New initiatives, new pathways to professional progression

In this edition of Quality Matters we take a look at some of the opportunities for professional progression, presented by new initiatives designed to prepare the flexible workforce for the increasing demand for health care. Times of rapid change can be challenging, but it’s important to seize the moment and grasp those new opportunities - and NHS Professionals are here to help you do just that.

First of all, we feature Continual Professional Development (CPD) – an outstanding route to the life-long learning which makes a real difference to both your career and the quality of care you deliver. CPD is an essential for every healthcare professional, and our article guides you through what it might mean for you. Revalidation, mandatory on a three year basis as from April this year, presents more opportunities by encouraging nurses and midwives to develop and demonstrate their skills. Add the new role of Nursing Associate, which will enable care assistants to move on to nursing or a more senior post and the future is looking bright for the flexible workforce!

With opportunities come responsibilities and in our article ‘Mind the Gap’ we look at the new national framework ‘Leading Change, Adding Value’. This framework aims to improve health and wellbeing, care and quality and funding and efficiency by focusing on, and eliminating ‘unwarranted variation’ so everyone, wherever they may be, can help to close the gaps which exist in healthcare provision. Finally, there are features on the Client Complaints process – a Lead Nurse takes us through how it works – and on the positive effects which can be achieved by acting on the Duty of Candour we all share.

So, it’s a busy issue, bringing you essential information we hope you find both relevant and useful. Maintaining, and enhancing, the quality of care through clinical governance is of critical importance to all of us, and if there’s any way we can improve the way we brief NHS Professionals flexible workers please let us know by emailing: clinical.governance@nhsprofessionals.nhs.uk

We’d also like to hear what you think of Quality Matters - all feedback is most welcome!

Karen Barraclough
Senior Nurse/Head of Governance

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
...enabling you to become a life-long learner

Undertaking quality CPD is not only about enhancing your professional practice and ensuring the delivery of high quality patient care. It also provides you with great opportunities to develop your skills both as a life-long learner and as a reflective practitioner.
Taking the time now to look at the new skills you would like to acquire and the learning available to you will mean you are potentially ahead of the game when it comes to your professional development and getting that new job.

**Developing a professional portfolio**

There are many ways you can access CPD opportunities - and developing a portfolio is probably the best way to record your progress.

Although it is not a requirement for registered nurses to complete a portfolio of evidence for revalidation, the NMC strongly recommend that you do – and the same can be said for all healthcare professionals. Whether you are a nurse or a care support worker, or indeed any other healthcare professional, a portfolio can help you demonstrate your commitment, both to your professional practice and to learning.

A professional portfolio is much more than a simple file of documents. It is an opportunity to demonstrate how you have applied new learning (or old learning seen with new eyes!) to your professional practice and how you have grown as a healthcare practitioner through the process of reflection.

Professional portfolios can be used to:

- Support revalidation for qualified nurses
- Fine tune clinical skills
- Develop business skills
- Support career progression
- Increase the chances of getting a new job
- Maximise employment potential
- Access formal education programmes
- Create a personal sense of pride

Developing a professional portfolio is not difficult. With a little preparation and commitment, it can easily become a regular activity to support your learning. A portfolio is personal to you – but some examples of what might be included in your portfolio can be found in Box 2.

If you are a care support worker you might want to look at the templates and the examples on the Nursing and Midwifery Council website used by Registered Nurses for revalidation - particularly the reflective accounts and practice related feedback templates, as they may help you develop your portfolio. [http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/](http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/)

**Benefits of CPD and becoming a life-long learner**

- Enhances your professional role
- Improves quality of patient care
- Enables you to develop as a life-long learner
- Means you are more able to engage with colleagues
- Keeps you up-to-date
- Supports your development as a reflective learner
- Helps you to develop your professional career
- Means you will be valued for your skill and knowledge
- Helps you to become easily adaptable to change
- Can help you gain promotion
- Learning new skills and knowledge becomes easier
- PLUS if you decide on a new career pathway or to apply for a new job you will have a great CPD portfolio to show off to any potential employer.

You’ll find many of the benefits of CPD listed in Box 1 above. But perhaps one of the most important is that it enables you to accept responsibility not only for your professional learning but also how you apply that learning in your professional practice.

Using CPD to support revalidation is now an essential requirement for professional nursing practice. But CPD is not just for qualified nurses. It is for all healthcare professionals, across every branch of nursing practice.

