



New job role delivers seamless service

St Monica Trust

A new job role, devised by St Monica Trust, successfully blends nursing with care assistant duties and effectively uses resources.





Background

St Monica Trust is a charity, providing care, residential and nursing care and supported housing to older people, with a range of needs. The Trust set up a project eight years ago, using Skills for Care funding. It created a new senior nurse care assistant (SNCA) role that incorporated a range of basic, clinical skills in addition to the core care and support skills. A job description is at Appendix 1.

Aims

The purpose was to give residents a more seamless service with fewer people required to provide support and to free up the time of qualified nurses for other tasks.

What was done?

Staff were given initial training at a local hospital, to develop their underpinning knowledge and were then assessed at NVQ level 3 in their workplaces.

“Team members who have received the enhanced training feel very positively about their roles and there is no problem with recruitment or retention.” **Jacqui Ramus, Practice development manager.**

Trained workers provide basic clinical assistance under the supervision of the on duty registered nurse. The nurse may delegate responsibility where the SNCA has been assessed as being competent in the relevant area. SNCAs can do a range of tasks including:

- administering medication
- wound, tracheotomy, catheter, ileostomy and colostomy care
- enteral feeding
- diabetes monitoring
- booking in and disposing of drugs.

The project has been successfully embedded into the practice of the Trust and developments have taken place. A Practice development officer: clinical skills trainer is now employed to provide update training and assessment of all care staff, including the level three SNCA workers. The nursing skills training is now tailored to the needs of individual residents, and is updated annually.



Training is linked to the following units within the QCF framework:

Dem 302 Understand and meet the nutritional requirements of individuals with dementia
HSC 2024 Undertake agreed pressure area care
HSC 3047 Support use of medication in social care settings
HSC 3050 Prepare for and carry out extended feeding techniques
HSC 3051 Undertake tissue viability risk assessments
HSC 3052 Undertake physiological measurements
IC 01 The principles of infection prevention and control
IC 02 Causes and spread of infection

Note: there are no units for some areas such as Physiological Measurements, or wound care in the HSC diploma, other guidelines, such as Marsden, are used for these areas.

Outcomes

The project is now fully integrated into the way care is delivered in residential units:

- residents expect this seamless support as a matter of course
- training is provided on site and tailored to individual resident needs
- qualified nurses are freed up to focus on more skilled areas of work and can branch out into new areas, such as leadership and management
- sufficient SNCAs are in post to ensure that one trained worker is part of each shift team, as well as a registered nurse
- enhanced understanding of medical conditions means that SNCAs can recognise significant symptoms at an early stage and can alert the registered nurse who quickly initiates appropriate interventions.

Bill's experience

Bill, a resident at St Monica Trust, had a chronic and deteriorating wound that was finally brought under control when the staff caring for him received training in these new skill areas. Better management of his condition meant that he was closely monitored; care staff were able to manage his daily care and recognise when the skills of the nurse were required. Prompt and appropriate treatment quickly led to his condition improving.



Impact

The project has made an impact on the national priorities:

- the new senior nurse care assistant role has increased levels of clinical care provided and increased personalisation, with fewer handovers
- there is a reduction in the number of residents being admitted to hospital
- some residents have been discharged from hospital more speedily
- fewer GP callouts have been required to the homes
- creating the SNCA role has provided capacity to respond to increased resident needs and managed resources effectively.

Learning

The project team have identified key learning points:

- sell the benefits of the new role to gain staff support and overcome resistance to change
- identify financial support for the SNCA role so it can be extended to its full potential
- offer professional development for nursing staff as well, their assessment and supervision skills are key to supporting the assistants.

Next steps

Well established in its nursing home and residential settings, the Trust is now looking at expanding the role into support in the wider community for people remaining in their own home. The service will also be expanded into its dementia care units. Sources of funding are currently being explored.

St Monica has recently been awarded Skills for Care funding to support a project that builds on this work, this time developing ways to train and support its care at home staff. It is the aim of this new project to develop blended learning (a mix of online and face to face training) packages to enable home care staff to develop a role similar to that of the SNCA. The key difference will be that community based staff will be undertaking basic nursing tasks without on-site supervision. The project team is currently exploring the implications of this so that it can be addressed in the final package.

Contacts

www.stmonicastrust.org.uk