IT SKILLS PATHWAY

LEVEL THREE

LEVEL TWO

LEVEL ONE

ENTRY

IT Skills for........ Nurses

Grace H Ferguson is a Nurse Team Leader in the Department of Nuclear Medicine at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, NHS Grampian. In this interview, she describes how completing NHS ELITE as part of the NHS IT Skills Pathway has assisted her with her day to day work.

How do your duties involve the use of IT skills?
In the department I order the surgical and medical stores through the procurement site. The nurses off duty is done through the Scottish Standard Time System (SSTS) and of course I check my emails, write and update protocols for each type of scan we perform in Nuclear Medicine, write information for new staff, do other rotas, tables, posters and letters.

What did you already know about IT before taking the NHS ELITE course?
I have been nursing for nearly forty two years. There were no computers in the hospital in 1970 and it was around 1989 when computers came to the wards so we could create patient care plans. The night Sister gave us minimal training. I was terrified of a computer!! I remember thinking I will have to leave nursing or just get on with it – I choose the latter! We bought a PC for home and over the years I have taught myself (many a night until 1am!) the basics.

How did you hear about NHS IT Skills Pathway?
In a Global email at work last September I read about the NHS ELITE course and thought that is exactly what I need.

Tell us how you went about learning NHS ELITE?
I enrolled on to the course through my IT training department and thoroughly enjoyed doing it. I did it mostly via elearning, at home in the evenings in peace and quiet. I completed it at work one day, passed the course and received my certificate. The qualification shows in my e-KSF and is linked to five out of the six core dimensions - Communication, Personal and People Development, Health, Safety and Security, Service Improvement and Quality.

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For more information about the NHS IT Skills Pathway, please visit our website at:

http://www.cfh.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/icd/itskills/pathway

Alternatively you can email us at:

it.skills@nhs.net

What was the experience like?
Our IT training department does offer weekly classroom based sessions but I decided to do my learning via elearning so I could do it in my own time. I enjoyed the course and found it very easy to use and navigate around.

Now that you've taken the course, how does it help you?
I now feel much more confident using a computer. I have learnt more about tables, spreadsheets, cutting, copying and pasting.

Are there any specific examples of how skills you learned help you in your duties?
I have found since doing the course that I manage my distribution lists better, sort my emails in a more organised way, make up tables quicker and I can use shortcuts rather than taking the long way round!

How does what you've learned directly/indirectly help with patient care?
I now do things much quicker on the computer so in fact I save time thus giving me more time to spend with the patients.

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What would be your message about the NHS IT Skills Pathway to other staff across the NHS?
I would encourage more staff to do the course. It can be done at any time, stopping and starting at any time – you are not against time. Don`t be scared, do the NHS ELITE course!

What are the next steps for you in terms of IT learning?
I am not terrified anymore, in fact, I love computers! So much so I have a PC, Laptop and a Netbook at home – even taking my Netbook on holiday with me!! I'm now hoping to increase my IT skills and I'm particularly interested in learning more about Microsoft PowerPoint.

DID YOU KNOW?

NHS E-learning IT Essentials (NHS ELITE) is a learning and assessment tool covering the essential IT skills that are required for most NHS staff. In particular, it covers the IT skills that are required for the use of computer based health information systems, such as how to use a mouse and a keyboard but also covers other skills like using Windows, working with files and applications and how to operate email and the internet. Find out more about NHS ELITE by visiting
http://www.cfh.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/icd/itskills/eits

The NHS IT Skills Pathway covers the full range of competencies for users of IT, from basic through to advanced levels. It has been developed in partnership with the NHS to provide an officially recognised route of learning and certification for the whole workforce.

Its purpose is to encourage everyone working within the NHS to review their current IT skills and knowledge against the national standards, determine what their skill gaps are and then identify their future training requirements based on the products that are available.

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