With the changing climate of healthcare reform, including introduction of the Care Certificate, the Nursing Associate role and now Revalidation, there has never been a more exciting time for career development.

The most important aspects of any professional learning are that:

- it is of good quality;
- you can apply it to your professional practice
- it works around you.

You are never too old or too experienced to benefit from new learning, or from a fresh approach to old learning. And it doesn’t have to stop at just professional learning. You may be a member of a committee or a voluntary group through which you have developed significant skills over the years.

Such skills can be used to enhance your professional practice. You just need to demonstrate this in your portfolio.

Finally... don’t forget to record any new learning as part of CPD activities and to make sure that every bit of your learning counts.

**Types of learning opportunities available**

- Reading journal articles
- Listening to Podcasts
- Watching webinars, some of which can be interactive
- Undertaking Massive Open On-line Courses (MOOCs)
- On-line learning courses
- Face-to-face classroom learning
- Distance learning

**In the workplace...**

- Handovers are a great way to learn about different diagnoses and treatments
- Shadowing opportunities may be available
- Being part of a consultation with a patient
- Asking questions and learning from other staff
- Joining in with informal teaching sessions when on assignment
Revalidation: Demonstrate what you do

Revalidation – an opportunity as well as an obligation

From April 2016 the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) has required all nurses and midwives to revalidate.

Every three years, at the point of your renewal of registration, you will need to show that, as a professional, you understand and work to the Code’s standards of practice and behaviour.

The aim of revalidation is:

- To improve public protection and professional standards
- To strengthen professionalism and practice

Participation in the revalidation process is on an on-going basis over a 3 year period rather than a single point in time assessment. All Nurses and Midwives will need to meet a range of requirements, designed to show that they are keeping up to date and actively maintaining their fitness to practice. It’s an obligation – but also an opportunity to structure, enhance and demonstrate your professional capabilities.

The obligation

To complete the revalidation process you will need to provide evidence to meet a number of requirements. You must…

- Be able to evidence 450 hours of practice or 900 hours for dual registration
- Be able to evidence 40 hours of continual professional development (20 hours of which must be participatory)
- Obtain practice related feedback over the three years prior to the renewal of your registration
- Record 5 pieces of written reflection and discuss these with another other NMC registered nurse or midwife in a reflective discussion
- Provide a health and character declaration
- Declare that you have or will have appropriate cover under an indemnity arrangement
- Demonstrate to a confirmer that you have met the revalidation requirements
- Keep an accurate and up-to-date portfolio of evidence

What should you do to get started?

1. Register at NCM online where you can find out your revalidation date:  
   www.nmc.org.uk/registration/nmc-online
2. Read the code and consider how it relates to your area of practice:  
   www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/
3. Ensure that you are up-to-date on revalidation development and tools by checking the NMC website regularly:  
   www.nmc.org.uk/registration/staying-on-the-register/

Useful Links

NHS Professionals provides a number of online opportunities for learning through:

The Managed Learning Environment (MLE)

Virtual College
https://nationalpatientsafetysuite.virtual-college.co.uk/

Other links you may find useful are detailed below:

NHS Professionals website – governance support page:  
http://www.nhsprofessionals.nhs.uk/elearning/Pages/clinical-governance.aspx

NHS Professionals Blog:  
www.nhspbank.com/category/revalidation/

Revalidation website:  
revalidation.mnc.org.uk

Indemnity

In response to an EU Directive, it is now a legal requirement for all healthcare and associated professionals, including nurses, midwives and allied healthcare professionals to have indemnity arrangements in place, providing appropriate cover against clinical negligence claims as a condition of registration.

NHS Professionals is pleased to confirm that all “bank only flexible workers” are indemnified under the “Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts” (CNST) when working shifts for NHSP in our client Trusts.

For more information, visit:  
http://go.nhs.uk/nmc-pia

QUALITY MATTERS: ISSUE 3

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Nursing Associate concept moves off the drawing board and into reality...

Last winter (December 2015), the Government responded to the increased pressure on the health and social care workforce in England by announcing a consultation on a new role that focused on nursing support.

The new role of Nursing Associate - described in Health Education England’s ‘Capacity to Care and Capability to Treat’ (http://tinyurl.com/j87cdlj) is expected to work alongside care assistants and registered nurses to deliver hands-on care, focusing on ensuring that patients continue to get the compassionate care they deserve.

