

## NHS Gateway 2024/25 – interim evaluation

March 2025

**Background:** The four Lothian Local Employability Partnerships and NHS Lothian have worked together to develop a regional, coordinated approach to offer individuals receiving employability support the opportunity to undertake a six-month paid placement with NHS Lothian. A total of 12 individuals (Edinburgh 1, East Lothian 3, Midlothian 4 and West Lothian 4) were appointed. The placement opportunities were identified to suit their career aspirations, location and availability. This helped to support their readiness for work. The placements are in NHS Band 2 posts across the organisation including within business and administration and estates and facilities in key roles where the NHS often has vacancies arising. The placements started on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and are due to complete on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025. This is a short progress update to help inform future decision making with a fuller evaluation planned at the end of the process.

**Outcomes:** As of 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025, all 12 placement candidates are still with NHS Lothian. All chose to be added to the redeployment register after being in post for three months. Of the 12, two have already begun new employment with NHS Lothian. A further four candidates have been successful at securing NHS Lothian employment via redeployment and one has secured a promoted role. We are hopeful there may be more successes before the programme ends.

There have been several opportunities throughout the process for candidates to increase their knowledge and skills over and above the direct experience within the work environment. This includes a bespoke NHS Lothian induction specifically developed for this project and further input on NHS Lothian values, job application processes and interview techniques.

Candidates report feeling more confident, having increased knowledge, skills and experience, and a greater sense of purpose. They also note an increase to income and improvements to general feelings of wellbeing. They hugely value the support received throughout this process and appreciate the opportunity provided. Please see further feedback from candidates below.

**Future:** There has been a significant amount of learning for all involved in undertaking this process and partners are committed to repeating the programme. Lessons relating to the appropriate balance of support from NHS Lothian staff and LEP key workers and the timing of the placement process will inform the development of a future iteration of the project. Future consideration will need to be given to where the challenges were encountered, the spread of the resource requirements for key stakeholders and improved clarity on the roles and responsibilities of those involved. It will be important to maintain all the successful elements of the approach and continue to offer flexibility and choice as part of the model.

## **Feedback**

### **Candidate A:**

*This placement was a great opportunity for someone like me who has a lot of barriers to employment,*

*It helped me gain experience in the UK*

*It helped me financially, as a foreigner living in the UK without a job is not easy with a lot of pressure from back home and the inflation makes it worse,*

*It helped me improve my conversational English and boost my confidence.*

*It gave me the opportunity to learn new things and gain a lot of knowledge.*

### **Candidate B:**

*I was very nervous when going for interview for the chance to be in the placement but NHS Lothian Workforce Development staff made me feel ease which helped my nerves settle. It has changed my life by giving me confidence back slowly, being back in social situations and getting me back in work with no pressure and the regular check ins helped with issues I was having. My boys have noticed I'm happier as am not in the house as much as I was before especially when kids were at school and I was home alone feeling a bit depressed. I loved the fact I could start back part time to get me back into the working environment and I was asked the hours I could manage. I think it's great that my placement let me leave a little bit early due to getting a full time job with their help on how to word things to redeployment for getting an interview. C (NHS Lothian Workforce Development) gave me the confidence to ask my new line manager if I could change my hours by 15 minutes so I wouldn't miss the bus everyday. If it wasn't for C suggesting it and saying I would be OK I probably wouldn't have asked and just kept missing the bus then have to wait 30 minutes till the next one. I usually don't do well with meeting new people or groups of people but NHS Lothian Workforce Development staff made the induction day feel so easy which I was dreading before it. C phoned me the day before my interview for my new full time job and gave me a pep talk that I definitely needed as I thought I would screw the interview up. I was touched by the text to say good luck on my first day and C checking in during the week to make sure I was still OK. I am so glad they were the people that helped me get into work again. I am so thankful they decided to take a chance on me as it has really helped me.*

### **Candidate C**

*To begin with my financial situation has improved immensely. Not only am I now paid much more than I received through Universal Credit I can actually put money into my savings account every month.*

*My personal life and outlook has also improved as working and having an actual structure during my week has given me a sense of purpose which I didn't feel I had before the placement. My general mood and attitude is much better because of this.*

*Possibly the biggest impact that the placement has had on me is that through using experience and skills I had before and continuously learning new skills throughout my time so far I now feel confident to look at career options and that I can learn any new skills required to continue a career within the NHS.*

*I view placements as an excellent option open to people and will always be grateful to be given the opportunity to work within the NHS through this programme.*

#### **Candidate D**

*This programme has helped me with all factors that hindered me securing a job. My confidence has massively increased, which has reduced my anxiety. I have gained experience of the day-to-day goings around the hospital & a good knowledge of the layout of the hospital too. I have formed a routine, which is key in keeping me motivated. I feel I am making a tangible difference by contributing in the Portering team, which has given me a feeling of self-worth. It has also taught me how to conduct myself in a professional environment. I feel very proud to be working in the NHS, seeing the great work and care delivered by staff. I am very grateful for this opportunity & would recommend anyone who hasn't had a job before to go on this programme.*

#### **Candidate E**

*I am pleased to inform my acceptance of the Band 3 Team Secretary Position following my successful interview. I wanted to take a moment to sincerely thank you for your support and guidance provided throughout this process - from helping me secure my current fixed term role to assisting me in transitioning into a permanent position.*

*I truly appreciate all the efforts made to help me find this opportunity, and I am grateful for the assistance provided.*

#### **Candidate F**

*This placement has certainly benefited me. Beforehand, I was really struggling with both getting a job and finding the motivation to even do simple tasks on some days. Having this placement has given me incentive to take care of myself and improve my wellbeing.*

*Before the placement, I was at home a lot. I would only really leave the house for a few hours to attend groups & meetings, but otherwise I wouldn't want to leave my house at all. Being a part of this has given me a reason to get up in the mornings, and I'm out of the house for a lot longer now.*

*It has also given me a lot more financial freedom. Before, I was mostly dependent on my grandparents since I was only receiving £30 a week, but now I'm able to pay for my own things as well as contribute to my household's bills and finances. It makes me feel a lot better about my living situation too, since I'm not entirely dependent on my family anymore.*

*In terms of confidence, this placement has really helped. I was lucky enough to have my coworkers completely take me under their wing and show me the ropes. Before I started, I was really worried about how I would cope in a work environment, since I'd never been in one before and I wasn't sure how much my neurological conditions would affect things. There were a few blips and things that caught me really off guard at times, but overall it's been amazing for both my mental health and my confidence. I feel like I can cope a lot better than I would've been able to before.*

*I would definitely recommend this placement, since it's helped me learn about what it's like to work in the NHS and it has been a really good opportunity for me. It's given me a lot more confidence and independence, and I sincerely feel like it could help other people like me in the future.*

## **Manager A**

*Here in Midlothian, the administration team have supported 2 employability placements. The placements were based at Midlothian Comm Hospital / Dementia Team and Old Bonnyrigg HC supporting Home First Team, with a rotation in between to allow them to gain as much experience as possible whilst with us and to provide them with the necessary skills to seek future employment within the workplace.*

*The 2 placements have been absolutely fantastic and settled really well into our teams, they will be a miss for sure, however the best part and a real success story in is that one of them has secured a permanent promoted post following interview within Midlothian HSCP admin team. The other has secured a permanent post at RIE.*

*NHS Lothian Education Lead Workforce Development Lead has reached out to thank us for being fantastic managers, which really means a lot to us, as we strive to be the best leaders we can be.*

*....we would be more than happy to support in future, should the opportunity arise.*