

NHS Patient Safety Syllabus 2.0

Level 1 and 2



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Key FAQs: About this syllabus what you need to know

Who is it for?

- This is a multi-professional syllabus. It is intended to cover all the patient safety training and educational needs of people currently working in the NHS or in training to work in the NHS. This includes both clinical staff and the wider health and care workforce and covers the voluntary sector and social care.
- Patient Safety Syllabus Training Level 1 and 2 content is available online. Videos content is played within Vimeo.

How is it different?

- This is the first NHS-wide patient safety syllabus. It is applicable to all staff.
- The syllabus includes the incident reporting and investigation that takes place after incidents (including near misses), but also adds critical proactive systems to prevent harm occurring in the first place. This reflects best practice in building safe systems within other safety-critical industries.
- The syllabus encompasses all national safety initiatives including national alerts, key safety regulations and safety campaigns.

How will it make a difference to NHS staff, including clinicians and managers?

- The syllabus provides a common language and framework for patient safety.
- It provides content to support all patient safety activities carried out by NHS staff. This includes incident investigation, creating a safety culture, using human factors, proactive risk management and managing system-induced human failures.

Does the syllabus include Human Factors?

- The syllabus is based on a systems approach to human factors. It is holistic in its use of human factors, both system- and person-based.
- Human factors is the study of the system within which staff work, including their environment, equipment and people. In other industries, the application of human factors adds a proactive approach to safety that goes beyond the reactive approach that currently dominates in healthcare.

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- The syllabus therefore explicitly emphasises a systems-based human factors approach to safety, where working systems and their interaction with staff are paramount in creating safety for patients and supportive working conditions for staff.
 - The aim of all the tools and techniques is always to minimise risk and consequent harm to patients.
 - These tools and techniques apply to all aspects of work within the NHS, including the safe design of plant, equipment, environment and working conditions.
 - The syllabus also includes popular ‘human factors’ approaches based on non-technical skills such as communication, stress management and situational awareness, commonly referred to as Team-or Crew-Resource Management.

What are some of the tools and techniques described in the syllabus?

- Because the syllabus is based on a systems approach, system mapping and risk evaluation are critically important.
- Tools to understand the system and the risks to patients include process mapping, Hierarchical Task Analysis, Failure Mode and Effect Analysis and human performance variation.
- Incident Investigation tools are based on best practice in identifying care and service delivery problems and emphasise system interventions in preventing future harm. These include the use of the Hierarchy of Control in designing most effective interventions, report writing and sharing lessons learned.
- Safety Culture, one of the four key themes on which the syllabus is based, is addressed through several tools including the Manchester Patient Safety Framework and the Safety Culture Index. The use of these instruments in creating a reflective, risk-aware culture and in accurately measuring it is an essential part of the syllabus.
- The syllabus emphasises throughout the importance of avoiding corrosive blame culture and the correct use of an Incident Decision Tree or Just Culture Guide in evaluating human performance and variability.
- Measurement and monitoring of patient safety, and the models that underpin thinking on safety, are included in Safety Culture education.

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- The syllabus also describes the use of formal tools in risk management, including reporting and learning from adverse events (including near misses), risk evaluation and ranking, risk registers and escalation of risk.
 - The syllabus addresses improvement methodology as it affects patient safety, with an emphasis on the reliability of safety-critical processes. The development of essential process reliability metrics and their correct application in building safe clinical systems is key to the syllabus.

Where does this work come from?

- The work builds on previous work in the NHS on patient safety, academic courses in patient safety, the national programme Safer Clinical Systems, and direct experience in managing safety in NHS trusts.
- The development of the syllabus has been guided by an expert advisory group including representatives from patients, NHS staff, academia, medical Royal Colleges, NHS Improvement and NHS England. The work was funded by Health Education England, and other jurisdictions have been consulted.

What impact will this work have?

- This syllabus will be relevant to patient safety education at all levels and in all professions.
- The syllabus is expected to create a step-change in thinking about safety, providing the understanding, tools and techniques that NHS staff at all levels need to build safety for patients.
- The syllabus is also intended to begin moving the emphasis from reactive to proactive methods, managing risk before it creates harm for patients.
- The syllabus takes the systems approach to safety that has been continually advocated across the world and sets it out clearly for professional education.
- Throughout the syllabus, the emphasis is pragmatic and focuses clearly on how to build safe clinical systems in all areas and departments of the NHS.

What is different in version 2.0?

