

Skills for Health

Research and Labour Market Intelligence Bulletin

February 2007

Welcome to Skills for Health Research & LMI Bulletin. This issue highlights a number of important developments in relation to policy, strategy, events and publications in the health care sector.

We are keen to disseminate our work in an appropriate and timely manner. The bulletin is therefore available in hard and electronic versions. Furthermore, we wish to engage with partners in collaborative research and analyses to improve and promote LMI for the benefit of the whole of the health care sector.

UK LMI Workshop

Skills for Health held its second UK LMI conference in Manchester on the 10th January. There was representation from the four UK countries as well as the broader spectrum across the healthcare sector.

LMI is recognised as an essential feature in assessing the implications of implementing government policy and effective workforce planning whilst meeting patients' expectations.

The event included presentations from:

- Jenny Clark (NCVO) provided an update on research into skills needs in the community /voluntary sector;
- Penny Tamkin (IES) provided an evaluation on productivity metrics and measures.
- Tim Sydenham (Experian) presented on UK migration study; and
- Christine Eborall (Skills for Care) presented an update on a national minimum data set.

The presentations and concluding discussions demonstrated the diversity and utility of LMI applications within the sector and reiterated the demand for both quantitative and qualitative data.

The day appraised ideas on how best to develop Skills for Health's research agenda with UK research and LMI organisations.

It is anticipated that Skills for Health will stage the next workshop in October 2007.

Copies of the presentations and further information on future workshops are available from Debbie Dresser.

Developments

Sector Skills Agreements

Sector Skills Agreements currently being developed by all Sector Skills Councils are geared to helping develop solutions that deliver better skilled workforces across the UK and to compete more effectively in the global economy. The collective vision for the SSA in the health sector is to transform the sector workforce to achieve:

- A patient-centred approach – services organised around patients and service users, reflecting major improvements in the quality, cost and accessibility of healthcare;
- Improved public health – with an emphasis on preventing ill health and supporting healthier lifestyles; and
- Team based approaches to healthcare delivery – through multi-professional and multi-disciplinary working across the sector.

The SSA action plans published in England and Scotland, and those in development in Wales and Northern Ireland establish the basis for the beginning of a long term engagement through a series of key agreements with partner organisations. The agreements will need to adapt and flex as the sector's systems, service and workforce policies, market conditions and structures evolve through a period of unprecedented change.

The SSA is a UK-wide strategy – as are the strategic drivers in the health care sector. But there are crucial differences between the four UK countries; not just in context and cultural terms but also in structural, institutional, legislative and policy terms. Whilst a single set of solutions for the UK is not appropriate there are many common elements e.g.

- Demographic Pressures
- Financial
- Technology
- Patient focused care
- Policy Drivers e.g. productivity

Regional and partner skills agreement will seek to develop the shape, skills mix and productivity of the workforce.

Further information and reports can be obtained from Meetal Jethwa.

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Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

IAG is a term used to describe the process which

- Enables individuals to make informed decisions about their learning and development.
- Helps individuals explore or plan their short, medium and long term work, learning or career objectives.
- Enables individuals to take the next step in learning or development.

Above all, careers IAG improves access to and retention in learning by enabling individuals to explore choices and make effective decisions about their learning, work or career options.

The profile of IAG has been raised among the Sector Skills Councils through a cross sector IAG project, initially focusing on England (owing to DfES funding) which included Skills for Health. The project enabled Skills for Health to look at how IAG supports the SfH agenda and to appoint an IAG Project Manager (Annette Clark).

A cornerstone of the IAG project has been to raise awareness of sector skills councils' LMI, to develop ways of making it accessible to careers IAG advisors and to support its interpretation. Accurate and consistent LMI has been requested by careers practitioners. More recently, the Leitch report (See reference below) has emphasised the importance of economically valuable skills and the need for individuals to be given clear, consistent advice on skills requirements and job/career potential.

Labour market information specifically designed for career guidance practitioners has been developed through a partnership between Skills for Health and the National Guidance Research Forum (NGRF) website. This is part of a project involving a number of Sector Skills Councils. The NGRF website now holds information on over 30 sectors including the Health sector. www.guidance-research.org/future-trends/health

The NGRF website provides centrally located, reliable, high quality Labour Market Information for the UK.

