

Summary of discussions held at the Health and Social Care focused Skills East Sussex meeting, 20th March 2018

Discussion session one: What are the principle skills and employment challenges facing the sector?

- There is a negative perception of working in the health and social care sector, perpetuated in part by the media (nurses going to food banks, a sector in crisis, overworked and stressed) with concepts that careers in the sector are very hard physically, long hours etc and that they are emotionally stressful.
- There is limited understanding of career progression pathways within the sector.
- EU migration out of the sector
- The living wage means that a job in a shop is often paid equally to some care roles.
- The lack of skills at level 2 (including functional skills) hold people back from progressing
- There need to be incentives for those working in the sector – such as housing schemes for key workers
- Salaries are competitive, so it is hard to retain staff within organisations – for example nurses move from GP practice to GP practice, so there tends to be sideways progression rather than vertical
- There are not enough men working in care roles the sector
- Staff are not up to speed with new current and future technologies

What needs to be done to address these?

- Career pathways in the sector need to be clearly presented
- The modernisation of the sector (use of new technologies) needs to be promoted
- Staff working in the sector need to be recognised for their work/commitment – Care, Social Work, Medicine, Administrators
- Routes such as apprenticeships need to be promoted to those thinking of entering and those already working in the sector. However, there is a lack of Apprenticeship provision available to SMEs.
- Flexible nature of work in the sector needs to be promoted particularly to those returning to work
- Work experience needs to be offered to young people and potential returning adults in a range of care settings. This is difficult to deliver but if a standard model was developed this would make it easier for care homes to offer opportunities.
- Opportunities to develop skills through rotational careers experience would be of value.
- The Home Office needs to manage immigration licences more efficiently to enable international recruitment.
- We need to lobby government collectively on matters affecting the sector.
- Lower level staff in the industry need to be upskilled
- Campaigns to promote careers in the sector to children and their parents would be of value

Discussion two: Could current careers and guidance activities be built on or joined up better in order to promote careers in the sector better?

- There is a lack of understanding about the range of careers available in the sector (e.g. nursing is known but OT, SALT, radiography etc) and pathways into and through careers are also not understood, so it is hard to present a clear image of the sector to those considering jobs
- Lots of agencies seem to be promoting careers in their own sector or organisation. It would be better if they could promote careers across the sector, especially because of the transferable nature of the skills.
- We should improve teachers' understanding of careers in the sector with professionals communicating directly with teachers
- We need campaigns that reach parents
- Careers campaigns need to involve direct access to the workplace (work experience, site visits)
- Employers need to be directly involved in promoting careers
- The technology angle needs to be promoted
- The Enterprise Adviser Network should be linked into and built on. Could we have mentoring programmes linked to this?
- Use of technology to promote careers, websites/apps and career opportunities. Could there be one point of contact to promote NHS and care workforce opportunities
- What funding to organisations have to promote careers? Could this be used efficiently if we worked better together? Independent care group, NHS, ASC
- Could we have a careers fair/experiential just for the sector?
- How can we recruit from other sectors – for example those working in customer service in retail or leisure?
- Are careers advisers equipped to talk about careers in private, public, health and social care roles and opportunities?
- Can work experience be integrated into Careers Advice in some way?
- Early awareness raising if we are thinking about long term workforce development. We could be working from primary school age, to graduates and those out of work or in lower skilled work
- We should engage institutes and lead bodies like the Royal Institute of Nursing, Skills for Care, NHS, etc supporting a joined up careers campaign.
- Could we create a video showing a range of settings and the gammit of careers via showing the patient journey – older person going into hospital, into respite in a care home, then supported in their home?
- Careers promoters from different Health and Social Care settings could be working together to jointly promote opportunities
- How are employers linking with DWP, Job Centre plus in order to recruit and promote opportunities?

Discussion three: What training provision is needed for the sector?

- Lack of knowledge about precisely what training is offered and by whom in East Sussex to support learning for and in the sector. This needs to be mapped out.
- Maths and English skills but in particular functional maths skills

- ICT training will eventually need to be tailored to the equipment and technology used in the role (digital skills for the sector and future skills)
- Is there any funding for standalone modules rather than full qualifications – in particular for employers who cannot afford to send staff out for substantial period of time.
- Employers need to have a better understanding of the training options available locally for their staff
- Apprenticeship opportunities need to be developed and promoted
- There is lots of provision available but a lack of understanding about how to navigate to the right education provider or course
- Can we make more of online learning options, flexible learning, part time etc . If large employers have online learning resources could these be shared externally – or with other employers?
- Could there be standard introductory courses at Level 2 that enable a move into a range of different learning at a higher level
- How are large employers using their Apprenticeship Levy to support career progression?
- Pre entry confidence building and lower level skill development (pre-employment training) needs to be in place for those returning to work