

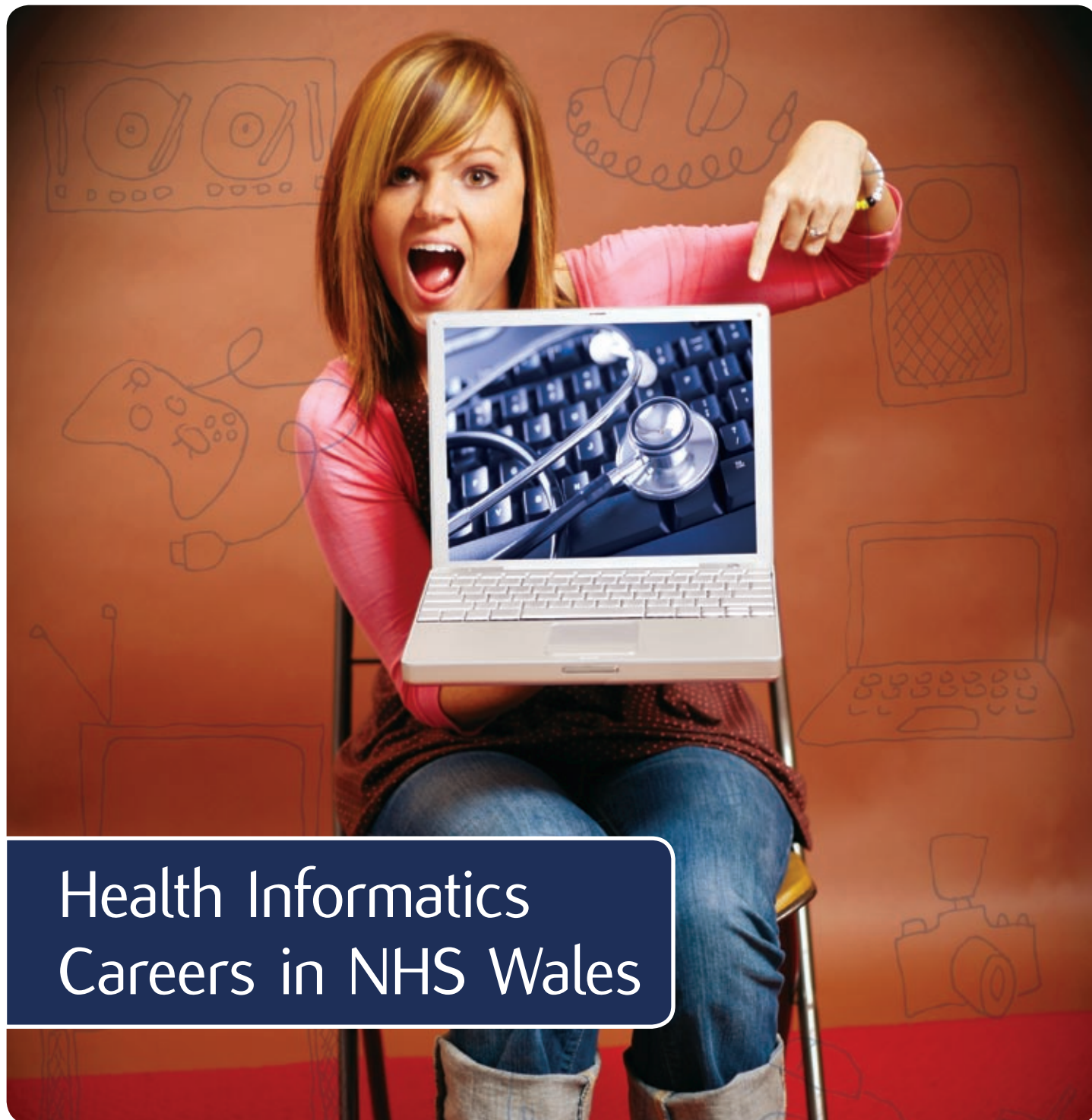
HI-Profile

Health Informatics Professional Identity,
Leadership and Education



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Gwasanaeth
Gwybodeg
Informatics
Service



Health Informatics
Careers in NHS Wales

www.wales.nhs.uk/hi-profile

Welcome to the NHS

The NHS offers a huge range of exciting and challenging opportunities for people who are passionate about making a difference.

With more than 300 different careers on offer, there is a job for you no matter what your interests, skill or qualifications.

What's more you'll be given every opportunity to build on your skills and learn new ones as part of the career framework – our commitment to skills development.

Scientists, accountants, porters, psychologists, nurses, health informatics staff and estate managers, to name but a few, are all needed to ensure the smooth running of the NHS. These people, and many more, work together as a team to deliver the very best care for our patients.

In this booklet, you'll find out about the wide range of opportunities within **Health Informatics** in the NHS.

One of the key ways to provide better healthcare is through the intelligent collection, management, use and sharing of information – otherwise known as health informatics. If you love working with computers, enjoy library work, are good at analysing data or find satisfaction in keeping accurate records, then there could be a job for you.

All NHS employees, including healthcare professionals, managers and administrators, rely on fast, accurate information to deliver the best care they can. Using IT creatively to achieve this means health informatics is one of the bedrocks of the NHS. Whatever your academic background, you can find a role that's right for you. What's more we offer a flexible workplace, excellent benefits and a wealth of opportunities to develop your career.

