

Development and implementation of a quality assurance framework in nursing and midwifery practice

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Introduction

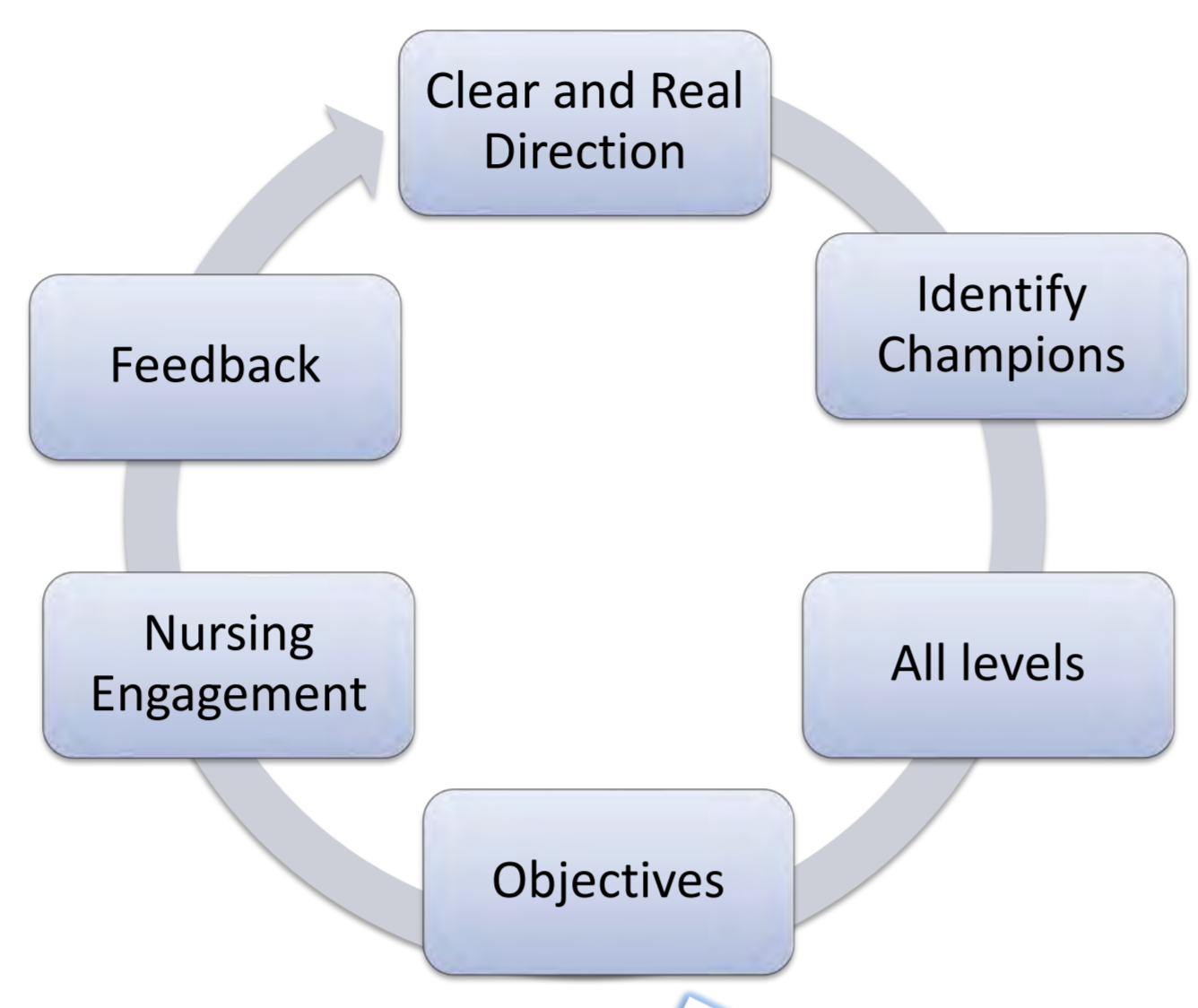
There is a longstanding aim for continuous improvement in the NHS, and a plethora of UK government policy on quality. Whilst the drive for high quality care comes from a national and professional level, it remains the responsibility of healthcare providers to demonstrate and provide evidence of how they deliver high quality care in a local setting.

