

The 6 Values of the NHS Constitution

If you ever find yourself in an interview for a job within the NHS, then chances are you will be asked some questions based around the core values of the organisation. This will be the same regardless of what position you're applying for, whether it's clerical, support, medical, nursing, or anything else. Therefore, it's a good idea to familiarise yourself with these values, and to think about what they mean, and what they might look like in your line of work. Of course, even outside of the NHS, these values represent core principles that will make anyone a better practitioner in health and social care, and are reflected in the approaches, theories, ethics and legislation discussed on this course.

The core values of the NHS are written into the NHS constitution. This is a document which is updated every 10 years. It sets out in writing the key principles and values that underpin the thousands of different arms of the National Health Service, giving them all a common set of goals and structure for their working practice. Currently, there are 6 core values in the Constitution, and these were written following consultation with staff, patients, and members of the public. As you look at each one, think about what it represents for the area of healthcare that you are most interested in, or for your own experience of dealing with the NHS.

Working together for patients.

The pathway that any patient takes through any interaction with the NHS will involve many different individuals and departments. Teamwork, cooperation and collaboration are all essential, and every part of this must be carried out with the patient's best interests as the first priority.

Respect and dignity.

Every patient, visitor, relative, carer and member of staff must be valued as an individual. Each person has their own beliefs, aspirations, needs, priorities and abilities, and these must be treated with respect and dignity by all others.

Commitment to quality of care.

This point is about setting high standards in the quality and delivery of care and treatment and showing dedication to continually improving the service offered. This includes safety and safeguarding, efficiency, and many other factors.

Compassion.

As well as technical and medical expertise, all aspects of care should be delivered with the very human elements of compassion, kindness, patience, empathy and understanding at their core.

Improving lives.

People come to the NHS in need of help, and the organisation and its staff must recognise that they play a vital role in improving the quality of life for everyone they treat. By highlighting this principle, the NHS aims to offer the best patient-experience possible and to continuously improve its facilities and services.



Everyone counts.

All practices must be inclusive and welcoming to all. The NHS is a vital part of all communities and must enhance community life by reaching out to all, and actively fighting discrimination.

As you can see, a lot of this crosses over with the ethics and principles discussed on this course, such as using a person-centred approach to care, and observing the 6 Cs of health and social care. Therefore, having a good understanding of these core values will prepare you well for study and assessment in our field, as well as possible future employment opportunities.