

# MSC Matters

Update bulletin from the CSO on Modernising Scientific Careers

November 2010 (Gateway Ref: 15180)

Welcome to this special Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) edition of the Chief Scientific Officer's Bulletin.

In England, the Minister has approved the continuation of the MSC programme. In addition, MSC was one of only three initiatives to be adopted by the Department of Health and cited by the Secretary of State for Health following ideas suggested by the public through the Spending Challenge process.

MSC is a UK-wide education and training strategy for the whole healthcare science workforce in the NHS and associated bodies. In England, the new Government has recognised the importance of MSC to the future of the NHS and the importance of continuing the programme.

MSC introduces a clear and coherent career pathway and structure for the healthcare science workforce. Aspects of the programme cover every step of the career pathway, and include education, training and workforce planning.

Importantly, MSC has been informed with leadership and input from the full range of professionals, professional bodies and patient groups working in this area.

## Keeping you up-to-date

There will be regular *MSC Matters* updates, to support professionals – including the healthcare science workforce, service managers and commissioners - in the NHS with the implementation of Modernising Scientific Careers. It provides regular updates on the progress of MSC, and on the tools, programmes and products that are available to support you and your colleagues.

*MSC Matters* is a regular bulletin sent to all stakeholders who are interested in MSC in England. Please cascade it to colleagues in your professional networks and teams and encourage them to sign up to our circulation list.

We want *MSC Matters* to be as helpful to you as possible. If you have comments about this issue or areas that you think we should cover in future issues then contact us on [msc.matters@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:msc.matters@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

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## Modernising Scientific Careers



## MSC out on the road

More than 1000 members of the healthcare science workforce, SHA workforce planners and education commissioners, Trust HR managers and Higher Education Institutions came together over the summer to discuss and learn about how the local NHS – particularly Strategic Health Authorities and Hospital Trusts – is implementing Modernising Scientific Careers in their areas.



Picture: Delegates at the NHS South West Roadshow

Individual SHAs ran Roadshow days, with presentations from the MSC programme team and local members of the healthcare science workforce showcasing good practice in their regions. Workshops were also held on aspects of implementation in the regions covering topics such as workforce planning and re-profiling, training and assessment in the workplace, and developing leaders in the healthcare science workforce.

The presentations can be downloaded from the CSO pages of the DH website ([www.dh.gov.uk/cso](http://www.dh.gov.uk/cso)) in the Modernising Scientific Careers section.

## First universities start MSC degree courses

This September saw the first universities - Manchester Metropolitan University and University of Bradford – offering new undergraduate healthcare science BSc (Hons) courses (Practitioner Training Programme level), for the new MSC model.

This followed a rigorous process of external assessment of the degree programme proposals over the summer by accreditation teams including expert representatives from the professions and higher education. The accreditation panel made

recommendations in respect of accreditation to Medical Education England Healthcare Science Programme Board (MEE HCSPB).

This accreditation process ensures that the new BSc (Hons) degree courses meet the new MSC curriculum requirements and learning outcomes. Accreditation will be for four years, with a review at two years.

BSc (Hons) degree programmes in Healthcare Science have been accredited at:

- Manchester Metropolitan University (Cardiac Physiology / Sleep & Respiratory Physiology)
- University of Bradford (Genetics Technology)
- Anglia Ruskin University (Cardiac Physiology / Sleep & Respiratory Physiology)
- University of Westminster (Genetics Technology)

Other Universities offering BSc (Hons) degree programmes will receive accreditation visits this winter.

## Trusts across UK work on MSC implementation

More than 40 'MSC Early Adopter' organisations from across all 10 regions of the NHS are progressing well on the implementation of Modernising Scientific Careers.

The 'early adopter' sites are a very important resource for progressing MSC. They are leading the way, looking at local implementation, informing elements of the national programme, and developing new roles and leadership arrangements.

The Early Adopters meet monthly, and each are looking in detail at various aspects of the MSC programme. For example part of the work at Imperial Academic Health Science Centre in London is looking at delivering supra-specialist scientific services and establishing a school in clinical science where doctors and scientists can be trained together.

While at Sherwood Forest NHS Trust, in Nottinghamshire, the team is developing a cohesive trust-wide approach to using MSC to accelerate the rate of service improvement with a particular focus on new Assistant and Associate roles.

A full list of the Early Adopters trusts and networks can be found on the CSO pages of the DH website ([www.dh.gov.uk/cso](http://www.dh.gov.uk/cso)) in the Modernising Scientific Careers section.

# Healthcare Science and the White Paper

The MSC Programme Team, and the MEE HCSPB, is working with its professional advisory members and constituent representatives to ensure that the programme of work fits with the direction of travel set out in the White Paper, *Equality and Excellence, Liberating the NHS*, and will inform the new education and training architecture.

In particular, the White Paper recognises the importance of aligning the commissioning of education for the healthcare science workforce with the commissioning of patient care and the role that Medical Education England will have in leading this locally and nationally.

The MEE Healthcare Science Programme Board is scoping the functions provided by existing education commissioners, with a view to making recommendations for the future that would be applicable for all healthcare science programmes.



