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**PHOTOGRAPHY AVAILABLE**

**East Midlands healthcare services to benefit  
from a new £10million staff development fund  
to improve patient care**

***A major new matched funding deal to improve staff training throughout Northamptonshire's healthcare sector was announced today during the launch of a Skills for Health consultation event involving healthcare providers across the East Midlands.***

Both NHS East Midlands and the Learning and Skills Council will contribute equally to a 'Joint Investment Framework', which will represent an additional investment of £10million per annum across the region.

The investment is one of the outcomes of the Sector Skills Agreement for Health in England. It marks the beginning of an ongoing consultation process – launched today by Phil Hope MP, Minister for the East Midlands - which will inform the creation of a similar agreement specifically designed to address the skills issues experienced by the healthcare sector throughout the East Midlands.

Speaking at the launch, Phil Hope said:

"The Joint Investment Framework is a shining example of what can be achieved through effective partnership working. Today's event is an important step forward in helping us work together to ensure the healthcare sector in the East Midlands has a workforce with the right skills, education and experience to meet the needs of those people living and working in the area. It marks the beginning of a collaborative process

that will help reshape our region's healthcare workforce in line with patient need."

Janet Monkman, Director of Workforce, NHS East Midlands, added:

"We are delighted to be a partner in the Joint Investment Framework. In the NHS, the people that patients come into contact with the most often are staff working in support roles such as receptionists, care workers, porters or cleaners. Therefore, the development of this part of our workforce is an essential part of providing excellent care. The new Joint Investment Framework will have a direct and tangible impact on improving the knowledge and skills of these staff and the care they offer to patients."

Karen Woodward, Skills Director for the Learning and Skills Council, East Midlands, concurred, she said:

"We see the Joint Investment Framework as a tremendous opportunity to develop the skills of NHS employees across the East Midlands. Our role is to source and offer public funding to support high quality training, leading to nationally recognised qualifications to meet the skills demands identified across the region, which in turn will lead to improved patient care, sharing the investment costs and working in partnership with the NHS and Skills for Health."

To inform the direction of the Joint Investment Framework funding, John Rogers, Chief Executive of Skills for Health reiterated the call for widespread collaboration between Skills for Health and the region's healthcare sector and explained the desired outcome; he said:

"During the consultation process, the skills gaps and shortages facing the healthcare sector in the East Midlands will be closely examined. Proposed solutions will subsequently be put forward within a Sector Skills Agreement for Health specifically covering the East Midlands.

“Skills for Health will lead the development of this Agreement, in collaboration with health sector employers and education and training providers across the region.”

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

**Photography of Phil Hope MP and other key speakers is available on request from Louise Jaggs t: 01242 257770 or 07712 011246 e: [louise@textontap.com](mailto:louise@textontap.com)**

**About the Joint Investment Framework (JIF) – [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)**

The Joint Investment Framework (JIF) is an agreement between the Strategic Health Authorities, Skills for Health and the Learning and Skills Council to support the delivery of skills in the healthcare sector. It is focused on staff in bands 1-4 to fund skills development and qualifications at Levels 2, 3 and 4, Apprenticeships and Skills for Life.

Agreed regionally, in response to a shared skills action plan, the JIF will be delivered through an investment of up to £50 million sector / £50 million LSC funding in England.

In addition to the benefits for patients and to service delivery, this agreement to joint investment will make a major health sector contribution to improving the skills of the nation. It will contribute to meeting the challenge set out in the Leitch review of skills and to realising the benefits of Agenda for Change and embedding of the Knowledge and Skills Framework in the NHS.

For further information visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/page/joint-investment-framework](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/page/joint-investment-framework)

**About the Sector Skills Agreement for Health (SSA) – [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/ssa](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/ssa)**

The Sector Skills Agreement for Health (SSA) is a UK-wide series of agreements, each brokered by Skills for Health. There are currently over 70 agreements incorporated; each of which supports the provision of best quality healthcare and services through the skills of those working in the sector.

The SSA’s aim is to achieve improved healthcare services by helping to ensure that the sector has a skilled, flexible workforce. The agreement spans the whole health sector footprint – covering NHS (HPSS), independent and voluntary employers. It sets out a strategy and solutions to tackle skills gaps and shortages in the healthcare sector so that patients receive the best possible care and the highest levels of service.

Outcomes of the SSA to date include: an emergent sector qualifications strategy; an emergent sector careers framework; closer working relationships with education funding bodies; strengthened partnership work between major bodies and agencies; application of competence-based approaches to workforce transformation; work to strengthen employer engagement; work to develop robust approaches to commissioning training and education; work to broaden access and progression into health sector careers; work on quality assurance; work to increase learning opportunities for previously excluded and disadvantaged employees.

For further information visit [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/ssa](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/ssa)

**About Skills for Health – [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)**

Skills for Health (SfH) is the Sector Skills Council for UK health, funded by the four UK health departments in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; the Sector Skills Development Agency; the education act regulatory bodies; and health sector employers and providers.

The 25 Sector Skills Councils which make up the Skills for Business Network are licensed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in consultation with Ministers from the devolved administrations. Each one has a sector 'footprint' and central goals to address skills gaps and shortages; improve productivity and performance; increase opportunities to boost skills; and improve learning supply.

Skills for Health's sector footprint covers the entire National Health Service, and the whole of the independent and voluntary healthcare sectors across the UK - which collectively employ approximately 2 million people. The majority of occupations are linked to hospital activities and community health services, but the sector also includes general medical and dental practitioners and healthcare professionals working in nursing homes and private surgeries, and retail outlets such as pharmacists, opticians and self-employed practitioners.

The overarching remit of Skills for Health is to ultimately help improve health and healthcare by assisting the whole healthcare sector in developing solutions which deliver a skilled and flexible UK workforce.

Specific Skills for Health aims are to:

- profile the UK healthcare sector workforce
- develop and manage national workforce competences across the UK healthcare sector
- influence UK education and training supply to meet healthcare sector needs
- improve the workforce skills of the UK healthcare sector
- work with partners to achieve these aims.

Further information about Skills for Health and its work can be found at [www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)