

# Skills for Health News

## Northern Ireland

October 2010 Edition

### Inside this issue

- Whittington NHS Trust dramatically reduces length of stay and improves quality
- Skills and workforce briefings help employers prevent skills gaps
- Strong support for 'Skills Passport' to cut recruitment and training costs
- Your views on the govt skills consultation
- Skills for Health conferences – last few places available
- Volunteers and you - making the most of the benefits to both
- New qualifications to meet employers' needs
- Your future education and training needs - have your say

Skills for  
Health



Welcome to the second edition of our Northern Ireland Newsletter. My aim is to keep you up to date with our projects that help you tackle your workforce and skills issues.

Skills for Health has developed a range of solutions to help you increase quality and productivity in the sector. Please contact me if you would like to find out more about how we can support you.

### Free qualifications event - 10 November

Skills for Health are running a free event on Wednesday 10 November to give you an update on the Vocational Reform Programme and new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

It's also your chance to tell us what you think the qualifications priorities should be for the health sector. If you would like to attend please let me know. This is a joint event with Skills for Care and Development, supported by the Department for Employment and Learning.

### Did you know?

We have recently relaunched our website. If you haven't taken a look yet please visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)

### Free Skills for Health event: Improving Quality and Productivity through Workforce Transformation - 8 December

We are holding a free one day event on Wednesday 8 December at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick aimed at helping employers improve quality and productivity through workforce transformation.

The day will demonstrate how Skills for Health can help employers with our range of products and services. If you'd like to attend please [let me know here](#) and see further information on page 4.

#### For further details and information please contact:

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### ABOUT US

Skills for Health is the employer-led Sector Skills Council for the health sector, serving the NHS, independent and voluntary sectors (2.1m employees throughout the UK). Skills for Health was relicensed in 2009 with an 'outstanding' contribution to workforce redesign. We are the authoritative voice on skills issues for the health sector and offer employers proven workforce solutions and tools - with the expertise and experience to use them effectively.

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Skills for  
Health

### 1) Whittington uses competences to dramatically reduce length of stay and improve quality

**Two new roles have helped Whittington Hospital NHS Trust dramatically reduce the length of stay over two years - down from 17 to 12 days in care of older people wards and 24 to 18 days for stroke patients.**

The Trust used Skills for Health competences for a new approach to design two clinical Therapy Assistant roles - one focused on the care of the older patient and the other working closely with stroke patients.



Thanks to their competence-based training, the newly skilled Therapy Assistants were able to tightly integrate into the service and provide a vital link between Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy teams.

Patients were seen more quickly and had to see fewer staff, leading to better continuity of care and a more personalised approach. Quality of care was judged to have improved.

Adrienne Simons, Service Manager for Physiotherapy, OT & Rehabilitation, Whittington Hospital NHS Trust said: "Taking a competence based approach to role design has helped us to pinpoint exactly the right skills to meet the needs of patients, and this strategy has proven to be successful.

"We found the quality of care improved and in future there is potential for reduced re-admittance rates."

- ▷ [To view the case study see here](#)
- ▷ [To find out using competences can help you reduce length of stay and improve quality of care and how Skills for Health can make it happen, contact your local Skills for Health country or region director \(see page 1\).](#)

### 2) Skills and workforce briefings help employers prevent skills gaps

**Intelligence briefings from Skills for Health that help health sector employers understand and respond to the fast-changing regional skills and labour market environment are available.**

Skills for Health publishes a range of 'baseline' skills and labour market intelligence reports for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. All are free to download from the Skills for Health website.



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Skills for  
Health

We can also provide bespoke, comprehensive intelligence specific to your organisation that not only profiles the health of your local communities but can predict demand for health services down to electoral ward level.

By mapping a wide range of health demand and employment intelligence to your own data and combining this with benchmarking information we can allow you to measure your organisation against other health sector employers on a range of criteria.

The results and analysis then enable you to predict and prevent your future skills gaps.

- ▷ **To view the briefings or find out more visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/lmi](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/lmi)**
- ▷ **To find out how our LMI briefings can providing a sound basis for your workforce planning contact your local Skills for Health country director (see page 1).**

### 3) Strong support for 'Skills Passport' to cut recruitment and training costs

#### **A one-year Skills Passport pilot project in England has received strong support from employers.**

The passport's potential to reduce duplication of statutory and mandatory training and pre-employment checks each time an employee moves between employers was picked out for particular praise.

The pilot was conducted among nursing staff at seven English NHS Trusts during 2009/10 and sought to test 'proof of concept' for the passport, which is seen as a powerful tool with which to support workforce flexibility and mobility across the four rapidly-changing UK healthcare systems.

