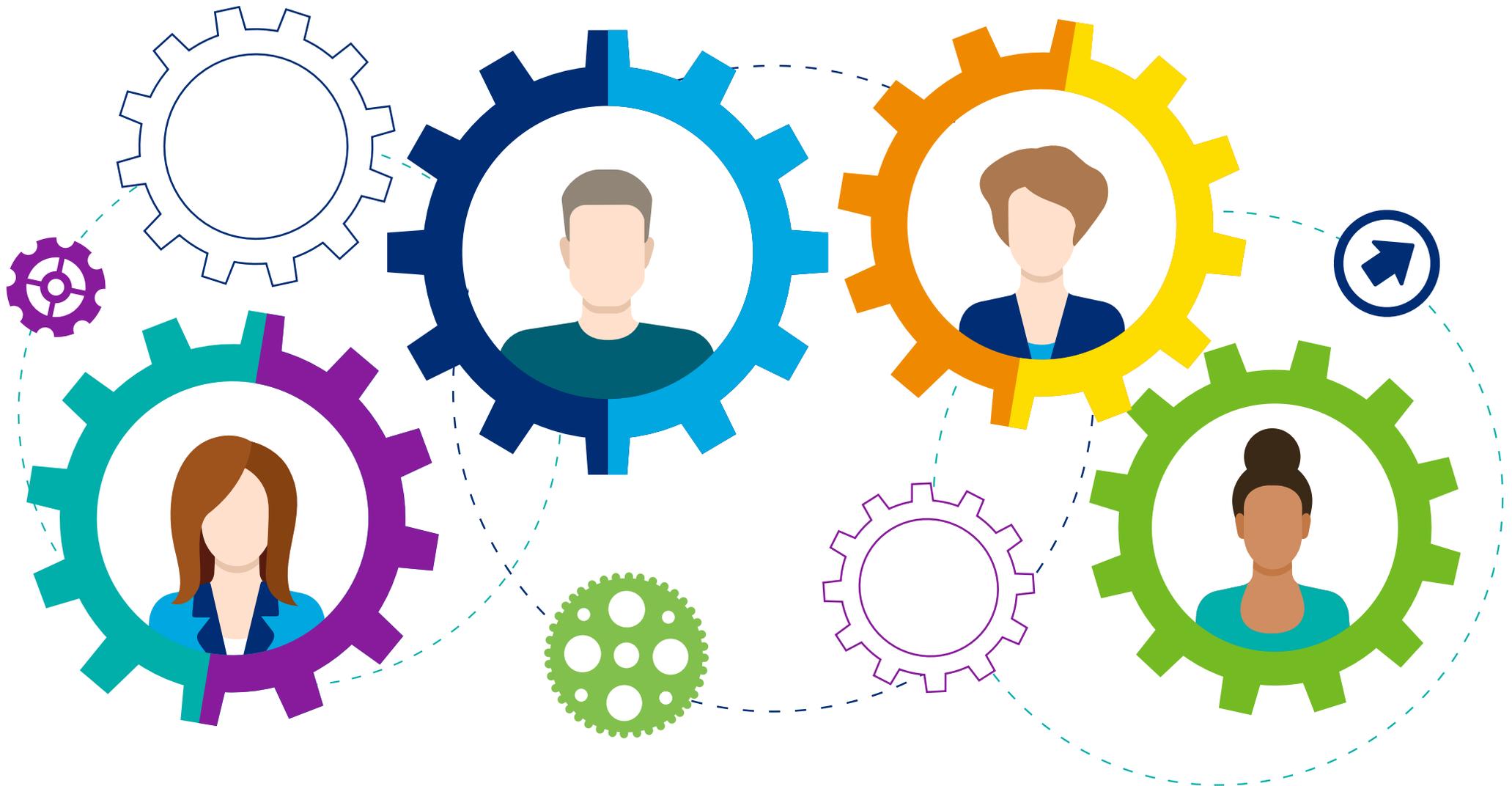


The Healthcare Support Worker Advisory Group



About the Advisory Group

The Healthcare Support Worker Advisory Group is the national voice of HCSWs for learning and development.

This profile tells you a little about us and what we do to help make sure that support workers get the high quality learning and education they need to do their jobs and develop their careers. We come from many backgrounds and disciplines and understand the challenges faced by other support workers.

Our knowledge and expertise is key in advising NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and NHSScotland as a whole.

Our aim is to help create the career development and learning opportunities that are needed for Scotland's 21,000 HCSWs to deliver the best in patient-centred care.



What we do

Support workers are central to the NHS in Scotland and we give them an influential voice on matters related to learning and development. The issues we raise are shared with the planning forums for nursing, midwifery and allied health professionals (NMAHP) and by the Workforce Directorate at NES.

