

Modernising Scientific Careers News

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March 2008; Volume 1

The UK health departments are currently considering important proposals concerning the redesign and definition of healthcare scientist careers. This quarterly e-newsletter is designed to inform stakeholders about progress in these proposals, termed the Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) Programme. The programme's secretariat, on behalf of the UK health departments, is at msc.office@dh.gsi.gov.uk. Please share this newsletter with colleagues and suggest that they e-mail the programme's secretariat if they wish to receive it in future. This address should also be used for any queries or comments on MSC.

What is Modernising Scientific Careers?

Modernising Scientific Careers is a key workforce programme within the Department of Health designed to ensure flexibility, sustainability and modern career pathways fit to address the needs of the future NHS. In England the programme has informed the Next Stage review Workforce Planning Educational and Training work stream. Coincident with the formulation of the MSC proposal was the separate development of an Action Plan for healthcare science in Scotland (published in Nov 2007), In Wales the publication of the Diagnostics Services Strategy, "Getting Results", has been followed by Modernisation Projects for Imaging and Pathology. Both projects have workforce work streams that are addressing both scientific and medical roles. Initiatives in each country serve to highlight the importance and urgency of developing healthcare scientists and to meet and address NHS service challenges. The Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) for England, Professor Sue Hill, has appointed Professor Shelley Heard as Programme Director for the project. Professor Heard leads a small team that is developing coherent plans for training and implementing the career framework, based on discussion and consultation with the UK health departments, the profession and the service. National Occupational Standards in healthcare science and the HCS Career Framework underpin this work.

Progress to date

1. UK Oversight Board

The MSC programme is a key project for healthcare science and the NHS. The UK Health departments are currently exploring the MSC proposals at a policy level. Scotland has released a position statement on MSC in the light of its own healthcare science action plan. Across the UK health departments, a policy agreement has been reached to engage in the governance mechanism for the proposals whilst continuing to explore the strategic benefits of MSC. An MSC Policy Board has been established under the Chairmanship of the Chief Scientific Officer for England, Professor Sue Hill. The Board will develop broad policy for the MSC programme which could then be implemented locally to take into account the requirements of the each of the countries, e.g. "Safe, Accurate and Effective, an action plan for healthcare science in Scotland" (see below)

The format and remit of a UK Oversight Board are being finalised to ensure readiness for robust governance of Modernising Scientific Careers.

2. National Occupational Standards (NOSs) update

Work on developing the 600+ functional National Occupational Standards (NOS) for healthcare scientists was completed in 2004. Skills for Health have now been commissioned to undertake further work on these to make them applicable to individual healthcare scientist roles. This further work is expected to be completed by early 2009. <http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/uploads/page/203/uploadablefile7.doc>

3. HCS Career Framework

This framework was published in 2005. Its aims are to:

- introduce an integrated career framework encompassing all disciplines and employment groups within the workforce based on roles and function and linked to transferable skills and competences
- clearly identify pathways for progression and transfer, supported by learning and development providing enhanced opportunities
- provide national consistency and maximum flexibility to support local service delivery, the expansion and extension of current roles; and the emergence of new roles.

For more information about the HCS Career Framework and for copies of publications visit www.dh.gov.uk/cso

4. Life Sciences Taskforce

The Life Sciences Taskforce (LSTF) was originally convened by the CSO to consider the roles, responsibilities and contribution of life science clinical scientists. It subsequently became a joint Royal College of Pathologists/CSO initiative co-chaired by the President of the RCPATH and the CSO with the aim of progressing this work, particularly in relation to the development of curricula and assessment programmes for higher specialist training. A process for supporting curricula development has been developed jointly between the Taskforce and Modernising Scientific Careers team. The third meeting of the Taskforce takes place in March 2008.

5. Events around MSC

The MSC programme team was established in September 2007. Since then there have been a number of workshops / CSO events:

- a. MSC Working Meeting, 5 October 2007 - attended by 21 HCS professionals to discuss early proposals for the development of a common training and career model.
- b. CSO Summit, 22 & 23 October 2007 - MSC was one of the topics discussed at this meeting of senior members of HCS professional organisations.
- c. CSO Conference, 27 & 28 November 2007 - MSC was the topic of one of the workshops at the conference. Sixty HCS professionals attended the workshop over the two days and provided valuable feedback on the draft proposals.

- d. MSC Working Meeting, 11 December 2007 - Nearly sixty HCS professionals from across the UK attended this working meeting and provided a wealth of feedback on the proposals.
- e. Frontiers in Laboratory Medicine, 31st January 2008 - Modernising Scientific Careers was also the subject of a recent all-day workshop at FILM. Over 40 participants heard a presentation from the CSO on MSC and then participated in a series of working meetings on the proposals, facilitated by the Professional Advisors to MSC (see below).
- f. In Scotland, under the auspices of Jacqui Lunday - the Scottish Government's Chief Health Professions Officer (CHPO) and Rob Farley - Healthcare Science Professions Officer, a series of regional events concerning the implementation of *Safe, Accurate and Effective, an action plan for healthcare science in Scotland* commenced in February 2008. Participants will also have an initial opportunity to explore the MSC proposals. A further national event in Scotland specifically for MSC is planned after these regional implementation events.
- g. In Wales it is anticipated that the Annual Healthcare Scientist Conference will be devoted to consideration of MSC.

