



Case Study 5: Career Change and Development

Access to Industry

Access to Industry provides access to education and employment for disadvantaged and excluded people. NHS Lothian provides work experience placement opportunities for participants of Access to Industry projects.

Transition is an Access to Industry Project that provides a daily programme of accredited learning on a rolling basis and operates as a 'mini college' for recovering substance users. It offers SQA qualifications that include specific job training and core skills to encourage access to further education and employment.

Participant to Access to Industry Programme, NHS Lothian

Transition student W knew he wanted to get back in to work in Healthcare, but didn't know how to get there so he decided to take advantage of the NHS Lothian partnership with Access to Industry to gain recent work experience through a work placement.

Joining Transition and getting used to a life free of substances, W knew he needed to get back into work, but he needed a strong focus to help him get there. Transition classes were the best option for W and he wasted no time in completing SQA qualifications in Transition's mini college environment delivered in partnership with Jewel & Esk College. He participated fully and was awarded 'student of the month'.

W had over 10 years previous experience of working with people with learning difficulties but had not worked in this environment for a number of years. The work placement helped him decide that care is the type of work for him and he has successfully moved in to employment as a Trainee Clinical Support Worker within NHS Lothian.

W said: "I wanted to find out if I still had the skills and confidence to work in healthcare and identify what opportunities were available in the NHS. I'm so glad that my caseworker told me about the opportunity because it's moved me in to the kind of work that I enjoy".



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Lone Parent Programme

NHS Lothian introduced new services for lone parents to help them look for work. As part of the new service package NHS Lothian delivers workshops through Edinburgh and Lothian to raise awareness of NHS careers and job application process. The service assists Jobcentre Plus customers to move into NHS vacancies.

Participant of the Lone Parent Programme

B was keen to get back to work after raising her 3 children as a lone parent. However, she was finding her lack of recent work experience to be a real barrier. Her job applications were getting through to the interview stage but time and again her lack of recent experience was letting her down. Her previous experience was in retail but she wanted to work in administration, having recently gained an HNC in Business Management at West Lothian College.

B went to see her personal adviser at Jobcentre Plus to find out what help and support was available to her. Her adviser then referred her to a Work Placement Co-ordinator, NHS Lothian, to enquire about the possibility of carrying out a work experience placement to review her skills



and build up her confidence. A Co-ordinator arranged for B to carry out an 8-week placement within The Recruitment Centre at St John's Hospital, Livingston. By doing the work placement B was able to gain an assurance that she had the skills she needed to work in administration and build her confidence. Towards the end of the placement, B had the opportunity of applying for a full time position and was offered an interview.

B was offered the job as a Recruitment Assistant and is now a valued member of the team. She said "Going back to work has made a huge difference for me and my family. I love spending time with my children but it's great to have my own life at work as well. Having a bit of extra money coming in made sure that we had one of our best Christmases this year too."



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NHS Lothian Healthcare Academy

The Healthcare Academy is a 5 week pre-employment training programme, designed by employers, to help unemployed people become one step closer to employment. The Academy is open to those who are unemployed, residing in the Lothian area, and interested in working within a health care setting. The course is designed to give the participants transferable core skills and is for people who would like to work as part of the non-registered workforce.

T, Student of the Healthcare Academy, NHS Lothian

I wanted a change of career, with a job that involved working with people. I felt the programme would improve my chances of a job by providing me with a sound grounding in the nature of the health care industry.

The most challenging thing for me about going on the programme was overcoming my concerns about whether I would feel valued at the age of 58. The programme and instructors certainly dispelled my fears.

Some of the activities I participated in at the Healthcare Academy included testing urine,

assisting at a diabetic clinic and observing blood being taken. I found that the importance of good patient care confirmed my own philosophy and reinforced my choice of career path.

I have completed my SVQ 2 in Health and Social Care and I am now working towards my competencies in taking blood and blood pressures.

I would recommend the programme to others, because it gives you the confidence to apply for various jobs using the knowledge gained from participating in the programme.

Y, student of the Healthcare Academy, NHS Lothian

I decided to apply for the Healthcare Academy course at NHS Lothian to change my career. I needed a profession to grow with and I saw the role of Healthcare Assistant as a door to working in the health sector. I found oral care for patients and infection control to be interesting aspects of the programme and I also found it very challenging to learn the proper techniques for manoeuvring patients. I had the chance to observe how patients are attended to and how best to communicate with patients. I learnt a lot about how the patients are assisted and supported in all aspects of their

daily life. Since completing the course, I have started work as a Nursing Assistant and I have been listed to start my SVQ training in February 2010. I can recommend the programme and I am proud to tell people what I do. If I work hard, I may end up as a nurse someday.

C, student of the Healthcare Academy, NHS Lothian

I decided to go on the Healthcare Academy course because the economic downturn made me realise I needed to acquire relevant skills in sectors that will not close down. During my participation in the course, I enjoyed helping service users in daily living activities like washing and feeding. I found the manual handling difficult and challenging because it is not easy to learn to properly lift heavy people. I observed a surgical procedure for a cancer patient using the latest technology. I also observed the daily routine of the patients in the hospital environment such as times for taking medication and what to do at meal times.

My ambition now is to do a postgraduate programme in hospital management. I want to enroll in a programme that will enable me to take up administrative work and management



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roles in the future in the NHS.

I would recommend the programme to others as a gateway to acquiring skills in the health sector and avoiding joblessness.

