**Introduction**

A collaborative pilot project between Leicestershire Partnership Trust and The Leicestershire and Rutland Hospice (LOROS) aimed to test a model of care delivery through Assistant Practitioner (AP) posts working for 6 months as an integral part of health care teams both in the hospice and in the community through the hospice at home service, and to further explore the potential for assistant practitioners to follow the patient working across both organisations.

**Approaches Used**

- 2 trainee assistant practitioners from each setting (n=4), with the support of mentors, undertook 4 rotational work placements between the hospice and community, supplemented by monthly study days.
- An action research model was used to evaluate the pilot and support a real-time development of the role and included qualitative interviews and focus groups (n=4) with assistant practitioners, mentors (n=5) and managers (n=3), alongside analysis of the adopted competency framework and reflective diaries.

**Findings**

The AP’s who all had foundation degrees: were skilled and able to provide continuity of care following patients through from home to hospice and back; they helped develop inter-organisational understanding of ways of working; freed up registered nursing time; demonstrated high level communication skills particularly when working with family carers; offered support to HCA’s. The main challenge related to changing policies in relation to what tasks they were allowed to undertake during the life of the pilot to allow the AP’s to fully embrace an extended role.

**Conclusion**

Hospice and community settings were convinced of the value and utility of the role and are looking to recruit AP’s as part of their long term staffing policy. However, each organisation sees a different focus for the role and they are not yet ready to embrace the concept of shared posts working across organisational boundaries.

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