For each sector there is a useful summary of key issues and other information including:

- Regional & national dimension
- Data and charts
- Equal opportunity issues
- Education and training
- Occupations
- Links and sources

The IAG project, in collaboration with NGRF is developing an online tool to support careers advisers on how to interpret and use LMI. This, in turn, will make the information more accessible to their clients. It is now in its final stages of development and information on how to access it will be disseminated.

Towards a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Lifelong Learning

The objective of the planned EQF is to create a European framework which will enable qualifications systems at the national and sectoral levels to relate to each other. This reference structure will be used on a voluntary basis and will facilitate the transfer and recognition of qualifications held by individual citizens.

The Commission is consulting the 32 countries participating in the Education and Training 2010 work programme, the European Social Partners, the relevant European associations, NGOs and networks, and the European industry sector associations e.g. ICT, construction, marketing etc. Their responses will be taken into account in establishing the final content and structure of the EQF, prior to a formal proposal in 2006. As part of the consultation, the UK Presidency, in co-operation with the Commission, hosted a conference on qualification frameworks in Glasgow in 2006

European Qualification Framework (EQF) tries to define common descriptors for competences which might function as signals on the education and labour markets.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/consultations_en.html

LMI Manuals

The Research and LMI team are currently producing Labour Market Intelligence Manuals for each of the English Regions. The reports bring together data from numerous areas, including, The Office of National Statistics, LSC, and the NHS Information Centre.

The manuals are designed to assist colleagues in creating a picture of each region, highlighting key workforce issues for the healthcare sector in order to assist decision making and planning.

There are nine manuals in total, currently in draft form and being revised to ensure suitability for all audiences. The nine reports will be produced in hard copy and PDF format by the end of March 2007 and will thereafter be updated on a half yearly basis in PDF format via the Skills for Health website.

Phase two of the work in spring '07 will move to the production of LMI Manuals for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Recent Publications

Skills and Economic Performance

This book explores the challenges facing the global economy and the need to raise workforce skills to enable the UK economy to grow and prosper *“If we can rise to the skills and productivity challenge, the benefits are likely to be substantial...(with) a step change in the behaviour of both employers and individuals and a sound understanding of the connections between skills and economic performance, the UK can face this challenge.”*

The publication examines five key dimensions of skills from an international, UK and national perspective:

- Competing in a global economy.
- The value of skills and workforce development.
- High performance working; the utilisation of skills.
- Management, strategy and performance.
- Effective policies: the sector and regional impact.

The second dimension (workforce development) arguably of most relevance, and timely, to our sector explores three main topics namely,

- the business benefit of skills.
- the value and pitfalls of informal learning; and
- using returns to education to understand sector skills needs.

Skills and Economic Performance

Porter, S. Campbell, M. (Ed)
Sector Skills Development Agency
Caspian Publishing London 2006
www.ssda.org.uk

Skills Upgrading: New Policy Perspectives

“Today skills are a chief concern for our societies. In a knowledge-based integrated economy where labour markets are increasingly flexible, skills represent one of the most valuable assets workers have...they (skills) need to be nurtured and renewed constantly if living standards are to be maintained, let alone increased”. This quote is taken from the introduction by Sergio Arzeni, Director at OECD and partly explains why the concept and delivery of lifelong learning is part of a UK policy development.

This publication takes a wide international sweep in relation to research on skills and policy development. Whilst the ‘UK’ chapter relates to employer training pilots in England, there is a good synopsis and critical review of skill policy development within the UK in the introduction to this chapter.

Of general interest is the introductory chapter which explains why a focus on skills is so fundamental to economic and social capital - the rationale is threefold:

- the continued existence of skills gaps and shortages;
- the desire to increase productivity;
- the imperative to reduce the prevalence of the ‘working poor’.

