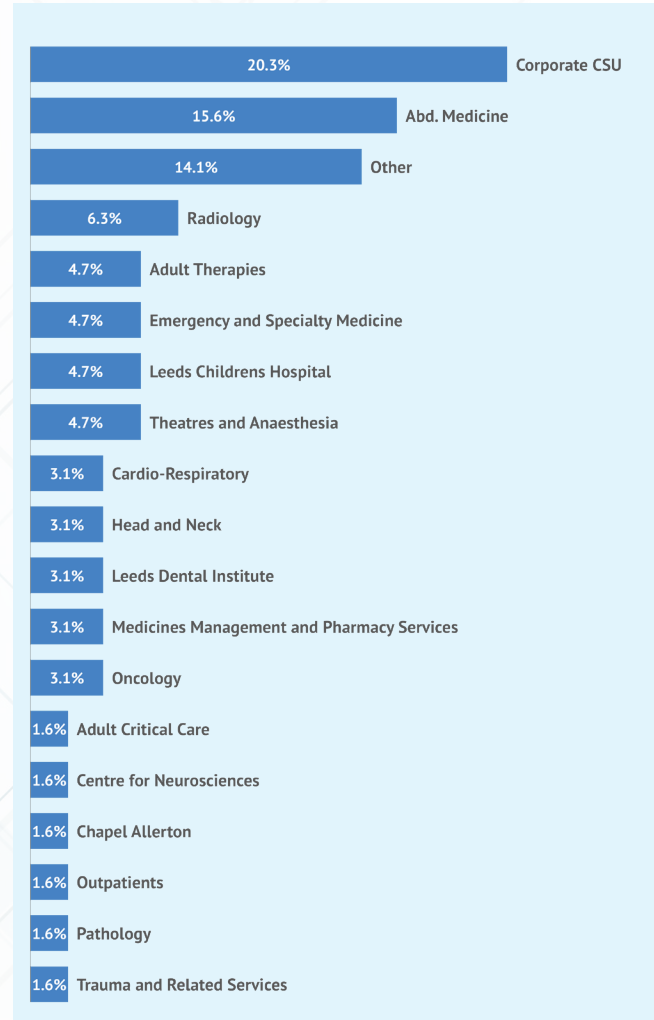


Figure 2: Which Clinical Service Unit do you work in?

Grade

In terms of band or grade, most respondents (74%) indicated they were band 6 or above. Band 6 typically includes the following staff: Ward Sister (RN), health records officer, clinical psychology trainee and biomedical scientist.

Length of service

Almost all respondents to our survey (92%) had been employed by the trust for 5 years or more.

*It is important to note that at the time of this survey being circulated to staff, the trust was managing the second significant wave of circulating Covid 19 in the community, and the associated rise in hospital admissions.

FINDINGS

Work related learning/employability events

We asked respondents about their involvement in work related programmes and employability programmes. In our question we determined work related learning as that which gives exposure and insight into future careers, including an understanding of the skills and knowledge required in the workplace. Work-related learning could include careers/skills events, open days and tours. In terms of employability programmes we identified that these are programmes that are typically aimed at people with qualifications at level 2 or below, and provide them with training to develop their skills and increased opportunities for employment, further/higher education opportunities in health-related subjects or moving into apprenticeships. This could include internship.

Involvement

Just under half of all respondents (48%) indicated that they had been involved in such programmes. The most frequent activities they took part in were the support of careers and skills fairs, cited by 71% of respondents, and tours of departments (cited by 55% of our respondents). Careers talks in schools and workshops held at the trust or school sites were also popular engagement devices to support work related learning and employability. 'Other' events and activities listed by respondents included supporting recruitment fairs and Graduate Management Training Scheme events.

Number of activities

Of those who were involved in activities, most (87%) were involved in between 1 and 5 events last year.

