Qni The Queen's Nursing Institute

Transition to the School Nursing Service

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Section C - Policy

Chapter 11: Developing your career in school nursing

Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to:
- Consider your confidence and competence in school nursing
- Start to contemplate your own personal development plan
- Begin to consider career planning

Importance of CPD

The overall aim of CPD is to give all those working with patients/clients/children and young people the opportunity to update their knowledge and skills in their area of work. For those that are qualified nurses it is a NMC requirement that at least 35 hours of learning activity relevant to their practice is carried out over a three year period. All qualified nurses must currently keep a portfolio which is updated on a regular basis, and at least every time a new learning activity has taken place (PREP). There is no point just putting together a portfolio of handouts, power points, leaflets and certificates of attendance. This will of course prove that you have attended an update, but it will not demonstrate what you have actually learnt. It is therefore recommended that a reflective account is written following each study day that you attend. Attending study days is also an opportunity for you to look at various career paths that you might like to follow in the community setting. The NMC is updating the way in which practitioners will need to demonstrate that they are up to date and have maintained contact with the evidence base for their practice.

Revalidation will replace the current PREP process in December 2015. For further information on this please visit the website: www.nmc-uk.org/Nurses-and-midwives/Revalidation

In 2004 the NMC created a third part of the professional nurse register for all Specialist Community Public Health Nurses that included school nurses, health visitors and occupational health nurses. An obvious career path for a staff nurse working in the community is to apply for the Specialist Community Public Health Nursing programme. However, others choose to remain as community staff nurses working in the school health team. You will need to apply in the first instance to a Trust to be sponsored to do the course and you will be allocated a qualified practice teacher to support you in practice. Should you decide to follow the Specialist Practice route; the standards for SCPHN are on the NMC website: www.nmc-uk.org/Educators/Standards-for-education/Standards-of-proficiency-for-specialist-community-public-health-nurses

The standards for SCPHN's are based on the four principles of practice:
- The Search for Health Needs
- The Stimulation of Awareness of Health Needs
- The Influence on policies affecting health
- The Facilitation of health enhancing activities
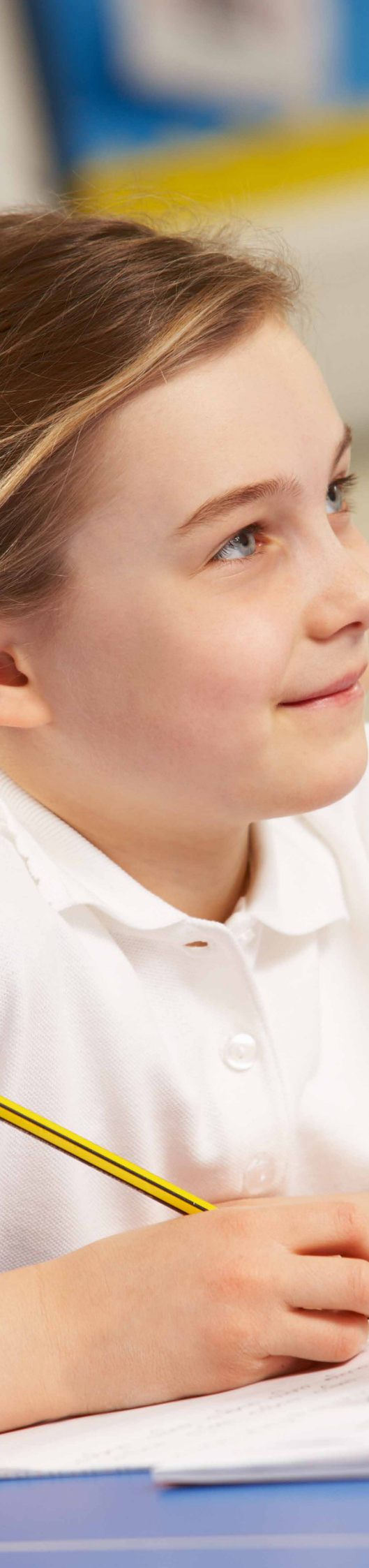
'It is imperative to know what your level of knowledge is if you are to work within your competence.'

