

News Release

8 March 2010

Employers must utilise workforce skills more effectively, says Skills for Health

Health sector employers must find new ways to utilise the skills of existing staff if they are to deliver greater productivity and higher quality care, says a new report from Skills for Health.

The UK-wide *Sector Skills Assessment 2009/10* reviews the current and future skills needs of the health sector in the context of rising financial pressures, increasing patient expectations and growth in long-term conditions.

It says that while the sector enjoys a high skills base, employers urgently need to consider how these skills can be utilised more effectively as the sector enters a new period of financial restraint.

This should include greater focus on developing staff at the Career Framework levels 1 to 4, to enable registered practitioners to make full use of their competences.

Employers will also need high levels of management and leadership skills to facilitate the significant service changes ahead, the report adds.

Commenting on the report, Skills for Health chief executive John Rogers said: "Our assessment suggests that the emphasis will be very much on doing more within existing resources, which implies far more effective utilisation of staff skills.

"For example, we expect multidisciplinary team working to become more prevalent as employers develop new and more flexible working structures.

"Employers have also responded positively to the creation of new roles at Assistant and Advanced Practitioner level and we expect these to be adopted more widely in the coming years."

The *Sector Skills Assessment 2009/10* is published by Skills for Health as part of a suite of assessments for the sector which together cover the UK and each of its countries.

It draws on original research undertaken by Skills for Health and a range of secondary sources such as the Labour Force Survey and Annual Business Inquiry.

Copies of the report are available to download from the Skills for Health website at www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/LMI

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Notes to editors

1. As part of its remit, Skills for Health develops high quality, accessible, skills and labour market intelligence for the UK health sector. Our primary focus is on the current and future skills needs of the sector, including those working in the NHS, independent and voluntary sectors. Our labour market intelligence can be divided into four broad areas: Baseline national and regional industry specific intelligence; Research themes; Future-oriented research; and the Labour Market Intelligence online tool.
2. The Career Framework for Health is an overarching resource for NHS and partner organisations, which can aid workforce flexibility locally, regionally and nationally. Further details are available at <http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/workforce-design-development/workforce-design-and-planning/tools-and-methodologies/career-frameworks.aspx>
3. Skills for Health is the Sector Skills Council 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.