In line with the ‘Shape of Caring’ review recommendations of March 2015, the new Nursing Associate role has the potential to transform the nursing and care workforce. Work is underway to make sure the role has the clear entry and progression points which are important for its uptake, impact and further development.

The ‘Shape of Caring’ review – also known as ‘Raising the Bar’ – sets out aims designed to ensure that throughout their careers, nurses and care assistants receive consistent high quality education and training.

Whether as Nursing Associates, as existing nurses or in the care workforce the overall intention is to ensure that the NHS staff of the future are ready, willing and able to deliver the high quality care patients need and can adapt to change as it happens. To achieve this, it is seen as critical to create a career pathway which offers progression opportunities – and gives job satisfaction to those who want to both make a difference to patients and to develop themselves in an increasingly important profession for the 21st century. With a population living longer, and with potentially multiple conditions as advanced ageing occurs, the nursing and care workforce can clearly be seen as a major element in national infrastructure.

Commenting on the new role, Professor Lisa Bayliss Pratt, Director of Nursing and Deputy Director of Education and Quality at Health Education England (HEE) said “This role has the potential to transform the nursing and care workforce. But it is neither a panacea for future workforce supply, nor a substitute for increasing the supply of graduate registered nurses – and throughout the process we sought to reassure people that patient safety remains paramount and is a determining factor that underlines the role.”

Following the consultation, which finished in March this year, HEE is now implementing a programme of work around developing the Nursing Associate role. In partnership with stakeholders and through a series of workshops around the country, the HEE will:

- Develop the scope of practice so that it is applicable across health and social care settings
- Identify the knowledge, skills and competencies required for the role
- Develop a national curriculum for apprenticeship-style training leading to a foundation degree
- Establish test sites across England in a range of health and social care settings.
- Support the test sites in the recruitment of 1,000 students for a 2017 start
- Apply and embed lessons learned to the Nursing Associate Trailblazer apprenticeship standard
- Evaluate the role with key partners

For NHS Professionals the new Nursing Associate role offers the opportunity to expand our service provision and include, when available, the additional staff group across the services offered to client trusts. In line with the ‘Shaping of Care’ review, the role will provide an opportunity for progression for existing care support workers who wish to further their career into a more senior post or who wish to progress onto a nursing degree.

NHS Professionals already has a proven track record in such ‘up-skilling’ initiatives with its Care Support Worker (CSW) Development Programme - which provides those who are new to care with the opportunity to complete a structured programme and obtain a Care Certificate qualification, whilst also working flexibly. As the training for nursing associates will be an apprenticeship-style programme it may also lend itself to our flexible workforce approach. Watch this space for more developments as the concept moves off the drawing board and into reality.
Minding the Gap - new framework shows how nursing and care colleagues can both lead change and add value

‘Leading Change, Adding Value’ is a new national framework that covers all nursing, midwifery and care staff in England - wherever they work and whatever role they might have. It is aligned to the ‘Triple Aim’ contained in NHS England’s Five Year Forward View - ensuring better outcomes, creating better experiences for patients and staff and also making better use of resources.

The framework shows how nursing, midwifery and care staff can help close these three gaps – the health and wellbeing gap, the care and quality gap and the funding and efficiency gap - while retaining the well-recognised 6 Cs (https://www.england.nhs.uk/6cs/) as being central to all that they do.

It focuses on ‘unwarranted variation’ – variations in health and care outcomes, patients’ experience and use of resources that cannot be justified by reasons of geography, population need or available infrastructure.

The framework has been co-developed since late last year across a broad range of national organisations, practitioners, patients, carers and the wider public.

The framework offers 10 aspirational commitments that will help focus on narrowing the three gaps, address unwarranted variation across a number of areas and assist in demonstrating the Triple Aim outcomes. They are designed to be applied locally in any environment and at any level.

For more information on the framework, visit: www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/leading-change/ or watch the short video created by NHS England’s Chief Nurse, Jane Cummings, to explain the framework and see how other nurses have tackled unwarranted variation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85icsVVJuQ0
Taking the lead on Client Complaints

In this article, Kathryn Oddy - one of the Nurse Lead team - describes case management for clinical and other complaints and any incidents that require investigation and resolution. Kathryn has worked in a number of senior roles within acute trusts, including Head of Nursing and Matron at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. This has given her much valuable and practical experience of the workings of clinical governance at ward and department level, including managing staff and handling complaints.

