Recruiting young people in the NHS

Survey results

December 2015
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Introduction

This report provides a summary of a survey undertaken by the ThinkFuture programme at NHS Employers about young peoples’ experiences of being recruited into the NHS. The ThinkFuture programme is commissioned by the national Talent for Care and Widening Participation programmes at Health Education England.

The survey paints a positive picture of young people’s experience of working in the NHS. In particular it provides a valuable insight into how young people find jobs, how they found the recruitment process, what support was available and what their experience of working in the NHS has been.

This report covers:

- the purpose of the survey
- our method
- respondent demographics
- key findings.

You will find the full set of survey questions in appendix one.

Purpose

The aim of the online survey was to gather information about how 16-24 year olds in bands 1-4 found their most recent recruitment process, including finding and applying for the role, their first day in the job and their experience of working for the NHS.

The results of the survey will be used to inform the development of NHS Employers ThinkFuture programme of work which aims to support and encourage employers to bring more young people into their organisations.

Employers may also wish to use the data summarised in this report to inform their own recruitment and employment practices.

Our method

The online survey comprised of 14 questions and was shared through a variety of NHS Employers communications channels.

The survey was open from 1 to 30 September.

We would like to thank Health Education England Local Education and Training Board (LETB) leads for sharing the survey in their networks and NHS England for promoting the survey to the CareMakers network.
Respondent demographics and representation

The survey received a total of 1302 responses, of which 1264 responses were suitable to use. The unused responses were discarded due to not meeting the criteria specified e.g. age or role within the NHS.

- Responses to the survey were received from 16-24 year olds across all 13 Local Education and Training Board (LETB) regions, however uptake in each of these regions varied greatly (ranges from two to 294 responses).
- The majority (59.1 per cent) of respondents are aged 22-24 years old. A full breakdown of respondent ages and band is available in figure one below.
- Measured against national numbers of acute, community, ambulance and mental health providers, the responses to this survey slightly over-represent acute and community trusts. Ambulance trusts are proportionally represented and mental health trusts are slightly under-represented in the data. See figure two.

Figure one: Proportion of respondents by age and job band

![Proportion of respondents by age and job band]

Key

- Apprentices
- Bands 1-4 roles

Figure two: Proportion of respondents by trust type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acute</td>
<td>552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other / Unknown</td>
<td>318</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Key findings

Overall, the results paint a positive picture about the recruitment process for young people in the NHS.

86.5 per cent of 16-24 year olds surveyed said that their experience of working in the NHS has been positive and more than 90 per cent had received support and encouragement to develop skills from managers and colleagues. There was a correlating pattern between those who had a positive experience of working in the NHS and those that received support and encouragement from managers and colleagues.

A small number [35] of people said their experience was poor. These respondents’ answers to other questions show a clear link between their experience of working in the NHS and whether they felt supported and developed by their manager or supervisor.

A key result is the proportion of respondents who saw themselves working for the NHS in 10 years’ time - 66.9 per cent.

A number of elements in the recruitment process were also rated highly:

- 87.1 per cent stated that they found the process of finding a job that they were suitable for good or very good
- 88 per cent said the job application process was good or very good
- 93.2 per cent said that the job interview was good or very good
- 91.1 per cent of people stated that the way in which they were offered the job was good or very good.

Areas for improvement

The results from this survey suggest young people encounter most difficulty after the offer of employment is made. Respondents highlighted a dissatisfaction with the level of contact between the employing organisation and the individual between offer of employment and start date, and were also dissatisfied with the length of time between being offered the job and their first day in work.

NHS Employers will ensure this feedback is incorporated in the products developed for employers and managers.
Pre-employment findings

How do young people find roles in the NHS?
There are many routes for searching and applying for roles in the NHS. Knowing how young people come into the NHS can help us to understand where they are searching for jobs.

The results show that NHS Jobs was the most used method to find jobs, with 59.7 per cent finding their current role through the NHS Jobs website. This was followed by 14.3 per cent who already worked in the NHS, and 10.8 per cent who found out about their job through word of mouth. Refer to figure three below.

Figure three: How do young people find roles in the NHS?

As previously stated, the majority of respondents found their job on NHS Jobs (756 respondents). Focusing on these individuals specifically, the picture is a positive one in terms of finding jobs by using the NHS Jobs website. Only seven people (0.9 per cent) said that the ease of finding their job was poor and only ten people (1.3 per cent) found the job application poor. See figure four.

JobCentre Plus (0.8 per cent) and education providers and careers advisors (both 1.3 per cent) were the least selected methods of finding jobs in the NHS. However, of those that found and applied for their role through JobCentre Plus, 90.9 per cent stated that they found jobs easily.
Figure four: How would you rate the ease of finding your current job role?