More recent developments in nursing include a high level national strategy and framework, however, there was a gap in the evidence for a systematic research based approach to engaging nurses in measuring and improving at scale within a local hospital setting.

This doctoral study set out to design and implement a structured framework to improve the quality of care across wards and departments.

Aim

The aim was to support nurses and midwives in delivering a nursing and midwifery strategy to improve the quality of patient care, through the development and implementation of a quality assurance framework: 'How can a nursing and midwifery quality assurance framework contribute to improving quality of care in nursing and midwifery practice?'



Action Research

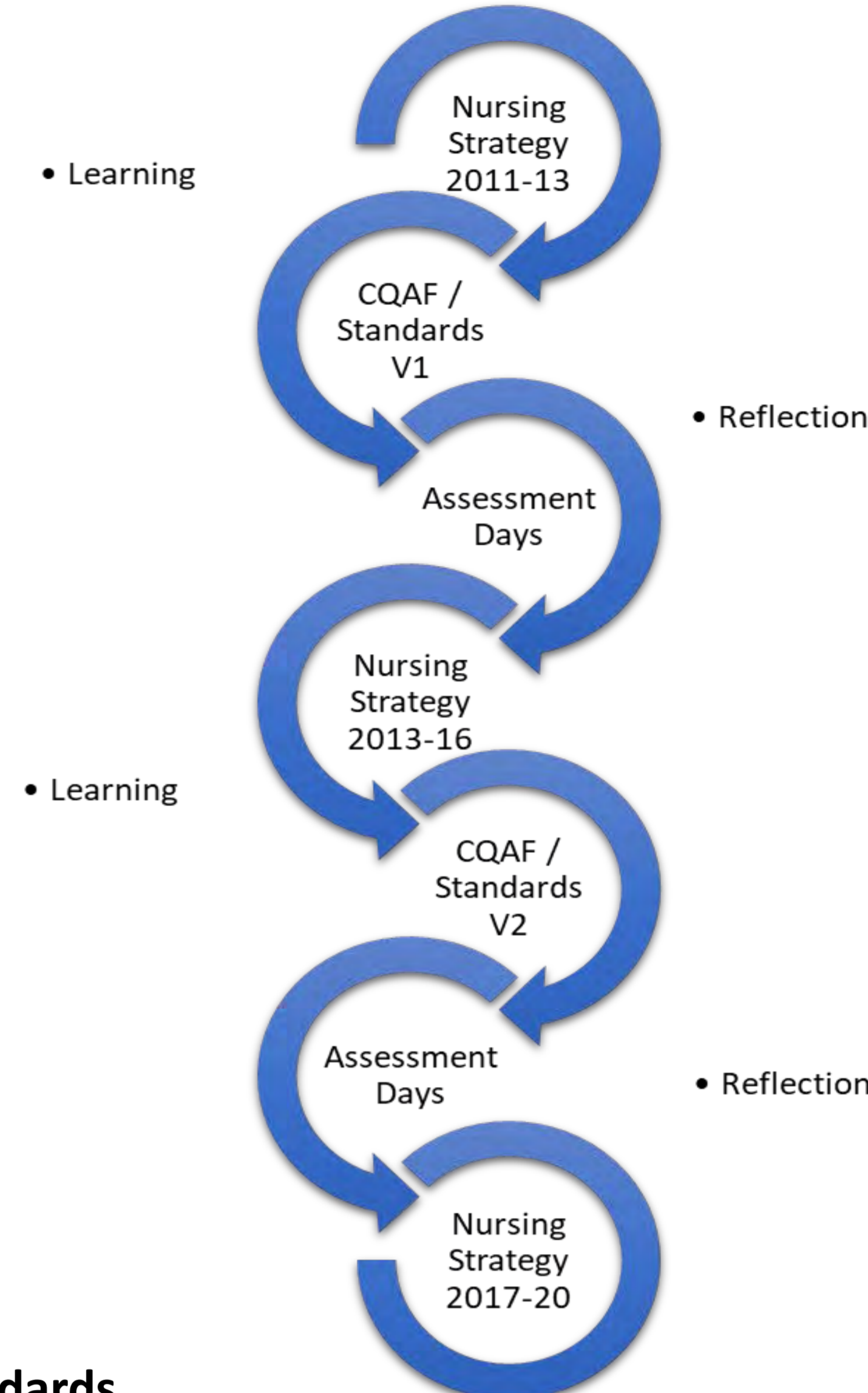
Action research is commonly reported as a methodology of choice when working with practitioners to deliver changes in practice.

