

NHS develops Facilities Academy partnership with council

Local authorities in Edinburgh and Midlothian along with Edinburgh College have joined forces with NHS Lothian to develop a new Facilities Academy which will teach pupils about all aspects of running a facility such as catering, first aid and building maintenance.

The NHS Lothian and Local Authorities Facilities Academy will offer over 16s the chance to learn about a range of roles in facilities.

Students will begin enrolling next month in the course, which has been created in partnership with Edinburgh City Council, Midlothian Council and Edinburgh College.

The academy is open to candidates of all ages from 16 upwards.

The students will work towards achieving the Certificate of Work Readiness, a nationally recognised qualification.

The college modules include topics such as communication, first aid, food hygiene, life skills and manual handling, and will be delivered by Edinburgh College at NHS Lothian's Comely Bank Centre with NHS Lothian staff helping delivering some components.

During the early weeks, students will attend NHS Lothian's corporate induction in preparation to start the placement and enable them to be work ready once the course is completed.

During the course, students will be able to talk to employees from all areas of facilities and will experience work-based placements.

They will be given the chance to have an insight into the various roles such as catering, domestic service, estates, porters, post room attendants, gardening, grounds maintenance and building maintenance.

The academy consists of a 15-16 week programme with a combination of study and an eight-week placement, via the local councils or NHS Lothian.

Candidates who successfully complete the programme will be eligible to join the NHS Lothian Staff Bank from where they can apply for permanent posts and also apply for posts within local authorities.

George Curley, Director of Operations-Facilities, NHS Lothian, said: "The Facilities Academy is a great platform for people to gain the hands-on placements en route to embarking on a career in facilities with the NHS and local authorities. We would encourage people to come forward and apply for this exciting opportunity."

Rachel McFadden, health and social care programme manager at Edinburgh College, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to give more people excellent career prospects. Once graduates have joined the Staff Bank they're able to apply for a whole range of positions, so they can find the right role for them. Often, people think the NHS only has positions for healthcare professionals but there's so many more choices. In all these facilities roles there's plenty of room for career development and it's a chance to work for a great employer."

Councillor Owen Thompson, leader, Midlothian Council, said: "We are delighted to be part of this initiative, which directly contributes to our agenda of creating youth employment. In Midlothian all public authorities are signed up to the Single Midlothian Plan, which commits us all to improving positive destinations for young people leaving school, intervening early in children's lives where we're

needed and promoting economic recovery.”