

Benefits of Working for SCAS

Preceptorship

Our Preceptorship programme was originally based on the DoHs AHP Preceptorship Guidance, and was one of the first in the country to follow this framework, investing a year's development in our graduates. Our Preceptorship ethos is that of support; newly qualified graduates may be fit-for-purpose and award, however, becoming fit-for-practise is an entirely different level of knowledge and set of skills, many of them based on experience and exposure. The aim of the Preceptorship programme is to support the registrant through their first few shifts; the graduate will undertake seven front-loaded shifts before going 'live', with a further 6 shifts interspersed through the following six months. The last six months is focused around offering the graduate the chance to undertake an on-line mentoring course, developing their mentorship skills, so that they may augment their practice, and that of other students coming through the university process.

Statutory & Mandatory Updates

South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS) offers a robust programme of updates, including all statutory and mandatory framework updates, as designed and agreed by regulatory organisations such as the NHS Litigation Authority (NHSLA), and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). We offer a yearly programme (undertaken by all staff) that offers updates that will contribute to your practice and CPD. The updates are usually a blend of stand-down abstraction training, eLearning, or both (depending on the requirements of the regulators). We view these programmes as vital for not only delivering a quality of service, but maintaining patient care for our service users.

Support & Development

We have a dedicated team of Education Managers who are focussed on your support, guidance and professional development. From return to practise updates (which are tailored to your needs as a registrant) to registrational guidance and CPD support (which focus on your needs as a registrant, and how you continue to contribute to the on-going standards), the Educational Managers are there to support you in your career, offering advice, guidance and counselling when needed, identified and called upon.

We offer a sound educational structure that focusses on team development; this is something that has been developed with Operations, to support Operations. The principle team structure philosophy is that of stratum – cross-sections of the organisation that work throughout an area, rather than in one place, with area education manager's support, so that we can practice consistently, rather than in isolation.

Personal Development

Members of SCAS staff are encouraged to continue their personal development in many ways. Every year SCAS is able to support hundreds of staff to study, in their own time, to gain additional knowledge, skills and qualifications - for example, in the year 2013-14 staff accessed funding for both long and short courses in many different disciplines. Some staff opted to study Masters Modules at the Universities of Southampton, Oxford Brookes, UWL, Cardiff, Manchester and Hertfordshire. Others are topping up their Foundation Degrees to full BSc at Oxford Brookes, (these will be joined in 14/15 by a further 30 members of staff starting at Southampton on the Clinical Practice course). Over 60 members of staff studied modules with the Open University this year, over 100 members of staff are studying for Modern Apprenticeships and many members of staff have been offered the opportunity to study to gain GCSE qualifications. Other courses supported by SCAS include Leadership at the Kings Fund, Prince 2, an MBA, Facilities Management, DTTLs and PTTLs, M and K Clinical courses, and the NEBOSH certificate. These individual courses were supported by a full programme of one day Winter Workshops where hundreds of members of staff attended for workshops hosted in the main by leading experts as external speakers which included Building Bridges, UCAS entry master classes, Investigations and the Courtroom Experience, ECG master class, Spread sheets made easy, Courageous Conversations, Medicines Management, Mediation in Action and many, many more. A similar programme of CPD is being developed throughout 2014 and beyond...!

Future Developments

Simbulance

Much of our clinical work takes place in the back of an ambulance yet most of our education takes place in a classroom or in front of a computer. The Simbulance provides an opportunity to learn, practice and make mistakes in a realistic yet safe and supportive environment. The vehicle comprises a simulated ambulance saloon and a control/debrief room. Full audio-visual capability allows playback and debriefing of scenarios. Learning from 'in situ' simulation (i.e. simulated scenarios in the real clinical setting) is optimised by 'situated cognition' whereby behaviours practised in the scenario are more easily recalled when the situation presents again in a similar environment. Simulation can yield improvements in team working behaviours and attitudes towards patient safety (Wallin et al, 2007; Patterson et al, 2013). Paramedic performance in the simulated environment has been significantly correlated with that in the clinical setting (Tavares et al, 2014).

Operational Structure

Each member of staff is allocated into a team with a Team Leader and Clinical mentor for each team who are responsible for all the management and training required for their team members. Each team has 18 members and are at work at the same time as each other to promote a positive ethos of team working. Should a team member require any support while on duty they can access their Team Leader or Clinical mentor immediately. The team also attend training together and have built in team time in their roster to allow the team further opportunities to develop as a cohesive group.

SCAS has a robust Make Ready service ensuring that each shift has a clean fully equipped vehicle for shift saving staff from carrying out these duties enabling them more time to care for patients.