Target group of activity

Many of the activities (45%) supported by our respondents had no specific target group indicating the events were general work related or employability initiatives. Of those that were targeted, these tended to focus on provision for young people aged 16-24 who were identified as NEET (not in education, employment or training), those from BME groups, or socially/educationally disadvantaged young people. 'Other' responses to this question included school-children, pre-registration graduates/those completing a university degree.

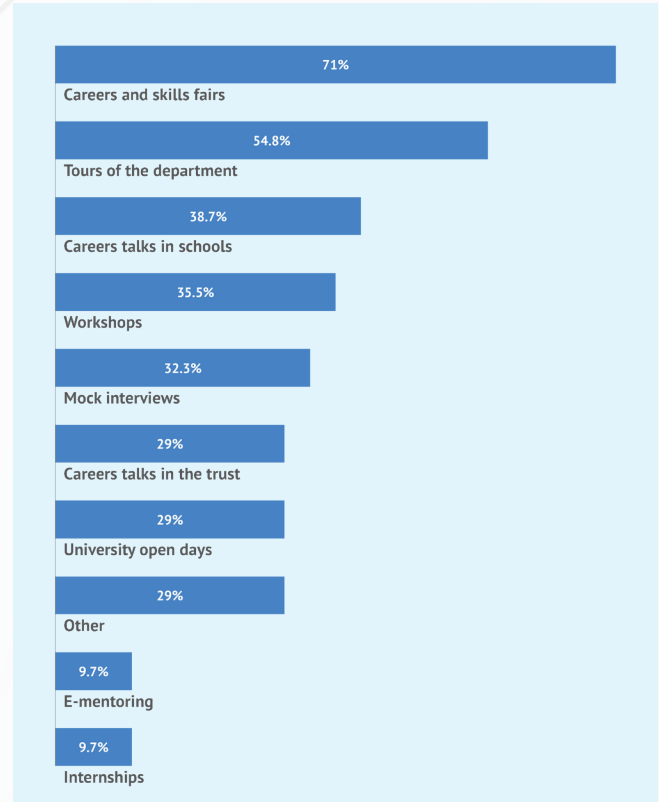


Figure 3: What work related learning/employability initiatives have you taken part in?

Barriers to offering work relation opportunities

By far the biggest barrier to engagement in activity in this area was lack of time (68%), followed by limited capacity within the trust (45%), and limited support from others (35%). 'Other' barriers to offering work related opportunities included some work not being deemed appropriate for work related activity, lack of skilled mentoring and guidance support for those undertaking such activity, and the impact of Covid-19 on the general operation of the trust.

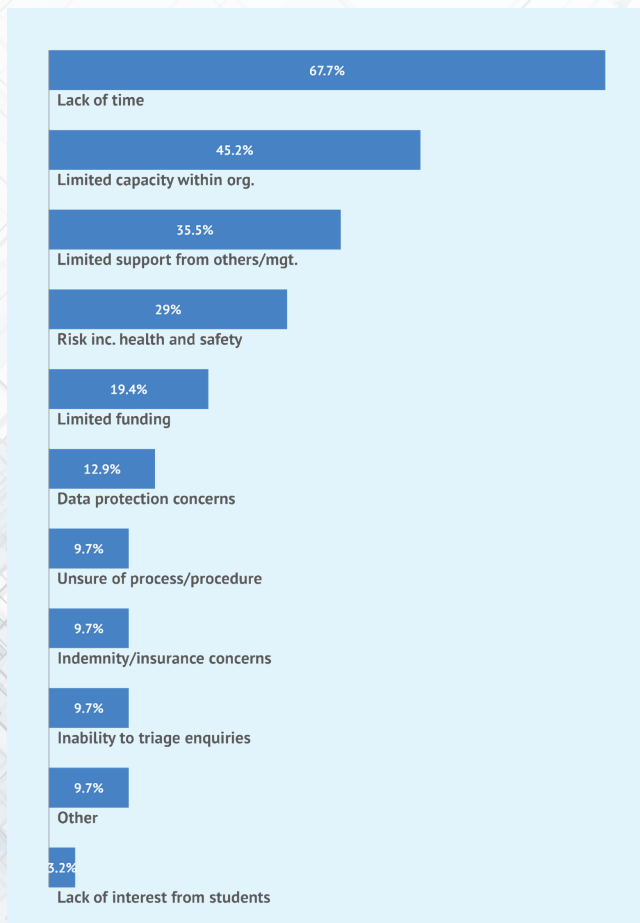
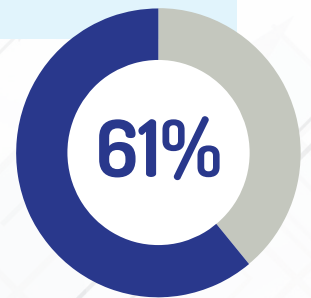


