

Exploring interest in developing a proposal for a non-medical consultant level 8 apprenticeship

Introduction

1. This paper is designed to test out interest in developing a proposal for a non-medical consultant level 8 apprenticeship. It does the following:
 - Explains the context - the possibility of pursuing the development of a consultant apprenticeship in England (with the potential for application in the other UK countries)
 - Sets out the rationale - why pursuing this development would make sense and what it could achieve
 - Explains in brief what a proposal would need to demonstrate
 - Suggests a way forward, if there is support to progress.

Context

2. The potential to make the case for a level 8 consultant apprenticeship sits in the following context:
 - Level 8 (doctoral level) apprenticeships can be developed
 - The level 7 (Master's level) advanced clinical practitioner (ACP) is now fully approved for delivery
 - Apprenticeships provide the opportunity for employers to invest in skills development in line with their workforce and service delivery needs (and, in health and care contexts, the population and patient care needs they need to meet)
 - There is existing level 8 professional doctorate provision for the healthcare professions that could underpin a level 8 apprenticeship.

Rationale

3. The potential benefits of developing a level 8 consultant apprenticeship would be as follows:
 - A level 8 non-medical consultant apprenticeship could provide a sustainable pipeline for workforce development and enable employers to invest in workforce development at this high level of practice
 - Optimising apprenticeships in this way would fit well with the workforce transformation agenda and ensuring workforce development is responsive to changing service development and delivery needs
 - In turn, this fits with finding new ways of ensuring the workforce's responsiveness to increasing demand and complexity, and finding new ways to enhance quality, productivity and affordability, while reducing unwarranted variation in the outcomes of care
 - A level 8 consultant apprenticeship would provide a logical progression from the level 7 ACP apprenticeship and strengthen structured career paths for the non-medical professions
 - A level 8 consultant apprenticeship could fit well with work that Health Education England is now getting underway to consider the development of a consultant framework (building on the ACP framework published in November 2017).

Requirements

4. In brief, a proposal for a non-medical level 8 apprenticeship would need to demonstrate the following:

- It would meet an occupational need and fit with a defined, distinct occupational role (and for which an apprenticeship is not either already developed, or in development)
- It would be distinctly different from the level 7 ACP apprenticeship that the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) has already approved
- It would meet employer demand
- Its development would be supported by employers and education providers, including by those that would be willing to form a trailblazer group, with an employer willing to act as the trailblazer lead
- It would be underpinned by level 8 education provision that would enable apprentices to meet and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) that would be defined in an apprenticeship standard.

5. More specifically, there would be a need to demonstrate that a level 8 non-medical consultant apprenticeship would prepare individuals to do the following (in line with level 8 occupational requirements):

- Practise with a high degree of autonomy, taking responsibility for making decisions on issues of material significance
- Manage high-levels of uncertainty, complexity and risk, including in areas in which there are significant unknowns and ambiguities
- Contribute to and disseminate new knowledge and thinking within a wide sphere of influence, including through active engagement with developing the evidence base and beyond a service delivery level (e.g. this would need to be demonstrated within their profession and/or specialty nationally or internationally, including through multi-disciplinary collaborations)
- Lead innovation and development within their sphere of influence
- Provide leadership to others, beyond their service delivery setting.

Proposed way forward

6. To progress a proposal, the following would need to be done:

- Draft full proposal, using the IfA template
- Secure interest from employers, reflecting due diversity in employer types (large, medium, small organisations, etc.)
- For interested employers to form a trailblazer group
- A lead employer being identified that would be prepared to take on the trailblazer group
- Secure interest from HEIs, with a view to some joining the trailblazer group
- Secure support from key external stakeholders, including professional bodies, government arm's length (ALB) bodies, HEI groups and multi-professional collaboratives
- Secure specific, in principle support from HEE, such that support for a trailblazer group could be secured from Skills for Health (subject to a proposal for the apprenticeship's development securing IfA approval)
- Work up notional timeframe for progressing.

Next steps

7. At this stage, it will be helpful if those with a potential interest in being involved can simply indicate this, with clarification as to whether this would be as
 - An employer
 - An HEI
 - Another type of stakeholder.
8. This indication of interest should be sent to the following email address by **midday on 23rd July: learninganddevelopment@csp.org.uk**
9. If you have any queries about the potential proposal or would like to discuss its development, please contact Dr. Sally Gosling, CSP Practice & Development assistant director; goslings@csp.org.uk
10. An update on planned next steps will be provided after this point.

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