

Managed Staffing  
for the NHS



# How NES can address doctor shortages in the NHS

*“At NES Healthcare we believe that we can make a significant difference in the way in which medical staffing shortages are addressed within the NHS.*

*The historic dependence on expensive short-term locum cover to address staffing shortages has cost millions of pounds, which not only puts pressure on NHS budgets but also impacts on quality and continuity of patient care.*

*What NES offers is the longer-term, managed provision of doctors, across multiple disciplines, at rates significantly lower than even the most cost-effective locum providers can offer.*

***NES Healthcare is now operating this managed staffing model in an increasing number of NHS Trusts and in doing so has helped to address acute shortages of doctors and historic staffing overspending.***

*As part of the current London Procurement Partnership (LPP) Framework, we have been audited and approved as a supplier of services to the NHS.*

*Our worldwide recruitment strategy enables us to provide significant numbers of doctors from overseas, giving our clients the opportunity to tap into additional sources of highly-skilled individuals.”*



Peter Sheppard, Managing Director



We employ over 350 doctors, across many specialties, from countries all over the world so that we can offer the best service possible. The large scale of the NES operation provides our clients with a high level of confidence in our capacity to maintain a reliable service.

# The NES Managed Staffing Model

Our hospitals identify a specific, recurring need (eg orthopaedics or general medicine) and engage NES to provide that cover on a long-term contractual basis. NES, as an employment business, recruits, assesses and trains the doctors before introducing them to the hospital.

Once in place the doctors work on a rotational basis, designed in conjunction with the hospital management to reflect the workload and the needs of the patients. They remain under the employment and management of NES, which means that we organise their holiday cover, provide emergency replacements for sickness and undertake ongoing training and Appraisals with them to ensure they can Revalidate in a timely fashion.

All of this is included in a monthly charge, which works out substantially lower than the high hourly rates charged by locum agencies. Regular, predictable monthly billing also facilitates more effective budget management.

## Peace of mind: The NES Standby Programme

NES operates a Standby Programme whereby a sufficient number of doctors every week are paid to remain free from commitments and to be **on hand for any emergencies**, such as a doctor going sick. This provides NES and hospital management with a robust safety net to ensure that they never run the risk of being left without a doctor.

In order to effectively operate the Standby Programme, we have a **24/7 on-call mobile phone** service so that hospital staff and doctors can reach us whenever they need to.



## Continuity is key

Our aim is to provide a hospital with a high level of continuity. Doctors are contracted for a minimum period of six months, and in most cases they will choose to prolong this. Over the last 3 years the rate of contract extension has been between 60% and 70%, which means that the hospitals are seeing the majority of doctors for much longer periods of time.

We aim to build on the continuity this provides by using a pool of experienced cover doctors for planned leave and, where possible, using the same individuals repeatedly in the same hospital.

In this way the hospital management's time is not taken up with new introductions and the subsequent inductions that are required for each doctor that attends a hospital. With the level of continuity of care that NES can provide, our doctors will become an established part of the medical team within each hospital.



## Quality Assured

NES has risen to the challenge of recruiting and managing doctors from overseas. Our initiatives in addressing the risks associated with this were recognised when we received the prestigious Independent Healthcare Award for 'Excellence in Risk Management' in 2013.

For many years, NES has been running a **specialised Training and Assessment Programme** for all new recruits, ensuring clinically competent doctors who are fit for purpose within our hospitals. In addition to these courses, NES provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Paediatric Advanced Life Support (EPALS), running fully accredited courses from our training facility based in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

NES holds the Quality Management Standard **BS EN ISO 9001:2008**. We have consistently maintained high standards of practice and have successfully retained continuous ISO accreditation for the past 25 years.

## Medical English Assessment

We have pioneered the use of specific medical English testing. This is done both at the start of a doctor's recruitment process, through an online Medical English Screening Test, and then more formally at the end when they are required to sit a Medical English Exam. Both of these initiatives are in addition to the language checks that doctors are required to undertake in order to obtain their Licence to Practise with the GMC.

It is our firm belief that this additional certification allows us to be certain of our doctors' ability to communicate with patients and is therefore preferable to more general academic assessments used elsewhere in the sector.

## Who do we work with?

NES has developed and grown through its extensive work within the Independent Sector. We are by some distance the largest provider of RMO services to the UK's network of private hospitals.

We currently work with over 175 hospitals and clinics and in order to effectively service these contracts we employ a pool of over 350 doctors at any one time.

We already have long-standing relationships with a number of NHS Trusts and this is the area of our business that is currently growing most rapidly.

These initiatives are unlike anything currently in place in the industry and have gone further than anything else to position NES as the industry's leader, both in terms of market share and quality of service.

## We welcome your feedback

We take your views very seriously. We actively seek out our clients' feedback on our doctors by issuing Performance Reviews, which are competency-based forms to enable the hospital management to highlight strengths and weaknesses.

This feedback is used individually to pick up on any training needs, and is also collated to highlight wider trends.



# Recruiting the best doctors

NES has developed a robust worldwide recruitment infrastructure in order to provide our clients with confidence in our ability to maintain a steady supply of doctors.