Figure 4: Barriers to work related learning/employability provision.

Collaborative arrangements with other providers

Around two-thirds of respondents (61%) indicated that they did not work with organisations outside of the trust to support work related learning or employability opportunities indicating that they were either initiatives of the trust or ad hoc initiatives either initiated by the participant or the member of staff.

Proportion of respondents who do not work with organisations outside of the trust to support work related learning.



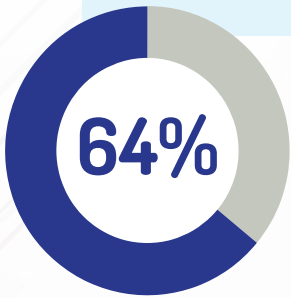
Of those who did work with other organisations, a number cited local and regional universities as providers of this collaborative support. Specific support was provided in terms of open days and specific programmes or initiatives funded by universities – such as the Go Higher in West Yorkshire project designed to support young people from typically disadvantaged areas to progress to local institutions and employers.



It gives a 3 way link, between the learner, employer and Higher education. We are able to show what Leeds has to offer.
Survey respondent.

For those respondents who did work collaboratively, they identified a number of benefits of working with partners. These included: providing access to a networks of local and regional educational providers, providing highly qualified graduates capable of fulfilling vacancies in the trust, linking the trust in with internship and summer school programmes for 6th form students, advertising the work of the trust and the work and career opportunities it has to offer, providing access to apprenticeship programme provision and support.

How prepared are participants for work related learning or employability provision?



Preparedness for work related learning or employability provision

Around two-thirds of respondents (64%) indicated that participants for work related learning or employability programmes were very/quite prepared for such provision when they came to the trust.

To ensure participants are fully prepared respondents suggested a number of factors, these included:

- participants being more aware of the work of the trust, the roles within it and examples of career routes
- more preparation from participants in terms of being ready (and confident enough) to ask questions
- enhancing participants communications and/or leadership skills prior to joining the trust
- more information provided to schools/colleges/ participants outlining expectations from the trust and the learning outcomes of the activity/ experience
- informal discussion or meeting with the participant prior to them joining the trust would enable a smoother visit.



An informal meeting prior to their starting would be very helpful. There is not necessarily the opportunity to have a decent chat with people first thing on a Monday morning (they always arrive on a Monday). The official paperwork etc gets in the way.

Survey respondent.

Work experience programmes or initiatives

We asked respondents about their involvement in work experience programmes or initiatives. In our question we determined work experience to be that which provide opportunities for direct experience of healthcare work within an organisational setting, this could include role shadowing for example.

Involvement

Less than half of all respondents (44%) had been involved in work experience provision, or supported such provision. Of those who did provide direct support for work experience provision, most (61%) provided between 1 and 5 opportunities prior to Covid-related restrictions; 18% provided multiple opportunities (between 6 and 15). One fifth of respondents (21%) indicated that they provided in excess of 16 opportunities per year (prior to Covid restrictions). In terms of Clinical Service Unit, these opportunities were offered in: Cardio-Respiratory, Abdominal Medicine and Surgery, Leeds Dental Institute and Theatres and Anaesthesia.