- This first revision of the syllabus following consultation and further programme development includes new competences in the areas of Safety-II, Medico-legal education and patient, carer and public involvement in patient safety.

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- Version 2.0 includes some language or terminology changes in the area of human error.
 - This version has removed previous sections more appropriate to the detailed curriculum training modules such as outcome statements (which will become formal learning outcomes at curriculum level) and assessment examples (which, again, will be included in curricula).
 - A detailed document explaining the rationale behind these changes, which were approved by the Patient Safety Project Advisory Group in September 2020, is published here.

What are the different levels of the Patient Safety training?

- **Level One – Essentials for Patient Safety** is the starting point for all NHS staff and focusses on the essentials of creating patient safety.
- **Level One – Essentials for Patient Safety for Boards and Senior Leadership Teams'** is an additional session for senior leaders and executive teams. There are no skills assessments in Levels 1 although a certificate of completion will be received.
- **Level two - Access to practice** is intended for all clinical and non-clinical staff who have an interest in understanding more about patient safety or who want to go on to access the higher levels of training. There are two sessions: The first introduces systems thinking (how the way we work can be used to reduce error and improve safety) and risk expertise (how we can identify and manage risk to keep patients safe). The second session looks at human factors (the science of work and of working together in safely designed systems) and safety culture (the significance of a true learning culture, free of inappropriate blame). Level two – Access to Practice includes an assessment and a certificate on completion of the assessment.
- **Level two Sector Specific Sessions** - From April 2023, five patient safety sector specific sessions were added to the Level 2 Access to Practice. The five patient safety sector specific sessions focus on Mental Health, Primary Care, Maternity, Acute Care and Management and Administration, and cover patient safety culture, human factors, risk management, supporting incident responses, and systems thinking. A certificate of completion is available following the completion of each session.



When was Level 1 and 2 launched?

- Health Education England, in partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement, The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and e-Learning for Healthcare published the new patient safety training materials in October 2021.

Where can the training materials be found?

- Levels 1 and 2 are available via ESR, Local Management System, and e-learning for healthcare platforms.
- The training materials can be found on the [e-learning for healthcare hub](#)

Who is it for?

- The first level, **Essentials for patient safety**, is the starting point for all NHS staff, and even those in non-patient facing roles are encouraged to complete it. Level one also provides an additional session for senior leaders: **Essentials of patient safety for boards and senior leadership teams**.
- **Level two - Access to practice** is intended for those who have an interest in understanding more about patient safety and those who want to go on to access the higher levels of training.

When will Levels 3 to 5 be available?

- Curriculum guidance for Levels 3 and 4 of the Patient Safety Syllabus curricula will be available from September 2023. Patient Safety Syllabus Training Level 3 and 4 FAQs are available on the website.

Is this training mandatory?

- The training is not currently mandatory; however, some organisations have made the decision to make the Level 1 training mandatory for all their workforce. An evaluation of uptake has shown that where organisations have made the decision to make the training mandatory and actively promoted the training to their employees, uptake and feedback has been good. Current uptake is being closely monitored and the decision to whether the training will be nationally mandated will be reviewed.

How long does the training take?

- It is advised that the first level takes approximately 30 minutes and the second level approximately 40-45 minutes. The sector specific case studies take around 30 minutes each.

How often does the training have to be repeated?

- We currently recommend that the Level 1 training is undertaken once every three years. However, organisations may choose to undertake the training more frequently than this. We will be evaluating the optimal frequency of undertaking Level 1 training and will share this evidence back with organisations via our website.

How can I access Level 1 and 2 uptake data and activity reports for staff in my organisation?

- For those working in NHS trusts and CCGs, the HEE e-Learning for Healthcare (eLfh) team are able to provide access to activity reports, so you can monitor how many staff in your organisation have accessed the training modules.
- When a user accepts HEE e-Lfh's terms and conditions, they permit their activity data to be shared with their organisation. However, HEE e-Lfh has to take reasonable precautions to ensure that only appropriate people within the trust have access to these reports. Therefore, users are required to be authorised by either the trust's Medical Director or the HR director (or Practice Manager for CCG's) before we give them access to the reporting suite.
- Offline versions of the level 1 patient safety syllabus training, complete with appendices, are available by contacting the e-lfh hub support desk support@e-lfh.org.uk.
- More information about the **authorisation process** : [Reports – e-Lfh Support \(e-lfh.org.uk\)](#) : [accessibility statement](#).