If you contemplate doing the SCPHN qualification you can do this at degree or Post Graduate level (PG Dip). The programmes at universities have to be approved by the NMC and successful completion of the programme will enable you to be recorded on the third part of the NMC register as well having an academic qualification. The programme is 50% practice and 50% theory. A portfolio of evidence demonstrating your competency will be required and the academic learning is applied directly to your practice. Some of the key topics covered on the course are:

- Leadership and management knowledge and skills
- Public health and health promotion
- The determinants of health and well being
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Research skills and the importance of evidence based practice
- Emotional health and well-being
- Engaging communities to improve health: assessing need
- Communication with children and young people
- The political agenda.

Values-based recruitment to Higher Education Institutes is now in place and you will need to be aware of these values if you are offered an interview to do the SCPHN course. You will be asked questions around the following:

- **Working together for clients** (children, young people and their families)
- **Respect and dignity** - valuing everyone as an individual, respect their aspirations and commitments in life, and seek to understand their priorities, needs, abilities and limits
- **Commitment to quality of care** - insist on high quality, safety and effectiveness of services
- **Compassion** - ensuring that compassion is central to everything you do
- **Everyone counts** - maximising resources for the benefit of the whole community, and make sure nobody is excluded, discriminated against or left behind
- **Improving Lives** - strive to improve health and well-being and people's experiences of the NHS.

If you are accepted on the course and qualify as a SCPHN you can then think about further learning opportunities such as the practice teacher course or, if you have done a PG diploma, you may want to complete the Masters programme.

The following website, www.nhscareers.uk, will highlight the various nursing opportunities that are available. Whether it be working as a member of a primary care team, working as part of a social enterprise or working with a specialist team of health workers; you will know what your specific interests are, so spend time working through this site.

A number of Health Care Assistants also work as part of a school nurse team and they also should be involved in continuing professional development. Whilst they are not accountable to a professional body, they still have their own individual integrity and individual responsibility to ensure that they are working as a safe practitioner.

It is imperative to know what your level of knowledge is if you are to work within your competence. Look at the diagram below. Where would you place yourself on the ladder of competence?
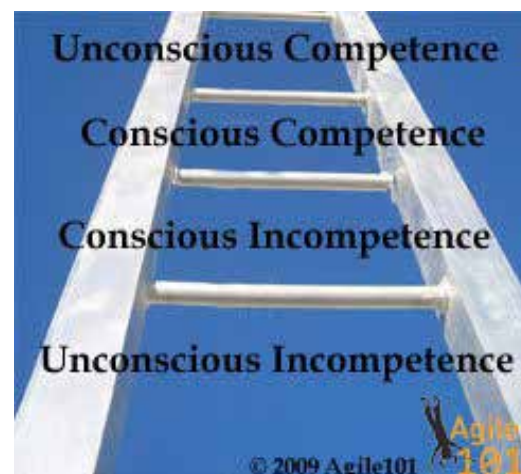
Level 1 – Unconscious Incompetence – You don't know that you don't know

Level 2 – Conscious Incompetence – You know that you don't know

Level 3 – Conscious Competence – You know that you know

Level 4 – Unconscious Competence – You don't know that you know – it just seems easy !

Using this ladder as a tool will assist you in identifying where more learning needs to take place, but it will also give reassurance when you are competent.

The web page, www.mind.tools.com/pages/article/newISS-96htm introduces you to a number of leadership and management strategies which you might find useful when you identify which level

on the above ladder you sit. Please remember that leadership and management not only happens in senior management positions, but every member of a team will have some leadership role to play.

Reflection point - Having identified where you are on the ladder, what action are you going to take to change your position on the ladder?