To find out more about working in health informatics please visit:
www.wales.nhs.uk/hi-profile

Or if you have any questions, you can email:
NWIS.HI-profile@wales.nhs.uk

The NHS – a rewarding place to work

There are very few careers as rewarding as one in the NHS, or that give you the opportunity to work with such a wide variety of different people.

We actively recruit people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of experience. This helps us understand the different needs of the patients we serve every day and provide the best possible service.

Whichever area you join, you become part of a talented, passionate team of people, committed to providing the best care and treatment to patients. You will also enjoy one of the most competitive and flexible benefits packages offered by any employer in the UK.

Benefits of working in the NHS

Everyone who joins the NHS is guaranteed a salary that matches their ability and responsibilities, and given every opportunity to increase it through training and development.

On top of your basic salary, you will receive at least 27 days' holiday each year, plus a range of other benefits, including health and counselling services.

Join one of the UK's best pension schemes

The NHS Pension Scheme is one of the most generous and comprehensive in the UK. Every new employee automatically becomes a member and you will get an excellent package of pension benefits.

Pay and Conditions

The NHS pay system, known as Agenda for Change, offers real benefits for all directly employed staff except doctors, dentists and senior managers, including:

- a standard working week of 37.5 hours
- holiday entitlements of 27 days per year, plus eight general and public holidays, rising to 33 days after ten years' service
- pay enhancements to reward out of hours, shift and overtime working
- career and pay progression based on the application of knowledge and skills
- annual personal development review to support career aspirations

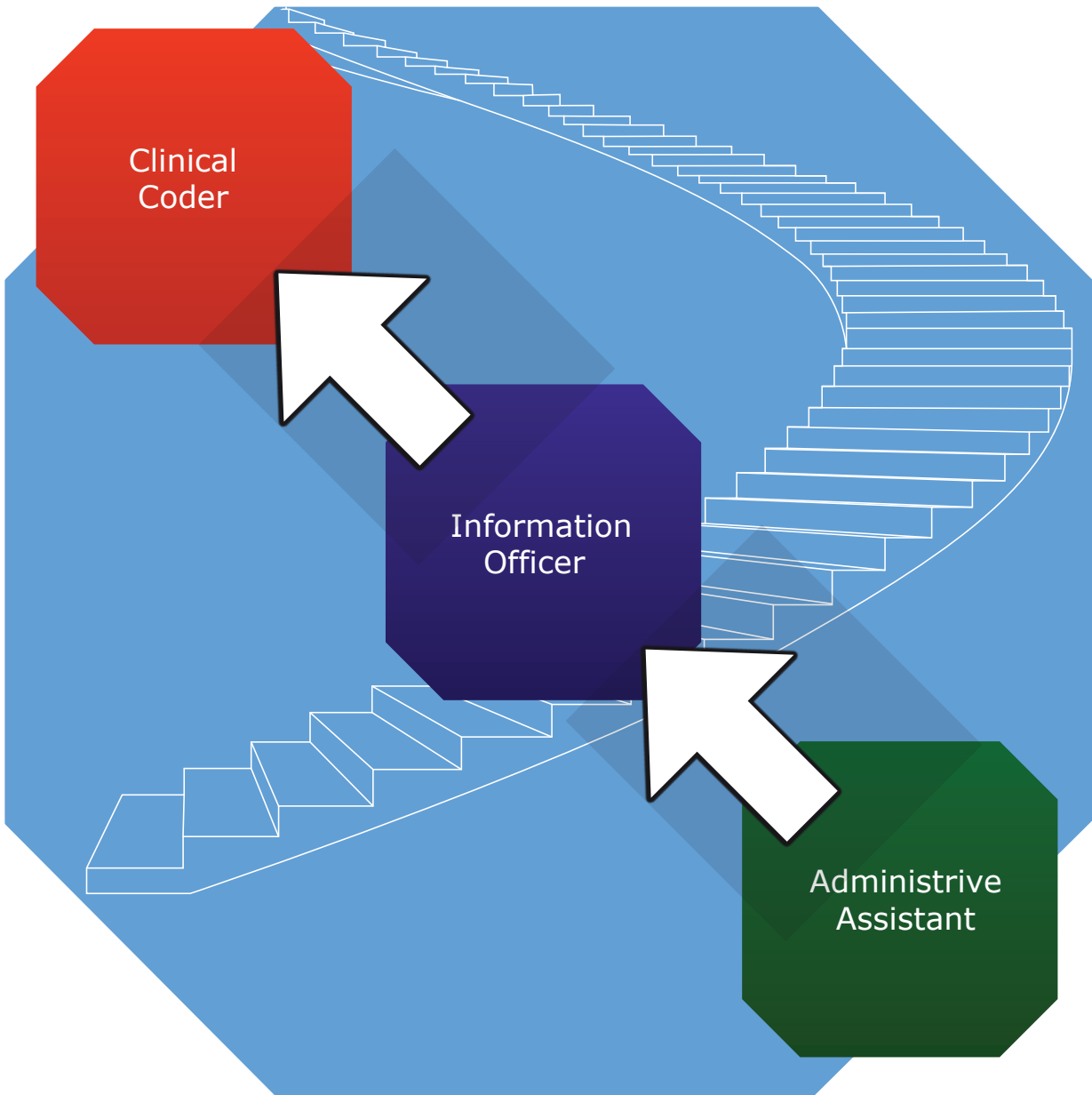
Other benefits of working in the NHS include training, occupational health services, automatic membership of the NHS Pension Scheme (unless you choose to opt out) and study leave for sponsored courses.