When considering these results, it is worth noting that all the respondents have ultimately been successful in securing jobs in the NHS. They may therefore have had a more positive experience than those young people who have not been successful.

Recruitment and selection findings

How did you find the recruitment process for your current role?
Questions about the recruitment process were broken down into stages including job application, interview, and contract and employment checks.

Overall the recruitment process was a positive experience for the majority of people surveyed. Respondents were less satisfied with the process for contract and employment checks in comparison to the other stages. See figure five.

Figure five: How would you rate how you were offered the job, and the contract and employment checks process?
In terms of the recruitment process:

- 87.1 per cent of people stated that they found the process of finding a job that they were suitable for good or very good
- 88 per cent said that the job application process was good or very good (figure six)
- 93.2 per cent said that the job interview was good or very good (figure six)
- 91.1 per cent of people stated that the way in which they were offered the job was good or very good (figure five)
- 71.7 per cent surveyed said that contract and the employment checks process was good or very good (figure five)
- 82.9 per cent felt their first day was good or very good (figure thirteen)
- 96.5 per cent felt qualified for the roles and felt that they could do them well.

Figure six: How would you rate the job application and interview process?

- How would you rate the job application?
- How would you rate the interview process?
Qualitative data review of recruitment process
Overall the survey data suggests that young people felt obtaining a role in the NHS was a straightforward process. Refer to figure seven below.

Figure seven: It was a straightforward process to start work

Open questions
The survey also gave respondents the opportunity to provide additional information regarding the recruitment process through three open questions.

Question one – Please share any further comments about your experience of being recruited into the role.
This question highlighted two areas for improvement:

- 5.6 per cent received little or no contact between interview and start date
- 19 per cent stated that processing time between interview and start date was poor.

Question two – Please share any more comments about the recruitment process.
Here, one per cent of those who responded felt that there needed to be more flexibility with the employment checks. For example, allowing less than three references as young people may not have been in a work environment before to have obtained references.

Question three – Please share any more comments about your experience of working in the NHS. This question highlighted two areas for improvement:
- 6.5 per cent would like to see more support from team
• 2 per cent said there was limited or no career progression

Interestingly, 217 (17 per cent) people said that they felt disadvantaged in the recruitment process because of their age. Further analysis of these respondents showed that the (weighted) majority were aged 22-24.

Figure eight: I felt disadvantaged by the recruitment process due to my age

Post recruitment findings

How do you rate your experience of working in the NHS?
The survey results in this section were particularly encouraging, with 86.5 per cent of 16-24 year olds surveyed confirming that their experience of working in the NHS has been positive. See figure nine. More than 90 per cent of young people received support and encouragement to develop skills from managers and colleagues. There was a correlating pattern between those who had a positive experience of working in the NHS and those that received support and encouragement from managers and colleagues. See figures ten and eleven.

Figure nine: How would you rate your experience of working for the NHS?

Key
- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor
- Don’t know / not applicable
Figure ten: My manager is supportive and encourages me to develop my skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know / not applicable</th>
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<tr>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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Figure eleven: My colleagues are supportive and encourage me to develop my skills

- Strongly agree: 66.8%
- Agree: 27.8%
- Strongly disagree: 1.3%
- Disagree: 3.7%
- Don’t know / Not applicable: 0.5%

In addition to this, young people also felt that they had the right experience to do their role (95.3 per cent) and the right skills (98.2 per cent). 97.3 per cent of those surveyed also felt that they had learned on the job and had grown in confidence, whilst 92.9 per cent felt that they brought a lot to their team and organisation. Refer to figure twelve.
Figure twelve: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about right skills and experience, and learning in the role?

Of the 111 16-18 year olds surveyed none reported having a poor or very poor experience on their first day in the NHS. 82 per cent of 19-21 and 22-24 year olds said that their first days were positive experiences. See figure thirteen.

Figure thirteen: How would you rate your first day in the role?

A small number (35) of people said their experience was poor.

These respondents’ answers to other questions show a clear link between their experience of working in the NHS and whether they felt supported and developed by their manager or supervisor.
26 of these respondents also said that they disagree or strongly disagree with the statement ‘my manager/supervisor is supportive and encourages me to develop my skills’. Interestingly, the majority of these respondents identified themselves as having the relevant skills and experience for their job. Unsurprisingly, only three of these respondents said that they see themselves working in the NHS in ten years’ time.

**Do you see yourself working in the NHS in ten years’ time?**
The responses to this question were very positive. More than 65 per cent of 16-24 year olds said that they saw themselves working in the NHS in ten years’ time.

Figure fourteen: Do you see yourself working in the NHS in ten years’ time?

