

## IT contractors can use new online resource to help secure NHS contract roles

IT contractors seeking to gain access to NHS contracts can access a new online resource, [NHS People](#). The website, from specialist NHS IT recruiter max20, will not only provide details of the latest IT contracts in the health service, but also offer insights from hiring managers in NHS IT departments.

"I see our new online portal as being a synthesis of a jobsite, [LinkedIn](#), a magazine and community for anyone seeking to work within healthcare IT," explains Don Tomlinson, managing director of max20 and the founder of the new portal.

"Initially, the portal will focus on IT contractors and securing them lucrative NHS contracts, as well as advertising permanent healthcare IT roles and assignments with NHS suppliers. Then, we hope to expand the portal's scope beyond purely IT into other areas."

### A place to find IT contracts - now

Tomlinson stresses that the focus of the site right now is true to max20's core business, which is finding IT contractors work in the NHS: "There are huge changes happening in the NHS and their success will depend on the health service's IT, and the IT professionals who manage and implement it.

"A few years ago, the NHS would only hire IT contractors with NHS experience, so the organisation was very much a closed shop. But NHS IT managers now recognise the benefits of hiring from outside the organisation, because of the fresh approaches, new technologies and additional skills and experience 'outsiders' bring.

"Two years ago every IT contractor we placed in the NHS came from the NHS. Now half of all IT contractors we successfully recruit come from outside, with backgrounds as varied as retail, financial services, engineering and telecoms."

### Insights to help win contractors work

Although the forum has not yet gone live, Tomlinson says contractors will be able to ask their peers for help and advice about securing contracts. It will be supported by regular blogposts, and available via social media channels.

"We have 12 years of experience in hiring IT contractors for the NHS. That's all we do, and we want to share that expertise," continues Tomlinson. "Through our extensive network of clients, which includes many senior NHS IT managers, we are also featuring guest bloggers who are giving us their insights into the key IT issues within the NHS. They're also offering tips on how IT contractors can win contracts."

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Don Tomlinson, max20

### How the portal will benefit IT contractors

When he conceived of the portal, Tomlinson wanted to address many of the gripes expressed by IT contractors about the hiring process and their experiences with recruitment agencies.

He explains: "The candidate experience can be pretty shocking at times and we wanted to make their lives as stress free and easy as possible. So, the registration process only takes about five minutes and, unlike many NHS recruitment sites, you don't have to upload all your documentation right at the start."

"But once registered, each IT contractor has a secure online account. They can upload their CV plus documents like proof of identify, proof that they can work in the UK, certifications and so on which are all necessary to secure NHS work. That documentation sits on the contractor's account and can be used for each contract application. Contractors can also set different types of alerts to tell them when we post new contracts relevant to them."

### Recruiters using the NHS People portal to find contractors

The portal is already proving to be a powerful tool for max20 to use when seeking contractors. Tomlinson gives the example of a contractor with a highly specialised set of healthcare informatics skills. "At the very last minute for very valid reasons she turned down a contract extension, leaving the NHS IT department concerned without a badly needed specialist.

"We immediately searched the portal database and found we only had two people with those skills, and one was the contractor who had just turned down the renewal. The second contractor had registered two days earlier via LinkedIn. We quickly got in touch and offered him the contract, which he accepted."

### How the portal may evolve

Tomlinson believes that in time it is inevitable that the portal may be used by recruiters of all kinds to find suitably qualified contractors and employees. "We have plans to extend the scope of the portal into many areas, such as adding different disciplines of contractors and employees needed by the NHS and new functionality.

He concludes: "Alongside the community and social element, NHS People will continue to be underpinned by high quality IT contracts and supported by our expertise in helping IT contractors find NHS assignments."

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