

The HCA Clinical Support Team

Mid Cheshire Hospital Trust

No Dedicated Team for the Delivery of the Care Certificate

Prior to the development of the HCA (Healthcare Assistant) Clinical Support Team there was no dedicated team overseeing the Care Certificate. The HCAs were given all the documentation on an Induction Day and then it was up to the individual wards to complete. Compliance differed across areas and completion rates were low. To raise compliance, the HCA Clinical Support Team was formed. The HCA Clinical Support Team consists of a Qualified Nurse and an HCA (Kayla and Chelly). Kayla is an International Nurse from the United States and is interested in HCA/HCSW (Healthcare Support Worker) recruitment and retention. Kayla has been a Nurse for over 4 years specializing in Accident and Emergency. Chelly is an HCA with over 15 years' experience between a surgical ward specializing in Bowel Surgery and then Diagnostics. She is very passionate about HCAs/HCSW not using the term '*just a Healthcare*' and instilling in the HCAs/HCSWs that they are important members of the team, and their role is vital in the health, safety and wellbeing of patients. They have been in post full time since September 2021.

What was the solution?

The team was established September 2021 and has seen the number of Care Certificate completers increase exponentially. The aim of the role is to give dedicated clinical support for all HCAs with a focus on New Starters and Induction.

The team provides robust training at Induction in the areas of NEWS2, Fluid Balance and Blood Glucose Monitoring. A HCA Skills Day is also run with an emphasis on Person-centred Care, Consent, Care of a Deceased Patient, Urinalysis, Catheter Care and Stoma Care.

The team also runs bite-sized training sessions on topics such as ANTT, Care Certificate Assessor Training, Mouthcare, and Care after Death.

The team is also a point of contact for any pastoral issues that occur when visiting HCAs on the wards, these are then referred to the dedicated Pastoral Team.

The development of the Self-Assessment Programme, where staff that have worked within the Trust before April 2020 are eligible to complete the self-assessment based on the Care Certificate Standards. The manager is then given a report and will sign to say that the HCA is following the Care Certificate Standards and abiding by the HCA Code of Conduct.

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The Clinical Support team have also been involved in a number of projects for staff recruitment, these include:

- The Prince's Trust Initiative- people aged between 16-30 attend a two-day online webinar.

Day 1 is where the HR team give advice on writing a CV, interview questions, roles within the Trust, and career progression.

Day 2 is where the HCA Clinical Support Team deliver training in the areas of a Day in the Life of an HCA, patient personal care, the HCA Code of Conduct, the NHS 6Cs and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards to name a few.

Once they person has completed the training, they can apply for a job role and will be guaranteed an interview for a position on the hospital bank, if they are not successful at interview stage then the HR team puts an action plan together and extra training is given.

Those that are successful will then be followed up in practice and will be required to complete the Care Certificate.

- The Volunteer to Career Pathway- this initiative is run in collaboration with The Mid Cheshire Volunteers. The initiative takes Ward Volunteers that have been volunteering for more than 6 months and gives them the opportunity to learn about the HCA job role, the legislation and policies, and then practical hands-on skills for example giving personal care. The course is run over 5 sessions and is a mix of online (taught) lessons and practical sessions using simulation. Once completed they are offered a bank contract and then are required to complete the Care Certificate. The Sessions are run with the Care Certificate Standards in mind.
- The team has also been involved in celebrating HCA/HCSWs within the Trust and has been on the HCA/HCSW celebration committee and has taken part in the celebrations.
- The team also attends recruitment events out in the community and visits schools on Careers Day.

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What were the challenges?

There have been many challenges. One of the main challenges was getting Ward Managers on board. As a team we visited every Ward Manager/Department Lead to explain our role and discuss with them that we will actually help relieve some of the pressure on them. The team also explained the role of Peer Assessor and asked if there are any HCAs that they would like to put forward.

Staff shortages due to Covid, this then means that the HCAs are struggling to have their Practical Portion (Competency Document) signed off as there are less Qualified Nurses from the Trust and higher use of Agency staff. We then advertised the Peer Assessor role within the Trust and developed a training programme which includes e-learning, online training and a written portfolio. This then allows the HCA/HCSW to assess their colleagues when working directly along-side them. It has made the HCAs who have been mentors on the ward feel invested in, and given them a sense of pride. It has made the new starter staff feel more supported and allowed them to feel comfortable to ask questions.

What were the results?

The results have been phenomenal, from September 2021 to September 2022 we have had a total of 216 HCAs complete the Care Certificate. We have had a number of HCAs that have gone on to be Trainee Nursing Associates, and enrol in university to complete the Foundation Degree, and then Nursing Apprentices who have gone to university to complete the Nursing Degree.

The HCA Clinical Skills Team have provided 21 bite size sessions on topics ranging from Care after Death to ANTT. We have delivered these sessions to 166 HCAs.

Want to know more?

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