

Case Study – Acute Cardiac Nurses - team and role profiles

Southend Hospital

The Acute Cardiac Nursing team at Southend Hospital NHS Trust had expanded rapidly since being established in 2002. The CHD competence framework was used to update the job descriptions of the team members and to develop a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities within the team.

The situation

In September 2002, a new role of acute cardiac nurse was created at Southend Hospital NHS Trust. The creation of this new role was mainly prompted by the NSF targets for thrombolysis (e.g. the door to needle targets). It was decided to develop a role for a specialist cardiac nurse who would look at all cardiac patients coming through A&E and the observation ward.

Initially there was one acute cardiac nurse in post. Over the past two years this has expanded and there is now a team of four acute cardiac nurses.

The aim

The acute cardiac nurse was a new role when it was created, and the job has evolved over the past two years. The existing job description was no longer felt to be a true representation of the role. Kay Abbott, acute cardiac nurse team leader, therefore decided to use the competence framework to create an up-to-date and more detailed job description.

Also, because there is now a team of four acute cardiac nurses, an additional aim was to use the competence framework to develop a clearer profile of the roles and responsibilities within the team.

The action

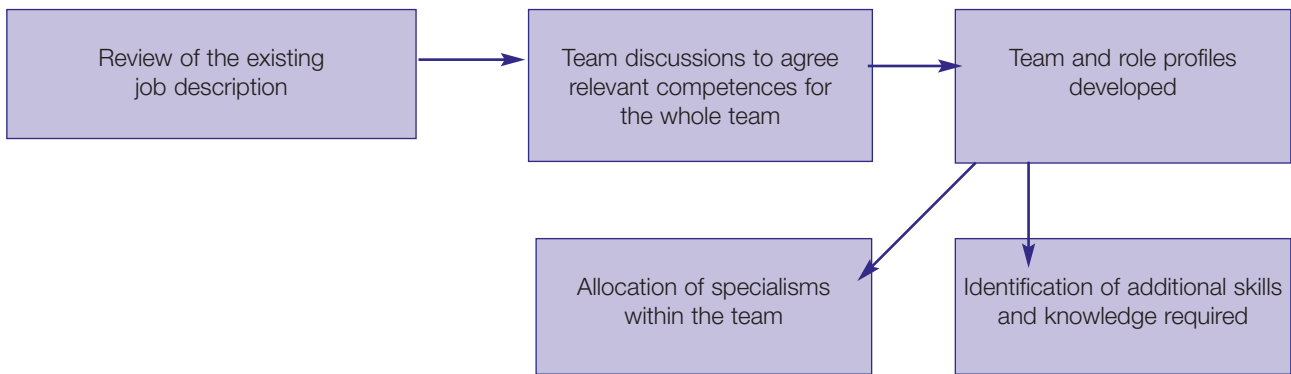
All the acute cardiac nurses in the team worked together to review the titles of the competences and develop a shortlist of those that seemed relevant to their roles. The competences on the shortlist were printed out and looked at in more detail. On closer examination, some of those on the shortlist could be discarded. Eventually, the team agreed on a final list of competences for the team profile and individual role profiles.

The team also made use of document templates, particularly the team profile template and the development needs analysis template.

The results

Using the competence framework, it was possible to define precisely the roles of individuals and the team. It also helped to identify and allocate specialisms within the team.

This process helped to provide ideas for how to develop roles, and to identify the additional skills and knowledge that the team needed. For example, part of the role of the acute cardiac nurse will be the prescription of CHD drugs (including thrombolytic drugs). This is a new role for nursing staff in Southend Hospital, and, therefore, there were no competences locally available to describe this activity. The CHD competency framework provided these competences.



Using the competence framework also had other positive results. Kay Abbott described how the discussions prompted through developing the Team Profile helped with team building.

'Probably the best thing about using the competence framework was that for the first time we sat down as a team and discussed where we are and where we are going. This was the first time we had dedicated time to do this – it has been great for team building.'

'We feel as a team that the competence framework helps us provide evidence of our competence – we were particularly attracted to the fact that these competences are part of a national framework, not just recognised locally.'

'One of the good things was that, as we were looking through the competences, we kept saying 'we do that all the time'. This confirmed the scope of our roles and provided recognition of what we do.'

The future

The competences from the team and role profiles will be transferred onto the hospital's competency forms, so the competences can be used during the appraisal process.

In future, the recruitment of acute cardiac nurses will make use of the competency framework to help in:

- finding the right person
- planning induction
- getting the person quickly up to speed.

The competences will also be used in writing personal development plans.

Contact details

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