To:  
Community Pharmacies in Kent Surrey Sussex  
(via Local Pharmaceutical Committees KSS)

08 March 2016

Dear Colleagues

**RE Opportunity for funded apprenticeship employment and training**

I am writing to request expressions of interest for participating in an important initiative to help Health Education England, working across Kent Surrey and Sussex (HEE KSS), establish the value of including cross-sector apprenticeships for pharmacy support staff (pharmacy assistants) in an overall strategy for the use of apprenticeships in pharmacy.

This small pilot project will involve the recruitment of 15 Level 2 Pharmacy Apprentices to undertake their training placements in both the acute and community sectors. The pilot will be run in partnership with the National Skills Academy for Health Apprenticeship Training Agency (NSAH ATA) and will be funded through HEE KSS project money, with a small contribution towards salary required from those offering training placements (please see attached FAQ).

The goal of this pilot project is to provide us with intelligence in the following areas:

- Appropriate recruitment pathways for this staffing group
- Benefits/dis-benefits to employers of having apprentices undertaking training cross-sector
- Apprentice experience and outcomes having undertaken cross-sector training
- Whether the use of cross-sector apprenticeships in pharmacy is a sustainable quality model for this staffing group.

We are looking for NHS Hospital Trusts and community pharmacies across Kent, Surrey and Sussex who would like to take part in this project. We will ‘pair’ up training placement providers and each will be allocated an apprentice who will undertake a 6 month placement before ‘swapping’ to undertake the remaining 6 months in the alternate sector. Each training placement provider will therefore be required to support an apprentice in their team for 12 months.

As the project is centrally funded, recruitment and employment will be managed by HEE KSS and the NSAH ATA, however input from placement providers will be required in preparation for
HEE KSS will pay a salary contribution up to the National minimum apprenticeship wage and pay the training costs in full. The placements will be required to top-up the salary to the National minimum wage. Please see attached FAQ for breakdown of costs and further information about the roles, responsibilities and commitments of HEE KSS, the NSAH ATA and placement providers in this project.

The success of this project depends greatly on the insights, perspective, and expertise of the placement providers. You can register your interest in participating, or being informed of progress throughout the project, by completing this online form by Friday 22nd April: 
http://bit.ly/1YrlQt6

Please note, as places are limited, decision making around placement providers will depend on a number of factors i.e. locality. Therefore expressions of interest will not necessarily guarantee a placement offer.

If you wish to ask any questions about the project before registering your interest, please contact Laura McEwen-Smith at lauramcewen-smith@kss.hee.nhs.uk

I thank you in advance and look forward to collaborating with you in this important project.

Yours sincerely,

Laura McEwen-Smith
Apprenticeship Project Lead: Pharmacy Support Staff
Health Education England, working across London and the South East

Enc. FAQ
Frequently Asked Questions

What do I get?

Project placement providers, or ‘host employers’, will get a pharmacy assistant apprentice for a 6 month placement, after which apprentices will switch into the alternative sector placement. In total, placement providers will have a pharmacy support staff apprentice present in their team for 12 months.

Placements will commence from September 2016.

You will get the opportunity to contribute to the development of processes and systems associated with the pilot project to ensure that you receive an apprentice that meets your organisational needs.

What are the benefits to me as a host employer (placement provider)?

You will gain a member of pharmacy support staff that has a good understanding of different sector working practices, increasing the potential for fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to pharmacy service challenges.

You will be recognised as actively contributing to providing young people aged between 16 – 24 with the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification and work experience providing NHS pharmacy services.

What are my roles and responsibilities as a host employer (placement provider)?

You will be responsible for ensuring apprenticeships receive appropriate supervision whilst undertaking on the job training.

You will be required to demonstrate that you have the educational infrastructure required to support apprentice training, feedback and assessment and to work with the HEE KSS apprenticeship project lead to ensure any gaps are identified and addressed.

You will be required to send weekly attendance to HEE KSS. NB apprentices are not paid for sickness and absence; apprentices are paid for annual leave (27 days per annum).

Roles and responsibilities will be set out in a formal placement agreement.

What is the role of HEE KSS in this pilot project?

HEE KSS will explore appropriate routes for identifying potential candidates i.e. NHS pre-employment programmes and manage the recruitment and employment processes (via the – NSAH ATA). This includes pre-employment checks.

Participant selection will be managed by HEE KSS/ATA through close liaison and involvement with placement providers.

HEE KSS will support the development of appropriate training plans, in collaboration with placement providers, taking into consideration the timing of the sector placement switches.

HEE KSS will support placement providers to ensure a robust educational infrastructure to enable the use of apprenticeships, including the provision of peripatetic assessment if required.
How much will it cost me?

Apprentices will be employed by the National Skills Academy for Health Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) on 12 month fixed term contract at 37.5 hours/week. Salary and training funding will be provided by HEE KSS, with a small salary contribution required from placement providers.

HEE KSS will fund £500 for each apprentice to cover any apprenticeship training costs.

HEE KSS will fund £3.30 per hour per apprentice. The remainder (ensuring National minimum wage of £5.30 and covering employer NI and pension contributions) for each apprentice is to be covered by the placement provider (see calculations below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hourly rate per apprentice</th>
<th>Weekly pay (37.5 hrs)</th>
<th>Annual Salary</th>
<th>Employer's NI</th>
<th>Employer's Pension</th>
<th>Total cost of apprentice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£5.30</td>
<td>£198.75</td>
<td>£10,335.00</td>
<td>£328.30</td>
<td>£91.26</td>
<td>£10,754.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HEE KSS contribution = £3.30 per hour which equates to £6,435

Placement contribution required from to cover cost of an apprentice for 12 months = £4,319.56

For any further questions please contact lauramcewen-smith@kss.hee.nhs.uk