New era of education and training for NHS staff

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Health Minister Dr Dan Poulter has today announced a wide ranging series of measures to improve the training, values and education of all NHS staff over the next two years and beyond.

The measures have been published in the government's mandate to Health Education England, a new arms-length body set up to give NHS training and education unprecedented focus and importance. It will be backed by £5 billion and will be accountable to ministers for delivering the goals set out in today's document.

Health Minister Dr Dan Poulter said:

The staff working in our NHS are our health service's most precious resource, and we must do all we can to ensure that our staff have the right values, training, and skills to deliver the very highest quality of care for patients. Today's mandate to Health Education England, backed by a £5 billion budget will help our many dedicated frontline staff to further improve their ability to care for patients as well as enabling our NHS to train the next generation of doctors, nurses and healthcare assistants.

As people are living longer with more complex medical and care needs, so must we ensure that our NHS workforce has the right skills and values to provide more care in the community for older patients as well as to give each and every child the very best start in life. Plans for the future training and recruitment of our NHS will lead to better working lives for staff and better care for patients.

The commitments for Health Education England include:

Better care for people with dementia and with complex needs
100,000 staff to have foundation level dementia training by March 2014 with plans in place to extend this further by autumn 2013;
training a multidisciplinary workforce able to work in both hospitals and the community, with a target of 50 per cent of medical students becoming GPs; and
more nurses to be trained in the community, with at least 50 per cent of student nurses doing community placements as part of their training by March 2015.

Clear national workforce plans

a new five-year workforce plan to ensure the right levels of staffing and training across the health service workforce by autumn 2013; including a commitment to tackle historical shortages in doctors working in emergency medicine and encourage more doctors into emergency medicine; and
a commitment that sufficient midwives and other maternity staff are trained and available to provide every woman with personalised one-to-one care throughout pregnancy, childbirth and during the post-natal period.

Better recruitment and training

Recruitment to all NHS-funded training to be based on values and behaviours as well as technical and academic skills by March 2015;
a plan to support the progression of healthcare assistants into nursing by autumn 2014, and to establish minimum training standards for healthcare assistants by spring 2014;

the development of postgraduate training for nurses working with older people with complex care needs, for introduction in September 2014;
more GPs with mandatory training in mental health and children's health;
increasing the number of apprenticeships as a route of entry to training for healthcare staff; and
timetable for the review of the qualifications required for non-surgical cosmetic procedures by summer 2013.
The far-reaching document is a blueprint for NHS staff training. It is aligned with the mandate for NHS England on its priorities to tackle preventable deaths; treat long-term conditions; introduce a culture of caring; and improve treatment of dementia.
Professor Ian Cumming, Chief Executive of Health Education England, said:
Health Education England exists for one reason and one reason only: to improve the quality of care delivered to patients by ensuring that our workforce has the right numbers, skills, values and behaviours, and is available at the right time and in the right place. Our mandate from the Government sets out

clearly the plans for education and training that will be the cornerstone for the delivery of high quality, effective, compassionate care, by recruiting for values and training for skills. Our £5 billion budget will allow us to recruit, train and develop a workforce that will deliver improved care to patients.

The mandate is set out under six broad themes - support for service priorities, NHS values and behaviours, excellent education, competent and capable staff, working in partnership and value for money. It covers the two years from April 2013 to March 2015 and will be reviewed in autumn 2013.

Contact the Department of Health press office for a copy of the mandate.

Notes to editors

From 1st April 2013, the Secretary of State for Health will have a statutory duty to ensure that an effective education and training system is in place for the NHS and public health. This coincides with abolition of the strategic health authorities and the transfer of their responsibilities for education and training to Health Education England (HEE) and employers working together in local education and training boards (LETBS).

It will be the responsibility of HEE to provide national leadership and strategic direction for education, training and workforce development and to ensure a nationally coherent system is in place.

The NHS invests almost £5 billion each year in central funding for the training and development of its workforce and that of the public health system. This money will transfer to HEE to support the delivery of the objectives set out in the mandate.

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