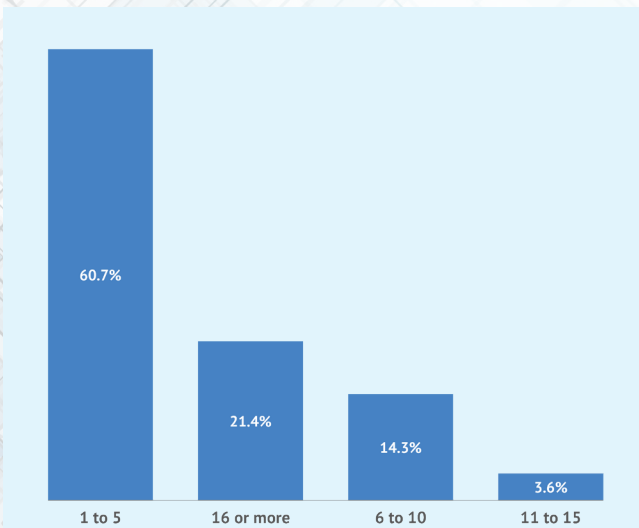


Figure 5: Number of supported work experience opportunities (past 12 months pre-Covid)

Length of placement

Most work experience placements (75%) supported by respondents are 3-5 days in duration. They are also, in the main, offered as consecutive days delivery.

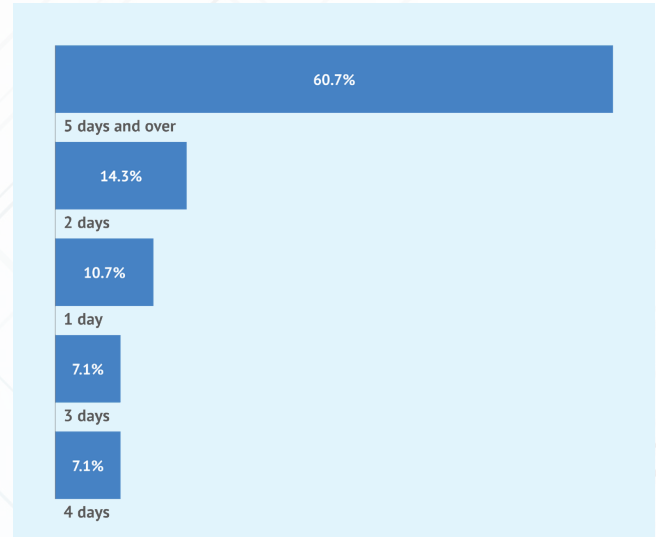
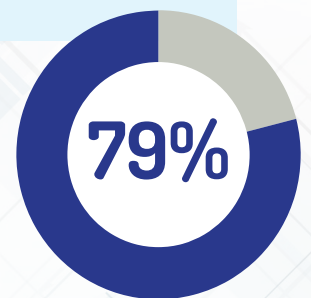


Figure 6: Length of work experience placement

Organising work experience

The majority of work experience placements supported by respondents (79%) are organised by themselves and colleagues in their departments, in response to individual enquiries. Some wider schemes were identified by a small number of respondents to support organising the work experience, these included the support provided via an undergraduate radiography course and support provided by Organisational Learning in the trust.

Proportion of work experience placements organised by survey respondent or their colleagues.



Target group of activity

Most of the activities (60%) supported by our respondents were targeted at year 12 or year 13 (aged 16 and above). A smaller proportion (12%) targeted year 11 (aged 15 to 16) students. 'Other' target groups listed by respondents included undergraduate students (discipline areas cited included pharmacy and radiography).

Selecting/recruiting participants

By far, the most popular method of selecting/recruiting participants for placements (69%) was via direct enquiries from students/schools. Other popular selection approaches include: first come, first served approach (38%) and via the use of an application form (35%).

