

I am the Regional Lead for East England for our NHS Cadets programme which is a national youth volunteering programme established by NHS England and is delivered by St John Ambulance. With much success in many areas across England and continuing to expand in surrounding areas, we are keen to share this opportunity with the young people in Suffolk.

I am contacting you now as the young people start to settle down in the new academic term, now will be a great time to think about the programmes for the young people to take on extra-curricular activities. This will enhance their transferable skills as well as look at the direction they want to take, especially with considering various options for the next stage.

We are successfully engaging with a diverse range of young people and with NHS Trusts, Schools and other youth providers who partner with us to run NHS Cadets programmes. The Programme provides opportunities for young volunteers and delivers positive outcomes for local young people from communities and groups who are often underrepresented in the NHS workforce. As an NHS Cadet, young people learn about life in healthcare from inspiring professional speakers along with developing critical skills, boosting their self-confidence, and exploring careers in the healthcare sector through volunteering experiences.

NHS cadets is a 36-week programme for young people who are able to gain transferable skills transitioning on to volunteering within the NHS, apprenticeships and some even branching out to University. Due to this success, NHS are continuing their partnership and funding with St John Ambulance to ensure we can bring this opportunity to as many young people to consider volunteering and even careers with the NHS where they otherwise would not have initially due to their personal circumstances. Like me, you will know who are underrepresented, SEND, NEET, FSM, Young Carers, Ethnic Minorities, LGBTQ+ and so forth, therefore, it is absolutely vital to share as many opportunities as possible with our young people so that we can become a society of inclusiveness.

It aims to equip communities of youth aged 14-18 years who are underrepresented in the NHS workforce with the skills to volunteer in healthcare settings. It is a 36-week programme for 2 hours a week and all modules are written and delivered by our team, whether that is facilitated in a training room within a hospital/Trust or a St John Ambulance building. Alternatively, this is also facilitated by schools and their own staff, depending on capacity and how each institute proceeds forward.

There are two programmes - Foundation which is targeting 14 - 16-year-olds, and they commence on key skills as well as some awareness sessions with guest speakers added in between the sessions, as well as adding in some career mapping. The Advanced programme is for 16 - 18-year-olds where they work on modules more clinical development that enhance their knowledge and work on Career skills with the potential of volunteering within a Trust for a particular time period and not just work experience. Furthermore, the transferable skills gained can be utilised in any work environment, such as police, army, navy, and so much more therefore, do consider this and share widely with your students.

<https://www.sja.org.uk/press-centre/press-releases/St-John-partners-with-schools-to-deliver-NHS-Cadet-programme/>

If this were something you would like to initiate within the school, please, do let me know so that we can arrange a meeting to discuss this further. With the recent feedback, schools and academies have found our NHS Cadets programme works well with the healthcare courses, especially now with the introduction of T-Levels, but it is not limited to just the healthcare students.

<https://www.sja.org.uk/get-involved/young-people/nhs-cadets/nhs-cadets-parents-carers/>

Please, do not hesitate to reach out if you want to discuss this further or require more information.

Kindest regards,

**Safina Kusar-Ahmed**

**Regional Lead (NHS Cadets)/Youth Leader/FA & Demonstrator/SafeguardingTM**

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