The road to development

A robust analysis of finance, workforce metrics, supply and demand modelling and national and regional policy was carried out by the SHA workforce planning team and formed the evidence base for the strategy. This is set down in a document entitled Underpinning Assumptions for the NHS South Central Workforce Strategy.

The themes of the strategy were developed by a group of strategy critical friends drawn from a range of NHS and partner organisations across South Central (see Workforce Strategy Update 1).

Following a review of the draft strategy by critical friends the first regional health and social care workforce event enabled closer discussions with local authorities. The strategy was sent directly to NHS chief executives for their personal review and to discuss in their organisations, in preparation for the Chief Executive’s Forum (see Workforce Strategy Update 2).

At the same time there was also a considerable analysis of workforce requirements to deliver the care pathway programmes. These are set down in Care Area Reports, which will form appendices to the strategy. As well as discussions with SHA clinical directors, some care pathway programmes ran specific workshops, while others are planning workforce focused events in 2010.

The workforce strategy conference enabled a wide scale review of the work to date, tested out the strategy against local expectations and considered its implementation.

The Audit Commission led Regional Workforce Planning survey in November gave South Central a baseline of systems, processes, roles and responsibilities on which to develop workforce planning at all levels of the system.

What the strategy aims to deliver in the next five years.

Ensure high quality education meets the needs of our staff irrespective of grade, role or seniority.

Meet the pledges in the NHS Constitution[1] to staff, and ensure our staff meet their responsibilities to patients, public and colleagues.

Ensure organisations fulfil their commitments in the skills pledge.

Ensure improved health and well being of the workforce, resulting in measurable quality and productivity improvements.

Support new ways of working and planning to ensure the workforce are fit for purpose and meet employers and public demands/expectations.

Work in partnership with the broader health and social care community to deliver this strategy.

Work with and engage the public (patients, service users, clients, carers and the general public) more fully, in workforce development and education of our staff.
DELEGATES ASK FOR BOLD ACTION AND CLARITY

At the end of the conference Katherine Fenton, Director of Clinical Standards and Workforce summed up some of the key points made by delegates and the actions needed in order to take the strategy forward. Katherine started by saying that there was no magic solution to the challenges facing the NHS but that the development of the workforce would be a key enabler and that we all need “to work collectively together and break down organisational barriers.” Katherine said that many delegates had asked for more clarity on everybody’s roles: SHAs, commissioners, providers and that this needed to be better articulated in the strategy. She explained that the role of the SHA was twofold, firstly building capability improvement and secondly holding people to account. She said the SHA needed to be clear in which role it was engaging with organisations.

Katherine said that the message from delegates was that the strategy should be bold about expectations and rate of change and include better measures, “We need to clearly state what is going to be different after year one, three and five,” she said.

The final messages to delegates were to “act now” and “not to wait for the perfect strategy”, and that South Central shouldn’t wait for instructions from the centre, but that we needed to work collaboratively to achieve system change. Katherine’s final comment was that organisations have the opportunity to take the workforce strategy to their own boards for review, and now needed to develop their own organisational workforce plans in order to deliver the strategy.

What delegates said in their personal written evaluation:

“It’s a starting point, good to get everyone involved. Hopefully the collaborative working will really start once the strategy is signed off.”

“The strategy needs to be more SMART with stronger indication of numbers/targets/timescales.”

“Need to unblock commissioning incentives which inhibit partnerships that could deliver.”

“Examples of good practice would be helpful.”

“HEI links are critical in career pathways. Get Trusts and local authorities together to prompt joint working.”

“Joint working with social care and third sector needs to be stronger.”

“Very useful event, opportunity for wider engagement and development of the strategy.”

Keep up to date with the strategy

The top team leading the development of the workforce strategy are Katherine Fenton, Director of Clinical Standards and Workforce; Allan Jolly, Associate Director for Workforce and Education and Ruth Monger, Head of Workforce Strategy.

If you would like to contact Ruth Monger on the development of this strategy, please email: ruth.monger@southcentral.nhs.uk or call 01635 275541.

Full reports from our major consultation events and Workforce Strategy Update newsletters are all online at: http://www.nesc.nhs.uk/about_nesc/workforce_strategy.aspx