

# Building a Local Pipeline – Widening Participation and Apprenticeships

**Peter Cook**

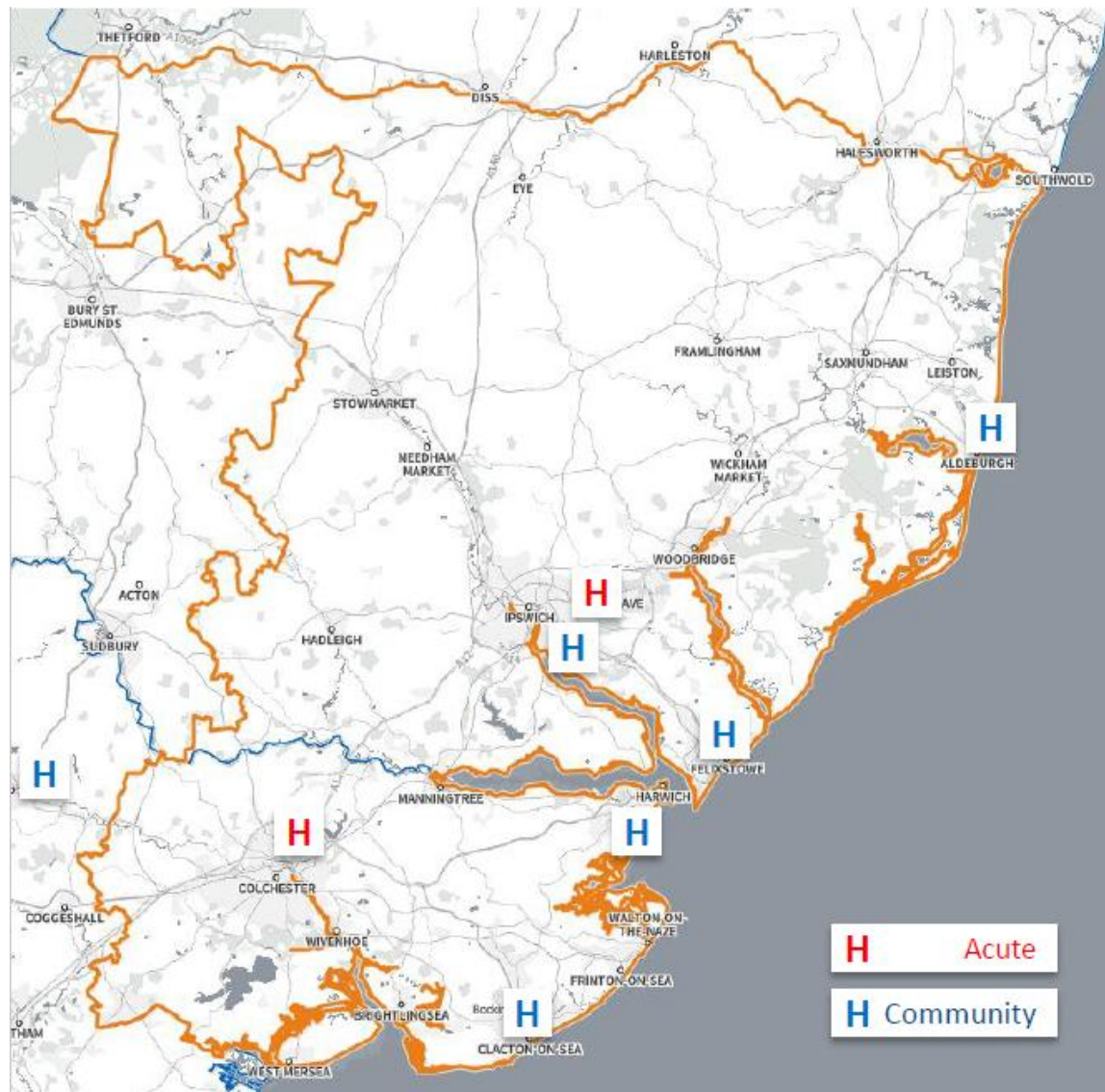
Associate Director, Research, Innovation and Education

**Kate Read**

Director of People & Organisational Development



# Our Trust



**East Suffolk and  
North Essex**

**NHS Foundation Trust**

Serving 800,000 residents



Two acute  
hospitals  
1,200 beds



Community  
service  
& six community  
hospitals



12,000 staff



250,000 emergency attendances



1.5m outpatient appointments



100,000 elective procedures

Our ambition is to offer the best care and experience, and to increase equality in health outcomes

We are an *anchor* organisation with a strong culture of innovation



# Developing the Pipeline – Widening participation amongst young people

- Number of students attending ESNEFT specific career events academic year 24/25: **2,625**
- Annual ESNEFT Career Fairs, Col & Ips circa **1000 attendees, 28 interactive stands**
- Innovation in the NHS events incl. robotic surgery simulation/VR scenarios
- Number of work experience opportunities at ESNEFT taken up by secondary/6<sup>th</sup> form students in academic year 24/25: **727**
- Pharmacy & Healthcare Science specific events/activities
- Children in Care & Care Leaver bespoke activities (SCC & ECC), incl paid internships



