

Agenda Item 16

Enclosure 14

Paper ETC47/02

Education and Training Committee

ISSUE No.1 OF "NHSU UPDATE"

From the Secretary

for information

NHSU UPDATE

Introduction

NHSU is the organisation set-up by the Department of Health to establish a university for the NHS. This is a major undertaking and will help focus education, training and development within the NHS giving more people more opportunities to improve the way we provide patient care.

NHSU Chief Executive

The work started properly in February of this year when the new chief executive Professor R.H. (Bob) Fryer CBE took up his post. Before joining NHSU Bob was Assistant Vice Chancellor at the University of Southampton and Director of New College, a post he occupied from 1998. Between 1999 and 2000 Bob was on secondment to Ufi Ltd as an Executive Director.

Bob was also a former Chair of the National Advisory Group for continuing Education and Lifelong Learning, a member of the 'Moser' Committee on Adult Basic Skills and of the Policy Action Team on Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal. Bob chairs the National Learning and Skills Council's Distributed and Electronic Learning Group. He is also a Board Member and Non-Executive Director of Ufi Ltd., where he chairs the Board's Learning Standards and Quality Committee.

Bob was awarded a CBE for services to Community Education in the 1999 New Years Honours.

What's been happening?

A great deal of progress has been made over the first six months in developing the initial ideas, but the NHSU is a long-term project that will grow and evolve over time. You may have already heard something about NHSU or it may be completely new to you, however we want to update you regularly on what is going on.

Design & Implementation Team

A temporary design and implementation team (DIT) has been set-up and now numbers just under thirty people (about 16 full time equivalents), with all but a few members being part-time and seconded from other organisations. These include the DoH, NHS (the majority), higher education, DfES, Ufi/learndirect, unions, other educational bodies and the independent and private sectors. The DIT meets fortnightly on Tuesday and is doing exactly what it says – helping design and implement the first stage of this new way of working.

Work Programme

The initial work programme of the DIT has been divided into four broad work streams each with a number of related strands within it. They are:

- **Curriculum** (concerned with identifying and designing the initial courseware portfolio and developing NHSU's blend of learning methods);
- **Delivery** (concerned with e-learning platforms, learner support, local infrastructure, local partnerships and relationship management);
- **Quality & standards** (concerned with quality assurance, validation & accreditation, credits and qualifications); and
- **Corporate development** (concerned with resources generally, funding arrangements, budget, learner numbers, staff, accommodation, consultation and planning. At this stage, marketing & communication is also located within the corporate work stream.

Project management

Each work stream is led by a co-ordinator. The four co-ordinators, project manager, project director, finance officer, one member from communications and the Chief Executive constitute the NHSU Project Management Group. This group is responsible for overseeing the NHSU project plan.

Towards a 'Corporate' University

NHSU is planned to be both a traditional 'academic' university and a so-called 'corporate' university. This is an extremely important feature of the planned NHSU, as we will need to make sure the learning opportunities we provide in the NHS are linked closely to the modernisation of the service and the improvement of patient care. Doing this effectively will require the setting up of suitable planning mechanisms and consultation processes across the service. This will enable NHSU to reflect corporate aims, values, priorities and plans.

What are we doing now?

Development Plan

We are preparing a Development Plan of NHSU to cover the period 2003-06 building on the current preparatory work by DIT.

We propose to distribute the Development Plan in October 2002. This will then provide the basis for an extensive and systematic consultation exercise throughout the NHS and its partners (1 November 2002 to 31 January 2003). Everyone will have the opportunity to see and read the plan and a large number of face-to-face events will be organised locally to involve local people. These events will be organised jointly with Workforce Development Confederations and more information will be available soon.

At the end of the consultation period, taking account of the responses and issues raised, we plan to organise a major national conference to feedback what we have heard and to bring this particular consultation process to an appropriate conclusion. This is planned for the end of February/beginning of March.

Partnerships & strategic alliances

Draft MoUs have been drawn up for strategic alliances with the Open University, Ufl/learndirect Ltd. and with the UK 'e-University'. These agreements mean that NHSU can draw on all the expertise within these publicly funded bodies, ensuring that we utilise their experience and best practices for the benefit of all NHS staff.

What next?

Launch portfolio

We plan to formally launch NHSU to NHS staff in the Autumn 2003 and are preparing the initial portfolio of programmes, modules and learning opportunities that will be made available. We want to make sure that what we offer people is what they need. We will be involving NHS staff and other groups in the development and trialling of this early work. Programmes being developed include the following, some of which may be provided in conjunction with other educational bodies:

- An induction programme for all staff focussing on the values of the NHS;
- Communications;
- First contact (triage) for primary care;
- Health informatics and support for ECDL;
- Skills for Life and Health (Literacy, numeracy and language);
- Cleaning and Infection Control;
- E-learning; and the possibility of
- Foundation degrees in health

First Staff Appointments

The first senior posts for NHSU were advertised in June. Initial recruitment is for five national posts. The first four of are at the equivalent of universities' 'Pro-Vice Chancellor' level.

- Director of Learning;
- Director of Planning and Resources;
- Director of Information and Communication;
- Director of Collaboration and Operations; and
- Head of Chief Executive's Office.

Interviews for these first posts will be held in early September.

Academic Board

Proposals to establish an academic board will be brought forward in September. This will involve senior and expert staff from further and higher education to help oversee and to provide a forum for academic quality, standards and improvement.

Intended university status of NHSU

As we have previously said we aim to be an academic university and to achieve this will have to comply with the very robust criteria and other quality standards set-down for all universities in the UK. But we also want to be a very different kind of university and the first public sector corporate university in Europe. To help guide us towards receiving a Royal Charter, provisional agreement has been reached with Sir Howard Newby at HEFCE (the higher education funding body for England) to establish a joint working group between HEFCE, DfES, DoH, Universities UK and NHSU. The task of this working group will be to review the criteria, processes and timing proposed for NHSU to acquire full university status. Final responsibility for determining university status rests with the Privy Council, on advice and recommendation from the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

What do you think?

Your views and comments on NHSU as it progresses are extremely valuable to us. We invite you to get in touch and tell us how NHSU can help you, your staff and your work. Our contact details are listed below.

We also hope that you will want to comment on the Development Plan when it is available later this year, or attend one of the events in your area. Whatever you have to say, we want to hear it, so please let us know what you think.

Contact details

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