To find out more about the different Agenda for Change bands, and see the most up-to-date starting salaries for each one, go to **www.nhs.uk/hi-profile**

Fulfil your potential

- The NHS is committed to offering development and learning opportunities for all full-time and part-time staff
- No matter where you start within the NHS, you'll have access to extra training and be given every chance to progress within the organisation.
- You will receive an annual personal review and development plan, to support your career progression.
- You will be encouraged to extend your range of skills and knowledge and take on new responsibilities through the Knowledge and Skills Framework.

See the centre pages for more on the Career Framework, and an example of how an employee has progressed through the NHS.



Case Study

Karen Field

Learning Laboratory Manager,
National Leadership and Innovation
Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH)

Karen Field has spent eleven years working in Health Informatics and was attracted to do so when she worked in a medical school library. She was asked about her previous work experience, what she is doing in her current role and what sort of development she had undertaken to progress in Health Informatics.

Previous work experience

I was a Chartered Librarian when I entered Health Informatics and my first exposure to the NHS was working in a medical school library. I then worked in an FE College Library and a University Library before moving to the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Wales library. I then went to the National Collaborating Centre for Cancer (NCC-C) where I worked as an Information Specialist.

Current role

I have been in my current role for five years and was attracted to it because of the opportunity to develop a service from scratch and a desire to stay in the health environment. This was a new post, created to lead and manage the strategic development of the Learning Laboratory for the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH). It is a hybrid role encompassing health informatics, communications and project management.

“I have been in my current role for five years and was attracted to it because of the opportunity to develop a service from scratch and a desire to stay in the health environment.”

Part of my role is leading the development and implementation of the Learning Laboratory Strategic Framework making sure that there is synergy with the overarching NLIAH programme. Included in this has been implementing a library catalogue three years ago, implementing an e-books service and the introduction and maintenance of a remote service/postal service to meet the needs of users.

I lead on communications in NLIAH particularly developing client-facing products such as the e-bulletin. I also oversee the bilingual development of the corporate website.

Over the past two years I have taken over the project management of the NHS Wales Awards. These are annual awards which NLIAH deliver on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). There are six categories and the aim is to celebrate good practice across NHS Wales and spread knowledge.

Development

I have obtained a Post-Graduate Diploma in Information Management



Helping you find the right work-life balance

The NHS is committed to maintaining a healthy work-life balance for all NHS staff. There is a real focus on specific areas that are designed to make your life easier at certain times during your careers.

These include:

- flexible working and flexible retirement
- childcare provision and support for carers in the workplace
- training and development
- coping with stress
- tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Managing your commitments in and out of work

The size and diversity of the NHS means we can offer you a range of flexible working opportunities.

Part-time roles and job-share opportunities are often available in some jobs, as well as term time only, evening and weekend positions. We will do everything we can to help you combine your work for us with commitments in your everyday life –whether you’re studying for a new qualification, raising a family or juggling other responsibilities.

Many people take an extended break to look after young children or other dependants who need special care, or to study full time.

We will help you combine your work for us with commitments in your everyday life.

You can find out more about the benefits of working in the NHS at www.nhs.uk/workingforus/benefits

Your career in health informatics

The intelligent use of information and computers to provide better healthcare – that’s health informatics, one of the fastest-growing areas of the NHS.

Every day in the NHS, information has to be collected, managed, used and shared. Good patient care depends on this fast and accurate flow of information.

As a health informatics professional, you are a vital part of the NHS team, the expert on patient information that others rely on to do their jobs.

Whether the job is to provide technical support or to develop cutting-edge electronic projects, health informatics staff are responsible for the non-stop cycle of information flowing throughout the NHS.

Health informatics staff help clinicians keep up with the latest evidence and research. They work with researchers or run their own research projects to advance clinical knowledge. They help find new ways of delivering vital services, such as laboratory test results, X-rays and drug dispensing, while also making them faster and more foolproof. They develop systems to free up clinicians from routine paperwork, allowing them to spend more time treating patients.

They work on systems analysis and development while maintaining intranets within hospital or community organisations. They also develop technologies that help patients live independently and longer with a better quality of life.

They also run the systems that allow NHS staff to communicate with each other, to access information and to deal with all the day-to-day service needs, such as ordering vital supplies and booking patient appointments. In fact, there is very little happening in the NHS today that does not involve health informatics.

The main areas of health informatics

There are many opportunities in health informatics, whatever your interests, skills and education. The work falls into these main areas:

- information and communication technology (ICT)
- information management
- libraries and knowledge management
- clinical informatics.

You’ll also find roles in four other areas – portfolio, programme and project management (P3M), health records and patient administration and education and training.

More information can be found at www.wales.nhs.uk/hi-profile and also at www.hicf.org.uk

Information and communication technology (ICT) staff

Most people rely on computers and electronic communication to do their job. If you work in ICT you have a key role, helping to run the systems used by (among others) scientists, doctors, therapists and other healthcare professionals, secretaries and managers.

