



IT Skills for..... NHS Administrators



Denise O'Connor is an admin assistant in the Walsall Palliative Care Centre at Walsall 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 use Microsoft Office on a daily basis as we need it to provide reports and audits and patient surveys. I use Outlook to book clinics, use shared calendars with the clinicians and to send emails to the nurses

How did you hear about the NHS IT Skills Pathway?

We were offered the opportunity to take part in the course through our IT Training Department and it was something that I had been looking into for quite a while. In my previous role we weren't encouraged to take on professional qualifications so this came up and I was really excited.

Tell us how you went about learning?

I attended ten half-day classroom sessions that were delivered locally. The class sizes were kept small and the trainers were very patient with us. After working through the classroom sessions I sat a practice test and then a final test. It was a very good course and as it wasn't too long and drawn out it was easy to fit it into my schedule.

What was the experience like?

It really helped to have the practice exam as you then knew what the questions were going to look like and how they were going to be presented. I think I would have struggled in the final exam had I not had the practice exam beforehand as having done that I knew what areas I needed to work on before sitting the actual exam. I was very pleased to pass and went home feeling fantastic and know at my age I can still learn things and it's going in and staying in. It's great!

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"Before taking the course I found I was asking other people for help but since doing the course I now have the confidence and the ability to do things for myself."

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

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Now that you've taken the course, how does it help you?

I find that I'm a lot more confident at work now, as right through my schooling and working life I've been asked to do things I haven't felt confident doing, I have always wondered 'will I be able to do it?' and now I feel a lot more confident having the qualification and certificate knowing I've completed the full course and I'm using it on a daily basis.

It also helps me to know that the software itself is able to do what I need it to do as before I used to not only think 'can I do it' but also 'is it possible to do it'. Now I know! I may not always remember it straight away but I know I can find it.

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

I can invite people to and set up meetings, I can look at shared calendars to see when rooms are available and I can even create a 'to do' list which I didn't even know existed. My spreadsheets have also improved now, they look more professional as they were very basic before and I can include charts and patient surveys within them which I was unable to do before. All my documents look better since I have become a Microsoft Office Specialist.

"I find that I'm a lot more confident at work now. It isn't just my productivity that has increased it is the productivity of the whole clinical team that we support."

How much time do you think save per week/month due to taking the learning?

I think my productivity has vastly increased since I have become a Microsoft Office Specialist. It has also contributed to the productivity of the clinicians I work with as they are not specialists in IT so quite often they will shout over 'how do I need to do this' so it isn't just my productivity that has increased it is the productivity of the whole clinical team that we support.

What would be your message about the NHS IT Skills Pathway to other staff across the NHS?

I would advise anyone using admin and IT systems (not just the admin and clerical staff) within the NHS, (and that includes clinicians) to go on these courses as they are great. They are not easy, but the qualification is so good at the end of it that it is worth the effort. The things you will learn will help you at home as well as at work – in all areas of life.

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

I am now booked onto Word 2007 but what I have learnt in Outlook and Excel will help me in progressing through that course. When I've completed that Module I will feel like a full Microsoft Office Specialist!

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>