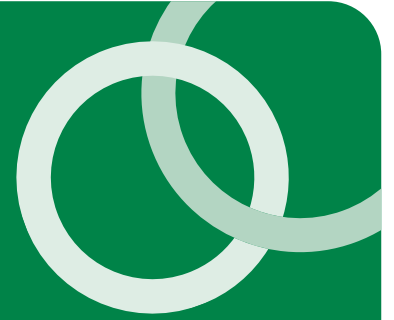


Professional development support standards for nurses in general practice



Professional development support standards for nurses in general practice

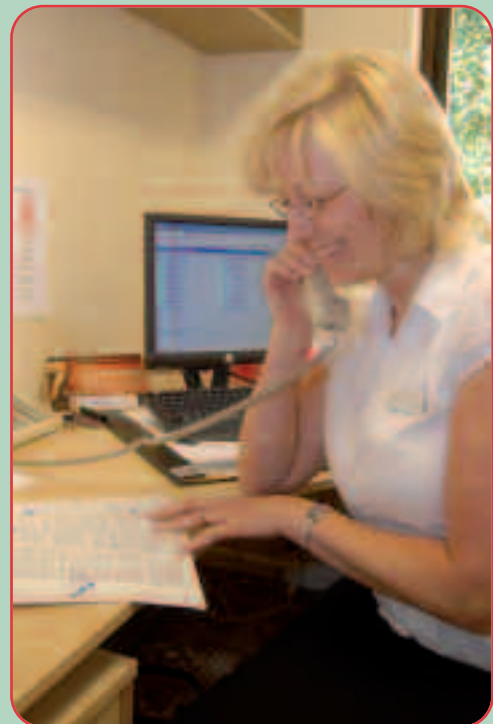
A recent national survey of practice nurses sponsored by the 'Working in Partnership Programme' (WiPP) indicated that some nurses do not have access to appropriate education or professional development and their employment terms can be very variable. This booklet offers 'at a glance' information on the essentials for support that should be available for all practice nurses.

The standards are divided into four sections. Each section identifies the relevant standards that nurses should be entitled to.

All nurses in general practice should:

Employment

- Have a robust contract, given to them within 2 months of commencing employment
- Have a comprehensive job description
- Have current NMC registration
- Satisfy the PREP requirements for practice
- Have at least one year post-registration experience
- Have their pay linked to AfC through the KSF
- Have a clear line of managerial responsibility
- If responsible for managing others, have appropriate training
- Have protected time for professional development
- Have a clear study leave policy
- Have an annual appraisal



Training and Education

- Complete an in-house induction programme for the first two weeks with an identified member of staff responsible for this
- Complete an accredited practice nurse foundation course within one year of employment
- Have access to an identified mentor; a more senior practice nurse to give them support in their new role
- Compile a PDP within which any difficulties have agreed goals and action plans
- Complete training courses relevant to the level of the job they are employed to do (see grid below)
- Receive annual mandatory training (e.g. anaphylaxis, BLS, infection control)
- Receive appropriate training for any new or advanced roles

Professional development support

- Regularly attend practice team meetings with GPs
- Have a source of professional advice and support available through the PCT
- Belong to a professional organisation or union
- Be supported to work within their scope of competence
- Have access to regular, formal clinical supervision
- Belong to a local practice nurse forum/ group

Quality

- Have their competence in a new role assessed by a qualified assessor
- Regularly update protocols based on the latest national guidance
- Maintain a 'competence file' providing a safe record of what they can and cannot do
- Engage in peer review
- Assist in practice Quality Team and Clinical Governance requirements
- Contribute to 'Development and Quality Practice Award' if appropriate
- Carry out regular audits
- Evaluate patient satisfaction with nursing care

Training Grid showing preparation and support required for different roles

New GPN	Foundation practice nurse course with practice assessment for competence	Access to mentor, practice nurse trainer and clinical supervisor
Experienced GPN	Level 3 courses on aspects of care, e.g. asthma, diabetes, wound care etc.	Access to regular formal clinical supervision and professional advice and support from PCT and/or professional organisation
Specialist Practice Nurse	BSc Specialist Practice and post grad diploma in specialist area Regular study days to update knowledge	As above
Advanced Nurse Practitioner	MSc Advanced Practice, Nurse Practitioner course, nurse prescribing qualification	As above

