

What makes an effective work-based mentor (WBM); perceptions and expectations

Aimee France

Associate Head of School: School of Health and Social Care (Apprenticeships)

Claire Staniland

Associate Head of School: School of Health and Social Care (Academic Partnerships)

EDGE
FOUNDATION

CELEBRATING
20
YRS

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**
Knowledge Applied

Dr Trudy Sevens
Associate Head of School



Karen Stevens
Apprenticeship Course
Lead-Physiotherapy



Project Team

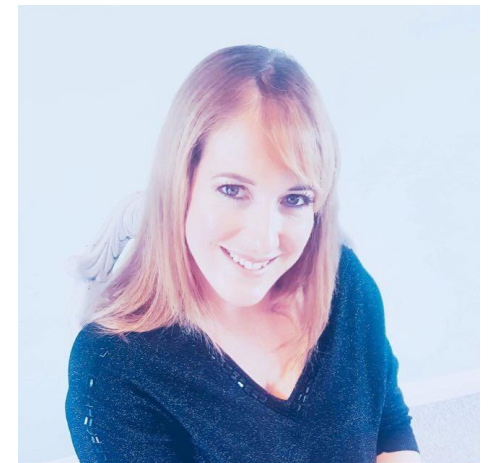
Josh Patel
Researcher @ukEdge



Aimee France
Associate Head of School



Claire Staniland
Associate Head of School





**Sheffield
Hallam
University**
Knowledge Applied

Introduction

***A mentor is someone who provides a support system for an apprentice.
(HM Government, 2023)***

Primary question: What are WBM's perceptions and expectations of the role?

Aim: To explore the perceptions and expectations of WBMs supporting degree apprentices. This will highlight areas for improvement and sharing across health degree apprenticeship training routes.

Rationale for the study

- Degree apprenticeships for the Allied Health Professions (AHP) are a relatively new concept
- Very little published literature relating to them and none that specifically focusses on the WBM supporting AHP apprentices.
- Lack of clarity
 - role
 - frameworks
 - implementation
- Linked to practice education supervision in health
- Varying methods of coaching and mentoring
- Importance of tripartite relationships

Methodology

5 Phases

- 1-Physiotherapy & Occupational therapy
- 2- Cross AHP – to start end of 2024
- 3- Emergent themes across professions
- 4 -Apprentice view
- 5- Employer view

Phase 1 supported by The Edge Foundation

Purposive sampling
8 online semi structured interviews
between 05/12/23 to 21/12/23
Thematic Analysis

Findings

Benefits of the role

- to the apprentice
- to the mentor
- to the wider community

Challenges of the role

- preparation and expectations of the role
- organisational/resource challenges

Enablers of the role.

- interpersonal attributes
- professional skills and knowledge of apprenticeships

Benefits of the Role

What the mentors told us

- *Enabled skilled, existing- sometimes long-term staff, to access opportunities for progression that otherwise wouldn't have access to*
- *we're learning from each other*
- *I like to help people and nurture them and get the best out of them and maybe push them a little bit*
- *contributing, like I say to the workforce of the future and the profession*

What the research says

- Widening participation (Green and Heales 2020, Sevens and Nightingale 2020a) and increased workforce retention (Welbourn, Devins and Reynolds 2019).
- Roberts (2019) suggests mutual respect in the mentor-mentee relationship and joint learning and development.
- A committed role model mentor can be invaluable in contributing to the achievement of organisational strategic goals (Parsloe & Wray 2000)

Challenges of the role

What the mentors told us

- WBM's felt underprepared for the role
- *wasn't a managerial role' but instead a 'pastoral' or 'general wellbeing and kind of emotional support'*
- *some of the information was going to somebody in the Trust that was part of apprentices, but it wasn't necessarily being filtered down to therapy services to the right people*

What the research says

- Lack of clarity in how to maximise support for apprentices in the workplace (Rowe et al, 2017).
- Heavy reliance on complex levels of collaboration between education providers and employers to ensure mentors are equipped to provide effective support for learning 'on the job' (Quew-Jones and Rowe, 2022).

Enablers of Role

What mentors told us

- Motivation for the role
- Interpersonal attributes
- *time management is absolutely essential' to ensure that apprentices don't 'just fall back into their role.*

What the research says

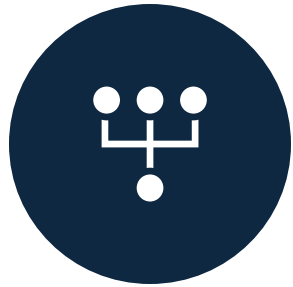
- Being open, patient, nurturing and supportive – aligns with literature on practice education (Francis, 2016).
- Mentoring-seeking and facilitating learning, in line with Roberts (2019) domains (proactivity, facilitating workplace learning, and support with internal and external networks).

Conclusions

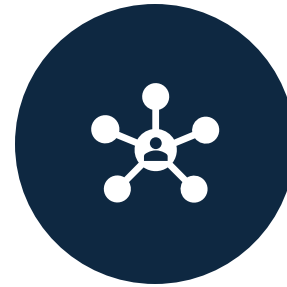
- Positivity
- Benefits
- Effectiveness of the apprenticeship model of training and education
- Preparation for the role is essential
- Attributes
- Challenges



Recommendations



Preparation for the role



Opportunities for networking



Time and resourcing



Disseminating the benefits and impact of the WBM role.

Thank you



References

- Francis, A., Hills, C., MacDonald-Wicks, L., Johnston, C., James, D., Surjan, Y., & Warren-Forward, H. (2016). Characteristics of an ideal practice educator: perspectives from practice educators in diagnostic radiography, nuclear medicine, nutrition and dietetics, occupational therapy and physiotherapy and radiation therapy. *Radiography*, 22(4), 287-294.
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1471595306000977?casa_token=3FPhm9DQjpAAAAAA:xhyayppy_GDM2c5LHCSRgvU6VhLo6GSohLH2BVl3D9AjqCbzjMr4rLXE4Nx7DU7AVAPuFKsURsx8
- HM Government (2023) Supporting your apprentice. Gov.UK.
<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/supporting-your-apprentice>
- NHS England (2023) NHS Long Term Workforce Plan
- Parsloe, E and Wray, M (2000), "Coaching and Mentoring: Practical Methods to Improve Learning", *Work Study*, Vol. 49 No. 6.
- Quew-Jones, R. J., & Rowe, L. (2022). Enhancing the degree apprenticeship curriculum through work-based manager and mentor intervention. *Journal of Work-Applied Management*
<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JWAM-03-2022-0015/full/html>
- Roberts, A., Storm, M. and Flynn, S. (2019), "Workplace mentoring of degree apprentices: developing principles for practice", *Higher Education, Skills and Work Based Learning*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 211-224.
<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/HESWBL-10-2018-0108/f#ull/html>
- Rowe et al (2017) The challenges of managing degree apprentices in the workplace A manager's perspective *Journal of Work-Applied Management* Open Access Volume 9, Issue 2, Pages 185 - 1994 December 2017
- Sevens, T. and Nightingale, J., 2020a. Trailblazers: Stakeholder motivations for developing degree apprenticeships for the radiography profession. *Radiography*, 26(1), pp.15-21.