

# Getting it right:

The current state of sepsis  
education and training for  
healthcare staff across England

Health Education England report: a summary by Virtual College

# Introduction

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Here we take a look at the key points highlighted in HEE's 'Getting it right: The current state of sepsis education and training for healthcare staff across England' report.

Health Education England (HEE) has released a report titled 'Getting it right: The current state of sepsis education and training for healthcare staff across England'. The report analyses how competent healthcare staff are in recognising and responding to the life-threatening illness, sepsis. If not, HEE has a responsibility, within its mandate from the government's Department of Health, to ensure training is available.

In order to comply with this mandate, and on behalf of NHS England's cross system programme board for sepsis, HEE conducted a scoping exercise to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state of sepsis education and training for healthcare workers in England.

## Aims and objectives

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According to the report, the aims of this scoping exercise were to:

- Identify groups of healthcare workers already receiving training in sepsis and the educational resources used to provide such training
- Identify existing examples of good practice and high-quality training resources
- Identify gaps in current training
- Make recommendations for future work needed to improve the provision of sepsis education and training for healthcare staff in the UK

## Exercise results

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HEE gathered responses from a number of stakeholders including 66 hospitals, ten ambulance trusts, 12 of HEE's local teams, nine academic health science networks, four royal colleges, the Registered Nursing Home Association, Skills for Care, UK Sepsis Trust and eLearning for Healthcare.

According to the report, only 37 per cent of the hospitals which responded to the survey reacted to questions about staff groups currently receiving training of sepsis. The majority of hospitals that did respond revealed that they offered sepsis training to 92 per cent of medical staff. Some 64 per cent of these hospitals claimed to provide training to all of their medical staff.

When questioned about sepsis training, the majority of respondents said that 92 per cent of their nursing staff received training, 62 per cent provide training to allied healthcare professionals and 56 per cent provide training to all of their staff.

The report stated that of the ten ambulance trusts that responded to their questions, all said that they do provide sepsis training for their clinical staff and had developed resources to aid this type of training.

# Moving forward

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HEE concluded that across the UK, there is a wide variation in training that is offered to healthcare professionals in different care settings. The data suggests that there are significant gaps in the provision of education and training in three key areas:

1. Primary care
2. Community settings including residential and care homes
3. Management and executive teams within healthcare providers

As it stands, many healthcare providers utilise staff inductions and teaching sessions for healthcare workers in training to provide knowledge on the illness. However, these sessions aren't always accessible for members of staff in permanent and non-training positions.

To resolve this, the HEE stated:

"Whenever a patient presents acutely unwell or with an acute deterioration in their condition, healthcare staff and within healthcare providers should be considering sepsis as part of their diagnosis - we should 'Think Sepsis'. We need to work with partners to ensure that education and training is provided to all healthcare staff working in all sectors of the NHS.

"In order to embed this guidance into practice, this work should include ensuring that this training this is aligned with NICE guidance on sepsis recognition and management."

In July 2016, NICE published its new guideline on sepsis recognition, diagnosis and early management. HEE stated in the report that its new materials have been aligned to this. In order to achieve these aims, HEE outlined a number of recommended actions.



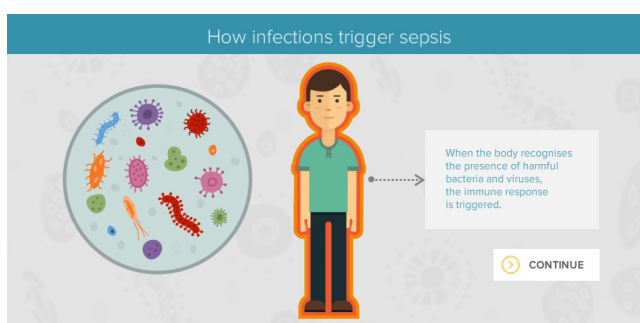
# HEE recommendations

Along with other stakeholders, HEE has recognised that it must also improve in a number of ways. This, according to the report, includes developing communication to maximise uptake and positive engagement with training resources.

HEE must also work closely with the cross-system sepsis programme board to develop a guide for training providers on updating their training and education resources so that they align with NICE guidance on sepsis (this was also applicable to healthcare providers). Together with the Royal College of General Practitioner's clinical lead for sepsis, HEE must undertake the work necessary to ensure the availability of an educational package for residential and care home staff. HEE must also create a package targeted at management and executive teams.

The report also recommended HEE considers developing the HEE Quality Framework to encourage the training in relation to the management of acutely deteriorating patients within the care training of all healthcare workers. In addition to this, methods for evaluating the resources for sepsis training should also be developed and HEE should ensure that training strategies that are proven to be effective are shared across the system.

Information about the funding and development of educational and training resources for sepsis should also be shared at local and national level in order to reduce duplication and improve quality.



Example screens from Virtual College's 'The Safe Management of Sepsis' course

# Healthcare providers' recommendations

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According to the HEE document, healthcare providers must develop their strategies so all their staff are trained in the recognition and management of sepsis. They must also make sure all healthcare staff receive training and consider introducing 'sepsis champions' who take ownership of training strategies and are responsible for their maintenance, development and monitoring of effectiveness.

It also recommends that different trusts consider various models and, as part of sepsis training strategies, healthcare providers should ensure methods are in place so that learning is sustainable.

The report also recommended:

- All staff take responsibility for their own learning needs in relation to sepsis and include this in staff appraisals
- Online sepsis training should also include interactive elements like including encouraging staff to discuss e-learning at teaching sessions or with a supervisor
- Healthcare providers should ensure serious sepsis incidents are used as learning opportunities and that appropriate educational resources are used to respond to these incidents

## Other recommendations

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All other stakeholders must make sure education and training materials on sepsis are updated to reflect the NICE guidance and that they also embed the concepts of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial stewardship.

In addition to this, HEE recommended that undergraduate courses for healthcare professionals delivered by higher education institutions should include training in the recognition and management of sepsis in a clinical context within their final year.



### Source

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/gettingitright.pdf>

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