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Skills for Health relicensed by UK government and recognised for “outstanding” contribution to workforce modernisation

14/10/2009: Skills for Health has been relicensed by government as the Sector Skills Council for the UK healthcare sector, following an assessment by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and the National Audit Office (NAO). Skills for Health was assessed as being at the upper end of the “Good” category in most areas, and “Outstanding” in its groundbreaking approach to workforce redesign.

The UKCES commended the level of engagement between Skills for Health and UK healthcare employers and highlighted the tools it had created to help employers develop the national healthcare workforce to meet future requirements.

The relicensing Panel at the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) was particularly impressed by Skills for Health’s “groundbreaking approach to workforce transformation (which) ... enables roles to be redesigned to provide a more efficient and effective workforce”; and its ability to “demonstrate significant impact UK-wide in a very complex sector, where both skills and health policy are devolved.”

Andy Burnham, Secretary of State for Health, said:

“This is excellent news for Skills for Health and the wider sector. The development of our workforce is critical across the health sector, enabling us to drive up service quality and productivity. It is particularly encouraging that the health sector’s work on workforce transformation has been judged to be of leading edge quality, leading to direct improvements in patient care.”

Charlie Mayfield, Chairman of the John Lewis Partnership and the UK Commission’s relicensing panel, said:

“The process of relicensing is an opportunity to uncover best practice and highlight wider issues as they arise. Skills for Health’s UK-wide approach to health workforce

modernisation is one of these examples, and the Panel urges the organisation to share this approach more widely across the Sector Skills Council network.”

Chris Hannah, Chair of the Skills for Health Board, added:

“Since being established in April 2004, everyone at Skills for Health has worked tirelessly to help reduce workforce skills gaps and shortages in the health sector. We are pleased that these efforts have been acknowledged formally after such a thorough assessment by the NAO and UKCES, but there is still a great deal to be done. The work of Skills for Health has never been so timely. The sector is seeking to improve quality and productivity in a period of financial constraint. Skills for Health has the workforce development tools to support the sector in developing a more flexible workforce to meet these challenges”.

Ends

Skills for Health – www.skillsforhealth.org.uk – is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the UK healthcare sector, encompassing the National Health Services, independent healthcare providers and voluntary organisations. Its purpose is to help develop solutions that can deliver a skilled and flexible workforce to improve health and healthcare.

More information, including a detailed description of the relicensing process, is available at www.ukces.org.uk – click on Sector Skills Councils – or from Alex Curling, Head of Press, UKCES: 01709 774890 alex.curling@ukces.org.uk and Jane Parsons, BIS press office: 020 7215 5947.

Skills for Health was one of four SSCs relicensed today (14/10/09) by Lord Mandelson, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. The other three successful SSCs were Skills Active (active leisure and learning); Improve Ltd (food and drink manufacturing and processing); and Skills for Justice (policing and law enforcement, youth justice, custodial care, community justice, courts service, prosecution service and forensic science).