The age breakdown was:

- 72.1 per cent of 16-18 year olds see themselves working in the NHS in ten years’ time
- 65.4 per cent of 19-21 year olds see themselves working in the NHS in ten years’ time, and
- 67 per cent of 22-24 year olds see themselves working in the NHS in ten years’ time.
Next steps

The information collated from this survey will be used to inform the development of three toolkits as part of the ThinkFuture programme of work. The toolkits will provide organisations with advice, guidance and resources to become a more attractive employer for young people, in a way that supports and meets the needs of the organisations who are recruiting.

NHS Employers will be using this data together with findings from three product development workshops held in November 2015 in London, Leeds and Peterborough. In attendance at the workshops were 18 participants from the NHS and 42 participants aged 16-24 years. These young people were from a range of social and economic backgrounds, and do not work in the NHS.

Employer’s toolkit
This toolkit will take employers through the journey of attracting and recruiting young people to work in their organisations. This journey will be down into the following three steps:

1. Pre-employment activity - such as schools engagement, work experience, working with Jobcentre Plus and pre-employment programmes such as the get into healthcare programme at the Prince’s Trust
2. Recruitment and selection – this section will cover everything from marketing vacancies to a younger audience, tailoring job descriptions and person specifications to be more accessible to young people and how you can use NHS Jobs functionality to make vacancies more attractive and accessible to 16-24 year olds. We will also be including information and resources to support a more accessible selection process
3. Post-offer – this element covers everything an employer needs to consider from sending a conditional offer through to the new starter’s first day in the role.

Manager’s toolkit
This toolkit will help change opinion and perceptions of managers about bringing young people into their departments and teams, and help them to see ways in which diversifying their teams by bringing young people in can have a positive effect on service delivery. We will be sharing examples of good practice and stories from teams in the NHS. This toolkit will also provide advice and resources for managers in order to ensure that they are ready to support new, young employees in their teams.

Communications toolkit
This toolkit, for communications teams, aims to be a ready-made recruitment campaign for trusts to adapt and use locally. This pack will include posters and digital graphics as well as advice and guidance on trust communications teams to use these resources effectively, using a number of channels.

Further information
For more information on the benefits to bringing young people into the NHS workforce, visit the ThinkFuture web pages.
Appendix one

Survey questions asked by NHS Employers ThinkFuture team to obtain information about young peoples’ experiences of being recruited into the NHS.

1. How did you find out about the role that you applied for?
   - NHS Jobs
   - JobCentre Plus
   - Careers advisor
   - Word of mouth
   - Jobs website (please specify)
   - Other (please specify).

2. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:
   (Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)
   - It was easy to find a job to apply for
   - The job application
   - The interview
   - How you were offered the job
   - Contract and employment checks
   - First day in the role.

3. Use this box to add any further comments about the experience of being recruited into your role. (Open text box).

4. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:
   (Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)
   - It was easy to find a job to apply for
   - I found the job description and person specification easy to understand
   - It was easy to complete the job application
   - I found the interview questions were targeted to my level of experience
   - I felt qualified for the job and that I could do it well
   - I felt disadvantaged because of my age
   - It was a straightforward process to start work
   - I understood my contract and what my job role was before I started work.

5. Can you tell us any more about the recruitment process? (Open text box).

6. How would you rate your experience of working for the NHS?
   (Very good, good, average, poor, very poor, no opinion).
7. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (Strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)
   - I enjoy my job
   - I have the right experience for the job
   - I have learned on the job and grown in confidence
   - My colleagues are supportive and encourage me to develop my skills
   - My manager/supervisor is supportive and encourages me to develop my skills
   - I feel I bring a lot to the team/organisation

8. Can you provide any further detail about your experience of working in the NHS? (Open text box).

9. Have you worked in the NHS previously?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Other (please specify)

10. Do you see yourself working in the NHS in ten years’ time?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Don’t know

11. How old are you?
    - Options from 16-24 years

12. What kind of role do you have?
    - Band 1-4
    - Band 5
    - Other (please specify)

13. What type of trust do you work for?
    - Acute
    - Mental health
    - Community
    - Ambulance service
    - Other (please specify)

14. Which region do you work in?
    - Yorkshire and Humber
    - East Midlands
    - East of England
• Wessex
• Thames Valley
• North West London
• South London
• North Central and East London
• Kent, Surrey and Essex
• North East
• North West
• West Midlands
• South West
Contact us

NHS Employers
2 Brewery Wharf
Kendell Street
Leeds LS10 1JR

www.nhsemployers.org/ThinkFuture
ThinkFuture@nhsemployers.org

@ThinkFutureNHS
NHS Employers
www.youtube.com/nhsemployers

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