

The PA Training Model in Tees

NHS North of England Commissioning Support Unit recognise the need to develop a process to identify healthcare tasks that can be safely delegated to PAs, and the requirement to support this by high quality competence based training. They worked in partnership with South Tees NHS Foundation Trust to develop a local response that met their needs.

NHS North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS) and South Tees NHS Foundation Trust placed skills and competence assessment at the heart of their process to deliver training and determine the healthcare tasks that can be safely delegated from healthcare professionals to Personal Assistants (PAs). This is vital to ensure that Personal Health Budget (PHB) holders are being safely supported in their homes and are receiving high quality care from their PAs,

The process across Tees begins with an assessment by a nurse, of the individual clients' needs. They produce a list of the competences that are required to deliver high quality, safe care to the client. This assessment determines which healthcare tasks can safely be delegated to a PA. It also identifies the training that they need to undertake in order to develop the skills their client needs.

Once a healthcare task has been deemed suitable for delegation, the training is provided using a traditional taught session. This session provides the PA with the necessary underpinning knowledge and theory.

Once the PA has developed the necessary theoretical knowledge and understanding, further skills training and assessment of competence is carried out in the classroom and in the field. For many healthcare tasks demonstration and practice of the skills will take place in the classroom using simulation technologies such as manikins. This will be followed up with further learning and skills acquisition in the client's home. It takes several weeks to complete this step. This is to ensure that the PA has assimilated the knowledge and is carrying out the skills element to the required standard.

The training and assessment of competence is provided by a registered nurse from South Tees Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. Their previous experience has included the training and assessment of Healthcare Assistants who care for complex patients in the community. Once the nurse is satisfied with the knowledge of the PA, and they have consistently observed their practice is of the required standard, they will sign the PA off as competent in this healthcare task. This then allows delegation to take place.

Figure 1: An overview of NHS North of England Commissioning Support Unit's approach

