



Improving professional development in health BUPA implements Skills for Health competences

With nearly 7,000 employees, BUPA Hospitals Ltd (BHL) recognises the importance of preparing employees for working in today's healthcare industry. To achieve this they provide progression and achievement programmes to support practitioners facing the current radical workforce reforms in the healthcare industry.

The aim of providing personal and professional development within BUPA Hospitals Ltd (BHL) is to:

- Enhance the quality of employees' learning;
- Continue to build excellence in teaching and supporting employees;
- Provide clinical staff with the greatest opportunities for personal and career development.

BHL works in collaboration with the University of Huddersfield offering a degree pathway of a BSc (Hons) in Professional Studies to every clinical employee. It also offers a range of ten National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), with over 200 assessors and candidates registered on these Health Awards. It is against this backdrop that the educational team of BHL began to compile competence based development frameworks in 2006.

Although the university and the NVQ programmes do much to prepare employees for the radical changes in the healthcare industry, BUPA recognised a need to increase capacity, capability and flexibility within new roles and responsibilities. Part of the solution was to design competence based work systems to drive the service and role redesign that is required today to maintain their success.



“Competence based frameworks are a very useful tool to help us support our staff development. The core competences are the very foundation of what we want our clinical staff to be able to do.”

Chris Middleton MSc. FHEA, Clinical Education Manager,
BUPA Hospitals Ltd.



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.

BHL first used competences within a new employee's employment pack. This is a professional portfolio of employment information, competence matrices and assessment frameworks. New employees now have a much clearer idea of exactly what is expected of them in employment – what, where, when and how. Each employee will have a unique folder detailing the competences required to fulfil their job role. The competences designed by Skills for Health are either NWCs or NOS and are currently used within the induction pack and as free standing tools for assessment for established employees.

Although competences used to design new roles are still in their infancy within the organisation, BHL have already certificated their first perioperative employee as an assistant scrub practitioner and a further twenty assistants are registered for this health NVQ level 3 award.

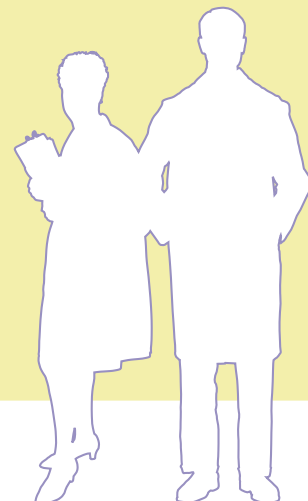
The Competences used within BHL employment portfolios are:

Core care competences:

- Effective communication
- Promote, monitor and maintain health, safety and security
- Undertaking physiological measurements
- Carrying out effective intravenous infusion
- Discharge Service
- Administration of medicines

Competences are being used to define the following roles:

- Advanced Scrub practitioners
- Perioperative assistants
- Endoscopy practitioners
- Paediatric recovery practitioners
- Paediatric ward based practitioners
- Cosmetic and Aesthetic practice practitioners
- Physi-nurse
- Infection Control Hospital Leads
- Pain practitioners





Skills for Health is developing its Sector Qualifications Strategy which will detail qualifications which are fit for purpose for the health sector.

“Our aim is to ensure that existing and new qualifications are competence based, demand led and based on employer/service need.”

Additional role specific competence pathways using Skills for Health competences will be designed by BHL over time that will allow new ways of working and role redesign. The aim is to establish an educational programme that will provide opportunities for skill acquisition and knowledge to be gained by each practitioner against each competence. This is followed by a professional and validated assessment process and as part of this programme, BHL has recently launched an initiative with the paediatric recovery practitioners.

BHL has also designed a medical device assessment framework by adopting certain relevant competences from the substantial resources within the Skills for Health framework. These have proved most useful for both practitioners and assessors in agreeing the required competences for practice in all clinical disciplines.

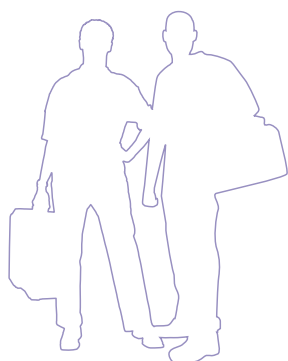
Benefits

- Frameworks can work in conjunction with formal accredited programmes.
- All employees have a clearer understanding of their unique competences.
- Greater flexibility within new roles.
- Perioperative employees being certified as assistant scrub practitioner.
- Career frameworks being provided with job expansion, enlargement and diversity.
- Improved staff retention rates.



Since competences describe what individuals need to know and do, regardless of who is performing the task, they have many and varied uses.

The application of Skills for Health competences and formal accredited education has provided BHL with an educational framework that will support practitioners in the delivery of safe and effective services.



“ BUPA Hospitals Ltd wants to be synonymous with exceptional education that benefits the patient first and foremost. Competence based training is helping us achieve this objective and helping us support our staff. We are delighted that people want to work for us and keep working for us! ”

Chris Middleton MSc. FHEA,
Clinical Education Manager, BUPA Hospitals Ltd.



BUPA Hospitals Ltd (BHL) was voted one of the Top 100 Nursing Employers for 2006. BUPA hospitals employ nearly 7,000 people, including approximately 4,500 nurses and numerous other non-medical clinical staff. BHL was the first independent healthcare provider to offer the new NVQ Health Awards for clinical assistants in care and practice for ward, outpatient, theatre, imaging and physiotherapy assistants.



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