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## 1) New online resources to help employers set up and benefit from Apprenticeships

The Skills for Health website now provides new resources to help employers, learners and training providers benefit from health sector apprenticeships. This includes information on setting up, delivering and evaluating apprenticeships within the health sector.

Amongst other things the apprenticeship web pages allows you to search over 100 job roles to identify the apprenticeship frameworks that will best meet your future workforce needs. This includes improving the skills of existing staff.

Many of the materials available have been provided by SHAs and can be customised for local use employers. All are free to use.

At the recent NHS National Apprenticeship Conference Trusts were enthusiastic about the use of Apprenticeships to improve quality of care and provide valuable new skills.

Ambulance Service Manager Paul Palfreeman, said; "Patient care has definitely improved since we took on the apprentices. They're answering the calls quicker, we're speaking to the patients much more regularly, we're keeping them informed and we're developing the staff as we go along."

Pharmacy manager Gill Risby said: "It brings to us a lot of skills that we wouldn't always expect. Younger apprentices come with a wealth of IT skills that some of our longer standing employees won't have."

Hereford PCT Training Centre Administration Manager Helen Pryce said: "Taking apprentices has had a real impact on the department as a whole because they can come in and they can offer valuable support, they bring with them enthusiasm, they've very keen to learn and it helps our team... to provide a more efficient services."

For further information, visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/apprenticeships)

## 2) Analysis of your future skills and employment needs

**Two new Labour Market Intelligence reports from Skills for Health analyse current and future skills and employment needs for the UK's health sector.**

*Tomorrow's workforce: Commentaries on the future of skills and employment in the UK's health sector* brings together views from some of the UK's leading thinkers in the field of healthcare workforce policy. Contributors include Professor Chris Ham of Birmingham University, Bryan Stoten from NHS Confederation, Candace Imison of the King's Fund and Nick Bosanquet from Imperial College. All offer an individual perspective on the sector's future skills and employment needs.

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.

The report 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.

Both reports are available from the Skills for Health website at [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/LMI](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/LMI)

## 3) New role delivers better care and saves precious theatre time

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is among a number of healthcare providers that have achieved significant cost savings with the help of Skills for Health's competence-based approach to workforce planning.

The Trust has developed a new Band 3 Advanced Theatre Support Worker role, underpinned by the Skills for Health competence framework and supported by training at Level 3.

The new role was introduced at three hospitals within the Trust to perform a limited scrub and recovery function and freed-up many hours of registered practitioner time as well as saving on overtime and agency worker costs.

More significantly, the role also helped reduce delays in getting patients through the theatre list. This not only improved the experience of patients through theatre, but also saved a significant amount of theatre time per year.

Jackie Green, Director of Human Resources at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "...this project has delivered significant results for us...The introduction of this new theatre role has freed up our most experienced staff while allowing others in the team to develop more interesting and varied roles."

## 4) How to check your staff have the Language, Literacy and Numeracy skills you require

New Initial Assessment Tools were recently launched, to assess literacy and numeracy for staff in a wide variety of roles. The tools can also be used by employers to help their staff develop literacy and numeracy skills.

The tools can:

- reduce the risk of errors in patient care particularly around drug calculations
- recruit staff who can communicate safely, with adequate numeracy skills
- monitor the literacy and numeracy of your current employees, and identify areas of risk
- improve the quality of service provision
- address staff development needs support your organisation's Skills Pledge commitment.

"The initial assessment tools are excellent! They will prove invaluable in identifying training needs and should help avoid any risk of quality suffering due to low levels of literacy or numeracy. The tools support our commitment to delivering safe and effective patient care and best of all they are free!"

Lizzie Shevlin, Staff Development Officer,  
Countess of Chester NHS Foundation Trust

For further information, visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/IAtool](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/IAtool)

## 5) Guidance on developing your workforce for end of life care

A new guide has been launched to help employers ensure that all health and social care workers are able to work confidently with people at the end of their lives by providing a framework to guide the necessary workforce development.

The *Framework of National Occupational Standards for end of life care* was developed by Skills for Health in partnership with Skills for Care, the National End of Life Care Programme and the Department of Health.

The framework supports and complements the earlier joint publication '*Common core competences and principles for health and social care workers working with adults at the end of life*', which was published in July 2009.

Both the framework, and the core principles and competences, reflect the key areas, actions and recommendations laid out in the *End of Life Care Strategy* published by the Department of Health in July 2008. They have been produced and refined following consultation and testing across the health and social care sectors in England.

To find out more visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/about-us/news/2010/End-of-life-care.aspx](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/about-us/news/2010/End-of-life-care.aspx)

## 6) How “groundbreaking” approach to workforce transformation can enable you to see more patients in less time

**Skills for Health’s proven approach to workforce transformation was recently rated as outstanding, following a formal assessment by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills and the National Audit Office.**

This was indirectly supported by Joanna Birch who commented after a recent joint project at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust, that:

“Skills for Health’s expertise helped us bring a sharp clarity to both new and existing roles - and their tools enabled us to improve productivity on the ground. The changes we made have improved consistency and quality of patient care, given staff greater confidence in their roles and enabled us to work more efficiently. We now see more patients in less time. Already we’re reaping the benefits. It’s been a great experience and the staff involved now have an appetite for change, which we want to spread across our other services.”

Chris Hannah, Chair of the Skills for Health Board, added: “We are pleased that our efforts have been acknowledged formally after such a thorough assessment, but there is still a great deal to be done. The work of Skills for Health has never been so timely - sector employers are seeking to improve quality and productivity in a period of financial constraint and we have the workforce development tools to help them develop the workforce to meet these challenges.”

## 7) Information on the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

**The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) is a new way of recognising achievement through the award of credit for units and qualifications.**

At present, it is difficult to understand all the different types of qualifications that learners hold - what level they are, how long they take to complete, what content they cover, and how they compare to other qualifications.

The new framework offers the sector easy to use, relevant and up to date qualifications and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and measure.

Skills for Health is working with stakeholders to transfer more than 200 health and social care qualifications into the new framework, which will become fully operational on 1 January 2011.

We’ll update you in the next newsletter, or for more information visit [www.qcda.gov.uk/19674.aspx](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/19674.aspx)

## 8) Working Time Directive programme completed

**Skills for Health has completed its national role supporting the NHS with implementation of the European Working Time Directive for doctors in training.**

This included 30 pilots and sponsoring hospital at night services that demonstrated creative ways of achieving compliance with EWTD and supporting the quality of patient care, clinical training and work/life balance.

The regional EWTD lead for Yorkshire & Humber wrote to Skills for Health and said: "I think without your work we would not have achieved WTD. You have all been professional, friendly, well informed and have worked very hard. I have really appreciated your support and input personally and thank you sincerely."

### WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE



## 9) Joint Health and Social Care event to explore innovative workforce development

**If you are looking for innovative ways to support the health and social care workforce, join us at the Hilton Hotel, Gateshead for our two-day conference: 9-10 June: Thinking outside the box - Innovative ways of supporting the health and social care workforce.**

The event will mix expert speakers with interactive workshops to explore innovative ways of workforce development in health and social care, ensuring they are effective and provide high quality care.

The two-day conference fee of £99 includes one night's hotel accommodation and the conference dinner.

For further information please email [marie@eventprouk.com](mailto:marie@eventprouk.com)