



Federation for Healthcare Science

www.fedhcs.net

Celebrating Healthcare Science Awareness Week within your organisation

Healthcare Science Awareness Week 2004 runs from 15th to 21st November.

The Federation for Healthcare Science encourages healthcare scientists to take any initiatives they can to promote healthcare science. This year, the Federation particularly encourages the use of Healthcare Science Awareness week to achieve and enhance local recognition of healthcare science. A recent survey carried out recently by the Federation identified this as an area which needs to be addressed. The survey demonstrated that only 24% of organisations had healthcare science leads at board level and only 18% had dedicated healthcare science forums.

The Department of Health is currently developing its suggestions for promoting Awareness Week. A major focus this year will be to bring healthcare science careers to the attention of young people in education, by allowing them to see and hear about healthcare science work within schools. This is an essential piece of work. It will ensure that science within healthcare benefits long term, by recruiting informed students who are able to choose appropriate courses and qualifications to access the many careers within the healthcare science professions. The Federation encourages healthcare scientists to become involved with this work.

The Federation also believes that Healthcare Science Awareness Week is a good time to promote healthcare science, not only externally but also internally within our own organisations. This paper offers some suggestions to healthcare scientists who may not have been previously involved promotional activities. Such events have proved successful in many organisations, providing a focus for setting up local healthcare science forums and leading to greater awareness and responsiveness to issues of concern to healthcare scientists.

PROMOTING HEALTHCARE SCIENCE LOCALLY

Running a local day or part day Healthcare Science event in your organisation has been shown to be helpful in achieving increased recognition of healthcare science. Many of the other healthcare staff within the organisation will not be aware of the range of activities within healthcare science disciplines.

Consider putting on presentations and/or demonstrations of healthcare science in action, from each of the strands of healthcare science (Life sciences, Physical Sciences and Physiological Sciences). Include career material and involve your HR/Training & Development department. Doing this at lunchtime, in an area popular with staff, gives you the opportunity to make a bigger impact. By starting small, you can set up such an event even where links between healthcare science groups are not well developed.

To help build links between healthcare science groups, you can put on a session to share best practice across disciplines, with examples of current research, audits and changing work practices. This could take the form of presentations, exhibits and demonstrations.

If your organisation has a healthcare science forum, consider working with other local organisations to put on a larger event. This allows you to target people working in other parts of healthcare, such as service commissioners and primary care organisations.

GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING A HEALTH CARE SCIENCE FORUM

- Find one or more motivated individual(s) who will be able to take the project forward.
- Invite all heads of healthcare science departments to the first planning meeting
- Do not expect an overwhelming response, but 3-4 keen individuals will be enough to set up and develop the initial event
- Book lecture theatre and/or demonstration space within the hospital immediately (hospital accommodation is often booked months in advance). Book a day, half-day, lunchtime or early evening meeting within Healthcare Science Awareness Week. The length of the meeting will be determined by the planned activity.
- Organise planning meetings of the group well in advance, to take the project forward.
- Engage key members of the Trust: Chief Executives, Human Resource Directors, Medical Directors, Chairman of the Board etc. by meeting with them directly to explain the aims of this event.
- Invite key members of the Trust to the event and if at all possible try to encourage a member of the Trust board to 'champion' the cause of HCS within the Trust at that level. Achieving this prior to the event would mean that the 'champion' could lead and chair the event.
- Planning the event:-
 1. A Healthcare scientist will need to deliver a keynote speech on the need to develop a forum. This could include looking at national drivers for change, such as: Making the change, NHS Plan, development of the Healthcare Science career pathway, national patterns of representation

(see Survey and other FHCS material on website); and will need to put these into a local context.

2. This could be followed by other presentations from healthcare scientists within the Trust about what they do, and particularly their role in research and development. These should contain information which will be new to members of the Trust in general.
3. Another format which has proved successful is a workshop, which suits the second part of such a meeting. The reasons for this are twofold: firstly, audience participation achieves a higher level of comprehension and commitment; and secondly this will also allow a corporate view to form the basis of any action plan. Break into three or four groups. Planning for this essential, with the workshop leaders having a clear idea of how they will manage the workshops. Topics should be decided well in advance by the strategy group, and link to the required outcomes. Examples include:
 - Group 1: Is there a need for a local healthcare science forum? What might it achieve? (working towards setting up Terms of Reference)
 - Group 2: How do Healthcare Scientists link in with Trust & Strategic Health Authorities/ Workforce Development Confederations, and make a difference? (putting a local group in its local context)
 - Group 3: Healthcare Science and Agenda for Change, Knowledge and Skills Framework, National Occupational Standards etc (ideas for working together to implement these more effectively)

Plan the time allowed for discussion, in order to achieve the outcomes required. Involve the chairperson of the event in this process, and if the chair is a board member, they will be able to feed back the outcomes of this meeting to relevant groups in the Trust. The Chair/planning group should take feedback from the workshops and work to set up a strategy group to take suggestions from the day forward.

4. Encourage poster presentations, which are a good way of demonstrating the wealth of good work that is happening across Healthcare Science within the organisation.
5. Plan advertising and Public Relations for the event, and for reporting its outcomes. This is a critically important to the success of the event. Date and venue should be circulated via all possible communication mechanisms within the organisation: for example, staff or directorate email groups, staff notice boards, internal newsletters and Intranets. All Healthcare Science managers should be asked to promote events at staff meetings and allow all grades of staff to attend. Healthcare Science union representatives can circulate their members. Invite everyone within the organisation to attend, and canvass key staff to ensure a high profile attendance. Remember to get dates in diaries as early as possible, so that key staff will be able to attend the event. Another aspect of advertising is to bring the event to the attention of the media, including press, local TV or radio and encourage them to

promote Healthcare Science week. This could include inviting journalists to attend the event, and having a healthcare scientist available to talk about healthcare science on a local radio show. Most organisations have a public relations officer who can be very helpful in managing this area. They will be able to recommend who to contact, can make the contacts and give coverage in organisational publications. Remember to take some photographs to use in post-event publicity.

6. Hopefully, the outcome of this event will be a clear message of the need for a recognised healthcare science forum. A steering/strategy group will need to meet to consider and develop ideas for representation and further areas of work.

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