



Better Skills
Better Jobs
Better Health

**The Sector Skills
Council for Health**

11th October 2010

NHSWhitePaper@dh.gsi.gov.uk

1st Floor
Goldsmith's House
Broad Plain
BRISTOL
BS2 0JP

☎ 0117-922-1155
Fax: 0117-929-3398

Liberating the NHS: Increasing democratic legitimacy in health A consultation on proposals

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FROM SKILLS FOR HEALTH

Skills for Health is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the health sector across the United Kingdom (UK). Our role covers all healthcare employers – including those in the National Health Service (NHS), independent and voluntary sectors. We are part of a UK network of Sector Skills Councils covering 85% of the UK economy. Our strategic aim is to develop a skilled, flexible and productive workforce for the whole health sector in all UK nations, to raise the quality of health and healthcare for the public, patients and service users. The delivery of this aim is reflected in our Statement of Purpose, which is appended to this response.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. The specific questions are not appropriate for us, as an SSC, to respond to that but we would like, through this response, to draw attention to some of the workforce transformation and development issues raised by the consultation document.

We note, and are pleased to see, the emphasis placed on improving integrated working. In addition to the options set out in the consultation document around commissioning arrangements and joint working through health and well being boards, we would draw attention to the need for such new ways of working to be supported by the more effective integration of the health and social care workforces where appropriate.

Skills for Health has undertaken a range of work aimed at developing the workforce at the interface between health and social care including, the development of new roles, and resources to support skills and competence development. These include:

- Common core principles to support self-care
- A learning and development framework to help health and social care staff better meet the needs of informal carers
- A training and education action plan to support delivery of dementia services across health and social care
- A range of resources to support health and social care staff deliver better end of life care
- Autism – a framework to promote awareness for mainstream health and social care staff

In general we agree with the intention to transfer responsibility and funding for local health improvement activity to local authorities as part of the reorganisation of the NHS. This will enable the wider determinants of health to be dealt with more appropriately and effectively, but importantly, from our perspective, it will also enable a more coherent approach to be taken to the development of both the specialist and non-specialist public health workforce. Skills for Health has already undertaken a range of work to support the development of the wider public health workforce including the development of a comprehensive *Public Health Career and Skills Framework*, which can be found on our website [here](#).

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss these aspects of our work in more detail and in particular how workforce development around integrated working and public health can support the drive towards localism and the development of more joined up services.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Pond', enclosed within a large, thin, hand-drawn oval.

Christina Pond
Executive Director, Standards and Qualifications

Appendix

Statement of Purpose and Aims

Skills for Health is the sector skills council for the health sector. We help the whole UK health sector develop a skilled, flexible and productive workforce to improve the quality of health and healthcare.

We do this in two ways.

Firstly, as the authoritative voice on skills issues we:

- Meet, listen and respond to employers and stakeholders
- Understand skills needs and represent them
- Champion effective investment in skills in the sector
- Conduct focused workforce research for employers
- Provide intelligence on the labour market to help employers predict workforce trends
- Ensure that employers get the right staff with the right qualifications through influence on education and training supply.

Secondly, we offer employers and the workforce tested solutions and tools, with the expertise and experience to use them effectively.

These solutions and tools help to deliver:

- A more flexible workforce
- A more productive workforce
- Fewer skills gaps
- Employees with better skills at all levels
- More rewarding jobs
- A better patient experience

They are based on unique workforce competences identified and managed by Skills for Health that are:

- Recognised across the UK
- Transferable
- Quality assured
- Used to develop recognised qualifications based on employer needs.

We recognise that to do this we need to work with partners across the sector, and in every UK country.