ICT staff are hands-on; diagnosing and fixing faults, supporting staff who use the systems, and developing improvements. Your work will support computers and communication systems ranging from appointment booking systems to systems in intensive care units.

Who will it appeal to?

Those with a natural flair for computing. Examples include helpdesk support staff, business analysts and information managers who develop better systems for staff and patient services.

Case Study

Cynthia Henderson

Head of Health Records,
Aneurin Bevan Health Board

Previous Work Experience:

Cynthia Henderson started her working career as a Legal Secretary before taking a break to have her family. She later took a job working evenings and weekends in the newly established 'Bed Bureau' in her local Aberdeen hospital - this was the opening to the world of health records. "It was hard work, going round all the wards three times during the evening, collecting and delivering bedstates and updating the Patient Administration System. Taking calls for patients to be decanted from the on-call wards and negotiating with others wards to take these patients was challenging but meant that emergency admissions were routed through the hospital to the most appropriate point of care and it was a valued service appreciated by the clinician and patient."

That was 25 years ago. Thereafter Cynthia moved up the ladder, touching on each area of the health records service from A&E, reception, maternity, paediatrics, libraries and microfilming, clinical coding and scanning. She spent time managing libraries and was involved in the health record service planning of a new Children's Hospital and the introduction of scanning as a replacement for microfilm. The term Health Informatics was starting to be introduced at this stage!

Current Role:

In 2006, Cynthia applied for a new post as Head of Health Records for the former Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust. She was successful in gaining the post which has meant a move from her adopted homeland of Scotland to a fresh new start in Wales.

"Over the past five years the strategic development of the health records service has been high on the agenda and the move to an



electronic record brings the service into the Health Informatics arena more comfortably than before. The changes required to the paper systems in order to move to an electronic/digitised environment have been complex but there are now major advances towards this becoming a reality and it is exciting to see the different pieces of the jigsaw now falling into place. Even though information is moving from paper to computer, organizing all this data is key as at the end of all that paperwork is a patient who's relying on that information being correct, accurate and available when it's required. It is hard work and health records staff are amongst the unsung heroes of the NHS!"

Development:

Cynthia joined the Institute of Health Record & Information Management in 1992 as a student member and over the following couple of years progressed through their suite of qualifications and is now a Fellow of the Institute. At that time the Institute was the only organisation offering health record specific qualifications to Diploma level. This was followed by completing a Postgraduate qualification in Managing Health Services which gave a broader perspective on Health Service Management.

Opportunities to conduct surveys for the Health Records Accreditation Programme provide a training school in Aberdeen for health records staff and conduct assessments for health records staff competencies enhanced her knowledge of other hospitals in the four home countries and to adopt best practice from these sites.

Information management staff

Staff in information management gather, analyse, interpret and present information about health and healthcare to improve services and patient care. Such information supports NHS services in all sorts of ways, from finding out how a trust is performing to planning how many staff are needed to deliver care in an NHS organisation. An example is information that shows how quickly an ambulance trust responds to emergency calls and can be used to improve performance.

Who will it appeal to?

People who can interpret statistical data and turn it into meaningful information about services. This branch of health informatics includes performance management teams, which analyse information about patients and services in order to find ways of improving service delivery. It also includes staff working in data protection and confidentiality, who focus on ensuring information is handled legally and securely. Information management staff need a thorough understanding of health services and the way information is used throughout the NHS.

Libraries and knowledge management staff

Healthcare professionals and managers need information to keep abreast of changes, in the

treatment of a particular disease for example, as well as for their professional development. It's your role to ensure they have ready access to the information they need, whether it's on paper, on disk or online. Increasingly your job will also be to help patients and their families find reliable information and sources of help on the internet.

Who will it appeal to?

A passion for information and for helping people access it lies at the heart of jobs in libraries and knowledge management. You will be the sort of person who can use a library system or an internet search engine to track down information. You need excellent people skills and a helpful attitude because dealing face to face with people at all levels of the NHS is a key part of the job.

Clinical informatics staff

How can we use clinical information to improve patient care? That's one of the important questions you will help answer. If you work in clinical informatics, your job is to capture, communicate and use clinical information to benefit healthcare services. This could be something as simple as analysing information about falls on wards to prevent hospital patients having accidents, or a large-scale, ambitious project such as helping to develop electronic patient records that link NHS organisations, from GPs to hospital clinics.

The work involves using and developing electronic means to support the whole cycle of information about patients and treatment, including research and audit. Clinical informatics staff are usually healthcare professionals who develop a strong interest in using IT and information to find better ways of working.

Who will it appeal to?

Those who want to find ways of making services better through the imaginative use of information. A clinical background means you have a thorough understanding of the operational side of services, while you are likely to be interested in harnessing the power of IT and data to make those services work better. Within that there is a wide range of opportunities, such as clinical audit, as well as openings to develop your own problem-solving projects or research.

**For more information about working
in health informatics please visit
www.wales.nhs.uk/hi-profile**

Case Study

Khal Salim

Security Services Technician,
NHS Wales Informatics Service

Previous experience

I had been an NHS employee for a long time before I decided to kick start an actual career – once I realised what the organisation could potentially help me to achieve I understood that Health Informatics was definitely the place to be. I was very lucky to be seconded from a data entry role to our then Telecoms service desk. I worked with some really great people that not only helped me to settle into the role but also taught me the value of 'on the job' learning – I was eager to learn more about what I was doing and as a result a series of opportunities opened up to me.

