

# Nuffield Health uses Skills for Health competences to eliminate one area's clinical incidents

**How supporting staff with competence based training helped build excellent safety record while freeing up clinical staff time.**

## The challenge

The Nuffield Hospital Guildford, one of Nuffield Health's 30 hospitals, identified that a competence based approach to staff training and development would enhance patient safety, address clinical incidents and support staff development.

After using Skills for Health competences to develop training packages for all their nurses around use of syringe drivers and specimen labelling, errors were reduced to zero and managers were impressed with the results. They built on this and adopted a competence based approach to all staff induction.

Following these early successes, managers used competences to develop extended roles for Healthcare Assistants (HCA).



## Benefits

- No incidents reported in three years since the programme began
- Competences used for risk assessment to reduce clinical incidents
- Over 100 nurses completed competence based assessments since 2008
- Competences support multi disciplinary approach and increased patient safety with more timely interventions
- HCA role extended to assist in theatre for specific procedures with backing of qualified staff, consultants and theatre manager
- Releases scrub sisters for more complex procedures
- Patients transferred from theatre by extended HCA post holder, freeing up registered nursing staff.

*“The Skills for Health competences are easy to use, they deliver what you need and they enabled us to make a quick impact on clinical effectiveness.”*

*“We use competences for anything that we need to assess because they are multi disciplinary team designed and validated.”*

*“We think that’s as safe as it gets.”*

**Jean Holloway**

Clinical Effectiveness Nurse, Nuffield Health

# What Nuffield Health did

Managers searched the Skills for Health database for competences relating to both areas of practice - monitoring and maintaining people from theatre to ward, and simple scrub procedures.

The competences were used to inform a specially devised training package which the HCAs completed over a four month period.

Both HCAs welcomed the opportunity to extend their scope of practice. One was a level 3 NVQ HCA where managers identified competences to enable the HCA to up skill and extend their practice around patient transfer. Another HCA experienced in theatre had their role extended so they are able to 'scrub' for specified procedures which have been risk assessed e.g. hand lift, ENT and some maxillo facial surgery.

Staff recognised that the up-skilled HCA carrying out patient transfer increased her awareness and assessment skills and enabled capacity to be released onto the wards.

The theatre example has been viewed as an unqualified success as the HCA, consultants involved and the theatre manager have all seen this role extension as a 'win'. Colleagues are released to do more complex activities, so making better use of their time and skills.

Managers have welcomed the way evidence based and measurable competences can be used to address clinical incidents, enabling staff to quickly pinpoint what needs to change.

## What are competences?

Skills for Health has developed a bank of national workforce competences which describe the skills and knowledge required to carry out a task or function effectively. They are designed to underpin and be integral to accredited and non-accredited education and training programmes.

Since competences describe what individuals need to know and do, whoever is performing the task, they can be used in many different ways.

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