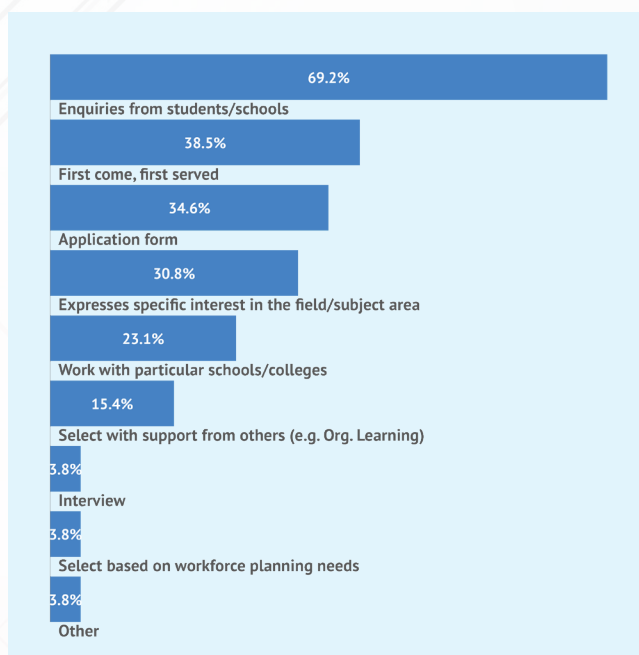


Figure 7: Selecting participants for work experience provision in the trust

Views on the value of work experience in the trust

We asked respondents to provide responses to a number of statements linked to their views and perspectives of work experience as offered by them and the trust:

- Three quarters (**75%**) of respondents agree/strongly agree that **work experience benefits others** who work in the trust.
- Only **39%** agree/strongly agree that offering work experience opportunities **doesn't cost the trust**.
- Almost all, (**93%**), believe that offering **work experience is a good device for the trust**.
- Most respondents (**79%**) agreed/strongly agreed that **young people** undertaking work experience **bring a whole new energy and perspective** to our work.
- All respondents (**100%**) agreed/strongly agreed that **work experience was good for recruitment** for the trust.
- Three quarters (**75%**) agreed/strongly agreed that the **trust offer of work experience positively affected the whole healthcare sector**.
- Almost all (**93%**) agreed/strongly agreed that work experience opportunities **helped young people to mature and become employment-aware**.

Barriers to providing work experience

By far the biggest barrier to engagement in activity in this area was limited capacity in the trust (61%), followed by lack of time (54%). Risk management and health and safety was also a strong barrier for around one third of respondents (31%). 'Other' barriers to offering work experience included lack of staffing and other linked resources to deal with enquiries made by students and schools.