Learning new skills on our National Service Desk whilst supplementing my knowledge with mentoring from the teams I worked with, allowed me to gain the knowledge I needed to eventually move to a new more technical role as a Network Engineer. With a good combination of technical, analytical and communicational skills I was in an excellent position to progress my career further and when a job in the field of Information Security arose, I made sure to take it whilst it was on offer.

Current role

My current role resides within the Security Services team at NWIS – although a relatively newly formed team, we have a very important function within the NHS in Wales as we help to put the security wrap around all services. This means we have a vital input into policy, service provisioning and delivery, as well as a wide ranging stakeholder interaction to provide impromptu consultancy on a number of issues from security awareness to compliance and audit. For me this generally means that each day is different from the last and your priorities can change at short notice – always a good test of time management skills.

"The major thing I can say about the people I've worked with in my NHS time is that they are talented, highly skilled individuals."

The skills required to perform in my current role are extremely transferable meaning that the opportunities for self improvement and progression are endless if you are willing and able to put in the hard work required to improve yourself and the level of service you are endeavouring to provide.

Development undertaken

The major thing I can say about the people I've worked with in my NHS time is that they are talented, highly skilled individuals. They know their craft extremely well and as such they are an important learning tool for any employee. As stated on the job training/ mentoring has been very important to me personally, helping me to understand and achieve things I never would have thought possible just a few years ago.

As well as mentoring it was a priority to develop different skills in order to improve my potential, this has meant undertaking several health informatics related courses which help to adjust my IT perceptions and hopefully align policies and procedures to best practice. Courses such as ITIL and Prince 2 provide an excellent background and understanding of what we should be striving to achieve as an organisation and the development required as we constantly strive to improve the end user experience.



Whether the job is to provide technical support or to develop cutting-edge electronic projects, health informatics staff are responsible for the non-stop cycle of information flowing throughout the NHS.

Career Framework

The Career Framework has been designed to improve career development and job satisfaction for NHS employees.

It encourages individuals to learn new skills and take on extra responsibilities that enable them to progress within the organisation. Many people take on additional responsibility within their own area, while others retrain and move in to different roles.

The case study on Nikki Ellery describes how she has progressed within health informatics. You can follow her career path in the white boxes on the diagram below, alongside other potential paths in the different areas of the NHS.

The diagram below gives an illustration of a variety of NHS careers and where they may fit on the Career Framework. It is not exhaustive; details on other careers can be found in the relevant booklets and on the NHS Careers website.

To find out more information on the Health Informatics Career Framework, visit www.hicf.org.uk

	Ambulance service professions	Allied health professions	Dental care professions	Healthcare science	Health informatics	Management	Midwifery	Nursing	Wider healthcare team
9 More senior staff	Clinical director of service	Director of therapies		Director of regional genetics services	Director of information management and technology	Director of human resources	Director of maternity services	Director of nursing	
8 Consultant practitioners	Consultant paramedic	Consultant radiographer		Consultant clinical scientist (medical physics)	Business Change Manager: measuring successful implementation of national systems in local environments	Associate director of children's services	Consultant midwife	Nurse consultant in stroke	
7 Advanced practitioners	Advanced paramedic	Specialist speech and language therapist		Chief maxillofacial technologist	National IT Training Manager: overall management, development and evaluation of Training of national systems across the country	Head of accounts	Head of midwifery	District nurse (team manager)	Head of estates
6 Senior practitioners/ specialist practitioners	Specialist paramedic	Specialist occupational therapist	Specialist dental technologist	Senior biomedical scientist	IT Training Manager: overall management, development and evaluation of Training within a local health board	Project manager	Community midwife	Community psychiatric nurse	Chaplain
5 Practitioners	Paramedic	Dietitian	Dental technician	Cardiac physiologist	IT Trainer: develop and deliver training courses to staff on a variety of IT skills, applications and systems Information Officer: disseminate statistical information and results using a variety of methods;	Payroll manager	Midwife	Neonatal nurse	Catering manager
4 Assistant practitioners/ associate practitioners	Control room duty officer	Assistant clinical psychologist	Assistant dental technician	Critical care technologist	Clinical coder: abstracting and analysing complex information from patients' case notes	General office manager		Community care assistant	Medical secretary
3 Senior healthcare assistants/technicians	Emergency medical dispatcher	Rehabilitation assistant	Student dental technician	Newborn hearing screener	Helpdesk adviser		Maternity support worker	Senior healthcare assistant	Security officer
2 Support workers	Patient transport service driver	Therapy clinical support worker		Pharmacy dispensing assistant	Support desk assistant		Healthcare assistant (maternity)	Healthcare assistant (nursing)	Maintenance assistant
1 Initial entry level jobs					Health records assistant			Nurse cadet	Porter

What opportunities are available?

Health informatics offer a range of opportunities and challenges. Which area is right for you?

Would you enjoy the challenge of supporting, improving and developing computer systems? Is data analysis your strength, or are you attracted by the idea of helping healthcare professionals keep up with the latest knowledge and research?