As the largest employer of flexible workers in the NHS, NHS Professionals has a team of Nurse Leads who are dedicated to flexible workers and focus on any issues that might arise around clinical practice and behaviour ‘on shift’. The Nurse Lead team is part of the wider clinical governance team NHS Professionals has put into place in order to support patient safety and quality in service delivery.

The complaints process

The complaints process usually begins when client trusts complete a feedback form on the NHS Professionals website. This is then logged by the complaints team onto an electronic system and given a unique number. This reference number is key to enabling Nurse Leads and others to identify and track any complaints case.

If you find you are involved in a complaint, it is important you make a note of the number and use it in any correspondence or communication with your assigned Nurse Lead.

Once logged, the complaint is reviewed and ranked for risk depending on the nature or severity of the issue. This enables the complaints case to be allocated to one of the Nurse Leads to investigate. At this point the Nurse Lead contacts the Trust and speaks to the individual who has raised the complaint to get a clear understanding of what has happened.

Gathering information

The Nurse Lead will ask the complainant to provide supporting information to assist with the investigation. This may include any witness statements, patient observation charts, drug charts and so on.

The Nurse Lead will then make contact with the flexible worker and discuss the complaint that has been raised. The Nurse Lead will ask the flexible worker for their account of what has happened in a written statement.

Keeping the flexible worker informed

- The Nurse Lead will offer support to the flexible worker as we appreciate that this is an extremely difficult time for them - particularly if they have been excluded from working.

- The Nurse Lead will give the flexible worker an indication of how long the investigation may take. This can sometimes be difficult as Nurse Leads are reliant on the Trusts and flexible workers providing the information in a responsive and timely manner. Complaints of a safeguarding nature can take much longer to investigate as they often involve multiple agencies.

- The Nurse Lead will communicate regularly with the flexible worker by telephone and email. They are available during office hours to deal with any queries that flexible workers may have.

- Reviewing and concluding the case

- Once the Nurse Lead has received all the supporting information, they will review the case and prepare an investigation report and conclude an outcome to the complaint.

- At this point the Nurse Lead will send an outcome letter to the Trust and the flexible worker. This outlines their findings and highlights any recommendations that the flexible worker will be required to complete.

- This is known as remedial action (RAP) or continuing professional development (CPD). Examples of this might be placement testimonials, or evidence of reflection or completion of NHS Professionals e-learning modules.

- NHS Professionals will offer support to any flexible worker during the completion of the RAP or CPD process. As this is completed, the complaints case is then closed.

- Once the outcome letter is sent to the Trust, the Nurse Lead will ask the Trust Lead to confirm that they are in agreement with the proposed recommendations and whether they will support the flexible worker returning to work to complete the recommended actions. It is important to remember that NHS Professionals cannot lift any exclusion from working without agreement from the Trust, who need to be satisfied about any resolution in line with their own clinical governance systems and policies.
The recent double Oscar winning film 'Spotlight', which explored systematic abuse within the church in Boston (US), focused dramatically on the issues of 'who knew what and when?' and if they knew 'what did they do about it?'. As the film progresses and the prevalence of abuse is exposed, it becomes obvious that it is the secretive culture of the wider organisation that sustains the manipulative behaviour of individuals.

The antidote to such a culture taking root is to be able to speak with candour. This concept is captured by the well-known phrase 'Sunlight is the best antiseptic'. Following the Francis Report on the culture and failing systems operating at Mid Staffordshire acute trust, speaking openly - with honesty and without fear of reprisal - is now a part of the Duty of Candour for all NHS trusts.

For a Trust, this means they must be open and transparent with the patient or service user when an unintended or unexpected incident occurs, where significant harm has happened or where it may still happen to a patient or service user. The incident must also be notified to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

"to err is human, to cover up is unforgivable, and to fail to learn is inexcusable"

Sir Liam Donaldson, former Chief Medical Officer UK.

The trust carries out this legal duty by:

• Apologising and taking responsibility for what went wrong
• Ensuring a Duty of Candour conversation is held with the patient or service user by a senior member of staff and that this is documented
• Investigating and ensuring a line of communication is open with the patient or service user at all times
• Giving feedback to the patient or service user once the investigation completed
• Sending a written apology to the patient or service user

While organisational responsibility is critical, personal responsibility is also vital to making this duty meaningful to patients, their carers and fellow staff.

So ask yourself - have you thought about what the duty of candour might mean for you?

Is there something that the Trust you work in needs to know or could learn from?

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