Western Health and Social Care Trust

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The organisation

Western Heath and Social Care Trust is one of five Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland. It is the largest teaching hospital outside of Belfast and serves inner city and rural populations of around 300,000. The organisation has 12,000 members of staff and around a quarter of these are nurses and midwives.

First thoughts about revalidation

The senior nursing executive team at the Trust believes revalidation is an important way of enhancing public and patient confidence in the professions, and of raising the profile of the nursing and midwifery workforce. They also feel that the revalidation requirements will provide a more cohesive professional development framework for nurses and midwives. Taking part in the revalidation pilot was seen as a significant opportunity to influence the development of an important new process for nurses and midwives.

Processes and procedures

The Trust established a multidisciplinary revalidation steering group, chaired by the Executive Director of Nursing and attended by local education providers and staff representatives. The group appointed a revalidation lead, who is responsible for implementing revalidation and for the ongoing organisational readiness of the Trust.

The Trust has an existing line management structure, and all nurses and midwives are encouraged to use their line manager as a confirmer. Where possible, confirmation and the reflective discussion will take place as part of existing regular appraisal meetings.

The Trust appointed lead nurses to act as revalidation champions. They attended revalidation master classes and cascaded information down to frontline staff. They will be available to act as reflective discussion partners for individuals whose line manager is not an NMC registrant.

Support for staff

All staff were asked to complete a personal profile to determine how ready they were for revalidation. This information helped to assess how much support they would need to meet the requirements.

The team organised a series of informal revalidation sessions across the Trust, which included workshops on reflective writing that staff found particularly helpful. The team found these workshops were the best way to relieve anxiety in staff, and to clarify expectations around the amount of time and work involved in revalidation.

The team incorporated NMC forms and templates into existing portfolios and appraisal documentation. Staff found this very supportive and felt this would enhance uptake of appraisals across the organisation.

Lessons learnt so far

Feedback from the nurses and midwives who took part in the pilot was overwhelmingly positive. Ensuring revalidation tied into existing processes proved particularly useful, as it helped staff make connections between what they were already doing and the new requirements they needed to meet for revalidation. It also reassured staff there wouldn't be many extra layers of paperwork involved in the process.

Revalidation did bring to light the importance of knowing when staff are due to renew their registrations. The pressure points across the whole three years have now been identified, which will allow line managers to plan for confirmation and appraisal accordingly.

Some work environments proved more supportive than others in terms of providing access to evidence, such as feedback, for nurses and midwives to use. This was particularly the case for nurses working in social care, and is

something that is now being addressed by the Trust.

The revalidation workshops were identified as the most valuable support offered, and more awareness sessions and workshops are planned to support all of their staff through revalidation over the next three years