

CASE STUDY

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

A Competence Based Approach to Developing our Workforce

Background :

A competency based approach to role redesign is a workforce improvement methodology that can help to improve patient services, address staff shortages, support skill mix issues and improve job satisfaction through the development of new and amended work roles. It can benefit the whole healthcare team from support staff to the medical workforce by helping to challenge and change established roles and patterns of practice and working. NHS staff are required to possess a unique set of skills and knowledge in order to support people with complex needs. It is therefore the workforce who must inform and drive the modernisation of working practices and service delivery.

To support the introduction of new, changed, expanded roles, it is first necessary to identify the competencies and skills needed by individual staff and or a team. Once the competences have been identified packages of education and training will need to be developed to prepare and support the workforce to change and modernise workforce practices and service delivery.

To undertake role re-design it is essential to work in partnership with existing staff to define the competence profile of the staff required to deliver the service. The competence profile of staff is the knowledge, understanding, values and performance required to safely deliver a service or aspect of care to service users. This information can assist in understanding:

- The needs of the patient/service
- The tasks or functions required to meet those needs

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) provides health care across the whole of North Wales. The organisation employs over 16,100 staff.

Use of National occupational standards:

BCUHB have used a variety of NOS frameworks to develop their workforce including Clinical Health Skills, Health and Social Care, Mental Health Adults And others. They are useful for managers, assessors, education providers, staff teams.

BCUHB use competences to develop an understanding of the requirements of a new, changed or expanded role. We have worked in partnership with services and staff to develop competence profiles for the workforce that support an efficient patient journey, by ensuring that the right staff with the right skills and competence are able to undertake their role safely and competently.

Using competences provides the Health Board with an evidence base and the measurable competence frameworks can be used to address areas of change and supports efficient staff education. Using competence provides an assurance framework that staff are safe and competence to undertake the role extensions that have been developed.

An outcome of the competence framework developments is that we are able to work with education providers to develop specific packages of learning that meet the needs of the service and support the progression of the workforce. Developing bite sized learning packages linked to competence assures the Health Board that education is fit for purpose and fit for the development of staff within our services.

Testimony from users:

“The Competency Framework has provided an opportunity to link workforce planning to staff development and organisational objectives to staff objectives. The framework provides team members with a clear guide as to what is expected from their roles and provides direction for future training needs.” Sue Wood – Clinical Nurse Manager

Benefits

- Patients benefit through the Health Board ensuring that it has the staff with the right skills and competence to deliver their care
- Staff benefit by having a clear understanding of what is expected in their role and being supported to achieve the requirements of the job
- Staff benefit by developing increased confidence in their clinical practice
- The specific service area benefits through having competent and confident staff
- Competence are transferable and so the wider organisation benefits by being able to replicate good practice across several service areas

The future

We will continue to use a competence based approach to role redesign in our services as it is an approach that

- puts the patients/service user at the centre of service change and supports the following:
- develops a service or workforce built around the patient and service user needs
- involves staff and encouraged engagement from the outset, unlocking the knowledge and expertise within the service
- Develops a workforce who have the appropriate skills to deliver the right service, in the right place at the right time and cost
- Enables the service to better identify and influence the workforce training and education requirements from education providers
- Promotes integrated planning taking into account, service, workforce and financial aspects, by clearly identifying the service requirements, the associated competence and the staff required to safely undertake the function.

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