

New Nail Carer role benefits South Birmingham NHS and its communities

A new Nail Carer role set up by South Birmingham NHS Trust is now recognised by the achievement of an accredited qualification at Level 2, with the potential to benefit patients and communities across the UK.

The background

South Birmingham NHS identified the need for the provision of routine nail care after discharging more than 4,000 patients from its podiatry service who simply needed their nails cutting.

Routine nail care can be difficult for some people, especially the elderly but also for some people with learning or physical disabilities, sensory loss, mental illness or short-term mobility problems.

The Trust was passionate about finding a way to support their patients and identified the need for the independent role of Nail Carer.



The outcomes

- Waiting times for people needing South Birmingham's podiatry services have dropped to just six to eight weeks from a previous high of up to two years; and the Trust's more highly skilled workforce can now focus on higher risk and more complex cases.
- There are currently an estimated 5,000 clients registered with Nail Carers that have been trained in Birmingham, and many clients are being seen several times a year. The value of the Nail Care business across Birmingham is therefore currently estimated at more than £250,000 per annum, with continued growth expected.
- Longer term, South Birmingham NHS expects to see a decrease in referrals to its podiatry services as GPs instead refer patients directly to locally accredited Nail Carers.
- The demand for safe, affordable nail cutting is growing. Evidence suggests that, nationwide, more than 30 per cent of over-65s are unable to cut and care for their own nails – a total of more than 2.7 million individuals. This number is projected to grow as the population ages.
- The potential gains in time and resources to the NHS are enormous. Apart from the savings to podiatry services and the new economic generation from the role, there could also prove to be savings in other areas, because routine nail care may reduce the risk of falls, especially in the elderly.
- To date, more than 120 people have been trained at Birmingham Metropolitan College and the new Nail Cutting and Care qualification has recently been launched in England and Wales*.



“Skills for Health worked with great transparency and openness. They were enthusiastic about the development of our role, and brought a wealth of experience to the process.”

Marion Rogerson

former South Birmingham CCG Commissioner – responsible for cross city development

The outcomes continued

- Thanks to the dedication of South Birmingham NHS Trust, and its partners including Skills for Health and the Awarding Organisations, the QCF Level 2 Award in Nail Cutting and Care is becoming more widely available across the UK, bringing economic benefits both to the NHS and to the Nail Carers themselves, and giving a vital lifeline to patients who might otherwise not have been able to find the help they need.

How they did it

The Trust worked with Birmingham Metropolitan College to devise a training course for Nail Carers. The aim was to produce qualified Nail Carers who would work independently from the NHS, and whose clients would book and pay for the service themselves.

This scheme proved a great success, offering a safe and affordable service to patients across the area.

South Birmingham saw the potential for the role to spread across the UK, and worked in partnership with Skills for Health to get the Nail Carer course recognised as a regulated qualification offered by Awarding Organisations.

The new QCF Level 2 Award in Nail Cutting and Care trains people to deliver affordable routine nail care to low-risk patients.

*Note: as of the date of publication, three Awarding Organisations (Agored, CIBTAC & ITEC) are offering the qualification and all enquiries relating to availability of the course should be directed to them.

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“Nail Care is a very integral part of a community pharmacy now, we have people leave here saying they feel like they are walking on air which is great feedback.”

Joanna Rose

Accredited Checking Pharmacy Technician,
GR Pharmacy



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