

# An Evaluation of an established Foundation Programme in preparing NQNs to work in a Level 3 PCCU. Exploring the Lived Experiences of Nurses during their Orientation Phase.

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## Background

Foundation programmes are well recognised across the PCC network in facilitating a structured approach to orientating and preparing NQNs to become competent and safe(1). Although structured orientation is advocated, there is a limited body of literature relating to orientation in the specific domain of PCC nursing. An evaluation of the current PCC Foundation Programme provided a timely review of how to develop and improve further the orientation experience for NQNs in this emotionally and intellectually charged speciality (2).

## Methodology

A service evaluation was undertaken using qualitative phenomenological investigation. A purposive sample of 6 NQNs were interviewed using 1:1 semi-structured interviews, eliciting in-depth opinions, experiences and perspectives of their overall experience, support, socialisation, educational input, development of competence & confidence, barriers/challenges. Thematic analysis produced common themes, refined and defined to describe their unique experience as a journey. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms to protect identities.

## Common Themes

### PCC As A Destination To Be

- Prior experience, self-development, PCC as a place to be
- "I chose here because I wanted to get as much critical care experience in a controlled and well run department" (Lucy).

### Help Along The Way... On The Journey

- Preceptors, value of consistency, scaffolding knowledge & skills
- I felt abit thrown when you were put with somebody you never worked with and you would be in your 7<sup>th</sup> week of supernumerary" (David).

### Learning The Ropes

- Being supernumerary, confidence and competence, allocation
- "I felt like a fish out of water in my supernumerary. I remember my first shift when my preceptor was double pumping inotropes. I had no idea what was going on" (David).

### Becoming One Of The Community

- Socialisation, development teams, community of practice
- "I think this is one of the really positive points of the programme" (Debbie).
- "Everyone was really welcoming. Everyone made an effort"( Laura).

## Moving Forwards

- Combined theory & practical study days
- Greater recognition & reinforcement of the preceptor role
- Introduction of a structured simulation programme
- Future validation of the PCC Foundation Programme
- Publication of findings in an appropriate journal
- Further research to compare other PCC FPs

## REFERENCES:

1. PICS (2015). Quality Standards for the care of critically ill children. (5<sup>th</sup> ed); London: PICS
2. Farnell, S. & Dawson, D. (2006). "It's not like the wards". Experiences of nurses new to critical care: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 43(3), 319-331.