



IT Skills for..... NHS Administrators



Angie Kingman is an Orthotics Officer at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust. In this interview, she describes how the NHS IT Skills Pathway has assisted her with her day to day work.

How do your duties involve the use of Microsoft Office/Windows?

I produce letters using Word and I produce and fill in a lot of spreadsheets. I use spreadsheets to show at a glance how different department's money is being spent and to record how many patients are being referred to us.

Do you use Microsoft Office/Windows regularly?

I use Microsoft Office every day, I use Word and Excel mainly and also Outlook.

What did you already know about Microsoft Office/Windows before taking the course?

Before I started this job I'd not even seen a spreadsheet before, so I had to teach myself how to use it. I did learn more while I was using it but I asked my manager in an appraisal if I could learn it properly.

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Which exams have you completed?

I'm now qualified as a Microsoft Office Specialist in Word Core, Word Expert, Excel Core and I'm nearly ready to take my Excel Expert exam.

Tell us how you went about learning?

I contacted the IT training department to tell them I wanted to learn more about Excel and they told me about the Microsoft Office Specialist course and enrolled me on it. I worked through the work book at my own pace and I could contact the IT training department if I needed any extra help. When I was ready I sat and passed the practice test then moved onto the exam which I also passed.

What was the experience like?

The practice tests do help you prepare for the final exams. They give you hints so you continue to learn by the time you take the final test. The Core exam for Word and Excel wasn't too bad as I found it quite straight forward but I did find it quite a jump to the Expert which was much more nerve racking. Although I was convinced I'd failed I'd actually passed!

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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



**View Angie's story as part of the NHS
MOST Video at www.nhsmost.co.uk**

(Continued from page 1) Now that you've taken the course, how does it help you?

I was surprised about how much I didn't know about Word as we all use Word regularly and simple things like inserting an automatically updating date saves me a few seconds every time I produce a letter. I learned a lot about Excel in being able to simplify information so that it was more easily seen, for example using charts, graphs and summaries.

Can you give some specific example of how the skills you learned help you in your duties?

The skills I have learned from the Excel course have given me the courage to experiment and to create my own spreadsheets. It has also allowed me to keep extra information which is helpful to my manager without her having to ask me to keep it.

Has undertaking the learning made you more productive?

Microsoft Office has definitely increased my productivity and made it easier for people to read the information I'm sending them.

How does what you've learned directly/indirectly help with patient care?

The skills I've learned aren't used directly in patient care but the information does help primary care givers. We use the information so that we can see how our service is being used so we know which areas to improve.

What would be your message about NHS ELITE/NHS MOST to other staff across the NHS?

The best part of the exam process is that you get the result straight away and don't need to be in suspense for weeks waiting to hear whether you have passed or failed. I would definitely recommend courses to other people in the NHS as even if you think you know how to use all the programs you'll find something that will benefit you that you didn't know. After passing my first exam I did have to go and have a little boast on the intranet staff message board and to tell people that it is a great course and perhaps they should consider doing it. Microsoft Office Specialist has made me more productive in my job and my monthly reports are much easier to read.

What are the next steps for you in terms of IT learning?

Having completed Word Core, Word Expert and Excel Core and nearly being ready to complete Excel Expert I've decided I want to go the whole hog and go on to become a Master.

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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.

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

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