The passport allows workers to create a verified online record of their skills, qualifications and experience which can be viewed by prospective or existing employers as required.

David Foster, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer for England, said: "I am delighted that it has not only confirmed the case for a skills passport but also highlighted a range of potential additional benefits for employers, health workers throughout the UK, universities and, most importantly, those who use health services."

We are now developing the passport further and testing it among other sectors of the health workforce with the aim of making the Passport available for wider use in 2011.

- ▷ **Look out for further updates in this Newsletter or on our website.**



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Skills for  
Health

### 4) Skills for Health conferences to help unlock extra quality and productivity - last few places available

Nearly 1,000 healthcare employers have signed up for the Skills for Health conferences taking place across the UK this autumn and winter.

The free events will be locally tailored to show how you can use our solutions to deliver more cost effective, high quality services.

The aim is to demonstrate how we can help you:

- address current and future workforce developments
- create better skilled, more productive teams

- unlock quality & productivity gains
- develop a more flexible workforce to suit the needs of ever-changing service demands.

These conferences are aimed at those in senior management, clinical lead or workforce development roles in the NHS, independent and voluntary sector.

A few places are still available for some of the conferences.

- ▷ To see all the dates and which events are still open visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/about-us/events/SfH-roadshows.aspx](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/about-us/events/SfH-roadshows.aspx)
- ▷ To register your interest visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/conferences](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/conferences)



The first event held in the South West attracted 75 delegates

### 5) Volunteers and you - making the most of the benefits to both

A new guide from Skills for Health brings helps employers work effectively with volunteers to make the most of the benefits they offer.

*A Guide to Volunteering in Healthcare Organisations* helps you to:

- attract new volunteers by highlighting benefits to potential recruits
- understand what works best when advertising volunteering opportunities
- access links to nhs toolkit on volunteering (which includes advice on recruitment, training and induction, managing volunteers and trouble-shooting)
- find out how volunteering can support your workforce development activities and open up new pools for recruitment.

Volunteers can often bring valuable expertise as former patients and can free up staff time.

Recent research suggests that every £1 invested in a volunteering programme gives a return of between £3.38 and £10.46<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Institute of Volunteering Research, *In Good Health: Assessing the impact of volunteering in the NHS* (2008)



The amount of money it would cost hospices to buy the services provided free by volunteers has been calculated at £112 million each year - around 23% of running costs<sup>2</sup>.

- ▷ To view the guide visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/careersinformationandadvice](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/careersinformationandadvice)
- ▷ To find out how you can make the most of the benefits volunteers offer, contact your local Skills for Health country or region Director (see page 1).

<sup>2</sup> Skills for Health, *The 'Hidden' Workforce, Volunteers in the Healthcare Sector in England*, (2009)

## 6) Creating integrated services and protecting the most vulnerable

**Skills for Health works with organisations across the health and education sectors to 'plug the gaps' to build seamless healthcare services.**

For the past three years we have been working with the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) in England to create an integrated approach to children's services. This aims to ensure that everyone working with children and young people has the right knowledge and skills to provide safe and effective services.

One of the outcomes of this work, a project to deliver training for those supporting children and young people with complex and continuing healthcare needs, has been shortlisted for a Social Care Accolades Award on 25 November.

Jane Roe, National Manager, Business development and Policy Directorate at CWDC said: "We value the contribution made by Skills for Health towards work on the refresh of the common core and qualifications development for the Children, Young People's and Families workforce.

"We are currently in the final year of a three year contract of work with Sector Skills Councils across the children's workforce. However, we look forward to continued positive partnership working with Skills for Health and the other SSCs in the future.

"This is of benefit to employers and ultimately for the children, young people and families who receive services."



## 7) Caring for carers - supporting those caring at home

**New joint guidance from Skills for Health and Skills for Care helps employers and carers in England work together to make the most of the benefits that carers can bring.**

According to the 2001 census an estimated six million people in the UK provide unpaid care to an ill, frail or disabled family member or friend. This is set to increase to nine million by 2037.

People who provide a substantial amount of care tend to have lower incomes, poorer health, and are less likely to be in work than their counterparts<sup>3</sup>.

Ensuring your staff are aware of the contributions carers make to delivering services, and understand their needs, means that carers are more likely to be able to continue caring effectively and less likely to rely on healthcare services themselves.

*Carers Matter - Everybody's Business* provides a framework to develop your workforce to support carers with both online and printed resources and links to a host of relevant sources of information.