This section gives you a brief overview of the roles in each of the areas of health informatics. You can find more detailed information in the relevant factsheets, or on the NHS Careers website.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

ICT staff are responsible for the development, management and support of the ICT infrastructure in one or more NHS organisations.

The roles listed below give an idea of the variety on offer.

Type of work	Main responsibilities
ICT support technician	- helps set up computing equipment, for example in a hospital - installs new computers, carries out initial tests, loads programmes and helps maintain computers
ICT test analyst	- supports the technical development and smooth running of new computer systems, for example development of an electronic patient record system - analyses a problem within a computer system, diagnoses and solves it
IT training manager	- manages the design and delivery of training in applications and IT awareness to NHS staff in the organisation - works with trust staff to identify training needs - provides advice on suitable training courses
Network manager	manages a trust's IT network infrastructure and provides technical support and advice to all the client organisations
Service desk operator	- investigates and helps staff with their computer problems - resolves faults over the telephone
Systems developer	- works on the challenging programme of development in the NHS, for example linking GPs with hospitals by computer, allowing patients to book hospital appointments from the GP's surgery - works closely with other healthcare professionals to make sure technical solutions are geared to improving ways of working and patient care
Telecommunication manager	- manages the telephony system - the job could involve using the latest technology to design a new hospital telephony system and ensure its smooth operation

Information management

Information management staff use information, including statistics, to plan health services, monitor how they are performing and develop them to improve patient care.

The roles listed below give an idea of the variety on offer.

Type of work	Main responsibilities
Clinical coder	- makes a full and accurate computer record of patients' stays in hospital - translates patients' diagnoses and treatment into alphanumeric codes - liaises with doctors, nurses and other staff to ensure patients' diagnoses and treatment are recorded accurately - reviews quality of data
Clinical coding tutor	- designs and delivers training for clinical and non-clinical staff to support the use of clinical coding - problem solving, and sharing ideas and best practice to make sure the information recorded about patient diagnoses and treatment is full and accurate
Data quality manager	- reviews current information systems to ensure that quality of data meets national standards and regulations - establishes and maintains new data audit programmes to ensure information is high quality
Information analyst	analyses information on health services, for example a population's Health needs or hospital waiting times, and uses it to help managers and healthcare professionals plan services and improve performance
Information auditor	helps healthcare professionals analyse the way they work, and uses the information to find ways of improving patient care
Information governance manager	ensures information systems comply with national rules about how information is captured, shared and stored
Planning and performance manager	- analyses information to monitor current services and plans for the future - helps ensure key performance targets are met, for example on waiting lists

Libraries and knowledge management

The amount of information on healthcare is increasing rapidly as we see huge advances in medicine and new thinking on managing and delivering services. Librarians and knowledge management staff help healthcare professionals and managers access information in

books, periodicals and online so they can keep up with the latest research and evidence base to maintain their professional training and development.

The roles listed below give an idea of the variety on offer.

Type of work	Main responsibilities
Head of archives and museums	responsible for art and historical collections of unique interest in the field of health within certain NHS trusts. These include collections of artifacts and documents that highlight the history of medicine, medical breakthroughs, or the men and women who pioneered healthcare in the past
Information assistant	- helps and supports the librarian - staffs the enquiry desk - carries out routine administration, such as sending out letters and ordering books, journals and other materials, as well as maintaining databases and records
Knowledge and information manager	- takes a lead on making sure a hospital or trust’s information resources are set up and run in the best way - manages the introduction of new information resources, for example helping staff and managers redesign information services around the needs of patients
Librarian	- answers research enquiries from library users - provides information using a variety of resources – from clinical textbooks to computer databases and the internet - prepares packages of information for healthcare professionals and other staff who may use it for training, research or their own professional development

Clinical informatics

Clinical informatics staff are usually healthcare scientists, doctors, nurses or other healthcare

professionals who have moved to health informatics. Their job is to capture, communicate and use patient information to improve services and patient care. The role also involves developing electronic tools to manage clinical information.

The roles listed below give an idea of the variety on offer.

Type of work	Main responsibilities
Clinical informatics specialist manager	- carries out full or part-time audit or research, using understanding of clinical practice to find ways of improving services - manages information services for a specialist area, for example maternity - assists the development of specific IT and/or information projects, such as the electronic patient record, which shares patient information across hospitals and GPs
PACS administrator (picture archiving communication system)	supports the running of the service that stores radiological images, such as X-rays, ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, and transfers them electronically to specialists within a trust and around the country
Pathology links manager	- responsible for the IT systems and applications linking shared pathology services - ensures the system works reliably and is compliant with national information governance regulations

For more information about roles in clinical informatics see the relevant factsheet, or visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working
To search for jobs visit www.jobs.nhs.uk

Case Study

Nick Groves

Consultant,
Anaesthesia and Intensive Care

Nick Groves has spent 25 years working in his current role and became involved in Health Informatics because he became aware of the significant waste of money and loss of opportunity caused by the poor application of Health Informatics in the NHS.

He wanted better and so became involved in various ways with the development of Health Informatics within the NHS. He was asked what sort of development he had undertaken to progress in Health Informatics and what he is doing in his current role.

Current role

I am a consultant in anaesthesia and intensive care, a specialty which has long relied heavily on technology. I was attracted to my current role in anaesthetics because of its combination of medicine with physics.

