

Supporting healthcare organisations through changes in the workforce development plan

How Buckinghamshire New University uses Aptem



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Introduction

Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) works with more than 20 healthcare organisations, including private providers and NHS trusts, to deliver healthcare apprenticeships.

This network expands to around 50–60 organisations when primary care partners, such as GP surgeries, nursing homes and medical centres, are included. From nursing associates progressing to Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeships (RNDA), to Operating Department Practitioner (ODP) and Occupational Therapy (OT), Advanced Clinical Practitioner programmes and senior leader apprenticeships, BNU's provision spans a wide range of roles across the modern healthcare workforce.



Every trust we work with does things slightly differently, but the standard of quality, compliance and support has to be consistent, whichever organisations we are working with.

Simin Alaei, Senior Manager Apprenticeship and Skills Relationships, Buckinghamshire New University



The challenge

NHS trusts operate under constant pressure. Ward managers, supervisors and education leads are often balancing frontline duties with the responsibility of supporting apprentices, so every additional form or login competes directly with patient care

For a university managing programmes across dozens of trusts, each with its own structure and priorities, keeping oversight consistent without adding to that pressure takes careful management.

The landscape adds further complexity. Funding routes, workforce priorities and NHS education structures continue to

evolve, and trusts increasingly work together, for example through consortium arrangements that share apprenticeship leadership across several organisations in a region. BNU needed a system that could flex with these changes rather than needing to be rebuilt every time they happened.



Ward managers, supervisors and leaders are excellent at their jobs, but their day job comes first. We have to make it as easy as possible for them to stay on top of what an apprenticeship needs, without it feeling like extra work.

Simin Alaei, Senior Manager Apprenticeship and Skills Relationships, Buckinghamshire New University



The solution

Aptem gives BNU's apprenticeship team, and the NHS colleagues they work alongside, one system for managing the entire apprenticeship journey.

Onboarding begins up to 20 weeks before a programme starts, with employer signatories identified early so responsibilities and deadlines are clear from day one, for every trust and every cohort.

Every ward manager, supervisor and tutor can be given access to the parts of the system relevant to them, rather than the university team acting as the sole point of visibility. Once apprentices are on programme, Aptem tracks off-the-job training hours, learning log submissions and engagement activity, flagging where a learner is falling behind before it becomes a compliance risk. Alongside this, BNU has built Power BI dashboards using Aptem data, giving trust leads clear, exportable reports for governance meetings without needing to log into another system themselves.



It has made our onboarding process so much easier. We know from the outset who needs to sign what and by when, and our processes can be implemented seamlessly in Aptem. This has made a real difference for the trusts we work with.

Simin Alaei, Senior Manager
Apprenticeship and Skills Relationships,
Buckinghamshire New University



20 wks

Onboarding begins up to 20 weeks before a programme starts, with employer signatories identified early so responsibilities are clear from day one.



Supporting diverse funding routes

Not every apprenticeship BNU delivers is funded in the same way. Following the defunding of Level 7 apprenticeships, its Advanced Clinical Practitioner apprenticeship currently draws on a dedicated allocation, administered through NHS England. This funding has been confirmed by NHS England until 2028/29 and is managed alongside the standard Growth and Skills Levy and co-investment routes used for programmes such as its senior leader apprenticeship, where funding arrangements have themselves evolved as government rules have changed.

Whichever route funds a programme, Aptem applies the same complete compliance framework in every case, tracking off-the-job training hours, individualised learner records and progress reviews to an identical standard. For BNU, that means a new or changing funding route can be picked up without ever having to build a separate, less rigorous way of managing it.



Expanding apprenticeship provision

The same consistency supports the full breadth of BNU's healthcare provision. When BNU launched its Diagnostic Radiographer Degree Apprenticeship (DRDA) in 2025 and Midwifery in 2024, it did not need to build a new processes to support them. The same onboarding sequence, off-the-job tracking, progress reviews and compliance reporting that underpin BNU's long-established nursing and allied health pathways apply from day one, giving the university and its NHS Radiology and Midwifery partners the same confidence in delivery quality on a new subject area as they have on programmes that have been running for years.



We are proud of our new Diagnostic Radiographer and Midwifery apprenticeships. Underpinning these programmes is a robust system that brings together all the information, processes and support needed by our apprentices and their employers in one place.

Simin Alaei, Senior Manager Apprenticeship and Skills Relationships, Buckinghamshire New University

The impact

For Simin Alaei, Senior Manager Apprenticeship and Skills Relationships at BNU, the result is a system that keeps pace with a demanding and changing sector.

Weekly reporting, automatic compliance flags and streamlined onboarding all reduce the manual chasing that once fell to BNU's apprenticeship skills managers. This frees up the team to focus on supporting learners rather than administration. For NHS trusts, that means governance reporting they can act on immediately, and an experience that fits around frontline roles rather than competing with them.



Looking ahead

As NHS trusts continue to adapt to changing workforce needs, BNU already has proof that its approach holds up: the same processes that support its long-established nursing and allied health programmes can be applied consistently to any newly developed programme. That track record means BNU's apprenticeship team can take on new programmes and funding routes without rebuilding how they manage compliance.



I have worked with a lot of providers in my time in education, and I have used several different systems. Aptem has been the best that I have worked with. It's very easy to use, and I'm on it every day.

Simin Alaei, Senior Manager Apprenticeship and Skills Relationships, Buckinghamshire New University



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