

News Release

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Skills for Health launches core standards for Assistant Practitioners

New core standards for Assistant Practitioners are published today by Skills for Health, the Sector Skills Council for healthcare.

The standards were developed in response to requests from employers and commissioners concerned at variation in the responsibilities, education and training of staff employed in the role.

The six standards cover the deployment and management of Assistant Practitioners, as well as their recruitment, education and training, competences and development.

Skills for Health programme manager Helen Green said: "Assistant Practitioners play an increasingly important role in delivering healthcare and employers will be reassured to know that staff, and prospective staff, employed in this role are working to nationally-agreed standards.

"The standards are also good news for those employed in the role because with greater awareness and understanding among employers, qualified Assistant Practitioners will be better able to move jobs without needing to undertake additional training."

North East Lincolnshire Care Trust Plus is one of a number of Trusts that contributed to the development of the core standards. Director of Care Lance Gardner said: "We are very excited by the development of the Assistant Practitioner role locally.

"The fact that as a Care trust we deliver both health and social care enhances the importance of this role. Today's publication of the core standards for the Assistant Practitioner role is a major step towards achieving this much-needed addition to our workforce."

The standards were developed following research commissioned by Skills for Health which showed that while a large number of Assistant Practitioners are employed in England, job descriptions and responsibilities vary widely.

Skills for Health consulted nationally on a draft of the standards during Summer 2009 and received almost 300 responses, with high levels of agreement for the proposals.

Although the role is based on work in England, Skills for Health believes that the core standards will be applicable across the UK following further testing work.

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Notes to editors

1. *Core Standards for Assistant Practitioners* is available to download from the Skills for Health website at:
<http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/~media/Resource-Library/PDF/Core-Standards-for-APs.ashx>
2. The Assistant Practitioner role developed is at Level 4 of the Career Framework. An Assistant Practitioner is defined as a worker who competently delivers health and social care to and for people. They have a required level of knowledge and skill beyond that of the traditional healthcare assistant or support worker. The Assistant Practitioner would be able to deliver elements of health and social care and undertake clinical work in domains that have previously only been within the remit of registered professionals. The Assistant Practitioner may transcend professional boundaries. They are accountable to themselves, their employer and, more importantly, the people they serve.
3. Skills for Health – www.skillsforhealth.org.uk – 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. Skills for Health was relicensed by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on 14 October 2009 following an assessment by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).