

# Northern Care Alliance NHS Group Oldham Care Organisation

Update on employment support and local recruitment.

## 1. Introduction

*“ We at the NCA know we cannot deliver on our potential without the expertise, experience and support of our partners in place. But our potential to make a difference to people’s lives beyond our normal caring services is significant. At this time of national crisis the NHS must stand up and do more than its brilliant work in caring for the sick”*

*Raj Jain, Chief Executive Northern Care Alliance NHS Group 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020.*

The NCA is the largest employer in Oldham. There is a strong link between decent work and good health. We need to use our social, economic and human capital to tackle the inequalities within Oldham. We have a place based organizational form and place brings us to a human scale of operation where we can see the difference that can be made to neighbourhoods and communities. Therefore our Social Value ambition is locally driven supported by Group and was launched through a community of practice launch event on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020 which can be viewed on line: <https://vimeo.com/475455960/b0a6ac64c7>

The approach within the NCA was informed by system conversations notably Oldham Leadership Board (chaired by Cllr Sean Fielding) following work with CLES in 2017 on Anchor Institutions and a meeting in late 2019 with Oldham College and Oldham Cares regarding workforce development potential and how the work of the NCA could be “anchored” to the wider system. This has led to the development of 5 pillars of social value; environment, place, people, purchasing and to anchor or influence.



This update will focus on the people pillar and provide an update to Oldham Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the range of initiatives which are being put in place to provide local employment opportunities with particular focus on young people who during times of economic downturn have historically been disadvantaged in obtaining meaningful paid work. In recent times, the world, particularly of work has changed significantly and like the disease the economic impact of COVID will fall disproportionately on low income communities. Oldham has been identified as in the top 10 localities in the country in danger of seeing the highest economic impact and associated increase in health inequalities.

NCA has agreed by 2025 the following ambitions:

- Create 1000 pre-employment opportunities across the NCA for those furthest away from the employment from a baseline of 320. Approximately 210 will be created in Oldham, from a baseline of 17 (2019-20).
- 85% of pre-employment learners will be supported into paid work from NCA baseline of 55% and 31% in Oldham.
- 50% of those employed by the NCA to be local resident of Oldham from 45% (based on NCA configuration of Oct 2019) which is approximately 80 jobs each year in Oldham.
- Support 1000 staff to become NHS Career Ambassadors by 2025 of which 220 will be in Oldham.

The NCA has secured over £100k to support people into work and to provide young people with experience of the NHS. This is from the Oldham opportunity area and Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The COVID pandemic whilst accelerating the importance and significance of this work has presented some challenges and plans have had to be modified for example, the NHS has had to limit visitors to its site and face to face interactions including work experience was initially suspended and is slowly coming back in a limited way in line with national guidance.

There is a risk that this or future surge in COVID-19 hospital cases could result in the government re-introducing restrictions as to who is allowed to access our sites. We hope that the digital solutions will mitigate some of this and if necessary we will work funders to manage this dynamic situation which remains out of our control.

## **2. Work with Oldham Schools**

In an ideal world we would inspire children and young people about NHS careers and job opportunities much earlier. The evidence is compelling: a young person who has four or more encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training and can earn up to 22% more during their career. Importantly the earlier these encounters take place the better because research shows that:

- Children at age 6 see jobs and future pathways as gendered
- Almost half of children age 7 base their career aspirations on people they know.
- Children at age 9 they are becoming more aware of potential constraints on their futures based on perceptions of social class, perceived intelligence and social mobility<sup>1</sup>.

The NHS Career Ambassadors Programme is a national programme which relies on NHS staff volunteering and then acts as a broker with schools. There are currently 70 NHS Career Ambassadors within Oldham with the plan to increase this to 220 by 2025 as part of the commitment to support 1000 NHS Career Ambassadors across the NCA.

Obviously going into schools has been limited due to the pandemic. Therefore, we are currently focusing on non-patient facing roles e.g. HR, finance, digital and supporting schools remotely. Any Oldham school who is interested are encouraged to register with NHS Career Ambassador Programme and utilise this national resource which is in place rather than set up a unique infrastructure for Oldham. The intention is to pick this up with schools in the run up to the new academic year in 2021 and facilitate face to face contact between NHS staff and children.

### **3. Work with Oldham College.**

The government is bringing in changes to technical education. The NCA funded by the Opportunity Area has been able to support Oldham College by seconding Julie Miller, a healthcare scientist and educationalist to review the health and social care T level curriculum to ensure it reflected opportunities for healthcare science given the large laboratory on the Royal Oldham site. This was so successful that the college have agreed to continue with this secondment into 2021 and focus on further curriculum design support for nursing cadet programme and estates and facilities roles. These new T levels include up to 90 days work experience which the NCA has committed to support these within health and social care.

### **4. Support to Young People to gain skills and experience by volunteering**

For many, volunteering is a great way of gaining experience and an understanding of the world of work. During the COVID crisis we have seen an increase in the number of volunteers support the NHS and wider communities. Funded through the Oldham Opportunity Area by August 2021 we will co-produce 30 new volunteering opportunities in Oldham for young people supported by Barnado's.

### **5. Support to young people to gain work experience**

The original plan with Oldham Opportunity Board was to hold two Open Days for 100 young people in the spring and summer of last year, which was not possible then and in the foreseeable future. Therefore, we are creating a digital knowledge hub which will be accessible to all young people interested in a career with the NHS it will sit underneath the NCA recruitment and be linked to the Oldham College website. This will be completed by August 2021.

