

# Careers in Healthcare

**Roles that support  
Information, Advice and  
Guidance in the Health Service**

## Introduction

This information leaflet has been produced by Skills for Health for those who advise people on career options relating to the health sector. It will be helpful to careers advisers, HR and line managers, supervisors, and anyone else who offers information, advice and guidance to prospective and existing employees, trainees and those seeking work.

In this booklet you will find information on:

- Learning and development teams
- HR Managers (including KSF and Agenda for Change leads)
- How IAG can support line managers and supervisors
- Union learning reps (ULRs) and meeting the widening participation agenda
- Mentors and Coaches
- Ambassadors

Explore further and you will find out about how different roles can offer unique opportunities for supporting individuals in their development and links to relevant information and more sources of support.

This leaflet is one of a series which are on the Skills for Health website. These cover topics such as qualifications, signposting and referral, the voluntary and independent sectors, funding and much more.

Visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/careersinformationandadvice](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/careersinformationandadvice) to access them.

*Skills for Health does not claim responsibility for the content and workings of other websites.  
The information and web links in this document are correct at the time of publication  
July 2011*

## Does your role support information, advice and guidance?

Staff at all levels across the health sector are often delivering some Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) on a formal or informal basis. But there are roles where delivery may be on a more regular basis.

An e learning tool has been developed with NHS NW to support health sector staff on their understanding of IAG and their use of it in the work place. See [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk) for further information.

The following are some examples of the roles and how IAG can support them.

### Learning and development teams

IAG will improve access to, and take-up of, learning and development opportunities. It means your learning and development teams can

- Make efficient use of learning resources. For example by ensuring that staff have the necessary skills to succeed on a course or qualification before they start
- Identify skill gaps and assess learning needs
- Support equality and diversity - enabling a wider range of staff to benefit from learning
- Support individuals at every stage in their learning and career journey
- Strengthen links between workforce planning and learning and development planning. For example, by aligning organisational priorities and plans with individuals' career plans
- Improve quality and evaluation systems. For example, the nationally recognised [matrix quality standard](#) for Information, Advice and Guidance is a useful tool for the team to assess where they are and where they want to be.

Overall, IAG will provide a framework for progression for the whole team, whether receptionist, clinician, union learning representative or manager.

#### **An embedded matrix approach at Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust**

Find out how the award winning Trust implemented the **matrix** Standard in a bid to assure the quality of its learning information and advice service.

[Read](#) how its successful approach ensures learning resources go further.

## HR Managers (including KSF and Agenda for Change leads)

The process of Information Advice and guidance (IAG) has been likened to a 'cradle to grave' approach - from recruitment to exit interview. It can therefore underpin some key Human Resource functions in your organisation, such as:

- **Supporting recruitment processes.** For example, prospective staff can be advised about opportunities for career progression. Those returning to the workplace can be advised about ways to add to their skills or renew their skills
- **Supporting induction processes and the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF).** An important part of induction is to ensure that staff are 'job ready' as quickly as possible. Some organisations now assess all staff at induction as part of an IAG process, so skill gaps can be identified and suitable learning put in place. This approach at the very beginning of employment supports KSF gateways and sets the groundwork for career progression
- **Improving staff retention.** Staff feel valued when given the opportunity to get involved in their learning and development. IAG places the individual at the heart of this process, enabling them to identify their goals and fulfil their potential
- **Supporting equality and diversity.** IAG can help organisations to recruit from every part of the community. New staff can then be supported to develop the employability skills they may not have had when entering the workplace
- **Improving performance management.** HR staff trained with an IAG awareness are well placed to recognise issues that can lead to performance management situations. A lack of skills, motivation and confidence may contribute to poor performance, and IAG systems recognise and respond to these needs.

### **Building IAG into the career lifecycle at Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust**

Find out how the Trust met the demographic challenge by upskilling its workforce, and improved staff recruitment and retention rates.

[Read](#) how its successful integrated approach secured a motivated workforce in rural Northumberland.

## Line managers and Supervisors

Information Advice and guidance (IAG) can support line managers in two key ways:

- In an informal enquiry where line managers are usually the first point of contact for staff with a query about their learning and development needs. They will be able to respond appropriately if they have excellent information skills and contacts available to them.
- In a formal process, such as an appraisal or Personal Development Review (PDR). The PDR process mirrors the IAG process offering support to the individual at every stage of the learning or development process. Where a line manager has strong IAG skills, they can encourage an individual to achieve their potential.

See these useful links and those below for further information which will be helpful for HR managers and education and training managers:

<a href="#">Chartered Institute of Personnel development (CIPD)</a>	<a href="#">NHS Employers</a> offers a range of information across workforce, employment and recruitment/retention
<a href="#">NHS Education for Scotland</a>	<a href="#">National Leadership and Innovation agency for healthcare (NLIAH)</a>
<a href="#">Beeches Management Centre</a> (Northern Ireland)	<a href="#">Simplified KSF</a>
<a href="#">Institute of Leadership and Management</a> have a range of leadership and management qualifications	<a href="#">Institute of Healthcare Management</a> have a series of management and development programmes
<a href="#">NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement</a>	National Patient Safety Agency <a href="#">A good practice toolkit for NHS managers</a>

## Union Learning Representatives (ULRs)

Widening participation is a key area for development in health sector organisations. The urgency of increasing the skills of all workers to respond to the changing needs of healthcare delivery is clear. Learning for the few needs to become learning for all, and organisations need to help staff overcome barriers to learning.

Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) are ideally placed to support this important agenda. They have a strong track record in engaging staff in learning, identifying needs and signposting staff to opportunities and other services.