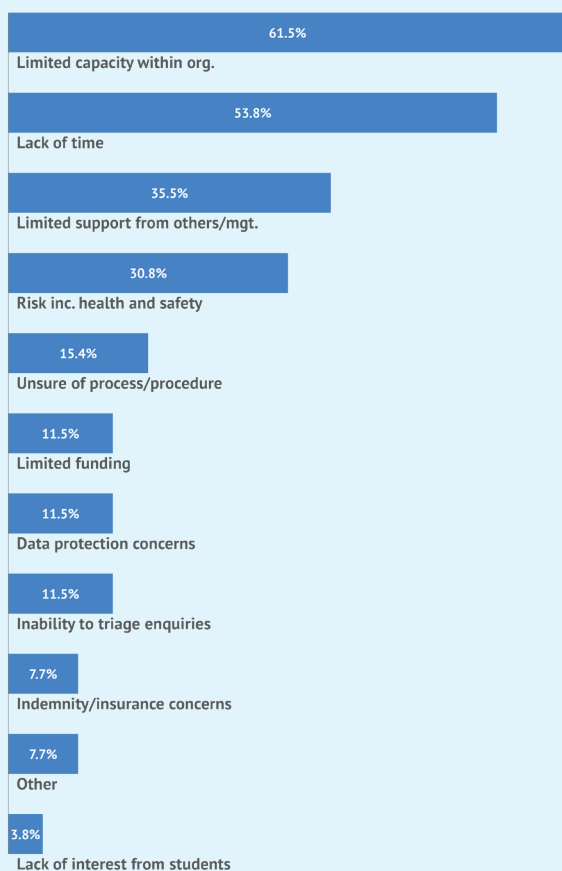


Figure 13: Barriers to providing work experience opportunities

Collaborative arrangements with other providers

Almost three-quarters of respondents (71%) indicated that they did not work with organisations outside of the trust to support the work experience offer provided. Of those who did work with other organisations, some cited schools/colleges, as well as local and regional universities as providers of this collaborative support. Specific support was provided in terms of publicising opportunities, putting suitable candidates forward for work experience, and coordinating placements between the trust and the school/college/university.

Preparedness for work related learning or employability provision

Slightly less than three-quarters (71%) indicated that participants for work experience provision were very/quite prepared for such provision when they came to the trust.

To ensure participants are fully prepared respondents suggested a number of factors, these included:

- prospective placement students carrying out fact-finding visits to the trust prior to placement
- having an informal meeting with the placement student prior to them starting placement
- requiring participants to carry out some pre-reading work or research of the trust before they undertake placement
- clear learning outcomes should be set prior to the experience and assessed afterwards.



I strongly support work experience as a means to show the wide range of opportunities in the Trust. Additionally, some people have an idea of a career path but see it differently when attend and may look at a different path in healthcare.
Survey respondent.

Personal development

Just over half of respondents (54%) thought that work related learning and experience programmes should fit with their personal development plans. In terms of evidencing this, most respondents (79%) indicated that this could include some form of certification (to show proof of involvement/number of hours involved).

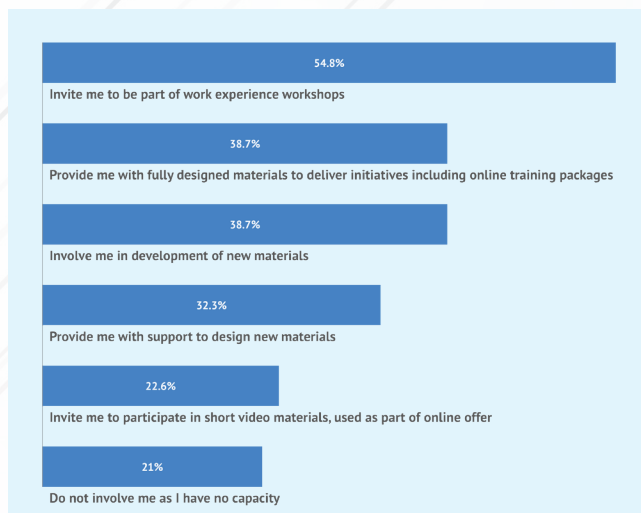


Figure 14: Suggestions to support work experience

Planning for the future

We asked respondents to think about the next 12 months (in light of Covid restrictions) and to anticipate the support they may need in order to realise their work experience offer. The most cited response (55%) was to invite respondents to participate in work experience workshops where the topic could be discussed. Other supportive measures put forward by respondents (39%) included providing fully designed materials/ involving them in the design of new materials to replace programmes which have ceased due to Covid restrictions.

Importance of work related learning and work experience programmes

Almost all respondents (93%) thought that it was very important/quite important for the trust to continue to offer work experience or work related learning/ employability programmes.



If people cannot get work experience they may not be accepted onto healthcare programmes which is essential for future workforce.

Survey respondent.

