

Notes of meeting between the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) and pharmacy organisations

2 May 2019

Attendees:

The Institute

PDA

General Pharmaceutical Council

Pharmacy Schools Council

Guild of Hospital Pharmacists

Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Health Education England

United Lincoln Hospitals

NPA

CCA

BPSA

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QUESTIONS RAISED AT THE PHARMACIST APPRENTICESHIP STAKEHOLDER MEETING ON 2.5.19

- 1. What gap is the apprenticeship aiming to fill, bearing in mind that the existing training programmes appear to meet the needs of the sector?**

The apprenticeship will provide an alternative route, giving employers and individuals the option to select the best route for them. It will likely be attractive local and national trainee pharmacists, as the costs of training will not be paid by the apprentice, and may suit those attracted to combining university study with workplace learning. In the case of other occupations, employers have cited the strengthening of the talent pipeline, widening participation and meeting local workforce needs as attractions of the apprenticeship model.

It may be that the employer group that has drafted the proposal has identified other incentives for developing an apprenticeship for pharmacists.

- 2. Will this create a two tier system in which some pharmacists are trained to a higher standard than others?**

No. If the apprenticeship standard is approved, there will be two routes into Pharmacist Registration – one through the traditional undergraduate self-funded route, and the other through an apprenticeship. Both will include an MPharm and the pre-registration exams. Both will be required to comply with the same regulatory requirements set out by the

General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhc) including the requirement that Higher Education Institutions must meet their Education and Training standards.

3. Will someone trained as a Pharmacist in an apprenticeship be able to transfer into the full range of Pharmacist jobs within the sector?

That is the intention and a requirement of approving the apprenticeship standard. The Institute and trailblazer group will work hard to ensure that someone who has completed the apprenticeship standard would be qualified and trained sufficiently well to transfer into any Pharmacist post.

As occupations evolve, apprenticeship standards need to be reviewed and kept up to date. Usually they are reviewed every three years, but this can happen more frequently if needed.

4. How much time for learning will there be within the apprenticeship?

The minimum requirement of any apprenticeship is that 20% of the apprentice's working hours must be given over to 'off the job' training. In practice, some occupations require more than this quantity. Training programmes are agreed by the employer and their partner Higher Education Institute, but in all cases will need to conform to any regulatory requirements governing training in the occupation.

5. Who is on the employer group that has submitted the proposal to the Institute?

In the past, we have not released details about the membership of employer groups until the proposal to develop an apprenticeship standard has been agreed by the Institute. We do not intend to make an exception to that approach in this case. However, if the proposal is approved by the Route Panel and Approvals and Funding Committee, we will publish the membership of the trailblazer group as quickly as possible. This may happen within a couple of weeks.

It is clear that there are concerns about the breadth of representation on the employer group. These have been heard, and the Institute encourages the engagement of any parts of the pharmacist sector that are not yet represented.

6. What will the entry requirements be to the apprenticeship?

Entry requirements are set by the employer and their partner HEI. The occupational standard may recommend a minimum entry requirement, and this will be discussed, and agreed by the trailblazer group, who will take advice from HEIs and the GPhc to ensure there is alignment with the education and training standards.

7. Will learning relating to independent prescribing/prescribing decisions/diagnosis/medical care be included in the apprenticeship?

The content of the standard will be developed during the drafting of the occupational standard, which will align to the regulatory framework set by the GPhc. The trailblazer group will produce a submission that lays out the knowledge, skills and behaviours required in the occupation, on which they will need to consult with the wider sector, before submitting it to the Institute for approval. The Institute will support the trailblazer group to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the outcomes of the consultations. The Route Panel and Approvals and Funding Committee will also be aware of the responses in the consultation and form a view about whether these have been properly addressed by the trailblazer group.

8. Will EU legislation and GPhC regulatory requirements be met for Pharmacist training and Registration?

Yes all legislative and regulatory requirements for registration will need to be met. A condition of approval of any apprenticeship standard is that it is aligned to regulatory requirements where they exist. For example, the recently updated apprenticeship for a Registered Nurse conforms to the requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

9. What is the maximum funding available and how can this be used?

Each apprenticeship standard is allocated a 'funding band': this is the maximum contribution that the government is willing to make to the training and assessment of the apprenticeship. The highest possible funding band is £27,000. The funding band for this apprenticeship standard will be determined at a later development stage. Approved Health and Science standards and funding bands can be found at <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/?routes=Health-and-science&levelFrom=6&includeApprovedForDelivery=true>.

When an apprenticeship standard is approved for delivery, an employer and training provider will agree a price for the training required (including the costs of the End Point Assessment). In some cases this is covered entirely by Government funding, and sometimes employers contribute towards the cost where the costs of delivery cannot be fully covered by Government funding.

10. Can other funding be accessed for pre-registration training?

The Institute is not responsible for this.

