

WORK EXPERIENCE DEEP DIVE SURVEY



Health Education England

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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 held 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. 64 responses to the survey were received between the period October and December 2020.

Findings

Work related learning / employability events involvement

Just under half of all respondents (48%) indicated that they had been involved in such programmes. Most frequent activities:

- support of careers and skills fairs (71%)
- tours of departments (55%).

Target group of activity: many of the activities (45%) had no specific target group indicating the events were general work related or employability initiatives.

Barriers to offering work relation opportunities:

- lack of time (68%)
- limited capacity within the trust (45%)
- limited support from others (35%)

Collaborative arrangements: 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

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)

Most work experience placements (75%) supported by respondents were 3-5 days in duration. They are also, in the main, offered as consecutive days delivery with the majority of work experience placements supported by respondents (79%) are organised by themselves and colleagues in their departments, in response to individual enquiries and most of the activities (60%) supported by our respondents were targeted at year 12 or year 13 (aged 16 and above).

Selecting/recruiting participants: 69% of placement participants were recruited 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:

- limited capacity in the trust (61%)
- followed by lack of time (54%)

Collaborative arrangements: 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 experience: 71% indicated that participants for work experience provision were very/ quite prepared for such provision when they came to the trust.

Conclusion

Two major types of activity that contribute the trust's activity in this area:

- careers fairs and tours of the department arranged by the trust
- work experience activity in response to direct contact with the organisation either directly to individual members of staff or the department

The main barriers to carrying out these activities are lack of capacity and time but there is little collaborative work with other organisations taking place and additionally although the majority of participants are well prepared, around a quarter of participants are not prepared.

Next steps

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.

- Dissemination of findings through the trust organisational structure and local education partners including University of Leeds Faculty of Medicine and Health and Leeds Beckett University to facilitate collaborative working discussions.
- Exploration of solutions for reducing the barriers including co-ordination of triage of work experience enquiries, toolkits to support preparation of participants including reflective diaries and code of conduct, online training opportunities for staff members to enable them to understand the most valued and most efficient programmes and to share learning materials.