We have our own **dedicated recruitment teams** based in the UK, Poland and South Africa and work closely with partners who supply doctors to us from Europe and beyond. We recruit from all over the world, with applications being received from doctors of 44 different nationalities during 2016.

Recruitment of high-quality medical professionals is of paramount importance to NES and doctors seeking employment with us are required to go through a strict recruitment process which typically takes 6 months or more. This time is taken to ensure that each and every doctor is properly assessed and approved as being suitable for work in the UK.

## Thorough screening

The first stage of a doctor's application is the **Medical English Screening Test**. This is applied to all doctors irrespective of their country of origin and background.

The test is run from the NES website and is a 30 question, multiple choice test with a **pass mark of 80%**.

Before starting work at one of our client facilities, candidates are required to successfully complete our **Training and Assessment Programme**, about which full details are provided in this brochure.



The NES Medical English Screening Test

This is a thorough assessment of the ability of the doctor's clinical skills and includes a **full Medical English exam**.

## Placing the right doctors at the right hospitals

Once a doctor has successfully completed all of the assessments and is accepted to work for NES, the focus turns to their placement at one of our client hospitals.

We are careful to match the correct skills to the appropriate hospital, for example providing hospitals that admit paediatric patients with doctors that have recent experience in this area, in line with CQC guidelines.



## Formal induction

Once a hospital has been identified for a doctor they will undertake a **week of shadowing at no cost to the hospital**. This is intended to give the doctors the best possible start to their work at the hospital.

During their shadowing within the department they will complete the hospital's induction, be signed off on competencies and will benefit from the opportunity to meet the team and to undertake basic clinical procedures under supervision.

Feedback we have received from hospital management in relation to this period of shadowing has been extremely positive. The result of this work is that instances of adverse feedback during a doctor's first working week, traditionally a period associated with the highest risk, have been greatly reduced.

## Clinical mentoring

Many hospitals assign a named clinical mentor at the induction stage on the doctor's first day. This is usually the Chair of the MAC or another consultant. NES encourages its doctors to avail themselves of this support where it exists.

It is our experience that the communication and rapport with consultants can be significantly improved where a clinical mentor is available to the doctor, especially in the early days of a new placement.

## Support

We encourage all of our doctors to maintain regular communication with the hospital's clinical management team. Good working relationships will often result in a doctor prolonging their stay at a hospital beyond their initial contract period, thus improving continuity and quality of service.

The doctors also benefit from regular contact with their NES Medical Staffing Manager, who is always on hand to help them with whatever they need.

In addition to this the Operations Director, Medical Director and indeed all the staff at NES are always available to assist doctors and hospital staff should issues arise. Problems, be they clinical or otherwise, are always resolved promptly, irrespective of whether they occur inside or outside of office hours.

The figures suggest that the relationships between our clients and our doctors are very positive. In 2016 we found that **66%** of our doctors extended their contracts.

During the same period, **95%** of our clients indicated that they would like the doctors currently assigned to their hospital to stay on beyond the duration of their current contract. This indicates that there is a high level of satisfaction amongst NES' clients in respect of the quality of doctor that we are recruiting.



# NES Training & Assessment



Dr Stephen Drotske

NES is the only company in its field that has developed a comprehensive training and assessment course for doctors to ensure better quality at our hospital clients.

Throughout a busy week of training and assessments, doctors will spend time with NES training personnel and external instructors brought in to assist in providing invaluable feedback on their readiness for their UK workplace.

**Dr Stephen Drotske** (pictured above), who heads up this division, has gained over 20 years experience in GP work, Anaesthesia and Accident and Emergency. He has conducted training in Adult and Paediatric Life Support for over 2000 medical professionals.

**The aims of our training and assessment programme are:**

- To ensure NES doctors have excellent clinical skills.
- To ensure NES doctors have a high standard of medical English.
- To ensure NES doctors are effective communicators in resuscitation.
- To fully prepare NES doctors for work in the UK.

Prior to attending the training courses, each candidate is required to complete a Training Passport. This is the doctor's entry ticket to the courses, and requires them to undertake set numbers of clinical procedures which must be signed off at their current place of work. The aim of this is to ensure that the doctors have been regularly practising the skills necessary to be successful in their work in the UK.

## Advanced Resuscitation Courses

Every doctor is required to attend and pass both Adult and Paediatric Advanced Life Support courses. Any doctor who does not achieve advanced resuscitation certification will not be accepted by NES. All training undertaken at NES counts towards CPD progress, which in turn will contribute to annual Appraisals.

## Ensuring a good standard of medical English

Whilst an initial English assessment is conducted as part of our screening process, the doctors are still required formally to demonstrate their competence with the language.

The importance of good communication skills amongst RMOs cannot be overstated, and there are many certificates and qualifications, such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) available to the doctors to demonstrate their competence.

However, none of these are able to provide the assurance of **good Medical English**, so NES has developed an English assessment that covers both conversational and Medical English. Doctors are required to pass this before they will be placed at one of our client hospitals.

This exam follows the structure of the IELTS in that doctors are assessed for ability in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, and must achieve a pass mark in each area.