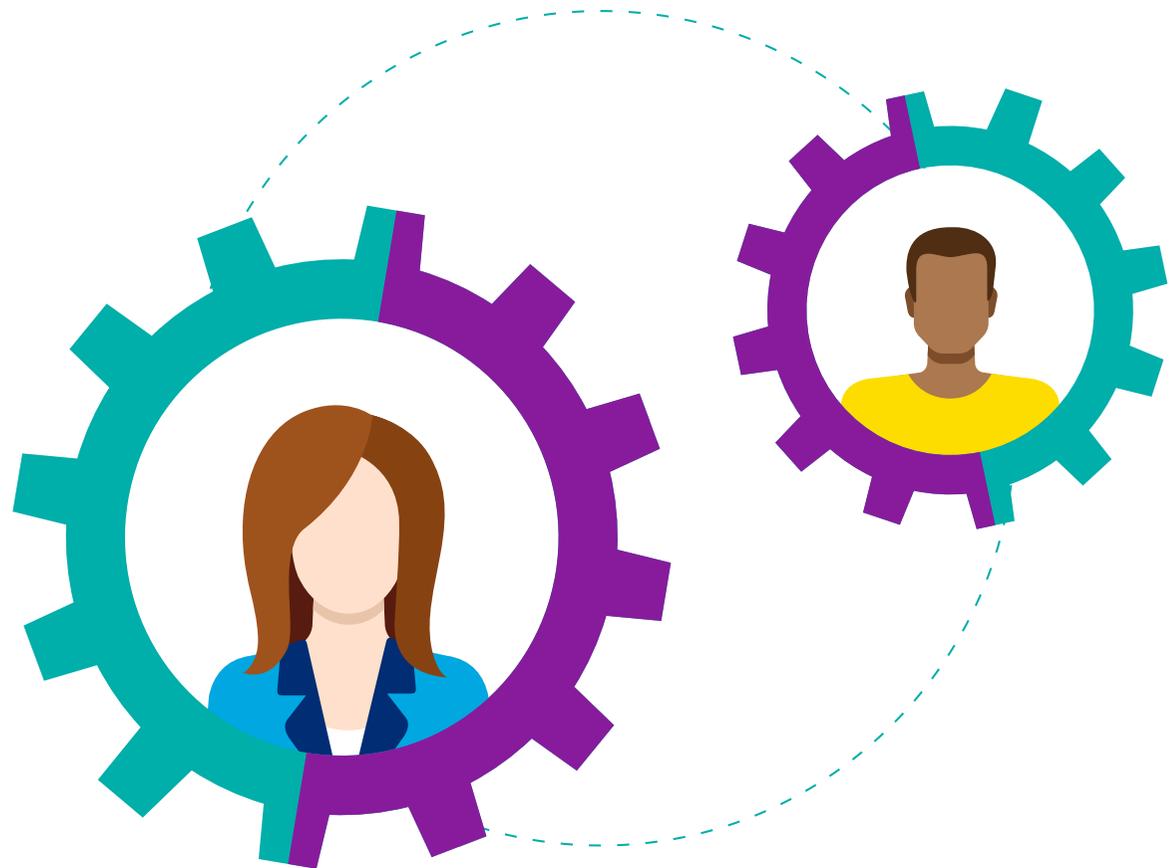
We work with NES to get support workers the learning and education they need to do their jobs as well as possible, and to advance their careers.

That means making sure the right opportunities are available and – just as important – that support workers know about them and can access them.

To help that happen we advise on:

- new learning resources being developed by NES and partners
- access to learning and development
- career pathway development
- qualifications
- conferences and events.

Our feedback to the NES HCSW Programme Team on operational plans and priorities helps ensure that they meet the real-world challenges faced by NMAHP HCSWs.



Who We Are

Our group comes from every part of Scotland's NHS. Most of us have had long careers as HCSWs, so we know the challenges and understand the need for good quality learning and education.

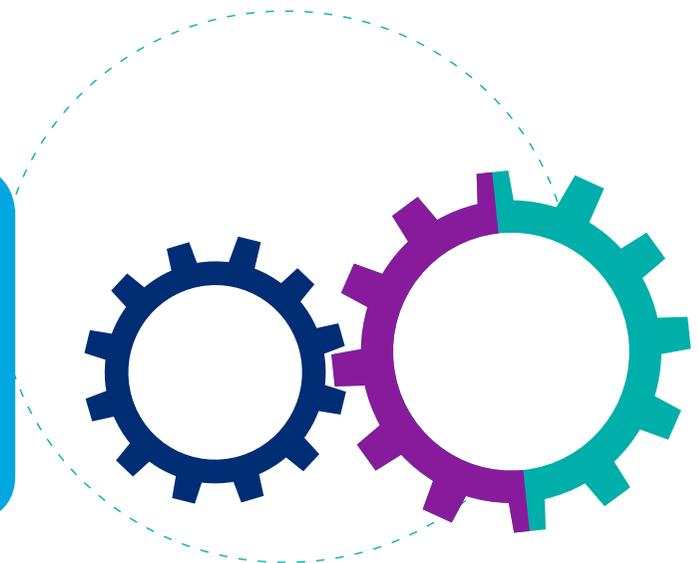
We believe that it is hugely important for all HCSWs to have access to new skills and to be able to develop their own careers in ways that make the most of their abilities and maximise their contribution to patient care and the health service.

