

Case study - introducing Trainee Nursing Associates

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Annabel Coulson, Programme Leader for the Leicester, Leicestershire School of Nursing Associates, shares her experience of introducing Trainee Nursing Associates

I was previously a practice learning lead at University Hospitals Leicester and am now the Programme Leader for the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Nursing Associate Centre for Clinical Practice and Leicestershire School of Nursing Associates. The school came about because of the Trainee Nursing Associates pilot programme commissioned by HEE, we wanted to do something different, responding to local need and create a role that was embedded in practice. We devised, lead and delivered a training programme to meet our needs within the trust, with a local university as a partner to guide and accredit the process.

Starting in 2017 the nursing associate role has been approached differently to registered nurses and is a practical hands-on role developed closely with service need in the trust. We have run three cohorts a year with the academic learning now managed by a local faculty. We are now working in partnerships across health, social care and the third sector within the county to spread our good practice and support. Close working partnerships means we have been able to make it relevant and responsive to local employer needs and be flexible to their circumstances such as employment timelines and skills needs.

My advice to others undertaking a programme of work on new roles is to maintain perseverance and determination! You need a dedicated role such as the programme leader post that I undertook, and it must have the support of the organisation and senior leaders, which I found invaluable in meeting my objectives. We worked closely with other organisations to spread the role in the locality. To do this I had to understand the common ground with them, ensure the terminology was understood and that everyone had the ability and capacity to work through

guidance and link it to something positive in their work. The conversations had to be open and honest, with no hidden agendas.

Sustaining the role in the various employers in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is a work in progress and the last year has been challenging and rewarding with great progress made. We have introduced preceptorship programmes and guidance to define the scope of practice. An important initiative was our integration development framework which looks at teamwork and where the role will sit within a team and the healthcare service being provided. We are also starting to look at the whole career and development opportunities, such as how the role will work at top of licence, a top up programme to become a registered nurse, or continuing professional development for those looking at a fulfilling career as a nursing associate.

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- [1] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work>
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