

Delegation & Training PAs in South Warwickshire

Background

In 2012 South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust moved from a paper based to an online system to ensure the safe practice of carers working with children with complex needs in a variety of settings across South Warwickshire. Interest in the e-learning has been high and since its development South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust has made the tool available for other organisations to purchase.

At the time of starting the project in 2015 approximately 65 sites across the UK were using the system to provide training to approximately 350 health care support workers, working in many different fields including schools, social care providers, hospices and private and voluntary establishments.

With the support from NHS England and Skills for Health, South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust have been exploring the expansion of the current model of training from children to young adults.

The Delegation and Training Approach

The training of carers and PAs is just one part of the delegation protocol within South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust. There are clear processes surrounding the types of healthcare tasks that can be delegated and the circumstances in which that delegation can take place.

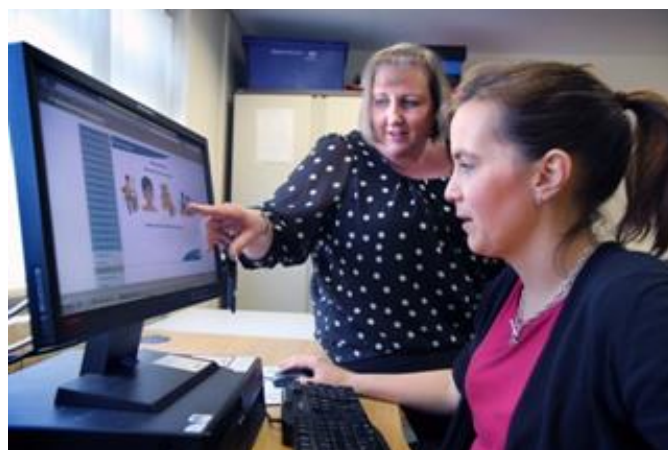
The e-learning system is therefore just one part of the overall approach to the delegation of healthcare tasks and the training of carers and PAs delivering these tasks to people with complex needs. The e-learning sits alongside skills training that is delivered by Community Nurses. The nuggets of learning within the tool are based upon locally developed competencies, written by teams of practitioners and these have been refined over time, in line with best practice.

Once it is identified that there is a healthcare tasks that it would be appropriate to delegate, the carer or PA is given access to the e-learning system in order to undertake learning relevant to the task they are going to carry out.

The e-learning provides underpinning knowledge together with an online assessment. After completing the online theoretical learning, the system creates an online workbook. This written assessment contains a series of multiple choice and free text questions, some of which will require answers to be contextualised to their client's individual needs. The free text and client specific questions are then assessed alongside the practical skills by someone that is occupationally competent; usually a nurse from the Community Nursing Team.

The skills training that is provided alongside the online learning is delivered by a nurse. This training usually takes place in the home of the person that requires the healthcare task at the same time that the nurses are delivering care.

Once the theory and workbook are satisfactorily completed then the practical skill will be assessed by the health professional that is delegating the healthcare task. In addition to this the Personal Health Budget Holder is able to sign that they are happy for their PA to now carry out the healthcare task.



The Project

Throughout the lifecycle of the project South Warwickshire have worked with multiple stakeholders to review the current training available for children and to examine if and how it can be applied to young adults.

This work was carried out through a series of questionnaires and focus groups exploring the ways in which the content of the online system and workbooks could be enhanced and changed in order to make the learning relevant to young adults. The project had early engagement from the Children's Community Nurses Network West Midlands who assisted South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust to identify the things that needed to be changed. This process was a huge success. Through the collective efforts of stakeholders eighteen workbooks were reviewed and updated. These are now able to be used in the delivery of training for carers and PAs that are looking after young adults.

Key Findings & Outcomes

The project has highlighted that the online system and existing training modules can be contextualised and applied to young adults. However, there is a need to change elements of the system, especially those parts that have pictures and animation involving children so that the learning has relevance for the client group.

The project has enabled the Trust to examine the platform and technology that is used for the e-learning. Since the development of the existing system the functionality of such systems has improved.

“The project has enabled us to examine how we can capitalise upon the success of the current e-learning system, there are clear opportunities and benefits to developing our existing delegation processes and training and apply this to adult services in the future.

The next steps are for us to examine the new technology that is available to us and develop a new platform once we have explored further funding opportunities”

*Jo Holder, Clinical Lead North Locality, Children's Community Nursing Team,
South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust*

Benefits

There are clear benefits for South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust in terms of hosting and maintaining a single e-learning system that works across children's and adult's services. There are also significant benefits to carers, PAs and individuals with complex health needs.

The uptake of personal health budgets across England is expanding and continuing to grow. People with complex health needs are seeking ways to continue to receive high quality care, whilst improving the control and flexibility they have around that care, including when and where healthcare tasks are carried out. The e-learning system is an excellent way to not only cope with this demand but to ensure that carers and PAs update their skills when needed.

Delivery of e-learning in this way provides a consistent approach to training and delivering underpinning knowledge and understanding across the health workforce. The system can be used not only for PAs but also for family carers, teaching staff and other healthcare staff.

The new system will mean that carers and PAs moving between clients of different ages can complete their learning using the same system, therefore potentially avoid duplication and confusion. For those people being cared for there will be a single system that can stay with them from childhood into adulthood. It will follow them through transition, providing continuity of care and giving them additional confidence that the skills of their carers and PAs are of the highest standard.