11. What other degree apprenticeships have been developed?

A number of examples were given of apprenticeship standards containing mandated degrees in regulated occupations. In particular, Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist were mentioned as having been recently developed at degree level. These apprenticeship standards meet the Health and Care Professions Council's (HCPC) Education and Training Standards. Training providers are accredited to deliver the degrees by HCPC.

12. Please provide guidance on apprentice recruitment and pay

There is a statutory apprentice minimum wage which varies by age. However, employers are able to decide if they want to pay their apprentices more than this, and in practice many do so. The NHS use the guidance set out in Annex 21 of the NHS Terms and Conditions Handbook <https://www.nhsemployers.org/tchandbook/annex-21-to-25/annex-21-arrangements-for-pay-and-banding-of-trainees>

Apprentices apply for apprenticeship vacancies in line with normal recruitment practices. It is up to employers to ensure that applicants meet their own entry requirements. There are no rules around how long an apprentice stays post completion. However, there is an expectation that the apprentice will remain in post as a Registered Pharmacist upon completion where the job opportunity continues to exist. Employers are not permitted to require apprentices to make any financial contribution towards the training or assessment of their apprenticeship.

13. Are apprenticeship standards England only?

Yes. Apprenticeships are a devolved policy. This means that authorities in each of the UK nations manage their own apprenticeship programmes, including how funding is spent on apprenticeship training.

Next steps for maintaining engagement with those present at the meeting:

- **It was requested that a wider stakeholder engagement event is arranged where the Institute is able to answer questions relating to the proposed apprenticeship standard.** The feasibility and practical arrangements of running such an event are being considered, but in principle the Institute is happy to participate in such an event.
- **The Institute undertook to feed back the issues raised at today's meeting to the members of the employer group that has submitted the proposal.**
- **The Institute undertook to keep delegates at this meeting informed about the progress of the apprenticeship standard as it is developed, including notice of any consultations being launched** (assuming agreement to develop the apprenticeship is given by the Institute).
- **The Institute undertook to explore what materials could be provided to delegates at this meeting to demystify the apprenticeship reforms.** A few notes to assist with this in the meanwhile are provided below.

SOME SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ABOUT APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS AND THE WORKINGS OF THE INSTITUTE

Employer group membership

The employer group must be recognised by the Institute and reflective of those who employ people in the occupation, including small employers. The size, geographical location and type of employers are looked at in our approvals process, as well as all other relevant factors. Upon approval of the proposal the membership of the Trailblazer will be published if the Institute approves the proposal to develop an apprenticeship standard and will be formally called a trailblazer group.

The Route Panel

The Route Panel represent the employer voice within the Institute. Panel Members are experts in their industry, characterised by their outstanding occupational knowledge, exceptional experience and critical grasp of the future skills needs of their sectors. They are also passionate advocates for apprenticeships and T-Level qualifications. The Route Panel make recommendations about the approval (or otherwise) of apprenticeship standards. The Pharmacist Apprenticeship Standard will be assessed by the Health & Science Route Panel.

The Route Panel's expertise in applying apprenticeships quality criteria and policy is informed by their experience of working and leading within the route concerned, usually at very senior levels. The Route Panel assesses the compliance of submissions made to the Institute's approvals process, testing these against apprenticeships policy requirements, and makes recommendations about whether to approve apprenticeship standards (and also the level of the funding band) to the Approvals & Funding Committee (a subcommittee of the Institute's Board).

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a job with training to industry standards. It should be in a recognised occupation, involve a substantial programme of on and off-the-job training, and the apprentice's occupational competence should be tested by an independent, end-point assessment. Apprenticeships are employer-led: employers draft and approve the standards, create the demand for apprentices to meet their skills needs, fund the apprenticeship (via the apprenticeship levy) and are responsible for employing and training the apprentice. But the needs of the apprentice are equally important: to achieve competence in a skilled occupation, which is transferable and secures long term earning power, greater security and the capability to progress in the workplace.

What is a degree apprenticeship?

Degree apprenticeships include the award of a full bachelor's or master's degree. Completing and passing the degree is an essential requirement of completing the apprenticeship. Other than the mode of study, these degrees are awarded by recognised universities and are no different in pitch or scope to the degrees awarded to students on a full-time academic route. In degree apprenticeships apprentices are employed as an apprentice whilst completing their degree programme. This may appeal to individuals who may not otherwise have seen university as a viable option. Degree apprenticeships can attract talented candidates into professional roles they may not have otherwise considered.

All training costs for degree apprenticeships are paid for by the employer, using funds provided by the government or covering some of the costs from their own funds.

All apprentices are required to complete an end-point assessment at the end of the apprenticeship. This is the way of assessing holistically the competence of the apprentice. Some degree apprenticeships integrate the end-point assessment with the assessment of the degree. In other cases, the degree is awarded before a separate end-point assessment that marks the completion of the apprenticeship.