



## Healthcare Science (HCS) Assistant Apprenticeship Update

At the last Board and Council I said that I would provide an update on the Healthcare assistant apprenticeship course which is part of the Modernising Scientific Careers programme.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> June I attended a Healthcare Science Assistant Apprenticeship launch day with Chair of the IDSc and a member of the Education Sub Committee hosted by Pearson's in London.

Pearson is the Education provider chosen by Health Education England to manage this project.

*\*Please note currently this apprenticeship programme is only available in England. We were advised talks are on-going with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.*

At the day the lead for the project presented the history of the apprenticeship scheme\*\* how it has been developed and the way forward. Attached are the presentations made by Cheryl Bott, Lead for Pearson and Professor Shelley Heard, Lead for Modernising Scientific Careers

There are now specific modules for decontamination, based on the Technical Certificate for Sterile Services, and new modules for endoscopy which will be circulated once they have been signed off. Final comments on the endoscopy modules have been submitted and accepted on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016.

### **Sterile services departments**

1. Receiving, cleaning and disinfection of reusable medical devices
2. Inspection, function testing, assembly and packaging within a controlled (clean) environment
3. Terminal processes (sterilization)

### **Endoscopy**

1. Receiving, cleaning and disinfection of reusable flexible endoscopes
2. Managing product release of flexible endoscopes

\*\*In 2012 the Richard Review made a number of recommendations for apprenticeship schemes. This included simplifying the schemes and allowing the employers to lead on them.

Employers were encouraged to form 'Trailblazer Groups' and design new English apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches.

All new standards must include:

- End point assessment
- Grading where possible
- No formal requirement to include qualifications
- Assessment that covers theoretical and practical elements
- Minimum duration 12 months
- English and maths
- Minimum 20% off-the-job training

**Funding** Although the apprenticeships are available from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 the supporting funding will not be available until Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

**Levy**

From April 2017 the Government will introduce a levy on all large organisations to fund the apprenticeship scheme. This (significant) sum of money will be paid annually into a central pot. As all NHS Trusts will have contributed to the fund it is in their interest to engage with the apprenticeship schemes.

If private companies are encouraged to pay the levy too then I am sure they will be keen to support this scheme. As you will be delivering this training on site, your organisation is eligible for part of that funding to cover your training costs. This funding will not however cover the cost of backfilling the staff while they are away from their work station.

### **Further developments**

Approval has been given for the development of a Level 4 HCS Standard for HCS Associates and work will start on this in September and the IDSc will continue to be involved in this development.

In addition we were asked if the IDSc would be keen to support a Level 6 apprenticeship standard for HCS practitioners (HCSPS) and biomedical scientists. We were also asked comment on the draft. The IDSc has submitted a letter of support to the Chief Scientific Officer, commenting on its content. When all these Levels are in place it will enable staff to work through this programme and provide an education route for more senior members of staff.

**Trevor Garcia 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016**