

PROJECT SNAPSHOT: PILOTING THE CORE SKILLS IN GENERAL PRACTICE

The [North West Core Skills programme \(NWCSP\)](#) is an award winning learning and development initiative being undertaken across the North West health sector to improve the efficiency and education quality of statutory and mandatory training. Following successful implementation of the programme by NHS trusts and higher education institutes (HEIs) across the North West, a new project is now focusing upon introducing Core Skills to general practices, with the aim of replicating benefits across primary care as well as within secondary care. It is recognised that since the abolition of primary care trusts (PCTs) training provision in primary care has become increasingly fragmented with a lack of guidance for individual practices. The introduction of the Core Skills programme is seen as an opportunity to provide clarity to practices on training requirements, establish an educational standard and define a consistent approach across the region.

An initial pilot will be undertaken with two separate groups of practices. The first group is made up of twenty general practices based within Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group. The second group is made up of approximately fifteen separate practices from across the North West who have previously expressed an interest in

the Core Skills programme and volunteered to be part of the pilot.

The initial scoping work for the pilot has been undertaken, with the pilot scheduled to run during the first quarter of 2015.

Key Aims

- Introduce the Core Skills to Primary Care
- Adapt the content and context of the Core Skills programme so it is relevant to primary care
- Demonstrate benefits similar to those achieved with NHS trusts and HEIs
- Use the pilot to inform and shape a wider rollout to general practices across the North West

Background

The NWCSP is an initiative delivered by Health Education North West (HENW) with the aim of standardising statutory and mandatory training across the North West health sector. The benefits include a consistent approach to training that provides improved quality and assurance. This allows previous training to be recognised and reduce needless duplication.



Core Skills

The Core Skills Framework started as an initiative in Cheshire and Merseyside, which grew to incorporate the whole North West. It has now evolved into a national document called the UK Core Skills Training Framework (CSTF), and is managed by Skills for Health. The CSTF states the learning outcomes that must be covered for the ten Core Skills subjects based on national legislation and guidance.

The NWCSF has developed a wide variety of education resources (including presentations, workbooks, assessments and eLearning), to meet the learning outcomes in the CSTF and to support organisations to deliver Core Skills training.

In the North West, over 90% of NHS Trusts have adopted and are delivering Core Skills Training. Post Graduate Medical Deanery Education (PGMDE) teams within HENW have aligned their junior doctor induction to the Core Skills. Ten HEIs and nineteen further education colleges are delivering Core Skills training across their programmes to healthcare students.

Key Stages of Setup

1. Pre-Pilot

- Prepare systems required to support the pilot, for example set up appropriate eLearning systems for the practices to use.
- Engage with the practices taking part in the pilot. Carry out a pre-pilot survey to gauge intelligence. Conduct individual practice visits to understand specific concerns or problems.
- Identify relevant risks and issues to the pilot and potential contingences to address or overcome.
- Agree parameters for pilot, including scope and success criteria.

2. Pilot Rollout

- Review existing provision in practices and map against the Core Skills. Provide access to appropriate resources to address gaps and cover the requirements.
- Provide ongoing support throughout the pilot to practices to address individual or emerging issues.
- Hold regular updates/reviews with the practices to gauge progress and capture feedback. Using lessons learnt to continually inform and shape the pilot.
- Record training compliance of practice staff over the course of the pilot.

3. Post Pilot

- Host a post-pilot review with the practices to identify achievements, identify improvements, agree next steps and their continuation of the Core Skills programme.
- Conduct a formal evaluation of the pilot, measuring its success against the agreed targets and lessons learnt.
- Based on the outcomes of the pilot, prepare for the wider rollout of Core Skills to other groups of general practices.

How It Works

The sponsor for the pilot in HENW is Kirstie Baxter, Head of Workforce Transformation with the central lead in Fylde and Wyre CCG being Tracy Riddick, Senior Integrated Governance Manager.

The pilot is managed and delivered by the NWCSF team with a single point of contact in each practice, i.e. the practice manager, who will be responsible for the rollout in their practice and engagement with the NWCSF team.

There is a preference for the Core Skills programme to be delivered predominately by eLearning using a number of platforms, but the NWCSF team will provide alternative formats and support as required. They will also capture activity, collate/record results and provide compliance reports at CCG and Practice level, as well as providing regular updates on the progress of the pilot to relevant stakeholders and forums.

Resources

The pilot is to be resourced by the NWCSF as one of its agreed work streams.

Training resources required during the pilot will be made freely available, allowing practices to review and evaluate the most appropriate resource for their individual learning needs.

Potential Risks/Challenges

- **Lack of engagement – practices not agreeing to take part in the pilot**
The pilot aims to secure engagement with 75% of general practices in the CCG. The more wide-scale the adoption across organisations then the greater the benefits, such as reducing training duplication. The introduction of CQC registration by practices has helped address this as Core Skills helps and supports practices to meet a number of the CQC monitor requirements.
- **Not relevant to primary care**
Previous training initiatives introduced into primary care have faltered because it has been felt they are not relevant and are too 'hospital focused'. The NWCSF is aware that elements of its existing Core Skills resources may fall into this category. Through engagement with practices, this has been declared from the start, with the request that practices inform the NWCSF of what content needs to be changed and what context it should be in. Based on this feedback, the NWCSF has proposed to develop a primary care focused version of its Core Skills resources.
- **Access to facilities or technology**
Depending on the set up of individual practices, particularly the smaller ones, they may not have access to the appropriate training facilities to undertake Core

Skills training. The NWCSP is reviewing this as part of the scoping work for the pilot and using initial site visits to identify specific issues and ways to address them. For example, a practice may not have access to a computer in a quiet area that is conducive for undertaking eLearning. In this case, the NWCSP can potentially lend the practice a laptop or tablet that can be used by staff to complete their eLearning at a place and time that is suitable to them.

Key Learning

From the initial scoping conducted so far, the existing training provision in practices is more varied than originally anticipated. It is the intention to recognise and accept existing training that is Core Skills aligned where possible, rather than impose new training on a practice. This is likely to lead to a wide range of Core Skills training resources and training providers which will provide a 'preferred supplier' list of content and materials for practices to select from for their Core Skills training needs.

There is also opportunity to see how the Core Skills can be used to support other national initiatives being supported such as the introduction of the Care Certificate which will commence roll out from April 2015.

Sustainability

Post-pilot, enhancements will be made based on lessons

learnt from the pilot and practices will be encouraged to maintain the training processes and procedures they have undertaken for the pilot.

Compliance in the Core Skills will be used to support and inform audit and governance mechanisms such as addressing CQC inspections.

The lessons learnt from the pilot will also be used to inform and accelerate adoption by other practices in the North West, for example across other CCG groups.

The NWCSP will continue to maintain and manage the existing Core Skills resources in the North West to ensure they remain relevant and up-to-date.

With agreement from practices, the Core Skills records of practice staff will be available on a central training database managed by HENW. This will support the movement of staff within primary care and promote greater flexible working.

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