In particular ULRs can help your organisation to encourage staff who have few or no qualifications and who lack the confidence to take up learning. ULRs receive specialist training from their union to equip them with the skills they need.

## Learning for all with Union Learning Representatives in North East England

Find out how Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Trust and ULRs are widening access to learning and development, enabling hundreds of staff members to take up opportunities.

[Read](#) how the Trust promotes equal access to learning.

Further useful links:

Skills for Health is working with unionlearn and union colleagues to develop a health <a href="#">contextualised version of the climbing frame</a> to support union learning reps in their work	<a href="#">Unionlearn</a>
<a href="#">Unionlearn Scotland</a>	<a href="#">TUC Wales</a>
<a href="#">Unison Scotland</a>	<a href="#">Unison Northern Ireland</a>
<a href="#">Unison England</a>	<a href="#">Unison Wales</a>
Unite the union <a href="#">England</a>	Unite in <a href="#">Scotland</a>
Unite in <a href="#">Wales</a>	Unite in <a href="#">Ireland</a>
<a href="#">Royal College of Nursing</a>	<a href="#">Royal College of Midwives</a>

## Mentors and Coaches

Information, Advice and Guidance processes underpin and support the role of the mentor or coach.

### How do mentors support individuals and organisations?

- They act as a sounding board when decisions have to be made and talked through
- Challenge or give feedback to the individual, helping them recognise opportunities and problems, personal strengths and weakness
- Pass on their know-how, knowledge and understanding, including the essential thinking patterns and attitudes that go with more senior positions
- Provide career counselling and advice, enabling the individual to establish realistic career goals and to plan how to achieve them
- Act as a source of knowledge and networks.

**Mentors and coaches** may find that they benefit from

- Training which includes basic IAG skills so you know how and where to access information and support on behalf of individuals.
- IAG resources for mentors who are seeking information about learning and development on behalf of an employee.
- Promoting the links between mentoring and IAG so that current and future mentoring schemes are supported and enhanced. There are a range of mentoring schemes across the health sector, from those that support top level leadership and improvement development, to those that are focusing on supporting NHS staff in bands 1 - 4.

Useful Links:

<a href="#"><u>Institute of Healthcare Management</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Chartered Institute of Personnel Development</u></a>
For up to date information on <a href="#"><u>coaching and mentoring National Occupational Standards</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Healthcare workforce mentoring framework</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Refugee Healthcare Professionals Programme</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Mentoring for Success</u></a> (Yorkshire and Humber)
	<a href="#"><u>NHS Education for Scotland</u></a> and <a href="#"><u>Flying Start</u></a> an online development programme for new practitioners in Scotland
<a href="#"><u>National Leadership and innovation agency for Healthcare (NLIAH)</u></a> (using coaching and mentoring )	<a href="#"><u>National Clinical Assessment Service</u></a> – mentoring and coaching
Institute of Leadership and Management <a href="#"><u>coaching and mentoring qualifications</u></a>	The Beeches Management Centre (Northern Ireland) offers <a href="#"><u>coaching information</u></a>
Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists – <a href="#"><u>register as a mentor or to find a mentor</u></a>	See this East Midlands example of how to <a href="#"><u>meet a mentor</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Brightside</u></a> – develop e-mentoring with individuals and organisations -	

Staff who support the IAG process may benefit from having a qualification linked to National Occupational Standards for information, advice and guidance. See the information leaflet on ‘Using Information, Advice and Guidance in the health sector’

## Ambassadors

Some health organisations or regions have Ambassadors or learning champions. The healthcare sector needs to bring in new entrants and ensure that people consider health as a career destination. By using the skills and experience of healthcare professionals, employers can illustrate rewarding careers for potential recruits. Health Ambassadors can take part in:

- Open days
- Scenario building events
- Workshops at careers fairs
- Linking in with local schools

Ambassadors are usually volunteers and they are there to support the careers IAG agenda. They will know about their own role, but they will also need to have current and up to date knowledge and know where to signpost if the enquiries are about roles that are not so familiar to them. The information leaflets under the section 'Exploring the health sector' may support Ambassadors in their role, whilst the leaflets in this section may support their development.

Ambassadors are not available everywhere across the UK, but there are pockets of good practice as illustrated in the following case studies:

### **Choose Health**

Find out how Luton and Dunstable Foundation Trust is reaching out to schools and colleges using health ambassadors to target the potential 'future' workforce.

[Read](#) how the Trust is showcasing rewarding careers in health.

### **Drawing a new workforce into the health sector**

Health Ambassadors working across Nottinghamshire have built a strong track record in promoting health and sharing the benefits of healthcare careers to young people in the region.

[Read](#) how the specially trained healthcare staff are widening participation across the East Midlands.

Health ambassadors may also find the information on [work experience](#) valuable



Further useful links:

<a href="#">Health Ambassadors East</a> and <a href="#">support for organisations engaging with schools</a>	<a href="#">Step into the NHS</a> – a website aimed at young people considering a career in the health sector
The social care sector has a well established funded ambassador scheme, this <a href="#">link</a> may support some ideas within the health sector	<a href="#">NHS Careers</a> have downloadable lesson plans, linked to the Step into the NHS site and information leaflets – see resources for education
<a href="#">Skills for Health</a> has information about the career framework, apprenticeships, employability	<a href="#">NHS Jobs</a> have information on current vacancies for England and Wales
Careers and opportunities in <a href="#">NHS Scotland</a>	<a href="#">NHS Wales</a> Careers
<a href="#">Health</a> Careers in Northern Ireland	