



Supporting Critical Care Nurses Redeployed to Ward based care during times of high acuity and winter pressures.

A Quality improvement project: Focused on Wellbeing, Preparedness
and Professional Support.

Presented by Kathy Yorke - Wellbeing and Engagement / PNA Lead
Leanne Eeles - Senior Sister/Ward Manager

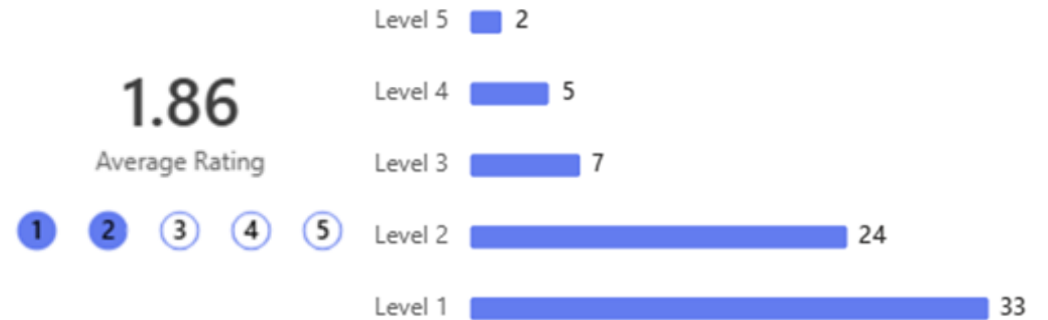


Background and Rationale

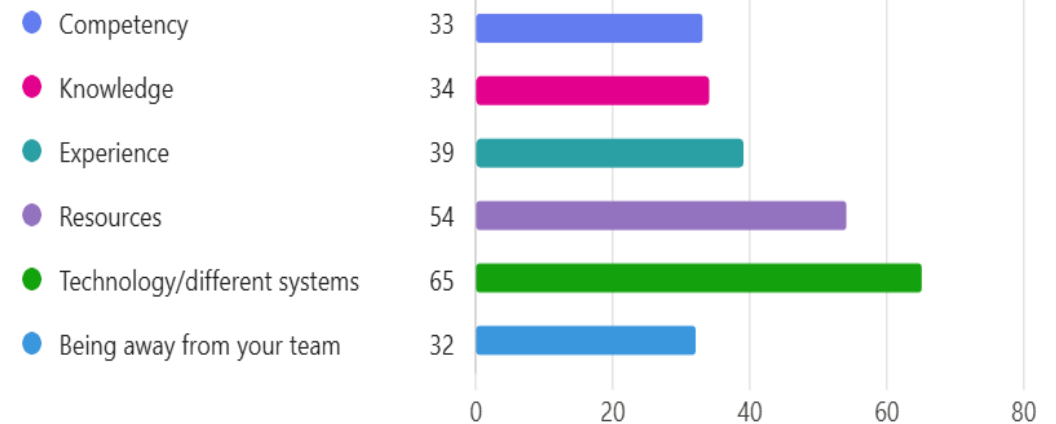
- Winter pressures often result in the temporary redeployment of critical care nurses to ward areas.
- In 2024, Redeployment emerged as the number one theme during Restorative Clinical Supervision sessions.
- Staff consistently voiced that these moves were stressful, disorienting, and poorly supported.
- A preliminary staff questionnaire confirmed that many felt unprepared, isolated, and anxious during redeployment.

Understanding the issues

On a scale of 1-5, 1 - being not at all prepared and 5 - being fully prepared. If you were asked to work on a ward, how prepared would you feel ?



What are your biggest concerns about working in a ward area?
Select 1 or all options you think apply.





Initial Support Package

Pre-deployment Planning:

- Clear list of staff expected to redeploy shared in advance
- Consideration of skills, experience, and ward demands

Supernumerary Period:

- Two weeks supernumerary on host ward
- Time to observe, ask questions, and adjust to ward routines

Ongoing Support & Check-ins:

- Regular PNA (Professional Nurse Advocate) check ins to address any concerns.
- Educational check-ins from both Critical Care and host ward teams
- Access to buddy wards for extended exposure and skill reinforcement

Resource Pack:

- Ward-specific guidelines, protocols, key contacts, escalation pathways and Discharge processes.
- Tailored for quick reference and on the go learning



Aims of the Project.

To develop and evaluate a comprehensive support package for critical care staff redeployed to ward areas.