On site work experience was suspended during COVID and is likely to recommence towards in autumn 2021. Historically, the NCA supported over 400 individual work experiences opportunities with over 70 happening in Oldham.

### **6. Support into Employment for Young People with Learning Disability**

The NCA already supports a "bridging the gap" which is a supported internship programme for young people from New Bridge School taking place over an academic year. This has been in existence for a number of years, although suspended during COVID this will be reinstated as soon as possible.

### **7. Providing Pre-employment opportunities**

This has been challenging during COVID and we committed to enabling 20 young people to undertake a pre-employment opportunity funded through the Opportunity Area consisting of three elements; a 10 week work placements; support to obtaining the Care Certificate and support with English and Maths. Given the practical nature of this course it is not possible to deliver this all virtually and therefore this was suspended until February 2021 and will be in two cohorts of 10 learners with a mixture of on-line learning and physical placements. If successful these learners will be supported into paid employment as healthcare assistants either at the Royal Oldham Hospital or within Oldham Community Health Services and there are sufficient vacancies to enable this.

The NCA in partnership with the Prince's Trust supports the "Get into Hospitals" employability programme which supports young disadvantaged people 16-30 years old (NEETs, care leavers, careers, those with mental health or physical health conditions and those with learning disability). A dedicated cohort is due to start in Oldham in March 2021. Given the COVID restrictions this has moved to an on line programme with work experience being provided in existing vacancies as on a "working interview" model.

The NCA Clinical Advisory Group (CAG) has confirmed that pre-employment placements can commence in January 2021 with individual risk assessments taking place for each learner to the same standard as if they were employed staff. This may restrict some learners due to the risks identified being limited to certain placements or areas of the hospital. It is hoped that this will be managed on an individual basis.

## **8. Kickstart**

This is a government initiative whereby employers provide a 6 month learning opportunity for young people in receipt of universal credit and at risk of long term unemployment. The government backfills employers with 25 hours of minimum wage. The NCA has been approved as a Kickstart employer and our first cohort of 30 learners will start across the NCA in April 2021. There will be 5 learners on the Oldham site. The NCA are in negotiations with the DWP to support additional cohorts.

## **9. Apprenticeships.**

The NCA offers a range of apprenticeships (nurse associates, catering, estates, business administration and healthcare science for example) and there are currently 105 within Oldham. These range from level 2 to level 7 indicating that apprenticeship is not just about accessing jobs but ensuring career progression.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Number</b>
2	26
3	14
4	6
5	32
6	15
7	12

However, it is recognised that there are barriers for some people to obtain apprenticeship positions and therefore we also offer pre-apprenticeship opportunities.

## **10. GMCA Removing Barriers to Apprenticeships – Young People**

This project is held jointly with Positive Steps and Oldham Council. This will create 40 pre-employment opportunities for Young People who will be supported initially by Positive Steps until a work place experience can be created on the Royal Oldham Site or Oldham Community Health services. From these 40 learners, 10 will be supported to apprenticeships with us. Furthermore, Positive Steps will be based for 2 years at Royal Oldham Hospital to support any existing member of staff, volunteer, learners or patient aged 16-25 who require support to obtain work, stay in work or access further adult education. The 10 apprenticeships will need to be found from existing vacancies. The intention is to offer other partners within Oldham Cares the opportunity to host pre-employment opportunities and or apprenticeships.

## **11.Support within communities**

Oldham has a rich diverse population and the NCA is committed to inclusivity to ensure that our workforce reflects the communities we serve.

The NCA through Director of Social Value Creation and the Associate Director of Equality and Inclusion have made significant progress in reaching out to Coldhurst community. This has included listening and insight work as to the perception of the NCA as an employer. As a consequence of this relationship we have managed to secure a grant from the GMCA with Get Oldham Working and Oldham Council. This will create 20 pre-employment opportunities for the BAME community in Coldhurst who will be supported initially by Get Oldham Working until a work place experience can be created on the Royal Oldham Site or Oldham Community Health services. From these 20 learners, 10 will be supported to apprenticeships with us. In addition the job coaches from Get Oldham Working will work with the BAME community in Coldhurst and make recommendations to our recruitment and pre-employment offer and hopefully increase the BAME participation in existing programmes e.g. Bridging the Gap and Princes Trust. The 10 apprenticeships will need to be found from existing vacancies and converted to apprenticeships. The intention is to offer other partners within Oldham Cares the opportunity to host pre-employment opportunities and or apprenticeships.

### **11. Next Steps**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April the NCA will produce a framework which will track progress in each of our localities against our social value ambitions to:

- Create 1000 pre-employment opportunities across the NCA for those furthest away from the employment from a baseline of 320. Approximately 210 will be created in Oldham, from a baseline of 17 (2019-20).
- 85% of pre-employment learners will be supported into paid work from NCA baseline of 55% and 31% in Oldham.
- 50% of those employed by the NCA to be local resident of Oldham from 45% (based on NCA configuration of Oct 2019) which is approximately 80 jobs each year in Oldham.
- Support 1000 staff to become NHS Career Ambassadors by 2025

External financial support will continue to be required to support this agenda and a partnership approach seems to be most successful. We will continue to develop this and welcome any suggestions from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Donna McLaughlin

Director of Social Value Creation

14<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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<sup>1</sup> The ACEVO commission on Youth Unemployment; *Youth Unemployment: the crisis we cannot afford*; London 2012.