



## North West Showcase Event



**Workforce Skills - Better by Design; the North West Showcase Event, held in March 2009, for employer focussed work solutions and examples of effective partnership in action attracted over 150 delegates from across healthcare, education and skills sectors.**

Employers, partners, and stakeholders involved in workforce development gathered to hear senior healthcare employers give real life examples of ways to tackle workforce issues. A mix of presentations and topical workshops demonstrated the value of Sector Skills Agreements and accurate labour market information, and placed national initiatives such as the Joint Investment Framework, Skills Pledge, the Sector Qualifications Strategy, Apprenticeships and the Diploma in Society, Health and Development into a regional context.

**“** *Staff engagement in an organisation has often been hard to measure, yet research has shown that an engaged workforce is more productive and shows better recruitment and retention rates than unengaged staff.*

*Organisations with staff that are engaged and enthusiastic about their work will find it easier to meet their challenges; will sustain these challenges in the longer term; and are shown to be more productive.* **”**

Julian Hartley, Chief Executive of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals



## North West

### Workforce Skills: Better by Design



## Event highlights

Peter Rowe, Chief Executive of NHS Ashton, Leigh and Wigan, as Chair of the event set the tone for the day when he spoke about the importance of developing new ways of working to meet future healthcare demands.

Dean Royles, Executive Director of Workforce and Education at NHS North West, identified two key factors to ensure the North West workforce has the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver world class services, namely: long term workforce planning and the development of a learning culture. Dean's aim for the region is to develop the existing workforce by promoting equity of access to continuing professional development; the development of an Apprenticeship investment plan to complement existing demand led cadet and pre-employment schemes, and maximising the use of the NHS NW Leadership Academy. Dean emphasised the need to provide effective leadership and build solid partnerships.



Julian Hartley, Chief Executive of Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust at the time, shared his personal experience of ensuring the 4,500 strong workforce of a large general hospital is able to fulfil the needs of a population exceeding 330,000, an influx of around 12 million tourists each year and more than 92,000 annual Accident & Emergency attendances.

Through open discussion of behaviours, culture, problems and frustrations, issues were identified and addressed, resulting in a positive impact on staff morale. Known as 'The Blackpool Way', this enlightened approach to employee engagement has had a knock-on effect to the hospital which now consistently delivers against its operational targets. It has achieved a 20 point reduction in mortality rates in the last 18 months; an 80% reduction in MRSA rates in one year; and a significant reduction in sickness absence by staff. It is now ranked as a top 10% performer in the 2008 staff survey – compared with being in the bottom 20% just two years previously.

Dianne Mardell, Regional Director for the North West at Skills for Health emphasised the importance of maintaining a dialogue and forging new partnerships in order to meet the region's workforce challenges. As well as providing access to a number of case studies, she outlined the excellent work already taking place through the Skills Academy for Health North West.

Also from Skills for Health, Chief Executive, John Rogers and Director of Strategy and UK Networks, Brian Payne, gave an overview of the UK wide role of Skills for Health and the tools and methodologies available to assist with workforce development

## Labour market information

With a population of over 6.8 million, the North West is the second largest English region after the South East. The NHS is one of the largest employers in the region, with over 202,000 staff representing around 8% of all employees and contributing 11% of the North West economy.

Over the past 10 years the North West has had the largest regional growth in healthcare employee numbers, a fact which gains perspective when considering the area's many tourist attractions – with Blackpool alone attracting over 12 million annual visitors and a further 14+ million flocking to the Lake District each year. The inevitable strain this influx of visitors puts on the region's healthcare services reinforces the need for a skilled and flexible healthcare workforce.

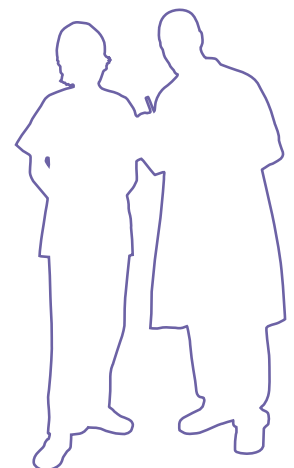
Skills for Health's research team will shortly be producing an updated labour market information report for the region which will be available from the Skills for Health website [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)

*“Ongoing partnership and collaboration is essential in identifying the workforce skills the North West needs to face future challenges and ensuring that skills are deployed effectively across the region to address these challenges.”*

Dianne Mardell, North West Regional Director, Skills for Health

## The workforce of the future

The factors which influence future development of the healthcare workforce are complex and diverse. With an ageing population and increases in those living with long term conditions, demands for health services are increasing. To meet these challenges, the healthcare workforce across the North West is predicted to grow by 25,000 people (9.4%) between 2007 and 2017. Employers, however, will need to recruit an additional 133,000 people overall to fill new jobs and replace existing workers who will retire or leave the sector





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### Workforce Skills: Better by Design

#### Key workforce challenges faced by healthcare employers in the North West

Skills for Health is working with employers and a range of partners from across the region to meet the following challenges together:

1. The need for accurate intelligence to inform workforce planning and development.
2. Improvement of access – and recruitment – to long term careers in healthcare.
3. Raising the skills base of the current and future workforce.
4. Supporting innovative and responsive education, training and development that is innovative and responsive.
5. Increasing workforce flexibility to improve service delivery.

For further information about the work of Skills for Health visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk) or contact:

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*98% of delegates ranked the event as 'good' or 'excellent' describing the day as "informative and thought-provoking", "motivational", "inspiring and encouraging".*

[www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)