

Creating safe, efficient and effective new services for remote and rural populations in Scotland

How Scotland's Remote and Rural Healthcare Educational Alliance used a competence based approach to create a new flexible role

The challenge

The Scottish Government identified a need to develop sustainable health services for remote, rural and Island communities in Scotland. Making better use of the healthcare workforce to address the challenge is vital.

A new generic support worker role is part of the solution if health boards are to make best use of available resources whilst meeting the needs of these communities.



Benefits

- **Huge savings of resources - instead of several different people travelling long distances in remote and rural areas, just one person with the right combination of skills can provide support to people in hard to reach places**
- **Supports early discharge from hospital, rehabilitation and self care**
- **Equitable, efficient, timely and safe practice improves experience for patients and carers**
- **New role spans health and social care**
- **Opens up potential opportunities to provide effective care on islands without a doctor**
- **Future-proofs progression for support workers into nursing and allied health professions**
- **Competences mapped using Skills for Health and Social Care Toolkits, and mapped to career framework means role is applicable across the UK**
- **Competences deliver evidence for regulation and personal development reviews.**

“This work will deliver a recognisable, flexible path for support worker staff in remote and rural areas and the learning they can undertake.”

“As a result they will be skilled to carry out activities such as provide appropriate nursing care, promote and maintain therapies prescribed by AHPs and to undertake social care tasks.”

“Overall, they will be better equipped to address the needs of populations living in remote and rural areas.”

Pam Nicoll

**Programme Director RRHEAL
NHS Education for Scotland**

What they did

NHS Education for Scotland's Remote and Rural Healthcare Educational Alliance (RRHEAL) worked with stakeholders to develop a new role encompassing health and social care, and put in place the right supporting education solution.

RRHEAL developed a national solution for a generic support worker role in remote and rural areas through consultation, national events and examining best practice of a rural support worker role scoped in 2007. They identified that this role be expanded to become a generic support role across health and social care.

The new role has potential for opportunities in non-Doctor Island settings e.g. Fair Isle, Skerries. Suitably skilled individuals could carry out a range of appropriate interventions such as helping individuals to better manage chronic conditions, carrying out screening process for the over 75s and providing early supported discharge. By drawing upon a broader range of skills, instead of several different people travelling long distances in remote and rural areas, just one person with the right combination of skills will be able to provide support to people in hard to reach places.

How they did it

Skills for Health competences were mapped for the generic health and social care worker (GHSCW) profile. It was established that healthcare support worker roles could extend from Healthcare Support Workers (NHS Career Framework level 2 and qualified at SCQF level 5/6), through to Assistant Practitioners (NHS Career Framework level 4 and qualified at SCQF level 7/8).

The next step is to develop education and training for health and social care support workers in generic skills, such as oral and written communication and specific contextual skills such as the administration of medicines; and leadership skills. It will meet a real need as employers and education and training providers have indicated there is a demand for joint education training for health and social care support workers.

Once qualified, the new post holders will have evidence of their capability and competence. Education programmes are currently being validated and it is anticipated that by late 2010/early 2011, future post holders will have access to modules that can support progression to nursing and allied health professional higher education programmes.

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Tel: 0117 922 1155

E-mail: info@skillsforhealth.org.uk

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