

Nursing Practice

COMMENT

“Why we’re recruiting for the right values, as well as skills”

Why do we need to recruit for values? The answer is simple: to ensure we recruit the right people with the right values to provide the best care possible for patients.

Unsatisfactory values and culture were key problems identified by Sir Robert Francis QC in his report into the appalling failures at Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust. To support a culture of care and compassion in the NHS, it is important that we begin by recruiting the right people with the right values. When people talk about values in the NHS, they talk about staff being compassionate, treating patients well, being committed to providing safe care and working in a team.

Patients are everyone’s responsibility: each person with whom a patient comes into contact is providing care, from the receptionist to the clinician, and the porter to the surgeon – but also managers and commissioners in the decisions they make.

This is why, from April 2015, all students across all healthcare disciplines going into NHS-funded training courses will be recruited for their values, as well as their skills. Many NHS employers are keen to follow suit and recruit staff across all roles in the same way, as the first step towards values-based employment.

The NHS Constitution forms the basis of Health Education England’s values-based recruitment (VBR) framework. Developed by patients, public and staff, these six values – working together for patients; respect and dignity; commitment to quality of care; compassion; improving

lives; and everyone counts – describe the experience that patients rightly expect from the NHS.

Those applying for jobs or a place at university should be seen face to face to determine whether they have these values before going out and caring for patients who could be our friends, our family, us.

VBR will breathe new life into the NHS Constitution, bringing it to the forefront of recruitment and helping to ensure that, for the first time, we have a workforce that is aware of and aligned with these values.

Organisations in other sectors have begun to recruit for values. They have recognised that, when the values of an organisation and employees match, this brings about positive outcomes for both. Indeed, VBR is already part of how many universities and trusts recruit students and staff. The VBR framework aims to ensure that healthcare students and staff are recruited in a standardised way.

Most care received by patients is excellent. But a situation such as Mid Staffs must never happen again. We know that assessing values of new recruits will not solve all the issues. Organisations need to live and model values to nurture an environment where these values can thrive.

Although Health Education England’s VBR programme focuses on the recruitment element of the employment journey, there are many programmes and initiatives promoting values across the NHS. With the system working together for patients, I am confident we can improve care. **NT**

Nicki Latham is chief operating officer at Health Education England

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SPOTLIGHT

Confidence boost for nurse commissioners

Commissioning nurses are more confident this year than they were last year, a survey has found (page 15). This is good news for nurses and good news for patients.

Nurses’ role in commissioning is essential, as they bring their knowledge, perspective and experience to the design of services. The largest professional workforce in the health service, their focus is on elements that are crucial to patients: compassion, dignity and patient safety.

Nursing Times’ A Seat on the Board campaign helped the government to see sense and ensure there was a nurse on the board of every clinical commissioning group.

Now, the issue is that their voice is heard. This increasing confidence is a positive sign that nurses are finding their place in the commissioning of services, and will be able to exert and increase their influence over time.



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