



MEET THE CHAIR NURSING ASSOCIATE TRAILBLAZER

We spoke with Sue Crew, North Bristol NHS Trust, who is chair of the Level 5 Nursing Associate Trailblazer group. Sue is a Registered Nurse with 35 years of experience in the NHS. She has a PGCE Teaching qualification and a Msc Distinction in Leadership and Management in Health Care.

So, Sue, please tell us a bit about your day job?

I am the Non-Medical Education Manager at North Bristol NHS Trust. I manage a team of people who deliver training for the non-medical workforce within the trust and Sustainability and Transformation Plan partner organisations.

I lead the North Bristol NHS Trust Apprenticeship Centre, delivering apprenticeships in Health, Business Administration, Customer Service, Functional Skills, Leadership and Management and Traineeships

Why did you step up to be chair of the Nursing Associate Trailblazer?

As an employer I was keen to work together with other employers to set up the apprenticeship standard for Nursing Associates. North Bristol NHS Trust was one of the second wave pilot sites for the Nursing Associate Programme so we were keen to share the experiences and knowledge gained during this first pilot site.

I had been a member of the Healthcare Support Worker trailblazer group and was keen to continue participating in developing the correct standards for different roles.

I was also the chair of the Assistant Practitioner Coordinators Network, who reformed to include Nursing Associate when the “Raising the Bar” review highlighted the need for a second level registrant within the nursing family.

The Nursing Associate apprenticeship standard has now been approved for delivery. Congratulations.

Looking back, what were the challenges?

The challenges the group faced were associated with

- Developing an apprenticeship standard for a curriculum designed by Health Education England that was then to be replaced by a Nursing and Midwifery approved curriculum. This happened after the original scoping and consultation documents had been approved
- Working in the shadow of other nursing family apprenticeship standards, such as the Registered Nurse Degree, that were also being developed at the same time. Although this could also be seen as a help since we could compare each apprenticeship with the other
- Trying to meet the needs of all participants such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council, Universities and a range of different employers
- Getting the apprenticeship standard written and approved in a short space of time
- Having to write two different versions of the Standard in a twelve month period to accommodate the curriculum changes and Nursing and Midwifery Council approval

What achievements are you most proud of?

We are very proud of the collaboration, participation and contribution that the entire trailblazer group members made to develop the standard.

This apprenticeship completes a whole progression pathway in nursing, from entry up to registered nurse level.

What tips do you have for other trailblazer Chairs?

Working with Skills for Health support team is an essential requirement for the smooth running of the trailblazer group.

Set a clear timeframe to complete the development of the standard and assessment plan. Ensure you have good representation across all the sectors that are involved in your trailblazer group.

As organisations are starting to implement this standard, what challenges do you foresee?

This is a new role that needs to be embedded into workforce plans. Doing so may be difficult until organisations realise the potential of this new role.

This may lead to difficulty in identifying sufficient numbers to create a good size cohort of trainees.

It may also be a challenge to ensure that we have good education providers, local to the needs of the employer.

Do you have any top tips for others considering implementing this apprenticeship?

- Ensure you have thoroughly reviewed all the competencies within your nursing role family so that clear demarcation is created between all the different roles.
- Take time to ensure your workforce plans include the development of the new role using an apprenticeship so that you can see the return on your investment.



[Click here to download the Nursing Associate standard and end-point assessment plan.](#)