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**Background**

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust band 5/6 Research Nurse transition arrangement has been in place for more than eight years. The framework sets out a schedule by which band 5 Research Nurses are trained in the specialist area of clinical research, progressing to a band 6 role on completion of all competencies within a two year period. Experiences of the band 5 Research Nurses have been mixed throughout this process so far; with differences in mentorship methods, guidance on the collation of evidence portfolios and support from experienced staff.

Our aim at the Clinical Ageing Research Unit (CARU) was to standardise the method by which band 5 Research Nurses were mentored and guided through their band 5/6 competencies on our department.

**Method**

Two band 6 Research Nurses were identified at CARU to develop a workable method for training band 5 Research Nurses in our department. This included:

- A standardised evidence portfolio.
- A “buddy” system to ensure that band 5 nurses always have an experienced Research Nurse available for guidance and support at all times.
- Regular 3-monthly meetings were introduced for the review of competencies and the setting of targets.

**Outcome**

CARU currently has three band 5 Research Nurses, and one band 6 Research Nurse who has recently transitioned from their band 5 post. All of these staff have developed comprehensive evidence portfolios guided by CARU’s template. Regular review meetings, and support from their mentor and “buddy” mentor has given them the support and guidance to push themselves towards their band 6 goal.

**Feedback from a band 5 Research Nurse**

“It had at times (in the past) been unclear as to what specifically constituted evidence of achievement of a competency. Differing mentors suggested different approaches to the portfolio itself, which sometimes left us (the trainees) confused as to the requirements and how to present the portfolio itself.

The standardised evidence portfolio provided examples and suggestions to enable us to compile our portfolios more easily. The framework also helped provide ideas as to how we could actually achieve competence. The suggested layout made it simpler to present all the evidence in a clear and structured manner.

Support from a designated Band 6 nurse meant that specific queries regarding the portfolio and the transition itself could be answered in a timely and individual manner.

Overall the standardised evidence portfolio made the approach to transition more consistent, thorough and clear.”