A Unique Career Pathway for Healthcare Assistants in a Hospice Setting

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Background
The Willis Commission advocated a career pathway for Health Care Assistants (HCA) to enhance career opportunities and support the sustainability of the future nursing workforce. Several opportunities have been embraced to enable this including the creation of Assistant Practitioner (AP) & Nursing Assistant roles and Health & Social Care apprenticeships. To underpin the knowledge base for these roles a variety of educational programmes have emerged such as Foundation Degrees, QCF frameworks and the Care Certificate which all provide building blocks to accessing further education onto the registered nursing pathway.

Our Experience
For the past 9 years LOROS Education has run a Foundation Degree which several HCAs from the hospice have successfully achieved. More recently, engagement in level 2&3 QCF modules has taken place. In addition, there has been a variety of activity to support HCA development in a hospice setting:

- 2 Assistant Practitioner posts (in Education & MND Team)
- 4 Trainee Assistant Practitioners – rotating into the community trust as part of a collaborative pilot project
- 2 Clinical Apprenticeships (inpatient ward and day therapy rotational posts)
- 2 HCA development posts, through ‘talent managing’ staff from the domestic team & HCA bank
- 3 Senior HCA posts on the inpatient ward

I was a volunteer at LOROS and felt that I had more to give. I took the opportunity to become an Apprentice Healthcare Assistant. The learning was a challenge because of my age, having been out of education for many years. My confidence has grown in abundance. I am now in post as a HCA and caring for people has become second nature to me. I feel like I have found my vocation in life.

Tracy Shaw, Apprentice…now HCA

The above initiatives have demonstrated the commitment of LOROS to develop our workforce and create novel roles within the nursing teams in alignment with national directives. The Education AP has developed and embedded the care certificate with new HCAs. One of the clinical apprentices was previously a volunteer and the 3 Senior HCAs have been internally promoted. The HCA development posts were created to enable appropriate staff who lacked traditional essential application criteria (NVQ level 2 minimum), to learn on the job, whilst undertaking supported study to attain vocational qualifications. Both clinical apprentices have successfully attained a substantive post at the end of their training and the success of this means we are seeking to appoint a further 2 clinical apprentices this year.

References

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