Key goals:

- Improve preparedness
- Enhance psychological safety and wellbeing
- Offer continuous professional and emotional support
- Promote collaboration between critical care and ward teams

The key is supporting staff to provide high standard patient focused care.

Collaboration

Fostering teamwork between different healthcare units

Preparedness

Ensuring teams are ready for any situation



Continuous Support

Providing ongoing professional and emotional assistance

Psychological Safety

Creating a safe and supportive environment



Sheffield Teaching Hospitals
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Buddy Wards

This initiative is designed to give staff the opportunity to:

- Build confidence in working on general wards
- Gain experience using the new Connect IT system
- Strengthen collaboration with our ward colleagues ahead of the busy winter period



How will it work?

- Staff can prearrange time to spend on Vickers 2 or H1, choosing either a morning or afternoon shift and will work with a nurse to supervise drug round and to get a feel for the ward's routine. This will be subject to our unit acuity on the day so may get cancelled at short notice
- Alternatively, if acuity is low on your shift you may request to attend on the day, please discuss this with the nurse in charge and then contact the ward directly.
- Both Ward managers are fully supportive and are looking forward to welcoming our staff.

We believe this experience will be particularly valuable in the lead-up to winter, when surge and winter beds wards become active

Post Deployment Questionnaire

3. How did you feel about being re-deployed prior to moving to a ward area? Please click as many options you feel best represent this.	Anxious 6 Supported 1 Overwhelmed 2 Confident 1 Optimistic 1 Apprehensive 3 Excited 1 Resentful 1
7. Which support intervention from the QI project did you find most helpful?	Education 0 Resource Pack 2 Wellbeing/PNA support 1 Adobe Newsletter 1 Supernumerary Shift 5 22% 11% 11% 56%
10. How do you now feel about redeployment to ward areas?	Anxious 3 Supported 3 Overwhelmed 0 Confident 3 Optimistic 3 Apprehensive 1 Excited 1 Resentful 1



Impact and Benefits

Qualitative feedback:

- “Having someone to talk to made a huge difference.”
- “I felt seen and supported, not just moved like a number.”

Quantitive Feedback:

	Count		Percentage		Result
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
Anxious	6	3	86%	43%	Positive
Supported	1	3	14%	43%	Positive
Overwhelmed	2	0	29%	0%	Positive
Confident	1	3	14%	43%	Positive
Optimistic	1	3	14%	43%	Positive
Apprehensive	3	1	43%	14%	Positive
Excited	1	1	14%	14%	Neutral
Resentful	1	1	14%	14%	Neutral



Key Learning

- Demonstrated that targeted, structured support can make a significant difference to staff experience
- Strengthened cross team collaboration between wards and critical care
- Reinforced the value of the Professional Nurse Advocate role in navigating operational pressures with compassion
- Created a sustainable model for future winter periods and ad-hoc redeployments



The Revised Support Package

Key Components

- Designated PNA/Buddy:
 - Named contact for each redeployed staff member
 - Regular wellbeing check-ins (Week 1, then every 3 weeks)
- Ward Buddy Collaboration:
 - Critical care staff paired with “buddy wards” for familiarisation
 - Point of contact on the ward for day to day support
- Education and Induction Support:
 - Handbook developed with quick reference guides and tailored induction resources
 - Access to training relevant to ward based care, from host ward education team.
- Return to Critical Care Support:
 - 1:1 wellbeing debrief on return
 - Optional follow-up Restorative Clinical Supervision session
 - Educational review and support.

Support Package

Themes	Support Available
Communication	Staff who are identified to support winter beds/surge areas will be given 8 weeks' notice
Induction/Orientation	Buddy wards available to access prior to redeployment and two weeks supernumerary time at the beginning of redeployment.
Educational support	Bespoke educational support from the Critical care Education team
Emotional Support	PNA support and wellbeing support throughout redeployment including an allocated buddy.
Clinical Safety	Host ward educational support throughout and raising concerns support. Allocation of ward-based buddy.
Recognition	Testimony from host ward and letter/certificate of appreciation from Critical Care
Reintegration	Return support, Debrief/Wellbeing conversation and PNA Restorative Clinical Supervision session. Education review and learning needs support.

Next Steps

- Embedding the support package as standard practice during winter planning
- Ongoing evaluation and feedback loops
- Exploring expansion to other staff groups beyond critical care
- Sharing the model Trust-wide and at regional/national forums and Conferences.