Our members include:

- **Linda Ewen**, who was a Midwifery Support Worker and is now an Associate Practice Educator looking after the learning of HCSWs working in clinical support services at NHS Grampian.
- **Gillian Flannigan**, an Occupational Therapy Assistant Practitioner based in West Lothian children's OT services. She is currently seconded part-time as an AHP Assistant Practice Educator as part of a national project to test an AHP Assistant Practice Educator role.
- **Anne Glover**, an NHS Lothian, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Leith Community Treatment Centre.

- **Ross Hume**, a nursing HCSW for NHS Fife in acute care on a respiratory and chest ward. He has taken a course which has given him particular expertise in caring for older patients with dementia.
- **Lisa Maynard**, who was an Assistant Practitioner working with AHPs at Dundee's Dudhope young people's inpatient unit. She is now on secondment to the Care Inspectorate where she is helping improve care plans for young people.
- **Heather Davidson** - an HCSW specialising in cardiology from the Golden Jubilee National Hospital.
- **Margaret Wylie**, a mental health HCSW who is now the Service Development Lead for HCSWs.

- **Kirsty Paton**, a Speech and Language Therapy Support Worker based in Stranraer. She is currently an AHP Career Fellow and is also testing the AHP Associate Practice Educator role in NHS Dumfries and Galloway
- **Laura Rossborough**, who is one of the NHS Fife's immunisation team working in schools across the health board area.
- **Nicky Stewart**, an Assistant Practitioner in Speech and Language Therapy with Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership based in adult learning disabilities service and mental health.



Why I Joined the Group

As a clinical HCSW for nearly 28 years I have been lucky with the opportunities I have been given to develop my knowledge and skills and to progress in my career.

But I know that it hasn't been the same for everyone.

That's why I joined the Advisory Group.

HCSWs want more development, to know about qualifications they can take and the career options that are available. They also need to be involved in and have more ownership of their own development.

If this is achieved it will provide patient-centred care and enhance the experience of patients, carers, families, colleagues and support workers themselves. Learning and development needs to be well planned, relevant to each person's needs and delivered in a way that suits them.

In joining the group, I have found that HCSWs are increasingly recognised as a skilled and valued workforce.

Our input has been valued, our views have made a difference, and we are making real progress towards creating the resources, and the learning culture, the support workers need.

**Margaret Wylie, Service Development
HCSW Lead, Dumfries and Galloway**

All support workers should be aware of the learning opportunities available to them. At the moment too much depends on line managers taking the lead rather than HCSWs having the knowledge and confidence to take action themselves.

We want to spread the word about the group and for support workers to get in touch if they have an issue, raise issues about learning and development or want to find out more about what's on offer.

Better learning and training made a big difference to my work with respiratory and chest patients on an acute ward. Many are older, some have dementia, and some are coming to the end of their lives.

I decided to ask to go on courses to increase my skills and understanding of these patients and it has brought enormous benefits to the care I can offer.

This experience made me want to help other HCSWs get the learning resources they need.

**Ross Hume, Nursing HCSW,
NHS Fife and Advisory Group member**

Shaping the Future

Among the NHS education and learning resources we have been consulted on are:

- **Healthcare Support Worker (HCSW) Learning Framework**
- The Children and Young People's Act e-learning resource
- Palliative care education resources
- Technology enabled learning (digital skills)
- Accredited learning for AHP support workers
- **Support around Death** (animation script)
- The **Communication Game**.

Why the Advisory Group Matters

These are some of the reasons why we think the Advisory Group and its work matter.

It's important that HCSWs have a voice that is listened to at a national level and that they are represented by people who share their experience. It says a massive amount that we are being recognised as such a strong part of the NHS Scotland workforce.

Linda Ewen

Too many people are leaving the NHS. They join because they care and have real pride in what they do. If they have access to education and learning, if they feel valued and can continue to increase their own sense of value they are more likely to stay.

Lisa Maynard



Shaping the Future

Why the Advisory Group Matters

These are some of the reasons why we think the Advisory Group and its work matter.

We're the test shoppers! We are consulted about the training and learning that HCSWs need to fulfil their roles. We're a diverse group with lots of experience, and we are quite a vocal bunch.