These standards are based on elements of the 'GPN Toolkit' produced by WiPP, an on-line resource for general practice nurses. For more information and guidance on any of the standards and related issues, go to www.wipp.nhs.uk

Standards for supporting health care assistants in general practice



Standards for supporting health care assistants in general practice

Health care assistants (HCAs) are still a relatively new addition to the general practice workforce, and as a result, their role is rapidly evolving. An HCA is defined as someone who works 'under the guidance of a qualified healthcare professional' (1).

The range of tasks undertaken by HCAs in primary care varies from practice to practice. It is therefore important that practices employing an HCA are familiar with the particular needs associated with the role and ensure that resources are put in place to support them and that delegation of tasks is appropriate (2).

This booklet offers 'at a glance' information on the essentials for support that should be available for all HCAs in general practice.

Employment conditions

- An up-to-date written contractual statement and comprehensive job description
- Written policies on health and safety, equal opportunities, disciplinary and grievance
- Salary linked to national scales, with annual increases in line with national pay awards
- A written policy on sickness absence, including sick pay arrangements that apply
- A system for recording incidents, accidents, verbal abuse or violence in the workplace
- Effective team working with clarity of leadership, roles and responsibilities

Competence

- Clearly identified competences that apply to the role
- A mentor whose role is to assess the competence of HCAs
- Competence assessed when newly employed and when undertaking new tasks
- Written evidence of competence assessment is maintained
- Gaps in competence identified with an action plan about how to fill them
- Ongoing monitoring to ensure that competence is maintained

Clear guidance about the HCA role, delegation and accountability

A clear list of appropriate tasks, with training to undertake the tasks as necessary
Clearly defined boundaries; the ultimate boundary being the safety of the patient
Agreed protocols for the delivery of care
Clarification of the issues around delegation, accountability and indemnity
Support and guidance in the role from a registered nurse
Adequate supervision to ensure patient safety

Training and education

An in-house induction programme for first two weeks of employment, with an identified member of staff responsible for this
An annual appraisal of performance and training needs
Support to compile a personal training and development plan (PDP)
Annual mandatory training (anaphylaxis, Basic Life Support etc)
Informal training either in-house or in training practice
The opportunity to undertake formal education such as NVQ or other formal training as offered by the Open University, the Primary Care Training Centre, Education for Health or other training providers as appropriate

Protected time for education and mentorship

Access to a local HCA forum
Future opportunities identified through skill-mix audit and practice priorities review



Educational opportunities for HCAs

Local attendance

Access courses - for HCAs without required qualifications to attend higher education, available at most colleges of further education

NVQ level 3 - course built around evidence of competence related to occupational standards

Open University course 'K100' for career progression - foundation for degree, available in some areas under the 'workplace initiative' with local mentorship

Study days commissioned by PCT or local practice nurse/HCA forum

Distance learning

Open University Diploma in healthcare studies

Primary Care Training Centre (PCTC) runs distance learning courses including the certificate in Primary Health Care Assistant and local study days on a range of topics

References

1. NHS Careers. Health Care Assistants/Auxiliary Nurses. NHS Careers website. http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/nhs-knowledge_base/data/5187.html
2. Health care assistants in general practice: delegation and accountability, RCN publishing 2007

Course information

Working in Partnership HCA toolkit at:

www.rcn.org.uk/development/hca_toolkit

Primary Care Training Centre at: www.primarycaretraining.co.uk

Open University Distance learning at: www.open.ac.uk

NVQ courses at:

www.edexcel.org.uk/subjects/a-z/health-care/ri/news/nvq-health.htm

Strategy Development Group

Department of Health

NHS Employers

RCN Practice Nurse Forum

RCN Nurse Practitioner Forum

Royal College of Nursing

Council of Deans of Health

London wide LMCs

Working in Partnership Programme