Motivations for being involved

We asked respondents about their motivations for being involved in work related or work experience programmes in the following areas:

- Almost all (**90%**) thought it was important/ very important to **support recruitment in shortage areas.**
- About three-quarters (**74%**) thought it was important/very important to **build community relations.**
- Half (**50%**) thought it was important/very important to **receive additional funding.**
- Most (**88%**) thought it was important/ very important to **build diversity in the organisation.**
- Over three-quarters (**77%**) thought it was important/very important to **help the future of the NHS workforce.**
- Almost all (**92%**) thought it was important/ very important to **support widening participation.**
- Almost all (**90%**) thought it was important/ very important to **provide a route to apprenticeships.**

SUMMARY OF SOME OF ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES SUPPORTED BY LTHT

Apprentice Clinical Support Worker programme

These prepare participants in the role of Clinical Support Worker. Consisting of a 15 month work placement on a single ward/clinical area with study days delivered by an external training provider in conjunction with LTHT staff to deliver education and training to provide the apprentice with the necessary skills. The resulting qualification is a Level 2 Apprenticeship. On successful completion of the programme apprentices work in clinical areas where there are vacancies and opportunities for permanent employment.

Recruitment Open Days

The trust holds a programme of open days. Regular recruitment events are arranged in each department to allow individuals interested in nursing, midwifery and perioperative practitioner roles an opportunity to see what services are provided. Many of these events have interviews taking place on the same day.

Step into Health

LTHT has signed up to the Step into Health pledge which connects employers in the NHS to people from the Armed Forces community, by offering an access route into employment and career development opportunities. They have been awarded the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award.

Work Experience

Work experience opportunities are available in clinical and non-clinical areas. Requests are addressed directly to the Head of Department and there is a process where written confirmation, forms are completed prior to commencing placement with a trust induction. Eligibility criteria help to manage the large volume of applications with priority given to applicants who live or study in Leeds, are aged 16 or over or at least 15 in full-time education or studying towards a qualification relevant to the field in which they are seeking experience.

Employability Programmes

Working in partnership with the local Council and charity partners, LTHT delivers an employability programme targeted specifically at people living in the immediate community of St James' University Hospital. This programme lasts a number of weeks and aims to provide participants with meaningful exposure to skills and knowledge relevant to entry-level professions across the trust. The support provided to participants is delivered in order to build their confidence, capability and aspirations regarding employment at the trust, and the programme culminates with the opportunity to apply for Band 2 Facilities Technician roles within the organisation.

CONCLUSIONS

There are current national drivers for change which will result in national reform. A Government white paper in January 2021 set out reforms to further education supporting people to get the skills required throughout their lives⁷. A significant skills gap has been identified resulting in a shortage of individuals across a wide range of sectors including health and social care⁸. Employers will be at the heart of the system to ensure that interventions lead to jobs improving productivity and skills gaps. Changes will include access to training and learning and ensuring people are well-informed through quality careers support. The success of traineeships and apprenticeships will be built on⁹.

The trust provides a clear aim on its website "The Trust has a stated aim to become the employer of choice, and to be a centre of excellence for specialist services, research, education and innovation and part of the way we will achieve this is by attracting talented people to join the NHS and us in particular"¹⁰. It has a dedicated webpage outlining their recruitment strategy including the values and behaviours that they are looking for in addition to explaining how recruitment is carried out.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Trusts are already providing a range of initiatives and should continue to develop innovative approaches to offering employment or work experience.
- Working collaboratively with partners (such as local colleges, universities, charities and councils) who have an understanding of the placement process provides mutual benefits including enhancing the influence and connections of community partnerships.
- Current activity is split between Trust-wide programmes and ad hoc activity, the latter is difficult to monitor and support; therefore a different approach to this could be beneficial to both the organisation and the individuals involved.
- Consideration of quality assurance/certification/validation needs to be taken forward in discussion with national stakeholder groups particularly in light of the growth of online provision in response to the pandemic.
- Trusts should assess and evaluate their work experience offer. This includes undertaking regular equality monitoring activity to evaluate the equity of access for work experience opportunities.

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