

Defining Knowledge Needs and Solutions for Support Workers in Scotland's Health and Social Services Sectors

Background

There are over 100,000 staff employed as support workers in the health and social services sectors. The consultation which underpinned Scotland's health and social services knowledge management strategies – *Enabling Partnerships: Sharing Knowledge to Build the Mutual NHS* (NES, 2010) and *Sharing Knowledge, Improving Practice, Changing Lives'* (NES and IRISS, 2010) indicated that this workforce group is not sufficiently supported by existing knowledge services, and that they require new knowledge solutions tailored to their needs. A common driver among support workers is the registration requirement to undertake health and social services SVQs, levels two and three. NHS Education for Scotland is commissioning a needs analysis to define knowledge solutions for support workers in Scotland's health and social services.

Objectives

This needs analysis will aim to define:

- The workforce profile and different working contexts of support workers in health and social services. This analysis should contribute to definition of user archetypes or “personas” within the support worker category, as the basis for specifying tailored knowledge solutions.
- The knowledge needs of support workers in their day to day work and learning. This should include:
 - o Knowledge support required by those undertaking Health and Social Care SVQs levels two and three, and gaps in current provision.
 - o Other knowledge support needed for day to day work and learning, beyond the requirement for registration qualifications.
- The combination of knowledge solutions best suited to the needs of this workforce group. This should include consideration of :
 - o ICT-based knowledge support- e.g. portals or zones - through the Knowledge Network (www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk) ; Social Services Knowledge Scotland (www.ssk.org.uk) websites; online social networking; mobile apps; e-learning; podcasts and webcasts; use of SMS etc.
 - o Development of online and/or face to face communities of practice.
 - o Person to person support in the form of training in information skills, sharing of knowledge through peer networks, mentoring and coaching, the knowledge brokering roles of colleagues or line managers; support from library, learning centre and training /teaching staff.

- Hard copy resources (e.g. books); libraries and learning centres
- The role of middle management as 'knowledge brokers' in sharing knowledge with support workers

Deliverables

Report on knowledge needs of support workers in health and social services, including definition of personas and analysis at the level of individual workforce groups within the support worker category.

Prioritised recommendations for knowledge solutions to meet these needs, taking into account the spectrum of options outlined above.

Timescales

This scoping exercise will be carried out during March 2011, delivering a report of findings and recommendations delivered by 31st March 2011.

Suggested methodology

Bidders are invited to propose methodology for this needs analysis. Suggested approaches include:

- **Desk-based research** to define the workforce profile and formal learning requirements of this staff group, identify previous work on this subject, and define personas on this basis.
- **Interviews:** Carry out face to face or phone interviews with appropriate representatives in health and social services to gather their views on the knowledge needs of support workers. Interviews should also be carried out with libraries and learning centres (e.g. NHS, health promotion, public, Further Education, Voluntary Sector) to uncover what type of support that they would be able to offer to this group of staff.
- **Focus groups:** with a representative range of support workers, to feed into the consultation, and to validate initial findings.
- **Questionnaire survey:** across the spectrum of support workers, to validate issues arising from interviews and add specificity to requirements.

Funding

A maximum of £8500 is available to support this project.

Applying to undertake this contract:

Your application should provide an overview of your proposed methodology, project plan and timings, project personnel, and costings. It should also outline previous relevant work.

Applications will close on **18th February 2011**, with face to face interviews taking place week commencing **21st February 2011**. Please send completed applications by email to susan.lindner@nes.scot.nhs.uk. Informal enquiries can also be made by emailing susan.lindner@nes.scot.nhs.uk or calling (0141) 352 2909.