



## IT Skills for.....



## Medical Secretaries

Kathy Davies is a Medical Secretary at St. Rocco's Hospice in Warrington, Cheshire. In this interview, she describes how getting Microsoft Office certified in Excel has not only saved her time but also increased her confidence in using Office software.

**How do your duties involve the use of IT?**

I'm using Outlook, Word and Excel on a regular basis. I use Word to create clinical letters and importing Excel graphs into reports and save them as PDF files. I also use Excel for creating incident reports and audits.

**How did you hear about the training and why did you decide to enrol?**

The IT Training department at Warrington PCT advertise all of their courses and my director noticed the Excel training and suggested that I might want to attend. I started with the basic course and then went on to the specialist course.

**Tell us how you went about learning?**

I attended classroom sessions that covered lots of aspects of Excel including the practice tests. The training was excellent and the practice tests were really helpful as they helped to prepare me for the live exam by simulating what it would be like.

**What was the exam experience like?**

I felt under a bit of pressure doing the live exam which is only natural but was relieved to pass.

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

It has helped me no end. My confidence has hugely increased because I now know that I'm doing things in the right way and I no longer need to go to other people to have my work checked. My manager (Medical Director—Dr Brooks) is really pleased with what I'm now able to do and it's not just what I learned on the course either. My increased confidence means that I'm willing to explore new features of Excel and try out things that weren't covered on the course too. Specifically, I now know how to construct formulas and also really simple things like putting comments into cells is really useful but something that I didn't have the first clue about before taking the course.

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

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**How else has it helped?**

The way that I'm able to display data in Excel for audits has helped with the prescribing of appropriate antibiotics to patients and I'm no longer spending time trying to find things and am much more efficient.

**Can you put a figure on how much time you're saving since passing your exam?**

I estimate that I'm saving about 30% of the time I used to spend in Excel as a result of the training so this easily makes up for the time taken out to undergo the training in the first place.

**In terms of patient care, how is what you've learned indirectly helping patients?**

My spreadsheets are able to display errors in incident reporting and trends and themes. These all help to tighten up our clinical practice and therefore improve patient care.

*"Get yourself trained! This training has proved invaluable to me"*

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

I'm going to be getting Excel 2010 soon so I want to get up to date with the latest version of the software and anything else that will help me with my work.

**What would be your message about Microsoft Office Training to other staff across the NHS?**

Get yourself trained! This training has proved invaluable to me. Not just with my current job but also with my confidence in using the applications. I now have a certificate to prove my skills in Excel and it's sure to help with any future roles that I may undertake.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

In a recent survey of over 2000 Learners that undertook Microsoft Office Skills Training-

- 97% of respondents state that what they have learned will help them with their day to day tasks
- 91% stated that partaking in the programme has increased their productivity in the workplace
- 99% would recommend the programme to their colleagues

**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:**

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