▷ **visit the resource at [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk) from early December**

<sup>3</sup> *Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities. "A caring system on your side. A life of your own." HM Government 2008*

## 8) New qualifications to meet employers' needs



**Skills for Health is working to ensure the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) qualifications are responsive to employers' needs and is easier for everyone to understand.**

Our new competence-based QCF qualifications will be available from January 2011 or earlier:

### Level 2

- Diploma in Clinical Healthcare Support
- Diploma in Emergency Care Assistance
- Certificate in Healthcare Support Services
- Certificate in Health Informatics
- Diploma in Optical Retailing (working title)
- NVQ Certificate in Pharmacy Service Skills (QCF) (available now)

### Level 3

- Diploma in Allied Health Profession Support
  - Diploma in Blood Donor Support
  - Diploma in Clinical Healthcare Support
  - Diploma in Dental Nursing (available December 2010)
  - Diploma in Healthcare Support Services
  - Diploma in Maternity and Paediatric Support
  - Diploma in Optical Retailing (working title)
  - Diploma in Pathology Support
  - Diploma in Perioperative Support
  - NVQ Diploma in Pharmacy Service Skills (QCF) (available now)
- ▷ **For further details visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/qcfupdate](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/qcfupdate)**
- ▷ **Skills for Health will be running QCF events in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in November and December to launch the new QCF health qualifications. See the news section of our website for more.**
- ▷ **To find out how the new qualifications can help develop your workforce, contact your Skills for Health country or region Director (see page 1).**

### 9) New Pharmacy qualification to help employers meet mandatory requirements

**A new set of qualifications for Pharmacy Assistants and Technicians is now available, in time to meet the new mandatory registration requirements for Pharmacy Technicians at Level 3 which come into effect in July 2011.**

The three-year project was undertaken in close partnership with the General Pharmaceutical Council (formerly Royal Pharmaceutical Society), hospital and community pharmacy employers, awarding organisations and training providers.

The Pharmacy Apprenticeship Framework is now available UK wide for Dispensing and Pharmacy Assistants and Pharmacy Technicians and includes the new accredited QCF qualifications. Learners will be able to register onto the Framework from September 2010.

Skills for Health is currently reviewing the Scotland Apprenticeship Framework to include the new qualifications.

Please [visit our website](#) for more details.

- ▷ **For further information on the qualifications visit our website**
- ▷ **The new registration requirements can be found on the General Pharmaceutical Council website**
- ▷ **To find out how the new qualifications can help you meet the registration requirements, contact your local Skills for Health country or region Director (see page 1).**



### 10) Your future education and training needs - have your say

**By giving us your views on future education and training needs we can help influence future training on your behalf.**

Just take part in the consultation on our draft education strategy. The strategy focus on three main themes:

- Demand from employers
- Provision by suppliers
- Partnerships across the sector.

By giving us your feedback on the strategy we'll be able to champion your views, influence supply by providers and facilitate partnerships to ensure you get training and education that are responsive and bespoke for the sector.

- ▷ **[Click here to take part.](#)**



### 11) Unique strategic workforce planning course to ensure your organisation's future health

**This one of a kind course helps organisations unlock quality and productivity gains by ensuring that their workforce planners are experts in their field. Participants have a unique opportunity to develop their roles by achieving a recognised and credible qualification.**

Monica Mendez, senior workforce planning consultant at Walsall Council, said: "The Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Workforce Planning is one of the best qualifications I have ever undertaken. It equips you with the knowledge and expertise to implement a workforce planning infrastructure in any organisation, local authority and PCTs included."

Applications are welcomed from across the UK. Deadline for applications for the course, brought to you by Skills for Health and the Centre and Thames Valley University, is on 5 November. The course starts in February 2011, completing in December 2011.

- ▷ **To find out about more about how the course can help you develop your workforce planning capacity and capability email Michelle Logan at [michelle.logan@skillsforhealth.org.uk](mailto:michelle.logan@skillsforhealth.org.uk) or contact your local Skills for Health country or region director (see page 1).**

### 12) New healthcare apprenticeships - Have your say

**The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009 introduces the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) and Wales (SASW). From 6 April 2011 all new apprenticeships must use frameworks which comply with these Standards.**

Skills for Health is developing new healthcare apprenticeship frameworks to meet both these Standards. These will be introduced on 1 January 2011.

To ensure that the new frameworks meet the needs of health sector employers, we are seeking your views on the options and flexibility they currently offer.

Please [click here](#) to complete the survey, or visit our website at [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk). You can answer for England, Wales or for both countries. The survey closes on 27 October.