The main focus of my Health Informatics involvement is the development of HI specialists and training clinicians to use HI efficiently in clinical settings.

I have been working with Swansea University on creating tools for healthcare and I currently contribute to the University's HI e-lectures programme.

I am particularly interested in the educational and strategic aspects of Health Informatics

"The main focus of my Health Informatics involvement is the development of HI specialists and training clinicians to use HI efficiently in clinical settings."

Development

I have developed through 'on the job' learning, various conferences and undertaking an MSc in Health Informatics in 2009. I have been a member of the Society for Computing and Technology in Anaesthesia since 1988 and hosted a national meeting in Cardiff in 1994. I have been a member of HI-PROFILE Steering Group since 2007 and I contributed to HI National Occupational Standards Review in 2009.

When asked about using the Health Informatics Career Framework Nick said:

I haven't used the HICF personally so far - however I will do so if an opportunity to take a contracted position in HI presents itself. I have shared its content and principles with clinical colleagues so that they can engage more efficiently with HI colleagues and contribute to planning and developing HI services.

Getting started

Anyone can enjoy a career in health informatics. There are roles for everyone, no matter what qualifications or previous work experience you have. Wherever you start, you will have the chance to learn on the job and carry on studying if you choose.

Health informatics (HI) staff work in every area of healthcare on a huge variety of projects and tasks. This means that the scope for people with different interests, skills and qualifications is enormous. People come into HI from a variety of different backgrounds. They include librarians, academics, scientists, business specialists, statisticians, managers, IT specialists and also clinicians such as doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. They come from within healthcare, like the clinicians who move over into a full-time HI role, or they come from outside, bringing their specialist expertise to the NHS.

The entry requirements will vary depending on the job. It may be possible to enter a career in HI with no formal qualifications, but some roles may require very specific professional qualifications, relevant experience and a commitment to professional registration.

You can take up a career in HI straight from school, college or university, or from a previous unrelated career, entering at the appropriate level and choosing whether to remain at that level or whether to progress after further study and experience.

This section outlines your options and some of the routes into this area of the NHS.

You may not need formal qualifications to begin working in health informatics, although GCSEs or equivalent qualifications and/or some work experience may be an advantage.

At entry level, you can apply for a range of assistant jobs, working in libraries, outpatient departments, or IT helpdesks, supporting healthcare and health informatics professionals. Jobs at this level include assistant library or information officers and IT helpdesk advisers.

You will be given the IT training you need by the NHS. You will also be encouraged to study for NHS Elite, a learning and assessment tool accredited by the Chartered Institute of IT that covers the essential IT skills required for most NHS staff.

Apprenticeships combine on-the-job training and work experience while in paid employment, with formal off-the-job training. Apprenticeships are open to anyone over 16 and not in full-time education. Availability varies around the country, so it's best to speak to your local NHS trust for more information about opportunities in your area.

With A levels, equivalent qualifications and/or some work experience, you can start your career as a HI trainee. There are also opportunities for existing staff to enter junior HI positions. A levels may also be helpful for some specialist roles, for example A levels including the study of anatomy and/or physiology are helpful for specialist library posts such as clinical librarian.

Currently there are a few specific qualifications developed and certificated directly by the NHS for health informatics. For clinical coders, there is the National Clinical Coding Qualification, which is delivered by the Institute of Health Records Management or the Professional Association of Clinical Coders in partnership with the NHS. An increasing number of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in health informatics are available that meet defined standards set by the NHS Health Informatics Quality Scheme for Learning and Development. These can be gained as part of a degree or masters qualification, or you can study for them within the job role. Many universities now have part-time masters courses and offer diplomas in health informatics, as well as undergraduate courses in health informatics management.

Foundation degrees, designed primarily for existing healthcare employees, combine academic study with workplace learning, equipping you with the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills for your chosen career path. A number of foundation degrees are available in healthcare informatics.

Many staff taking up HI roles in the NHS will already have many of the core skills needed for the job and, once employed, will be supported in identifying any

Careers in health informatics in the NHS

gaps and receive help towards bridging them. This learning will count towards professional recognition and may lead to a recognised qualification, for example a foundation degree in health informatics.

Graduate opportunities

A strong academic background and sound management experience in health opens up opportunities in senior management positions in health informatics. Staff working in information management often hold a degree or masters degree in a health informatics subject.

A degree in library and information studies or information science will allow you to join the professional tier of the library service. For a very senior role, such as knowledge services manager, you may also need a postgraduate qualification in information and library work.

A particularly specialist role, such as a head of archives and museums, might require specific qualifications or experience, such as a postgraduate qualification in museum or heritage studies.

The NHS Wales Informatics Service can provide further information on opportunities such as graduate internships and undergraduate student placements in all areas of health informatics.

If you would like further information, please send your enquiry to NWIS.HI-ProFILE@Wales.nhs.uk

Work placements

Arranging a work placement is one of the best ways to find out if a career in health informatics is for you. This will give you the opportunity to experience the working environment, the type of jobs you will be doing and to speak to people already working in that area of the NHS.

The number and type of work placements available vary depending on where you are in the country. For more information about opportunities in your area, please talk to your local NHS organisation or contact NWIS.HI-ProFILE@wales.nhs.uk.

Pay

Most jobs are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. The NHS job evaluation system determines a points score, which is used to match jobs to pay bands and determine levels of basic salary. Each pay band has a number of pay points.