I feel that my participation in the programme has positively affected my confidence. I now have skills that are in demand. The Healthcare Academy is an excellent gateway to starting a career in the health sector.

Case Study – Tayside Healthcare Academy

In Tayside, the NHS and multi-agency partners in Social Care, Education (via local Colleges in Angus, Dundee and Perth) Skills Development Scotland and Jobcentre Plus aim to ensure a locally recruited and sustainable quality care workforce by encouraging people in the local community to view health and social care as rewarding career options. All partners are fully involved in this initiative, each contributing its own particular expertise to the programme.

The intention is to equip students to enter the care sector with a high level of competence in care provision, or to promote their progress to further

or higher education as reflected by the Career Framework for Health.

The target group comprises individuals from all social and cultural backgrounds, particularly those who have experienced barriers to training and employment (including lone parents, young people, looked after young people, older unemployed people, people who have experienced long term unemployment, redundancy and people with mental health issues).

Pre-employment training courses of durations between 7 and 9 weeks are offered across Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross in line with locality profiles. Each course contains mandatory skills training in line with Health and Social Care requirements together with supervised placements in clinical, non-clinical or social care areas.

An additional course of 36 weeks duration is delivered by Dundee College in partnership with NHS Tayside and Dundee City Council Social Work Department. Dundee College and partners delivered mandatory skills training as required by NHS Tayside and Dundee City Council and also provided placement opportunities for students within Health and Social Care while students

are supported to achieve six units of the SVQ2 in Health and Social Care.

Case 1

L moved into Tayside to provide support to family members. Having taken early retirement from her previous administrative position she had been dismayed to find that her skills were no longer regarded as current. She suffered severe loss of confidence and felt isolated, as she had been unable to develop a social circle within the area. L joined the Healthcare Academy pre-employment course and fully engaged with the programme. She found it challenging but made the most of the placement opportunities. Initially she accepted a part time position within NHS Tayside, but was able to increase hours and later was appointed to a full time administrative post. L has now established herself as a valued team member and has regained her self-esteem.

“I left the Ministry of Defence after 33 years, having been forced to take a form of early retirement, as no job was available to me in the Dundee area. Personal family reasons brought me back to Dundee after 40 years away as I had to take on the role of family carer to elderly parents with serious health issues. I discovered that my many



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years of experience and relevant skills were not apparently transferable, and this came as a great shock to me.

I experienced a feeling of loss of confidence and self-respect. Because of my age I felt unable to access courses of a longer term, to re-train. The combination of my caring requirements, my perceived skill gap and being in the older end of the market, made me feel unemployable.

After completing the Healthcare Academy course, I applied for a position as a clerical officer, using the guaranteed interview process. I was successful, and although the job was initially only 20 hours, I was happy to accept as I realised that working in a different organisation would be a steep learning curve. Being on the course had helped enormously as I was well grounded in care values and the ethos of the NHS. I also felt more confident knowing that I had completed all the mandatory skills - such as manual handling - needed by NHS employees.

Working within the renal department was challenging, as NHS administrative systems are necessarily complex, however after establishing myself in the team I became confident in their use,

and after some time the opportunity arose to access more hours.

I now work full time in Renal Services and my role has substantially developed. A significant part of my work is to arrange dialysis systems to be in place for patients who wish to take holidays both in Britain or elsewhere in the world. I provide explanations and reassurance to the patients and their families and am the link person they know they can contact. I have huge responsibility in this job, but I find it completely rewarding and stimulating. There are always things to learn, and access to the NHS has given me opportunities to develop a whole new set of skills. My confidence is back, and I love my job."

Case 2

M is a friendly and outgoing person who had been employed within the manufacturing industry since leaving school. On being made redundant he discovered many other men with similar manufacturing skills in the same position.

M became extremely anxious regarding the future. He had not ever thought of working in health care and saw himself as potentially unable to work due to feeling de-skilled. He joined the Healthcare Academy and discovered during the placements

that he had a talent for providing care for people, particularly older people. At the conclusion of the course, M successfully applied for a position as a Health Care Support Worker using the skills he obtained on the course and a clinical reference. He is now well established within the organisation and has fitted in very well with his clinical team.

"I had always worked in Manufacturing in Dundee. It was a real shock to be made redundant and I was really worried about what was going to happen to my family and me. It had never occurred to me that I might work in the NHS and certainly not as a care worker. I didn't really know what to expect when I joined the healthcare academy course but I found that I really loved working with people, and knowing that I was making a difference to people who were ill and maybe frightened. I was really pleased to get a job in the NHS as a Healthcare Support Worker. It is very different to my previous job but I really really enjoy it"



Case 3

G is a lone parent with no family connections in the area. Without a background in health or social care she had always had an ambition to work in this field, but had not worked for some years. Her confidence levels were low. She had recently moved and joined a Health and Social Care Academy programme, but initially was too shy to participate in the required activities. As the course progressed and G worked with her fellow students and staff associated with the programme, she became more confident, however the turning point for G was attending her placements. She became aware of her considerable abilities with regard to care and quickly obtained employment with a private care provider following the course and has now completed a nationally recognised qualification and is about to commence another level. She is awaiting promotion in her chosen field.

“When I first came on the Angus Health and Social Care Academy I had little confidence, I was quite worried about the course and how I would manage, but I enjoyed it – particularly the placements and I would say that the experience was well worthwhile”