Governance and implementation

This section outlines how St Monica Trust embedded governance and implementation to support its apprenticeship programme, focusing on leadership, risk oversight, decision-making and innovation.

Strategic direction came from trustees and the CEO, with HR, the apprenticeship team, and care managers leading recruitment and onboarding. A dedicated Apprentice and Work Placement Lead ensured continuity and managed provider relationships, while governance was maintained through the People Committee and trustee oversight.

Risks such as safeguarding and operational strain were addressed through a centralised framework, revised policies and staff training. Monthly reports, digital tools and feedback loops enabled progress tracking and timely interventions, ensuring safe and effective delivery.

This section is split into the following topics:

- roles and accountability
- governance oversight of emerging risks
- measuring progress
- key decisions and key learning.

Roles and accountability

> "Hiring a dedicated person with apprenticeship knowledge has been essential. Our Apprentice and Work Placement Lead joining revolutionised how we manage it. It's too big to be part of someone's job unless they're on it full-time."
>
> **Sara Naylor-Wild,** Director of Care, St Monica Trust

- **Providing strategic direction** – Trustees and the CEO ensured alignment with organisational values and long-term goals, while HR led recruitment and coordination.
- **Engaging operational managers** – Care managers supported selection and onboarding, fostering ownership and engagement across teams.
- **Introducing a dedicated lead** – An Apprentice and Work Placement Lead acted as the central point of contact, managing provider relationships, recruitment logistics and apprentice support.
- **Training operational teams** – House leads received training to support younger workers, including those with neurodiverse needs, creating inclusive environments.
- **Ensuring quality through provider choice** – Education partners delivered relevant training. When one provider failed to meet expectations, the Trust switched to a more suitable partner, demonstrating responsiveness and commitment to quality.

> "The entire project all went through to our People Committee… and the People Committee then has trustees who give oversight and governance."
>
> **Paul Tisdale,** Director of Innovation, St Monica Trust

Governance oversight of emerging risks

> **"We have an organisational-wide risk assessment… and we have mitigation plans and appropriate action behind all of that."**
>
> **Paul Tisdale**, Director of Innovation, St Monica Trust

- **Embedding structured decision-making** – A cross-functional governance group – including HR, learning and development, operations, and finance – ensured alignment with priorities and compliance, with key decisions escalated to senior leadership and trustees.
- **Maintaining clear communication** – Regular meetings and departmental updates fed into executive discussions, supported by Microsoft Teams for real-time collaboration and issue resolution.
- **Introducing policy and contract changes** – Safeguarding policies tailored to younger adults, restricted working hours, targeted staff training and fixed-term apprenticeship contracts of at least 15 months were implemented.
- **Managing risk proactively** – Departments contributed to centralised risk assessments covering safeguarding, operational strain and financial unpredictability. Mitigation plans with clear actions and timelines were reviewed regularly for visibility and accountability.

Measuring progress

> **"We work really closely with our apprenticeship provider… who provides us with a monthly report… so that we've got a really good understanding of the progress."**
>
> **Clare Reeve,** Training and Development Manager, St Monica Trust

- **Embedding structured reporting** – Standard templates and regular updates ensured transparency and consistency, supported by the innovation team to promote continuous improvement and co-production with staff and residents.
- **Tracking performance and progress** – Monthly reports, digital tools and feedback loops enabled early interventions when apprentices faced challenges, reinforcing accountability.
- **Using digital systems for monitoring** – The UK Government's digital apprenticeship service tracked enrolment, completions and funding, while provider reports detailed attendance and milestones.
- **Integrating internal systems** – Workday ensured HR compliance and workforce monitoring, with progress reviewed in executive and trustee meetings using standardised templates.
- **Celebrating success and impact** – Indicators included retention, progression and feedback from care teams and residents. Milestone events and reductions in agency costs highlighted cultural and operational benefits.

Key decisions

Here is a summary of the key decisions that made a difference around governance and implementation:

- Created a cross-functional governance group involving HR, operations, finance, and learning teams to guide programme design, ensure compliance and align apprenticeship activity with strategic priorities.
- Revised employment contracts to fixed-term agreements of at least 15 months, aligning with apprenticeship standards and ensuring clear and consistent expectations for younger recruits.
- Developed a safeguarding policy tailored to younger adults, including restricted working hours and targeted staff training to ensure safe practice and compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Introduced an organisation-wide risk assessment framework to identify and mitigate risks related to younger apprentices, ensuring coordinated responses across departments and visibility at executive and trustee levels.

Key learning

St Monica Trust's governance planning for its apprenticeship programme combined clarity, collaboration and adaptability to ensure safe, effective delivery.

- **Define roles early** – Clear responsibilities across HR, care management and leadership ensured accountability and alignment with strategic goals.
- **Create dedicated leadership** – An Apprentice and Work Placement Lead managed logistics and provider relationships, reflecting the scale and complexity of delivery.
- **Establish robust structures** – Governance bodies like the People Committee and cross-functional oversight groups supported consistent decision-making and risk management.
- **Embed compliance and safety** – Contracts, policies and safeguarding protocols were revised to meet the needs of younger recruits from the outset.
- **Integrate progress tracking** – Digital systems and monthly reporting enabled timely interventions and continuous improvement.
- **Balance structure with flexibility** – Governance allowed the programme to adapt to emerging needs, while remaining focused and inclusive.

Recommendations

Access a checklist of practical recommendations inspired by St Monica Trust's approach via Skills for Care's website.