



Strategic
Research
Alliance



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Trainee nursing associates (TNAs): An exploratory study of an emerging role

Steve Robertson
on behalf of the SRA



Special thanks to Dr Rachel King



Strategic
Research
Alliance



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Background to NA role



The Healthcare workforce in the UK is becoming a barren wasteland!



It is hoped that **Nursing Associates** are one solution



Strategic
Research
Alliance



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Aims of TNA research

Examine participants' career aspirations

Observe career trajectories

Describe systems of clinical support

Evaluate well being

Explore workplace identity issues



Strategic
Research
Alliance



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Methods: Exploratory study Longitudinal Cohort Study

Exploratory study

- Stakeholder engagement
- Focus groups



Cohort study

- Questionnaires
- TNA interviews and diaries
- Stakeholder interviews
- Repeat annually for 4 years



Strategic
Research
Alliance



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Focus Groups: 15 participants



Generate and test ideas
recommend future changes

Breen, R.L. (2006) A Practical Guide to Focus-Group Research. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 30(3): 463-475

April 2017
cohort

June 2018
cohort

FG 1
(n=3)

FG 2
(n=3)

FG 3
(n=9)



Small number but still dynamics

Longhurst R (1996) Refocusing groups: pregnant women's geographical experiences of Hamilton, New Zealand/Aotearoa. *Area* 28(2): 143-149

Average length of
discussions: 52 minutes



Strategic
Research
Alliance



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Background of participants

Gender

- 6 male 9 female

Experience in healthcare

- 6 months - 20 years



Learning disabilities



Surgery



Orthopaedics



Haematology



Emergency care



Maternity



Mental health



Strategic
Research
Alliance



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Thematic analysis (using Quirkos)

Themes	Sub-themes
Drivers for undertaking the training	Lack of previous training opportunities Affordable local career development
Pragmatic concerns and support solutions	Placement variations Support networks
Role ambiguity	Role clarity (TNAs and colleagues) Role expectations and perceptions
Career development	Personal growth Career ambitions



Strategic
Research
Alliance

Findings



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Key Drivers:

Affordable, local, career development

“I’ve got a young family so I couldn’t afford to go and get a loan. I couldn’t even live on a bursary. So this was the only way of developing for me.” (FG 1, Carl)

New knowledge & opportunities

“You get stuck in a rut when you’ve worked on a ward for so long ... I got a bit fed up just doing my bit and then seeing the nurses struggle, I wanted to be able to do more to support them.” (FG 2, Julie)



Strategic
Research
Alliance

Findings



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with
 Royal College
of Nursing

Pragmatic concerns:

Placement issues

"I was given two mentors but then I got onto the ward and found they've not actually passed their mentorship course, so I ended up with nobody. For six months I've not had anybody." (FG 3, Hannah)

"Because we're counted in the numbers, I don't think we get as much opportunity as we'd like. I think that's the biggest issue for me." (FG 2, Julie)

Academic concerns

"You'll be doing assignments, you've got exam revision. And there's not enough hours. A lot of people naively came into it not expecting that, and I think that's where a lot of upset was caused." (FG3, Hannah)



Strategic
Research
Alliance

Findings



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Role ambiguity:

“Personally the first question nearly everybody asks you when you see them on placement is “what actually is a TNA?” (FG 1, Scott)

“It’s quite stress inducing that though, trying to explain something you’re not really fully understanding what you’re doing yourself.” (FG 1, Carl)

“On some of the placements, it’s like you’ve been sent to learn how to be a healthcare assistant in another setting.” (FG, 1 Rob)

*“It’s quite hard to try and like change your cap throughout the shift.”
(FG 2, Julie)*



Strategic
Research
Alliance

Findings



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Support solutions:

“I’ve had support from all staff, they’ve been going through this journey with us and they’re in the same boat.” (FG 2, James)

“They choose to get to know us... it’s not just ‘we’re teaching you this’, they get to know us individually as people rather than as students.” (FG 3, Claire)

“Everybody’s supporting each other, everybody’s...you know, they’re willing to talk about stuff and things like that, aren’t we.” (FG 2, James)

“... so we’re part of this Facebook group that’s got all the TNAs in.” (FG 2, Julie)



Strategic
Research
Alliance



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Career Development

Two-thirds intended to go on to do RN training

Unclear career pathway

“I asked last week and somebody said that they would potentially be writing something while we’re doing this class for a top up. If not it could be like a home learning thing where you stop on your base placement.” (FG 3, Anna)



Strategic
Research
Alliance



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Implications:

TNA growth is facilitated by:

- ***Affordable local training:*** crucial in developing enthusiastic, motivated previously unregistered healthcare workers
- ***Role clarity and support networks:*** key to successful mentoring and utilisation of TNAs
- ***A clear pathway for career progression:*** enables TNAs to achieve their aspirations of becoming registered nurses



Strategic
Research
Alliance

Next steps



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

- Cohort established
 - Recruited: 126
 - Completed: 99
 - Qualitative progress establishing sub-cohort (approx. 30)
- Stakeholder work under consideration – emphasis on HEI stakeholders



Strategic
Research
Alliance



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

in strategic partnership with



Royal College
of Nursing

Questions?



With thanks to the rest of the SRA team: Rachel King, Michaela Senek, Emily Wood, Beth Taylor, Jane Seymour, Peter Allmark, Angela Tod, Tony Ryan