# Developing the Pipeline – Widening participation amongst young people

- **“Next-Medic” Programme** with ARU (widening participation criteria) in 3<sup>rd</sup> year and now applications to medical school
- **“Next-AHP”** with several HEIs from Feb 2025, 34 participants
- **“Next-Healthcare Scientist”** with UoE from autumn 2025
- **£100k** investment to enable/enrich a health & care curriculum at key stage 4 at **4 secondary schools** serving our most disadvantaged communities (mock ward etc)
- Investment in both vocational colleges – VR scenarios, equipment, staffing, new biomedical science curriculum (BTEC/T Level)
- Number of Further Education work placements provided in 24/25: **105 BTEC/T level students**. For 25/26: **150 T Level work placements committed to per year**
- **“ESNEFT Career-Start”** Programme with Colchester Institute (masterclasses, placements, mentoring, guaranteed interview) since 21/22



# Developing the Pipeline – Widening participation more broadly and supporting local employment

- **Health & Social Care Sector Employability Programme** 16-30 year olds: King's Trust 3 year programme 2025-2028, which we will deliver across north Essex
  - Our recruitment (70 per year) to our programmes will draw from 4 streams of engagement across Colchester and Tendring
    - From further education
    - Young adults with learning difficulties and disabilities
    - The unemployed or young adults who are NEET
    - Those not ready for employment but who benefit from volunteering as a precursor to securing employment in the sector
- **Essex Year of Opportunity 25/26 ECC**
  - Paid internships for care leavers
  - Pre-Employment programme for the unemployed – 80 participants across north Essex
- **Circa £750k of Apprenticeship Levy Share** invested in creating employment in our local communities
  - Health & care sector, “Tendring 100”, “Colchester 25”





# Converting the Pipeline into... Health Care Support Worker Apprentices and beyond



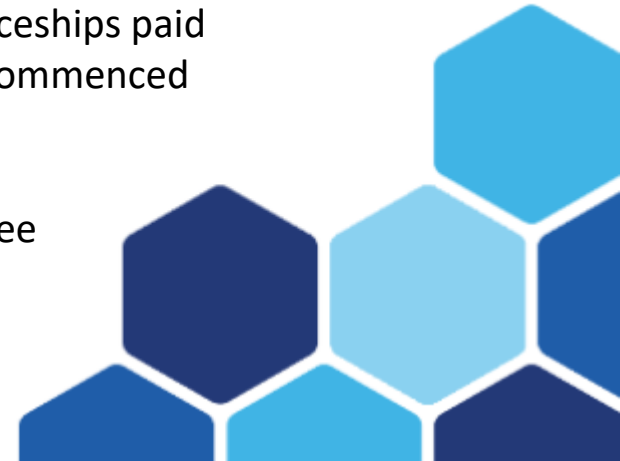
- **HCSW Apprenticeship Academy**
- Started in September 2023
- Designed to open up opportunities for those who are new to care or have very little experience
- 8 week off the job made up of classroom time, ward shadowing and independent study
- Completion of Care Certificate mapped into the delivery – no duplication
- 164 have started the programme
- 25 completed – 13 with distinction
- 5 have progressed to level 3

# Converting the Pipeline into... Medical Doctor Apprentices



## Medical Doctor Degree Apprenticeship

- Only 1 of its kind nationally, in collaboration with ARU, huge interest from prospective applicants
- August 2024 saw our 1<sup>st</sup> intake of 25 medical apprentices employed by ESNEFT; degree apprenticeships paid mostly from Apprenticeship Levy and part paid by NHSE. 2nd intake of 25 medical apprentices commenced July 2025
- Widening participation criteria used as part of the selection process
- 5 year programme, exactly the same education and content as the traditional route, no tuition fee debt for the apprentices – ESNEFT staff
- Successor programme to be launched “Medical Employment Programme” this autumn





# Progressing and developing our staff –

## Apprenticeships

- 577 ESNEFT staff undertaking Apprenticeships\* - record numbers
- Record number 109 completed Apprenticeships in 2024 calendar year(100 in 2023)
- Wide range of Apprenticeships Standards, with staff across a broad range of disciplines/occupations and bandings
- Record levels of Apprenticeship Levy spend (£2.3m forecast for 25/26) and Levy Share (24 external employers, 60+ apprentices)
- Became an “Employer Provider of Apprenticeship Training” in 2022, delivering a finite number of Apprenticeship Standards, rated “Good” by Ofsted
- Strategic Trust approach to Apprenticeships – to “grow our own” and develop stepping stones from entry level roles through to postgraduate roles
- Apprenticeships in use across all AHP professions employed at ESNEFT
- Using Apprenticeships to support leadership development – circa 100 staff undertaking leadership Apprenticeships
- Using Apprenticeship Levy share to address health inequalities locally

\*As of end Oct 2025



# Final Thoughts

- Collaboration & partnerships
- Personal connections
- Executive support
- Telling people about and celebrating success
- Creativity
- Thinking wider than the NHS
- Accessing funding creatively and in partnership
- Perseverance