Also acknowledge that you may be at different levels of competence depending on what skill or subject matter is being addressed. You may find the exercise uncomfortable because it displays areas where you possibly thought you were more competent than you actually are. This is not a problem as long as you are aware of this and demonstrate an emotional intelligence that is resilient and will assist you to develop/strengthen in these areas www.mind.tools.com

www.emotionaliq.org/EI.htm This website will introduce you to emotional intelligence and the different models used. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions in you and in others. Having recognised this it then enables you to identify strategies that will help you to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Personal Development Plan

What is required of a personal development plan? A development plan is designed to help you to reflect on your career to date and for you to put together a SMART (Specific, Measured, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) action plan to assist you to reach your next goal. There are three key stages in working on a personal development plan:

1. Identify what is required of your current role
2. Carry out a SWOT analysis – look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that have assisted/prevented you from working effectively in your current role and also when considering future roles
3. Develop a SMART action plan to assist you to move forward in the direction of your chosen career.

Reflection point - Have you considered any other community career paths you may want to follow? What steps/actions do you need to take to follow your chosen career pathway
This website may help you to develop your plan: www.worldwork.biz/legacy/www/downloads/Personal_Development_Plan.pdf

Having devised this personal development plan it will pave the path for you when you attend interviews and will also assist you when writing your CV, as it will have outlined clear objectives in the form of your SMART action plan.

Applying for jobs

Firstly, find out background information about the company: whether it is a NHS Trust or a Social Enterprise, charity or private company. Information can be found on the website. Find out what their vision and strategy for the future is. What skill sets are they looking for – do you have the skills they are looking for? It is essential that the job description is scrutinised and that you look at the essential skills and desirable skills that are required for the position that you are applying

> 'Leadership not only happens in senior management positions, every member of a team will have some leadership role to play.'

for. When you compile your CV ensure that it meets the criteria in the job description. Be as succinct as possible when you answer questions on the application form and do not add unnecessary information that has no bearing on the job application.

www.monster.co.uk This website will give you a lot of valuable information regarding the format of CV writing and the way to use specific words that will enhance your CV.

If you are invited for an interview it is a good idea to have a practise interview with someone who has an understanding of the role you are applying for. Make sure you are up to date with government and Department of Health policies that potentially will impact on your practice. Be enthusiastic and remember to let the interview panel know what specific skills you will be bringing to the role. If you are asked to present at interview it is likely that you will have ten minutes to present. Prepare your power point slides. Keep these to a minimum (not more than 10 slides) and only write headers or bullet points so that you can talk around the slides and remember to speak slowly and articulate your words. It is also a good idea to bring your portfolio of personal development which will demonstrate how you have been updating yourself and what you have learnt from the updates. https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gv.uk/advice/getajob/interviews

Should you be unsuccessful at interview it is always a good idea to ask for feedback from the panel – this will help you when you apply for further jobs.

Reflection point - Now that you have completed this on line resource, what do you plan to do? Has working through the various chapters assisted you in challenging your practice? Do you feel more confident now? Are you going to pursue your studies further?

Chapter Summary
This chapter has looked at the importance of recognising your individual competence in the role you are currently working in. It has given some ways in which you can recognise your level of competence. This can really only occur if the individual concerned has a self awareness that will enable them to act on the areas where they feel less competent and put a strategy in place to deal with this.

The career pathway for working in the community was looked at, recognising that not all staff nurses will want to study for the Specialist Community Public Health Nursing programme. The importance of having a personal development plan was discussed and also it was stressed that preparation in the form of CV writing, interview skills and application processes were important when applying for any new role in the community setting.

Further Web Resources
- www.nhscareers.uk
- www.jobs.nhs.uk
- www.changemodel.nhs.uk
- www.kingsfund.org.uk
- www.cno.dh.gov.uk
- www.nmc.uk.org
- www.rcn.org.uk
- www.businessballs.com

Evaluation
We would be grateful if you would complete a short evaluation on this resource. To take part, please go to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SXF8TXW. Thank you.