## Genetics Programme shows benefits of MSC approach

Frontline staff and external evaluators have both commented on the value of the Modernising Scientific Careers approach, evident in the early findings from the MSC Genetics Programmes.

The positive evaluation has led to a second tranche of new Practitioner and Scientist Training Programmes (PTP and STP) in Genetics. The University of Nottingham is delivering the post-graduate part-time

MSc in Clinical Science – Genetics, which is an integral part of the Genetics Scientist Training Programme.

The MSC Genetics Programme was the first to implement the MSC approach to careers, education and training. Whereas previously, Molecular Genetics and Cytogenetics had been taught separately, both the Practitioner and Scientist Training Programmes have integrated both areas of genetics.

The National Healthcare Science School of Genetics in NHS West Midlands has been established to oversee the delivery of the Genetics PTP and STP. The Head of the School is Val Davison, who is the Director of the West Midlands Regional Genetics Service. She spoke of the consistent evidence of benefits through cross-working and wider breadth of knowledge – for both trainees and other staff.

This was echoed by the University of Warwick and ORCNI Ltd, who were commissioned by the Department of Health to evaluate the MSC Genetics Programme. The external evaluation began in October 2009, with an interim report received in April 2010 and ongoing reports as the cohort is evaluated.

The interim report made three sets of recommendations: for the MSC Team, the National Healthcare Science School of Genetics, and general suggestions about improvements to the processes.

Three promising observations were consistently observed by the evaluation team:

- The trainees are positively assisting in the cultural unity of Molecular Genetics and Cytogenetics departments.
- The problem based learning approach of the University of Nottingham's postgraduate STP programme is acting as a training tool beyond the trainees, incorporating other staff members into the process.
- Trainees believe their enhanced breadth and depth of knowledge will enable improved workforce flexibility in the future at times of workload pressure.

# Planning for the future

The Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) programme has been working with SHAs to collate information on NHS Trust placement capacity and trainee requirements for the next three years from 2011. Members of the MEE HCSPB Workforce Planning Working Group took part in a workshop in September to review this information to:

- bring a national dimension to aggregated SHA workforce/commissioning plans for healthcare science
- review potential commissioning scenarios for 2011/12 and beyond
- compare commissioning scenarios for 2011/12 with current commissioning plans
- identify vulnerable healthcare science specialisms
- advise SHAs on commissioning numbers for 2011/12 and beyond

This work will be used to help determine the number of academic programmes that will be needed to support the new MSC training programmes and to inform SHAs' commissioning plans for 2011 and beyond. A further two key projects on workforce planning are taking place in the coming months. These will:

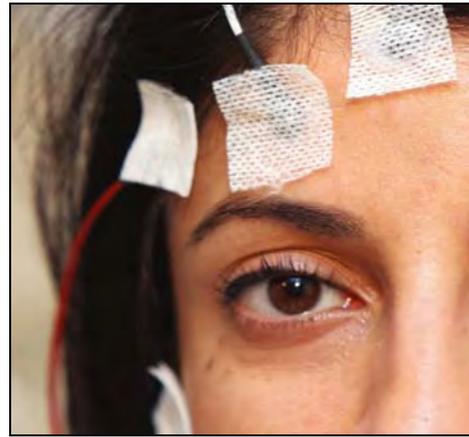
- provide advice on the demand side parameters for the ongoing development of the integrated workforce planning tool. The workforce planning tool is currently being piloted by SHAs and early adopter organisations
- lead an horizon scanning project to inform long term planning for the healthcare science workforce

## Overview of MSC

In response to requests, an 'overview' sheet has been produced. It covers the following topics:

- What is MSC?
- What are the main changes within MSC?
- What is the timescale for MSC developments?
- What are the education and training programmes within MSC?
- What is the timescale and governance for the MSC developments?
- MSC: benefits for patients, the NHS and the healthcare science workforce
- Tools to help implementation of MSC

It can be found on the Chief Scientific Officer's pages of the DH website ([www.dh.gov.uk/cso](http://www.dh.gov.uk/cso)) in the Modernising Scientific Careers section, where there are also links to all the key policy documents for MSC.



## New recruitment scheme for Healthcare Scientists

The new scheme for the recruitment into Master's level healthcare scientist training posts in England will start in the New Year for the September 2011 intake of Scientist Training Programme (STP) trainees.

The new scheme will help to ensure consistency across the country. There will be a single national timetable for recruitment, national guidelines for the conduct of selection interviews, and assessment centres to ensure all candidates are treated fairly and equally. Science graduates will apply for the training posts through the NHS Jobs website, with shortlisting and selection processes organised and conducted by local Trusts working in established scientific networks. New networks will be supported through grants to run assessment centres.

The new national healthcare scientist trainee recruitment scheme will be managed on behalf of all SHAs by South Central SHA. It replaces the previous scheme, co-ordinated by Northgate Arinso Ltd.

Details of all training posts will be available on the NHS Jobs website <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>. Further details of the scheme and a list of all the posts will be found on NHS Careers website <http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/>. Details will be on the websites in January 2011.

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