

# Creating accessible training in Psychological Therapies

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust uses competences for training programme

When Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust was invited to host a National Demonstrator Site (NDS), managers decided to use the opportunity to develop its provision of training and education packages in Psychological Therapies.

The Trust offers care for the population across Berkshire, including support for people with mental health problems and those with learning disabilities. Services are provided for children and young people, adults and older people as well as specialist substance misuse services.

Managers were keen to upskill the current workforce in bands 1 – 4 and equip them with the skills and competences they might need in their daily dealings with service users. The work was timely fitting in well with the Trust's review of Psychological Therapies training requirements, which identified that five levels of modular training be developed. This work also supports the national directive to ensure Psychological Therapies are as available as medication for people suffering from mental health disorders.

The NDS project offered an ideal opportunity to explore and use National Occupational Standards (NOS) and Skills for Health competence planning tools, and ultimately develop and accredit a new modular training programme in foundation level psychological therapies. An important element of the project was to assess with learners and line managers whether NOS could aid learning and support continuing professional development.



// The training has made a real difference to the people who have completed the programme, enabling them to understand better the needs of our service users. The NOS and competences were a great asset in devising this modular training and we are delighted with how the programme is gaining momentum with Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. //

Julie Bennetts, Project Lead,  
Psychological Therapies Demonstration Site, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust



**Skills for Health has developed a bank of national workforce competences (NWCs) and National Occupational Standards (NOS) which describe the skills and knowledge required to carry out a task or function effectively. Competences are designed to underpin and be integral to accredited and non-accredited education and training programmes.**

The foundation level training was open to all staff in bands 1-4 who have any contact with service users, for example support workers, administration staff, facilities staff and receptionists. Prior to a NOS and competence based approach being adopted, two cohorts of learners had already progressed through the in-house training programme.

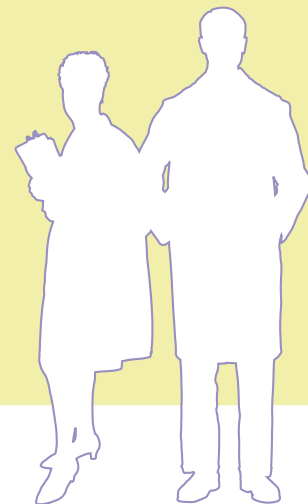
Managers identified NOS, mapping them to the Foundation Level programme, and then they used Skills for Health competence application tools to identify competences.

When a third cohort of learners participated in the project, and progressed through the revised training programme, their feedback was captured through a learner's handbook. This self assessment format prompted learners to consider their level of competence in skill areas. It formed an important part of the education package, before and after the training which was delivered in four half days over a period of four weeks. The self-assessment exercise was drawn from the Skills for Health Self Assessment Tool and the learning objectives of the programme.

## Core competences identified and used

### **Core care competences:**

- Relate to and interact with individuals.
- Ensure your own actions support the care, protection and well-being of individuals.
- Contribute to, assess and act upon risk of danger, harm and abuse.
- Implement, monitor and evaluate therapeutic interventions within an overall programme.





The Competences are part of a range of electronic tools available on the Skills for Health website which can help managers design roles, services, education and training and forecast future needs. They are a powerful tool for those who want to structure their teams' and individuals' learning and development around service user needs and they can all be linked to the Knowledge and Skills Framework.

// We are very pleased with the early results of our work on this particular aspect of the National Demonstrator Sites work, especially with the way that NOS and KSF are so complementary. Now we are looking at competence based job descriptions for support staff, which represents a very exciting stage of development. //

Julie Bennetts, Project Lead,  
Psychological Therapies Demonstration Site, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Use of competences and workforce planning tools are still in their infancy at Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Initial results however have been promising, in particular the performance indicator aspect of competence tools have proved to be extremely helpful for managers.

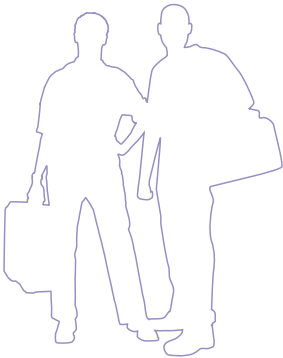
Work relating to the development of an award pathway for staff will continue in the future focusing on the accreditation of each of the five levels of training and the links with Further and Higher education. The Trust aims to have the Foundation and Basic courses accredited by Thames Valley University and the higher levels by the University of Reading.

## Benefits

- Progression career pathway for staff in bands 1-4.
- Service user centred approach facilitates positive learning experience.
- Learners exposed to carers and service users as part of training programme.
- Increased empathy amongst learners with service users.
- Self assessment enabled learners to engage effectively with training programme.
- Greater employee satisfaction, leading to reduced turnover levels and saving HR costs.

**Competences describe what individuals need to know and do, whoever is performing the task, which means they have many and varied uses.**

The application of NOS and Skills for Health competence and application tools has enabled Berkshire to take a more standardised approach to workforce development, in particular upskilling in bands 1-4.



// We have been delighted at the way the learners have embraced this programme of training. Such education packages offer a real step up for individuals, and will prepare them for further career progression in the future. //

Susanna Rose, Head of Psychological Therapies,  
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

**Berkshire Healthcare**   
NHS Foundation Trust

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust provides care and support to a population of around 900,000 across Berkshire. The specialised Trust provides all NHS led mental health and learning disability services across the region. It offers a wide range of services for individuals at every life stage – from children and adolescents to working age adults and older people.



Skills for Health continues to support the development of competence based approaches to the design and redesign of roles and services. As part of this we are helping health care organisations strengthen their professional development programmes.

Skills for Health is the Sector Skills Council for the UK health sector (the National Health Services, independent healthcare providers and voluntary organisations). Our purpose is to help develop solutions that can deliver a skilled and flexible workforce to improve health and healthcare.

Use our interactive guides to find out more about competences and how to use them at:  
[www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)