This study adopted a participatory action research approach to facilitate the development, delivery and evaluation of a quality assurance framework to support nurses and midwives in the implementation a local nursing and midwifery strategy to improve the quality of patient care.

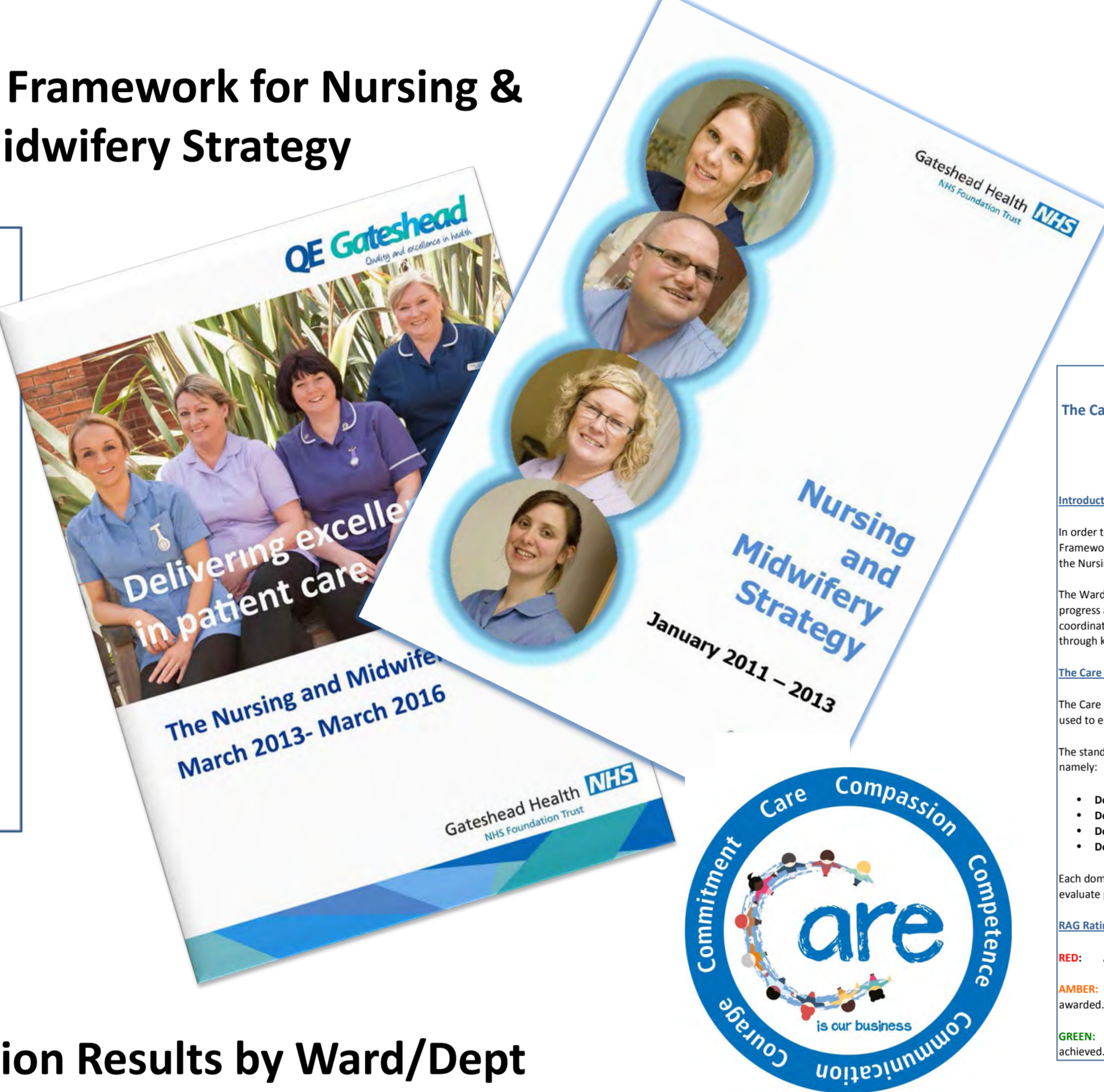
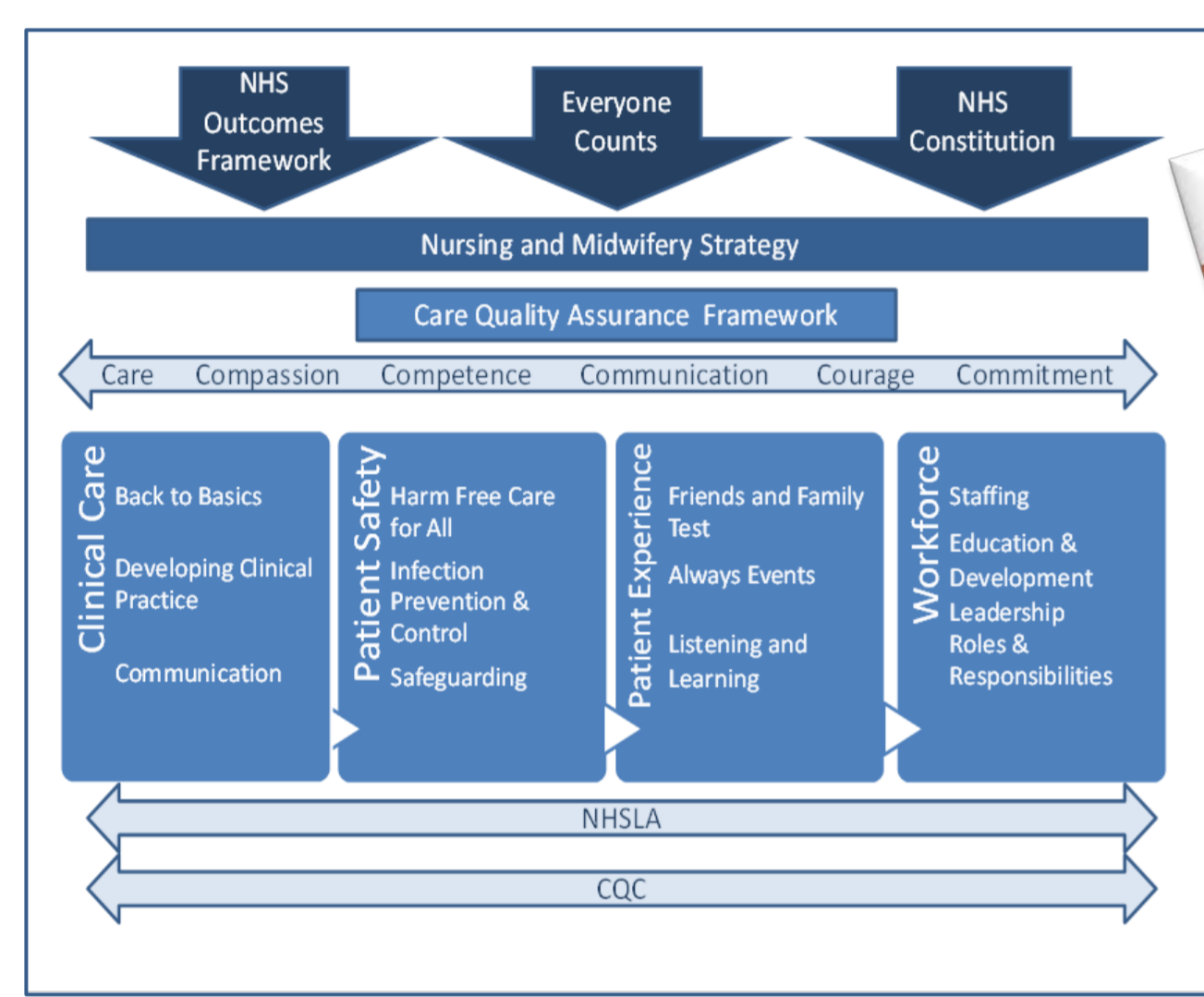
This included the development of quality assurance standards and programme of assessment days including: observations, interviews and examination of a portfolio of evidence.