Nicky Stewart

The group is invaluable. Great things are happening across Scotland and across disciplines that are influenced by HCSWs. And good training is an important investment. It enables HCSWs to do their jobs competently, and to develop their skills and careers.

Anne Glover

When I started we were just thought of as 'helpers'. The difference is enormous now, but much more can be done. Our group brings all sorts of benefits for the future, and HCSWs are very much the future in the NHS – it's onwards and upwards.

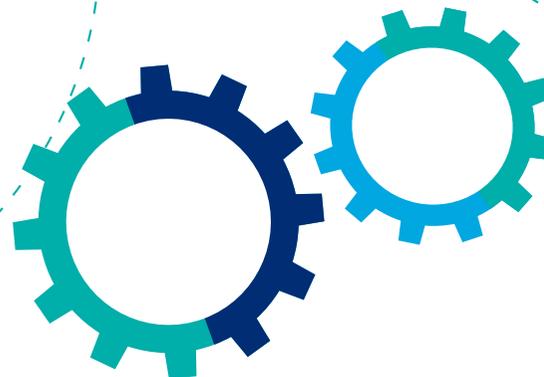
Gillian Flannigan

It's excellent that HCSWs have a voice and it's important to raise awareness about it and what it can do. If they have issues to raise they can come to us, we are up for it.

Gillian Flannigan

It is extremely important that HSCWs have a voice - it helps us shape and grow our learning and development and our opportunities to climb the career ladder.

Laura Rossborough



Be Part of the Future

Being a member of the HCSW Advisory Group is a chance to shape the future of the health service and to make sure that support workers have greater ownership of their own career development.

We are always interested in hearing from people who would like to join the group – bringing fresh experiences and ideas to our work.

Joining the group (which has a maximum membership of 14) is also a great chance to network – finding out about the good practice going on in different disciplines and health boards.

Ask a Question or Raise an Issue

If you want to raise an issue about support worker education and learning or ask about the opportunities that might be available for you, then please get in touch with us.

The best way to reach us is by emailing hcsw@nes.scot.nhs.uk

All HCSWs should know about this group. We are here for them.

Nicky Stewart

All too often HCSWs only advance their careers because a line manager sees their potential. But if they know what learning they need to go from a Band 2 to Bands 3 or 4 it puts the power in their hands.

Lisa Maynard



Working with NES

By Jane Cantrell,
Programme Director, NES

Experience matters – and the HCSW Advisory Group’s members know a huge amount about HCSW role and how these are developing within teams and organisations.

They also understand the challenges in bringing that potential out.

NES, and NHSScotland more widely, welcome the group’s views on how to deliver the learning and development resources support workers want, and in ways that are tailored to their needs.

The group was set up by NES in 2014 and is at the heart of our HCSW Programme. It advises on:

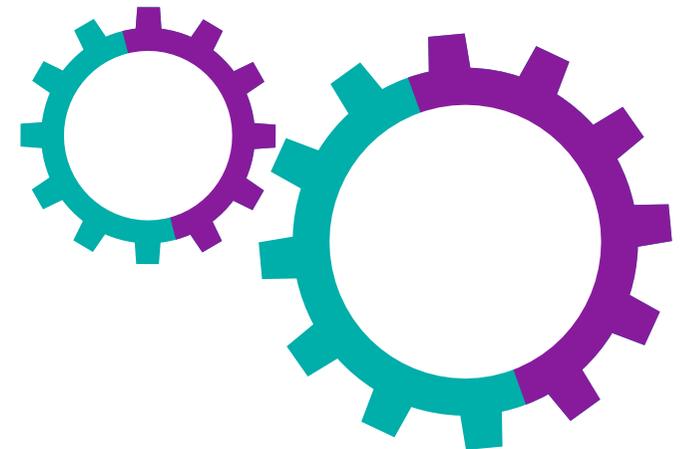
- the resources (or infrastructure) supporting HCSWs to learn at work
- the learning culture needed for everyone to learn and develop
- learning needs and preferences.

We want to build clear, effective and flexible career structures that allow HCSWs to expand their roles, increase their skills and achieve their ambitions in line with **national policies** and action plans.

This is being done in a number of ways. One is through the **HCSW Learning Framework**, which empowers support workers and leaders to make good choices about learning.

Another is through the **4 Pillars of Practice** for HCSWs (clinical skills, facilitating learning, leadership and service improvement).

The input of HCSWs, through the Advisory Group, is enormously important to both of these – keeping us in close touch with what support workers want and letting us know if we are getting it right.



Find out more

Contact us at hcsw@nes.scot.nhs.uk or follow us on
Twitter [@NES_hcsw](https://twitter.com/NES_hcsw)

The Healthcare Support Worker Advisory Group

This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages. Please contact us on **0131 656 3200** or email **altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk**.



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