Skills Upgrading: New Policy Perspectives

OECD Publishing 2006
www.oecd.org

Leitch Review

The Leitch Review was tasked with considering the UK’s long-term skills needs. The review places emphasis on achieving a demand led skills system which adds economic value; further raises productivity across all sectors; is simplified and ensures employers and individuals have a strong and coherent influence on investment, funding and provision of skills and future qualifications. The review sets out an urgent and radical agenda - to direct the UK towards world leadership in Skills by 2020.

One of the key solutions is to increase and strengthen the strategic influence of employers through Sector Skills Councils and Sector Skills Agreements.

The Leitch Review of Skills is a UK-wide report. It is still awaiting a formal response from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and from the UK government.

Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills

(‘The Leitch Review’ December 2006)
HM Treasury
www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/523/43/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf

International Perspective

As a more long-term aim, Skills for Health intends to benefit from and contribute to a European and international debate around skills development in the health care sector. Cedefop – the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, established in 1975 – is a European agency that helps promote and develop vocational education and training in the European Union (EU). It is the EU's reference centre for vocational education and training.

Call for Tenders

Foresight study on themes and issues for Cedefop Report on vocational education and training research in Europe.

The purpose of this contract is to help Cedefop identify the themes and issues to be addressed in the 5th research report to be published by Cedefop in 2010/2011
Deadline: 06 March 2007

www.cedefop.eu.int

European Commission C(2006)
PROVISIONAL* WORK PROGRAMME 2007
COOPERATION THEME 1
HEALTH

Calls for proposals

The third main area of interest in the Co-operation theme is in optimising the delivery of health care to European citizens. The sub-themes are:

- Translating the results of clinical research outcome into clinical practice including better use of medicines, and appropriate use of behavioural and organisational interventions and health therapies and technologies.
- Quality, efficiency and solidarity of health care systems including transitional health systems.
- Enhanced health promotion and disease prevention.
- Horizontal Coordination and Support actions across "Optimising the delivery of health care to European citizens" Specific international cooperation actions for
- Health system research.

Budget: Euro 628 000 000

Deadline: 19 April 2007 at 17:00 (Brussels local time)

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.CooperationDetailsCallPage&call_id=10

For the full list of grants in the EU see

http://ec.europa.eu/grants/index_en.htm#health

UK LMI Steering Group

We are pleased to announce that significant progress has been achieved in setting up a UK wide steering group for labour market intelligence in the health care sector.

The purpose of the group is to undertake the following functions:

- Critically appraise a UK LMI Strategic Framework for the health care sector.
- Critically appraise the SfH Research and LMI Strategy.
- Review and offer comment on progress towards achievement of objectives contained in the strategy.
- Promote the production and dissemination of UK health care sector LMI.

Skills for Health is seeking nomination from individuals and organisations who have an interest and/or expertise in research and evaluation of workforce skills and labour market information.

Nomination forms are available from Meetal Jethwa at our Head Office.

Research Strategy

Research Strategy 2005-2010

Research supporting and informing the skills needed for today, and for the future, for high quality service provision in health care.

The importance of identifying and utilising an evidence base in policy development is now widely recognised – this places high quality research as a cornerstone of development and sustainability. The emerging UK sector skills agreements have research (skill needs assessment) as the first of a five-stage process in its development cycle.

Beyond the immediacy of the sector skills agreement process and implementation, Skills for Health seeks to ensure that it can offer a unique research based service which is of value to employers in the health care sector and is embedded in our strategic, business and operational plan frameworks. The development of a UK wide labour market intelligence resource and network will be a signal effort to achieving this strategic goal.

Our research activity will therefore complement and extend skills related research activity undertaken by our UK partner research bodies including the Department for Employment & Learning Northern Ireland, the Department of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Futureskills Scotland and, health and labour market related research bodies in England.

Copies of this report are available from Skills for Health head office or downloaded from the main website.

UK LMI Data Sources

This report provides a comprehensive analysis and appraisal of sources of LMI for the health care sector.

In undertaking this exercise the report provides a series of recommendations or development points to address areas where there is little or no data, inadequate data or an inability to compare data across the whole workforce in the UK.

Copies of this report are available from Skills for Health head office or downloaded from our website.

Contacts

If you wish further information on any of the above or want to explore ideas for future collaborative work please contact the Research and LMI team at Skills for Health:

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