

The Health and Social Care sector

As the economy recovers, new jobs will become available. The basic skills required for many of these jobs are expected to rise – it is estimated that by 2010 around 95% of all new jobs will be at Level 2 or above. These fact sheets have been designed to support people in making informed choices about future employment and / or training to make the best of these new opportunities.

The North East Health and Social Care sector

The Health and Social Care sector offers an impressive range of job roles and career opportunities. It includes all organisations which provide either social care or health care to individuals. Care homes, hospitals, hospices, adoption services and foster carers, social work, day centres, dental and GP practices, nursing agencies and mental health hospitals all lie within the Health and Social Care sector.

Job roles across the Health and Social Care sector include care assistants and home carers, doctors, surgeons, pharmacists/pharmacologists, nursing auxiliaries and assistants, dental practitioners, dental nurses, nurses, medical researchers, medical receptionists and secretaries.

The North East Health and Social Care sector employs nearly 150,000 people across the region. It is largely a publicly paid-for sector, and it includes National Health Service hospitals and clinics which do not aim to make a profit through the services they provide. It also includes community and voluntary employers.

Health and Social Care is a relatively 'recession-proof' sector. The UK industry has remained stable and remarkably active through the current recession. As a result of support from the Government, companies have remained keen to invest in health and social care in the North East. Two large care providers in the region have recently announced strong performances over the past year. Employment in the sector is expected to increase by roughly 6% in the North East from 2007 to 2017.



New government strategies have been introduced to encourage workers into the social care sector. For example, £75 million has been invested to support social care traineeships to get 50,000 young unemployed people into social care work. The government has also invested £4million to offer £1000 incentives each for newly qualified adult social workers and their supervisors for extra support in the first year of practice.

The demand for Health and Social Care services is changing rapidly for a number of reasons. These include an ageing population, a growth in long-term illness and an increase in emergency hospital admissions.

Despite the current recession, the Social Care sector in North East England still has plenty of vacancies and is looking for new applicants.

Skills required in the Health and Social Care sector

The skills required in the Health and Social Care sector range from very specific medical skills to more general skills to do with caring for the long term sick, disabled people and older people.



It is important to have a people-centred attitude, the desire to help others, and skills such as:

- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Flexibility and adaptability (including the ability to work under pressure)
- Management and supervisory skills
- Ability to interact comfortably with individuals from a wide range of backgrounds
- Management and supervisory level skills

Accredited training is required for many job roles. Common qualifications include NVQs in Health, Clinical Laboratory Support, Dental Nursing, and Occupational Health and Safety, and (for administration roles) the Certificate in Administration.

Qualifications in the Social Care side of the sector *may* be at lower NVQ levels, though the work involved is no less demanding than in Health Care. They may include the NVQ in Support Services in Health Care, the VRQ in Dementia Care or the 14-19 Diploma in Society, Health and Development. There are specific skills shortages within the social care sector, and people who have the skills needed to work with families and children are in high demand. The qualification needed to be a Senior Care Assistant has recently been reduced from NVQ level 3 to NVQ level 2, showing there are plenty of positions that need to be filled.

Training provision for people interested in the Health and Social Care sector is available in the North East and there are many opportunities to develop skills which will be in demand.

Qualifications gained from Apprenticeships include the NVQ in Health and Social Care (or in Health); the Technical Certificate in Health and Social Care; Key Skills in Application of Number and in Communication. Volunteering opportunities to gain experience often arise in the sector. The best way to find out about these is to contact your local volunteer centre, visit the do-it-yourself website (see link below), or approach your local NHS Trust directly.

For more information about the Health and Social Care sector please see the following websites:

- The National Skills Academy's Social Care website www.skillsacademyforsocialcare.org.uk
- Skills for Health www.skillsforhealth.org.uk
- NHS North East website for information on qualifications and careers www.northeast.nhs.uk/careers
- Do it Yourself website for volunteering opportunities <http://www.do-it.org.uk/wanttovolunteer/aboutvolunteering/diy>