These meetings provide opportunities for participants to discuss and feed-back their views in writing on the developing proposals around MSC. So far, more than 200 individuals from across the UK and a wide range of disciplines have participated in these events, providing crucial feedback which is helping to shape and define the career model. There will be further opportunities for healthcare professionals and other stakeholders to give their views on the proposals when a discussion document on MSC is published in early summer, 2008.

6. Leadership programme for HCS

The standard for leadership qualities in the NHS is provided by the Leadership Quality Framework (LQF). This consists of 15 qualities arranged in three clusters - personal qualities, setting direction and delivering the service. The LQF serves as a benchmark for assessment and development of HCS in their leadership roles. Further detail can be found at www.leadershipqualitiesframework.nhs.uk The results of focus groups with HCS show that there is intrinsic understanding of and agreement with the LQF.

Following a series of workshops held in May 2007, proposals for the leadership development of HCS - both those currently in post and for those who will be entering training in the future - are being developed

In Wales the 'Care to Lead' programme Lead programme is in place to support and develop leaders across management and professional groups. The programme is underpinned by evidence based practices including the Leadership Qualities Framework. Further details are available from www.nliah.wales.nhs.uk

7. Professional Advisors

The CSO and MSC programme team recognises that the professions are key stakeholders and must take the lead in developing and implementing the new model for training and career development for HCS. With this in mind, four Professional Advisors have been appointed to date, as part of the programme team:

Division	Professional Advisor	Email contact address
Life Sciences	Dr Graham Beastall	GBeastall@gri-biochem.org.uk
	Ms Nicky Fleming	nicky.fleming@yahoo.co.uk
Physiological Sciences	Mr Keith Johnston	keith.johnston@nhs.net
Physical Sciences and Engineering	Dr Derek Pearson	Derek.Pearson@nhs.net

Please contact your divisional Professional Advisor if you wish to discuss any aspect of MSC.

8. Next Stage Review (England)

Work through the CSO's office has looked at the contribution of HCS to the eight planned Darzi care pathways. The document "**Our NHS, Our Future: the contribution of healthcare scientists**" was developed to give an indicative (but not comprehensive) description of the services (and potential location) provided by HCS. It was presented to Lord Darzi at a meeting with SHA representatives and members of the scientific professions at a meeting at the DH in January. It is available by request from msc.office@dh.gsi.gov.uk

9. Scotland's Action Plan for Healthcare Science

In November 2007, "*Safe, Accurate and Effective, an action plan for healthcare science in Scotland*" was launched by the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for health and Well-being. The plan was developed in collaboration with the Scottish Forum for Healthcare Science and commenced with the secondment of a national project officer to lead the exercise. A major healthcare scientist-led workforce survey was undertaken to characterise the distribution and type of HCS staff working in the various disciplines, and to help identify workforce issues. Following a year of stakeholder engagements, the published plan has three clear purposes:

- To maximise the contribution of healthcare science to improving the health and well-being of the people of Scotland through safe, accurate and effective healthcare science interventions
- Ensure that healthcare science expertise contributes to the development of sustainable clinical teams that will underpin the implementation of the new health policy agenda in Scotland
- Ensure that the clinical leadership, research capacity and capability of the healthcare science workforce are harnessed to contribute to national and local priorities that improve the quality of care and outcome for patients.

2008 sees *Safe Accurate and Effective* commencing its implementation phase and further debate with stakeholders will consider how to take forward the 12 recommendations. This will include examining how healthcare scientists can rise to the challenge of meeting the 18 week GP referral-to-treatment target, shifting the balance of care, (i.e. where practical, a greater community presence), role developments, service user engagement, remote and rural working, and research and development opportunities.

These events will also be an opportunity to explore the proposals around Modernising Science Careers.

A primary objective of *Safe Accurate and Effective* is the early establishment of formally constituted Healthcare Science Area Forum in each NHS Scotland Board. The plan lays out the contribution that such a forum can make as distinct from existing committees. NHS Boards have been invited to identify a lead healthcare scientist to start this process. A link between area forums and the Scottish Forum for Healthcare Science is envisaged.

Safe Accurate and Effective makes recommendations around gaps in the current provision of education and training in Scotland, for example with clinical physiologists and clinical technologists. NHS education for Scotland, (the special health board charged with commissioning E&T for the NHS), is expected to open a healthcare science work stream to tackle these challenges. A higher specialist training scheme for Clinical Scientists is under consideration, and a recently launched frontline leadership programme for all NHS Scotland staff is expected to attract wider interest from healthcare scientists. A *research, development and innovation* day will be held for healthcare scientists on 23rd June 2008 to begin the process of highlighting and reinforcing the infrastructure in Scotland available to NHS healthcare scientists wishing to undertake research.

Safe Accurate and Effective is available to download from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/NHS-Scotland/HealthcareScience/contents>

10. Discussion document on Modernising Scientific Careers

It is anticipated that a discussion document setting out the proposals to modernise scientific careers will be published in May. It will be sent to all stakeholders including professional organisations, employers and others with an interest in healthcare science such as higher education institutes (HEIs), and to individual professionals who have indicated an interest in receiving the document.

11. Contacting the MSC team

Please forward this e-newsletter to any of your contacts with an interest in healthcare science. If individuals would like to register to receive this newsletter please do so at the email address below. We welcome your input and comments on any aspect of the MSC programme. Please contact us on:

msc.office@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Contact for Scotland: Robert.Farley@nes.scot.nhs.uk

Contact for Wales: jennifer.frost@wales.gsi.gov.uk