

Enhancing Clinical Leadership: A Band 5 to 6 Development Framework

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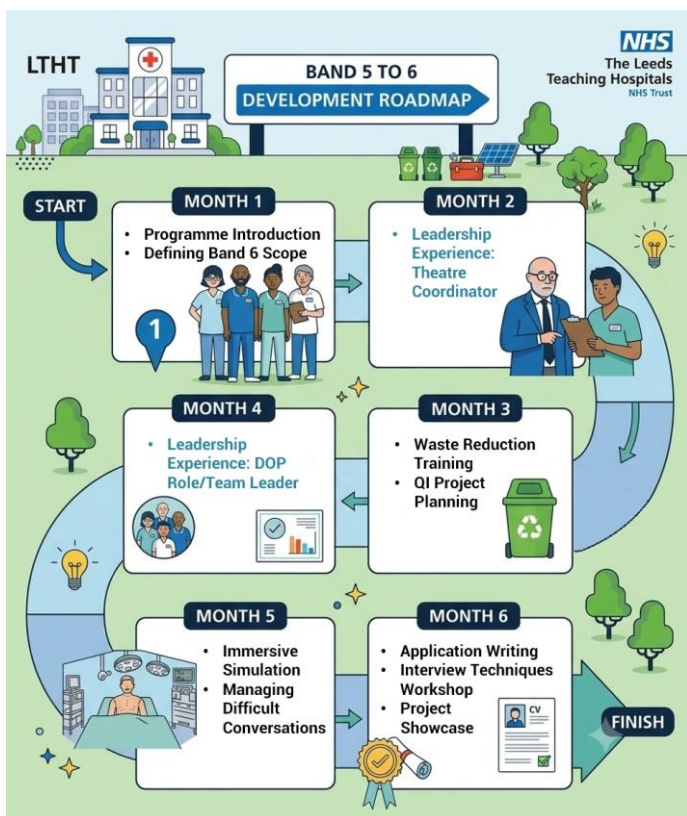
Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project addresses a recognised leadership readiness gap, targeting the future transition of Band 5 practitioners into senior Band 6 roles. Grounded in the national NHS Enhanced Clinical Practice Framework, this project aims to achieve a structured, 6-month development roadmap that equips staff with the leadership skills required to manage complex theatre lists and navigate challenging people management scenarios autonomously.

A key milestone has been collaborating with senior team leaders across 26 clinical teams to design a curriculum aligned with the four principles of enhanced practice. While the project is still in its early stages, significant progress has been made in establishing a standardised pathway to provide a clear development trajectory and structured support for implementation.

Challenge or Opportunity: Initial data gathering and qualitative feedback collated across clinical teams highlighted a distinct developmental gap regarding the transition from Band 5 to senior Band 6 roles. This evaluation revealed that the department currently lacks a standardised preparation programme for this specific career progression. While Band 5 Operating Department Practitioners demonstrate excellent baseline capability, a prominent theme emerged regarding a lack of operational readiness to transition into senior roles. This gap directly maps to the core capabilities highlighted in the NHS Enhanced Clinical Practice Framework, specifically around autonomous clinical reasoning, managing discrete complexity and service continuity. Key areas identified for professional growth include enhancing local problem-solving capabilities, developing experience in service quality improvement and preparing candidates effectively for senior recruitment processes.



Actions Taken: Using qualitative feedback gathered from senior team members, leaders, and coordinators across the CSU, I designed a 6-month transitional roadmap mapped to the NHS Enhanced Clinical Practice Framework. This structured curriculum integrates theory-based study days, immersive simulation scenarios, and structured shadowing opportunities supported by a tailored competency checklist. The programme also incorporates a hands-on quality improvement project focused on theatre waste reduction. Collectively, these components allow practitioners to develop clinical leadership capabilities, enhance their clinical decision-making, and build confidence in team and list management.

Impact: As the programme is finalised, its primary impact has been enhancing cross-team collaboration and identifying shared training themes across a complex CSU with 26 clinical teams and approximately 450 Band 5 staff. This process has supported the development of a standardised workforce framework aligned with NHS Enhanced Practice principles, creating clear leadership expectations and a visible career trajectory for our Band 5 workforce. Anticipated outcomes upon implementation include increased internal promotion rates, higher-quality interview performance, improved staff retention, and a workforce equipped to safely manage clinical complexity.

Leadership Learning: Leading this initiative across a CSU of over 1400 staff has developed my capacity to navigate large-scale stakeholder engagement, capitalise on diverse clinical expertise, and build a collective commitment to change. Managing this process has demonstrated that success relies heavily on adaptability and ongoing feedback, ensuring the curriculum remains clinically relevant as it develops. Ultimately, this experience has strengthened my strategic leadership skills by demonstrating practical ways to bridge the gap between national frameworks and local operational practice.

Future Plans: The immediate next steps are to finalise the programme theory and teaching elements, followed by the supporting competency checklist, before initiating a phased pilot to test the curriculum in practice. Gathering feedback during this pilot will allow us to refine the framework before a wider rollout. The long-term strategy focuses on tracking workforce metrics, specifically internal promotion rates, staff retention, and interview performance, to evaluate measurable impact. Ultimately, the aim is to embed this standardised framework as a sustainable blueprint for Band 5 workforce development, ensuring clinical staff are dynamically equipped to meet evolving NHS Enhanced Practice standards.

