



ODP SURGE
SUPPORT FOR UPSKILLING, RETENTION,
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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



College of Operating Department Practitioners

The Value of the ODP Profession

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The aim of my project- To explore ODP apprenticeship funding, promoting the value of the profession in the current NHS staffing crisis. Those who have transferable skills require minimal support and supervision to complete preceptorship programmes; transitioning smoothly into autonomous practitioners. Therefore, why are we not growing our own staff? Why are we not succession planning? Why are we not employing ODP's in roles outside of the perioperative environment, ensuring a diverse workforce, which is fit for the future?



Actions Taken- To investigate further I met with the Chief AHP lead, the Deputy Chief AHP Lead and newly appointed Workforce Strategy Officer for my organization. I contacted TRAC recruitment to establish whether an ODP with a HCPC registration who meets all the essential criteria can be shortlisted for roles where it states essential criteria NMC registered. I was told each recruiting manager inputting the vacancy onto Trac decides the criteria for shortlisting and this cannot be overridden. I undertook a job search on NHS jobs of appropriate non-theatre roles to see how many had NMC registration as essential criteria. My findings were 7000 vacancies; I filtered the results to pay scale band 6 and took a small sample of posts from differing regions. These roles all included in the title 'Nurse' Specialist. I analysed the personal specification and job descriptions, all detailing skills an ODP can demonstrate.

GROW YOUR OWN ODP WORKFORCE



Leadership Learning- I have strengthened my leadership qualities, feeling empowered to communicate and hold meetings with key stakeholders, displaying greater confidence. I can deliver strong elevator pitches to ensure I communicate my ideas clearly, concisely and with purpose. Assuring key messages are delivered to diverse audiences, maintaining the value of my topic. Action Learning Sets have equipped me to explore real workplace challenges and to listen actively to others' perspectives, rather than offering immediate solutions, empowering others to find their own solutions. I will apply these learning experiences in my role as a Theatre Manager, using coaching conversations with colleagues, communicating more confidently, leading change and creating opportunities for reflection and shared learning.

Future Plans- The narrative must change around ODP apprenticeships. A constant feeder system needs to be developed to enable a steady workstream of Theatre Support Workers (TSW) transitioning into apprentices and then into ODP's, a steppingstone system of development. We need to stop focusing on the negativity of losing a TSW on the floor and having to undertake costly backfilling of positions and think differently. Focus on employing the next TSW for 6-12 months who will then transition into an apprentice, continuing the cycle, and evolving the workforce. If ODP's want to develop outside of theatre, positions should be made available. ODP's need to push boundaries, apply for roles, question roles if open only to nurses. As a Manager I will support this and continue to network with key stakeholders, seeking advice and support from CODP, who have clear pathways for ODP development. I will continue to push opportunities and challenge the status quo.

Impact- my project has identified barriers with ODP apprenticeships, providing evidence to support reviewing apprenticeship investment and workforce planning to improve career progression, development, succession planning and staff retention. I have created evidence, awareness and recommendations for change. Raising awareness with senior AHP leaders and the workforce strategy team, contributing to discussions about creating a more flexible, sustainable multidisciplinary workforce, and how recruitment criteria may unintentionally limit the utilisation of the ODP workforce, who possess transferable skills matching many band 6 specialist roles. Although, I have not made immediate changes, potential future impacts include, a review of apprenticeship funding has been agreed, and ODP apprenticeships are being explored for future cohorts, and I have been asked to submit a document detailing the duties and skills ODP's exhibit in my workplace.



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