

# Nursing associates: The role and where it came from!

*Gary Kirwan, National Officer and Team lead, Employment Relations Department, Royal College of Nursing*

*October 2019*

# The Story so far- Nursing Associates

- ◆ Employer driven - rooted in the Shape of Care review
- ◆ HEE led initially, now responsibility for standards is with NMC
- ◆ Nursing Associate 2 year programme, an apprenticeship since 2018
- ◆ First and second cohorts recruited to in 2017, before apprenticeship developed
- ◆ NAs qualified this year from the 2017 cohort
- ◆ Pattern of recruitment across STP areas, all sectors involved

# Nursing Associates, pay and Job evaluation banding

- ◆ There are two roles; Trainee Band 3, Nursing Associate Band 4, pending NHS job evaluation (Band 3 agreed, after job evaluation). Are employers Job evaluating the Job descriptions, are the results a band 4?
- ◆ TNAs are apprentices, on-going negotiations on apprenticeship pay, for all apprenticeships in the NHS, under the NHS Staff Council, apprenticeship pay group

# Nurse Associate Apprenticeship

- ◆ Original standard published, by the Institute for Apprenticeships end of 2017 for use in 2018
- ◆ Standard developed by trailblazer group - Responsibilities - ‘supporting the registered nurse’
- ◆ Revised standard April 2019 – Responsibilities- ‘enable registered nurses to focus on more complex clinical duties’

# NMC regulation

- ◆ First NAs regulated with NMC in 2019
- ◆ England-only role
- ◆ National standards for education
- ◆ National NA proficiencies to be met on qualification
- ◆ Generic – not field specific
- ◆ One code – for nurses, midwives & NAs
- ◆ Consistent processes for NMC fees, revalidation.

# Nursing Associates now

- ◆ June 2019, 1000 Nursing Associates on the NMC register
- ◆ Health Education England has partnered with the Florence Nightingale Foundation to offer this leadership development opportunity for Nursing Associates.
- ◆ Nursing associates training in cervical sample taking- commencing this year

# Governance and Assurance

- ◆ Systems Regulators - NHSi and CQC
- ◆ CQC state - 'it is important to understand that nursing associates are **not** registered nurses and we expect health and care providers to consider this when deploying them'
- ◆ The Employer - what's in the Job description, how will NAs be deployed, where is training and CPD support?
- ◆ Regulated professional - The Nursing Associate will be expected to work within NMC code

# Comparison: Registered Nurse to Nursing Associate – NMC Standards of Proficiency

## RN

- ◆ Being an accountable professional
- ◆ Promoting health and preventing ill health
- ◆ Assessing needs and planning care
- ◆ Providing and evaluating care
- ◆ Leading and managing nursing care and working in teams
- ◆ Improving safety and quality of care
- ◆ Coordinating care

## NA

- ◆ Being an accountable professional
- ◆ Promoting health and preventing ill health
- ◆ Provide and monitor care
- ◆ Working in teams
- ◆ Improving safety and quality of care
- ◆ Contributing to integrated care



# Supernumerary or protected time?

- ◆ Registered nurse students or apprentices must be supernumerary
- ◆ For trainee nurse associates, employers can choose supernumerary or protected time
- ◆ Protected time – NMC definition:
  - *Protected learning time is defined as time in a health or care setting during which students are learning and are supported to learn*
  - NMC requirements:
    - released for at least 20 percent of the programme for academic study
    - released for at least 20 percent of the programme time, for protected learning time in external practice placements,
    - protected learning time must be assured for the remainder of the required programme hours.

# Accountability & delegation: firm ground

- ◆ NMC Code
- ◆ NMC Proficiencies
- ◆ NMC delegation & accountability supplementary info
- ◆ Job descriptions
- ◆ Organisational policies, protocols. Do employers have them? They should

# Accountability & delegation (abridged from NMC)

## Delegation

- only delegate tasks and duties that are within the other person's scope of competence, making sure that they fully understand the instructions
- make sure that everyone they delegate tasks to are adequately supervised and supported so they can provide safe and compassionate care
- confirm that the outcome of any task delegated to someone else meets the required standard

## Accepting delegation

- make sure that patient and public safety is not affected ... work within the limits of your competence ....raising concerns immediately whenever you come across situations that put patients or public safety at risk
- ask for help from a suitably qualified and experienced health and care professional to carry out any action or procedure that is beyond the limits of your competence
- complete the necessary training before carrying out a new role

# Changes to student supervision and assessment.

**mentors and sign-off mentors**  
will be replaced by  
**practice supervisors   practice assessors   academic assessors**

Under the NMC Code all nurses/midwives/nursing associates have a duty to: *support students' and colleagues' learning to help them develop their professional competence and confidence* (9.4); **Therefore in future all nurses/midwives/NAs (including newly qualified) can undertake the role of supervisors**

Practice assessors will undertake a role similar to sign-off mentors, i.e. confirmation of a student's proficiency in providing safe and effective care. This will be informed by feedback from practice supervisors

Practice assessors must have knowledge and expertise of the proficiencies and programme outcomes they are assessing. They must work closely with academic assessors

Education/preparation for supervisors & assessors no longer mandated

# Working at the top of license

- ◆ Familiar term?
- ◆ Changing boundaries:
  - at all levels
- ◆ Will/do NAs & APs free up RN time or add capacity but on similar activities?



Over-qualified HCA



Under-prepared/underpaid RN

# Comparison: Assistant Practitioner and Nursing Associate

## Assistant practitioner

- ◆ Commenced 2002
- ◆ Nursing and AHP support role
- ◆ Defined role/area of practice
- ◆ Not regulated
- ◆ Apprenticeship Level 5 (foundation degree)
- ◆ Progression to registered nurse training variable
- ◆ Local curricula
- ◆ Local job descriptions
- ◆ Local workforce planning

## Nursing associate

- ◆ Commenced 2017
- ◆ Nursing support role
- ◆ Generalist role (not field specific)
- ◆ Regulated by NMC
- ◆ Apprenticeship Level 5 (foundation degree)
- ◆ Progression to registered nurse training explicit
- ◆ National proficiencies and education standards
- ◆ National job description templates/guidance
- ◆ Health economy planning & national targets

# Workforce planning, preparation & deployment (local system):

## Issues:

- Costs
- Pipeline: 'grow your own'
- Approach to recruitment & development
- Functional skills
- Preparation & support for existing staff
- Staffing levels & skill mix review & monitoring
- Deployment of NAs
- Avoiding substitution
- Governance, policies, processes etc.
- Evaluation/audit including quality & safety

## Resources:

- Skills for health list of apprenticeships in health: <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/standards/#standard-1894>
- NMC Standards: NAs, RNs, student supervision & assessment <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/>
- RCN website, practice based learning: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/blogs/practice-based-learning-is-changing>
- NMC protected learning: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/education-standards/nursing-associates-protected-learning-time-supporting-information.pdf>
- NHS Employers guide for NAs: <https://www.nhsemployers.org/nursingassociates>
- HEE Preceptorship for NAs, Best Practice guidance
- NHSi Improvement resource for deployment of NAs: [https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/3649/Nursing\\_associates\\_in\\_secondary\\_care\\_.pdf](https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/3649/Nursing_associates_in_secondary_care_.pdf)
- CQC NA briefing for providers: [https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20190123\\_briefing\\_for\\_providers\\_nursing\\_associates\\_0.pdf](https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20190123_briefing_for_providers_nursing_associates_0.pdf)
- RCN website: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/become-a-nursing-associate>



## Routes into registered nursing

