



## Widening Access and Participation through Apprenticeships, Schools and Colleges

### Apprenticeships

Increasing diversity and widening participation is a key requirement in the recruitment process, including apprenticeships, as outlined in the NHS People Plan. In 2021 HEE commissioned 'NHS Employers' to deliver a project to find out what employers are doing to be more inclusive in apprenticeship recruitment and retention and what challenges they face with this. Key findings included;

“Males who identified as being from an ethnic minority were under-represented within the apprenticeship starts, particularly in those aged under 24 years”.

“50 per cent of employers reported that they were not so good, or didn't know how good they are at attracting people with protected characteristics”.

“30 per cent of employers said that they do not take any positive action during recruitment”.

One of the key recommendations from the report is to offer employers guidance to raise awareness of the support available, and more shared learning to support better inclusivity in apprenticeships, including additional guidance on positive action.

The BNSSG Apprenticeships Strategy includes an EDI statement with recognition of significant disparity of representation of apprentices or staff that identify as BAME between the highest and lowest bands and apprenticeships can help to address this by providing inclusive career opportunities. The apprenticeship strategy aims to promote an apprenticeship offer that raises aspirations and supports the ICS's priorities to tackle poverty and unemployment. The strategy seeks to prioritise marginalised groups including those not in employment education or training (NEET). Positive action approaches and guidance for system-wide apprenticeship opportunities will be explored together with the BNSSG Apprenticeships Manager and BNSSG EDI Workforce Project Manager.

For queries about inclusive approaches to apprenticeships please contact the BNSSG Apprenticeships Manager Richard Francis [richard.francis7@nhs.net](mailto:richard.francis7@nhs.net)

## Schools and Colleges (Young Person's Pathway)

The BNSSG Project Lead for schools and college engagement takes forward the promotion of apprenticeships and other opportunities to engage young people. The BNSSG Career's Hub and Young Persons Pathway has been established to develop a single point of access for all careers information and activities, supporting the delivery of collaborative activities aimed at increasing the number of young people pursuing a career within the Health and Social Care Sector. As part of this and aligning with the HEE Widening Participation Strategy, improved system-wide equal opportunities monitoring, and EDI KPIs are being developed to ensure a targeted approach whilst aligning with system inclusive recruitment priorities.

For queries about inclusive approaches to schools and college engagement please contact the BNSSG Schools and College Engagement Manager Laurence Ross [laurence.ross@nhs.net](mailto:laurence.ross@nhs.net)

### Useful Reads:

NHS Employers – [Inclusive recruitment into apprenticeships report](#)

HEE - [Widening Participation Strategy](#)

HEE Widening Participation - [Directory of Best Practice](#)