A participatory action research approach supported collaboration and the ward and department teams were empowered to 'own' the action research process through good communication and the conscious employment of a practice development approach.

The evaluation was supplemented by thematic analysis of qualitative interviews with participants.

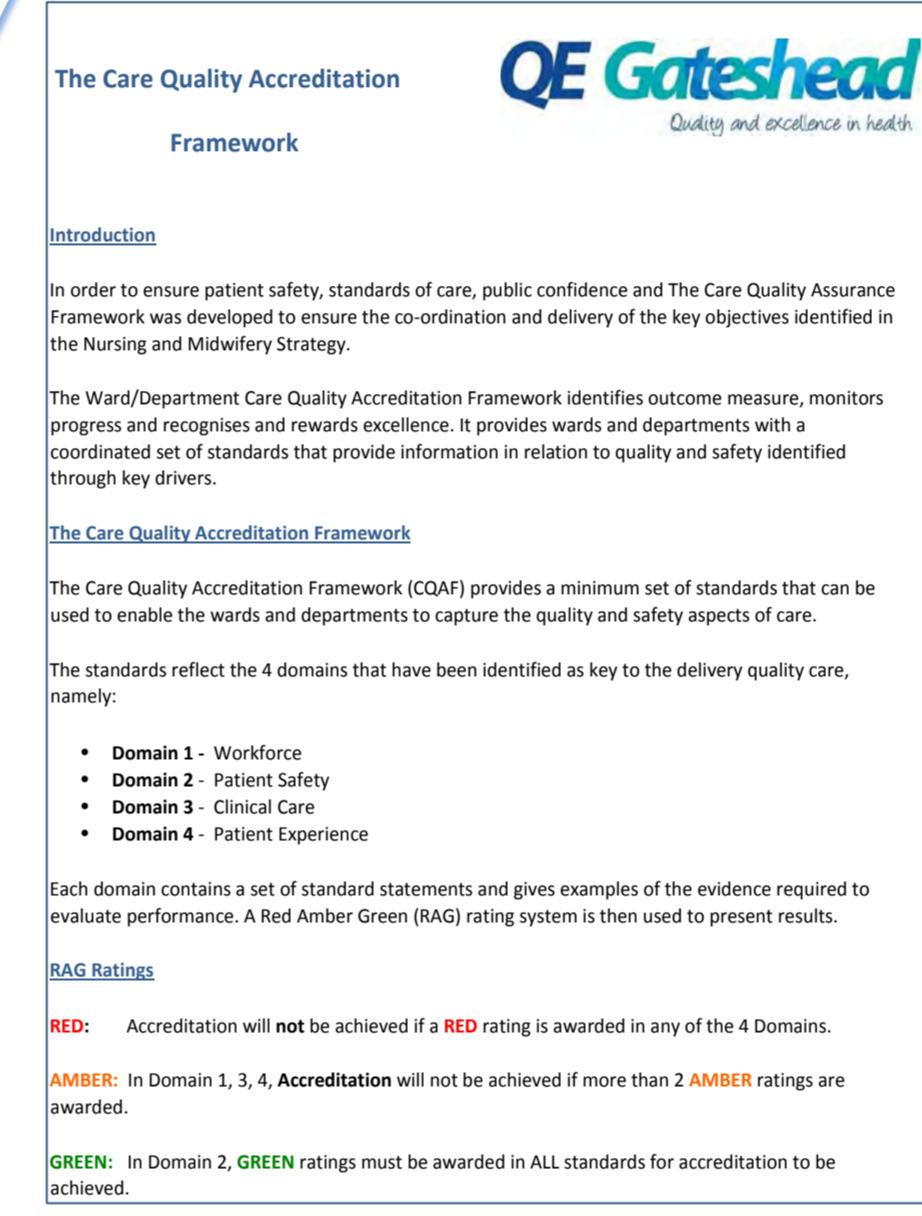


Assurance Framework for Nursing & Midwifery Strategy



Assurance Standards

A substantial element of this study involved the development of a set of quality assurance standards and comprehensive programme of ward and department assessments.



Domain	Standard	Example of evidence	Red	Amber	Green	Outstanding	N/A
Domain 1 - WORKFORCE	1.1	There are in place to facilitate education for the development of staff	-	+	+	+	
	1.2	Staff are involved in the delivery of the Nursing and Midwifery Strategy					
	1.3	Staff have access to relevant leadership and management training					
	1.4	The level of staff education is high					
	1.5	Processes are in place to effectively manage absence and sickness					
Domain 2 - PATIENT SAFETY	2.1	Controlled drugs are managed and administered safely					
	2.2	Medicines are administered per Trust policy					
	2.3	Medicines are administered per Trust policy					
Domain 3 - CLINICAL CARE	3.1	Discharge planning is undertaken in accordance with the Trust policy					
	3.2	There is clear communication between the MDT when planning discharge					
	3.3	Discharge planning is undertaken in accordance with the Trust policy					
Domain 4 - PATIENT EXPERIENCE	4.1	When you request the ward, do you get enough information about ward matters (e.g. medicines, visiting, dietary ward)?					
	4.2	When you call request medicines to a member of staff do you get the appropriate time call?					
	4.3	When you call request medicines to a member of staff do you get the appropriate time call?					

Heat Map of Accreditation Results by Ward/Dept



Results