# The Training & Assessment Course

The Training and Assessment course combines theoretical work with frequent 'hands-on' practicals. Up-to-date equipment and mannequins are of a high quality to ensure that skills can be put into practice.

**The Training and Assessment course covers the following:**

## 1. Pharmacy

An introduction to the Pharmacy Department, which includes the importance of an RMO's relationship with the Pharmacist, drug charts, prescriptions, the British National Formulary (BNF), dosage calculations, Latin abbreviations, indications and contra indications, side effects, IV fluids, PCAs and the importance of good clinical note-writing.

This section culminates in an exam, for which doctors are expected to use their BNF and a calculator. The pass mark for this section is 100%.

## 2. Venepuncture and Cannulation

Including blood bottles and labelling, sharps disposal procedures, needle-stick injuries (and associated policies), arterial blood gas sampling, painless cannulation.

The candidate's aptitude in this area is judged by means of practical assessments.

## 3. Working in the UK

Areas covered include the importance of hospital induction, resuscitation scenarios, ECGs, early warning signs, post operative complications, mandatory training, hygiene (hand washing, use of white coat, MRSA), patient care plans, death certificates and asepsis/ infection control.

## 4. Male and Female Catheterisation

"Why, when, where, with whom", the equipment and its uses, Prophylactic antibiotics.

The candidate's aptitude in this area is judged by means of practical assessments.

## 5. Medical English

**Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.**

This section culminates in an exam. The pass mark for this section is **70%**.

## 6. Infection Prevention, ANTT & Blood Transfusions

As part of our commitment to high quality patient care, we ensure doctors have a clear understanding of the cause and spread of infection and each individual's role in safe blood transfusion.

## Continual development of the Programme

Dr Drotske works closely with our hospital clients to continually review and develop our Training and Assessment. Through this partnership we have created a programme that is successful in providing well-prepared doctors that are fit for purpose within the UK healthcare sector.

The initiative shown, coupled with the investment put in place by NES Healthcare was recognised at the Laing and Buisson Independent Healthcare Awards in October 2013 as we won the award for Excellence in Risk Management.



NES' purpose-built Training Centre



## Refresher training

At NES we appreciate that resuscitation knowledge needs constant updating. NES therefore runs Intermediate Life Support (ILS) and paediatric Intermediate Life Support (pILS) courses for all its doctors on an annual basis.

Despite our best endeavours, we recognise that occasionally a doctor's skills may need improving in a specific area. NES can provide training and support on a one-to-one basis at our Training Centre. This training is designed to take the doctor to an advanced level of practice and is only ever undertaken in conjunction with the hospital management.

## Appraisal and Revalidation

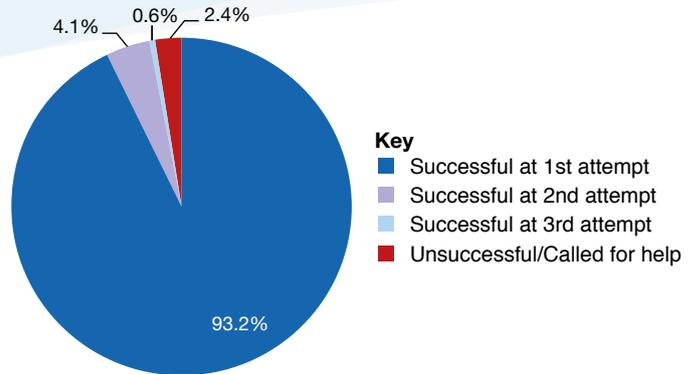
At NES Healthcare we are committed to engaging with Revalidation and have invested time and resources to ensure that suitable processes are in place.

Our Responsible Officer, Dr Stephen Drotske, has been instrumental through his work with the South Central Strategic Health Authority, the Association of Independent Healthcare Organisations (AIHO) and the GMC's Revalidation Reference Group in establishing NES as a Designated Body with the Department of Health.

Dr Drotske was one of the first group of thirty doctors in the UK that Revalidated on 17th December 2012 and has since had the privilege to conduct Appraisals for other Responsible Officers. This has enabled us as a Company to remain at the forefront of any developments in this area, thereby ensuring that we can prepare our doctors for a seamless Appraisal which is ready for Revalidation purposes.

From the commencement of Revalidation in April 2013, we have been able to fully engage in the Appraisal and Revalidation process with many positive recommendations made to the GMC for doctors to receive their Licences to Practise for a further 5 years. Our Appraisal service is headed by Dr Anneke Blaauw, who manages a team of Appraisers.

## Clinical audit



NES doctors are encouraged to participate in clinical audits. These help NES establish the outcomes of the work that the doctors are doing, and also provide the doctors with valuable evidence for their Appraisals.

The Blood-Taking Audit (see graph above) undertaken in October 2015 provided evidence that over 93% of venipunctures undertaken by NES doctors were successful at the first attempt.

## Summary

At NES we all feel very strongly that whilst knowledge is excellent, it is the 'contribution' that counts, both from our doctors and office staff. We are proud of our achievements to date, but will constantly strive to improve our service so that we can maximise the quality and continuity of our doctor service provision.

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