

In defence of a higher degree apprenticeship (perhaps)

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Context

- 2020 NHS staff survey: demand for development opportunities by clinical support staff
 - longer term anecdotal evidence (clinical support ‘second class’, less development & career opportunities etc).
- November 2021 level 5 Operations Manager apprenticeship launched.
- L&D & the course deemed **good** Ofsted August 2022
- November 2024 cohort 4 will start.

Who are the learners?

- 3 cohorts, 30 enrolled, 18 (60%) do not have a degree.
- 22 females & 8 males, 4 (13%) from ethnic minorities (below Trust average of 23%).
- 12 (40%) existing managers (band 5).
- 3 students have dropped out (2 went to more senior roles with other employers).

Some anonymous learner feedback

- “I am learning to reflect and evaluate my previous skills and adapt when required for positive outcomes within my team.”
- “...the standards on the course are very high which means that my focus and care for the work and staff is raised to a higher level. We are becoming more conscious/holistic as leaders.”
- “I have found all the course content invaluable in my new role. If I hadn't received this to date, I would have been out of my depth very quickly.”

Lessons so far...

- L&D & course rated 'good' in an Ofsted 'deep dive' in August 2022.
- Buy in from managers largely good.
- Enables learners to critically & consciously think through tacit knowledge.
- Challenges: completion rates, evaluating work-based impact & awareness of the course.

What's changed about work since 2010?

- 'Organisations around the world are at a **critical point of change**. They're facing **new uncertainties** and grappling with new variables. Demands for **more flexible ways of working** create challenges – **expectations from all stakeholders have grown**. But they also bring new opportunities. **Fairness, inclusion and wellbeing are now core issues for our organisations as much as for our societies**.
- **The new demands on leaders and managers are tough**. As decision-makers they need to **understand new variables, gather new evidence** and **take new actions**. As models of culture, they need to understand their own experiences, backgrounds, assumptions, biases and behaviours. As people leaders, they **need to understand how to listen and engage others**. As drivers of performance, they need to **boost productivity** in a flexible and hybrid working world.' ([CIPD, 2022:8](#))