A total of 122 assessments days were conducted over a 4 year period (2012 to 2016) across 33 clinical areas. The results, represented in the heatmap above, demonstrated an improvement, in relation to patient outcomes and experience (measured by the standards) across all areas.

The findings demonstrated that quality of care improved across all four domains of the nursing strategy, as measured by the assurance standards.

The evaluation was supplemented by a thematic analysis of qualitative interviews with nurse and midwife participants to capture their reflection on their involvement in this programme of work.

Thematic Analysis

Strong clinical leadership, a supportive culture, and staff engagement were identified as key enablers which facilitated improvements in the quality of care this is congruent with current academic literature.

When you are doing the ward assessments, the ward managers and deputies are sort of really looking forward to this as it is an opportunity to really shine and show off all the good practice they are doing.

I think the leadership does make a big difference ... if you get a good ward leader with good deputies then it is about that whole team approach and the involvement with the staff nurses ...

I think when you are new into the role as a ward manager, it's good, sort of, structured expectation of where you should be.

Conclusion

The study found that a structured approach to developing a quality assurance framework is an important feature of improving care for patients. This work demonstrates a unique contribution to nursing knowledge within the context of a local hospital setting and informs future developments on nursing and midwifery strategy and practice. This also provides an evidence based standardised approach to supporting the delivery of a nursing strategy to improve quality and is relevant to those who seek to improve the quality of patient care, both within the UK and internationally.

References

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