Your career in health informatics could start at an AfC band 1 as a helpdesk adviser, rising to band 7 for an information management and technology section manager. More senior managerial posts attract higher bandings or are covered by the salary scheme for very senior managers in the NHS. Examples of other roles in this group, with typical AfC pay bands, include clinical coding support worker (band 2), service desk operator (band 3), information officer (bands 4–5), systems developer (band 5) and health records manager (band 7).

For more information on pay bands in your chosen career, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

Case Study

Nikki Ellery

Business Change Manager,
Hywel Dda Health Board

Nikki Ellery has worked in the NHS for 23 years and has spent 19 of those years working in Health Informatics. She was asked about her previous work experience, what she is doing in her current role and what sort of development she had undertaken to progress in Health Informatics.

Previous work experience

Health Informatics was not a known phrase when I started to work in the NHS and I kind of 'fell' into the field. I started in 1988 as a Personnel Officer and after four years I enquired about career paths in the NHS and was asked if I wanted to do the job of Clinical Coder. I spent almost two years working in this role on the 'clinical' side of the fence. I then became PA to the Director of Strategic Planning which was about strategic and clinical services. My next move was to be Information Officer for the Trust which involved collating all waiting lists and Welsh Office returns on waiting times. I was then seconded for one and a half years to be PA to the CEO and Chairman in a local NHS Trust.

I returned to IT as the first IT Trainer in Carmarthenshire. My role was to train all users on both Microsoft Office packages and also clinical systems. My experience as a Clinical Coder helped me to have an understanding of user's experience and also to gain their respect. After five years I moved to work in an NHS Trust as IT Training Manager and it was around this time that Health Informatics became recognised in its own right. My role involved ensuring that over 6,000 staff had the resources in place to undertake all types of IT training such as national ECDL, in-house or clinical systems training. After six and a half years I left to take up a secondment as National Training Manager at Informing Healthcare working on national systems such as the Welsh Clinical Portal and Individual Health Record. However, after about

eleven months another secondment came up in a Health Board to be Business Change Manager working specifically for the Welsh Clinical Portal.

Current role

I was attracted to my current role because having spent several years in both clinical and training specialities I could see the benefits of working closely with clinicians in implementing a clinical system. Working on the ground floor level, ensuring that all the IT infrastructure is in place and that staff have been appropriately trained to use the system as well as operating 'business as usual' is bringing all the experiences I have had over the past 19 years into one role.

I have been in my current role since July 2010 and my main focus is to manage the business change necessary to deploy the various versions of the Welsh Clinical Portal, ensuring adherence to the comprehensive and structured plan and the readiness tool-kit.

My role is pivotal to ensuring the successful take-up of the application, starting with Pathology and Radiology Test Requesting and Results Reporting.

Development

I have gained a lot of practical experience and insight into how clinical systems are used within the NHS by directly training staff or managing trainers who train staff.

I am a PRINCE2 practitioner which has helped me gain jobs. When I was a Clinical Coder I undertook the ICD10 and OPCS Coding Exams, and I was a Senior Associate member of the Institute of IT Training.

For the future I can't see myself moving out of the HI field as the majority of roles I would be interested in are within HI. I am fully aware of the Health Informatics Career Framework and how I can use it should I wish to progress my career.

What’s your next step?

We hope you’ve found this booklet useful, and now have a better idea of whether a career in health informatics is right for you.

If you’ve decided you do want to work in this area, it’s important to start planning ahead straight away.

Find out as much information as you can about the qualifications you need and the opportunities that are available.

If you need a degree, UCAS can advise on which universities offer which courses. They will also be able to tell you what they look for in applicants. For example, getting some work experience is an excellent way of showing your commitment and enthusiasm.

The table below gives some hints on what you should be doing and who can provide you with the best advice.

Whatever position you’re in now, we can help. Email: NWIS.HI-Profile@wales.nhs.uk or visit our website at www.wales.nhs.uk/HI-Profile
To search for jobs, go to www.jobs.nhs.uk

Where are you now?	What should you do now?	Who can help?
Studying for your GCSEs	• check what your likely exam grades/results will be • explore routes into your chosen career – will you need a degree or other qualification before you join, or will the NHS train you on the job? • are there any particular skills or experience that will improve your chances of getting into your chosen career? • enquire about volunteering or work experience • find out if you need any specific A levels, or equivalent qualifications • consider the option of an apprenticeship.	Subject teachers Your careers adviser Professional bodies NHS Careers
Studying for A levels or another course at your school or a local college	As GCSEs, plus: • if you need to study a particular degree, investigate which universities offer it • investigate any further qualifications you might need for your chosen role • search the NHS Jobs website at www.jobs.nhs.uk and speak to your local trust to get an idea of current vacancies • consider the option of an apprenticeship.	Subject teachers Your careers adviser UCAS NHS Careers Professional bodies NHS Jobs
At university	As A levels, plus: • visit the Graduate Management Training Scheme website at www.isthenhsforme.co.uk	University careers service NHS Careers Professional bodies NHS Jobs
Looking for a new career	As A levels, plus: • find out if you will need to retrain before you apply for new roles or if the NHS will train you while you are working.	NHS Careers Jobcentre Plus Professional bodies NHS Jobs UCAS

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