

Hybrid Nursing and Midwifery Sustainability Roles

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For further information regarding the hybrid role, or how we can support you in a similar role please contact nrm.sustainability@nhs.net.

Background

Multiple aspects of the carbon footprint plus are clinician sensitive, especially nurse and midwife sensitive, however, Trust level leadership around sustainability invariably sits within Estates. Whilst Estates teams are vital to the NHS achieving our net zero ambitions there is often a gap in structures that support clinician involvement. We know that 9 in 10 staff support a greener NHS. However, the unprecedented challenges within the NHS, mean healthcare professionals find a lack of time as a barrier to act and do not have protected time to focus on this. A dedicated sustainability hybrid role can address this problem.

In addition, hybrid roles allows for targeted work in clinical areas, for instance within maternity services, which supports long term health benefits for service users, aligning with priorities such as [SBLCB v.2](#), [UNICEF BFI](#), [OASI](#). Furthermore, this aligns with the NHS workforce plan and CNO ambition (shown below), by providing opportunities to support nurses and midwives to develop, and work to the full capacity of their skills and expertise are opportunities to retain and value the professions.

Nursing & Midwifery Sustainability Ambition



What is the hybrid role?

The role entails a registered nurse or midwife working clinically for 80% of the time and having 20% protected time to work on sustainable quality improvement projects relevant to their clinical area and green plans. This allows multiple benefits, not only for the individual, but for the NHS. Nurses and midwives can actively support delivery of local Green Plans, the national net zero ambitions and could contribute to local staff engagement on these issues. Their projects and achievements would also be amplified on a national level bringing visibility of the Trusts work on clinical sustainability too.

Each hybrid role should receive mentoring locally, and coaching support nationally from NHS England teams (from the Sustainability and Innovation team in the Nursing Directorate). This provides opportunity for exposure to senior leaders locally and nationally to allow for personal leadership development. As numbers grow, we will create a network of nurses and midwives in similar roles to facilitate peer support.

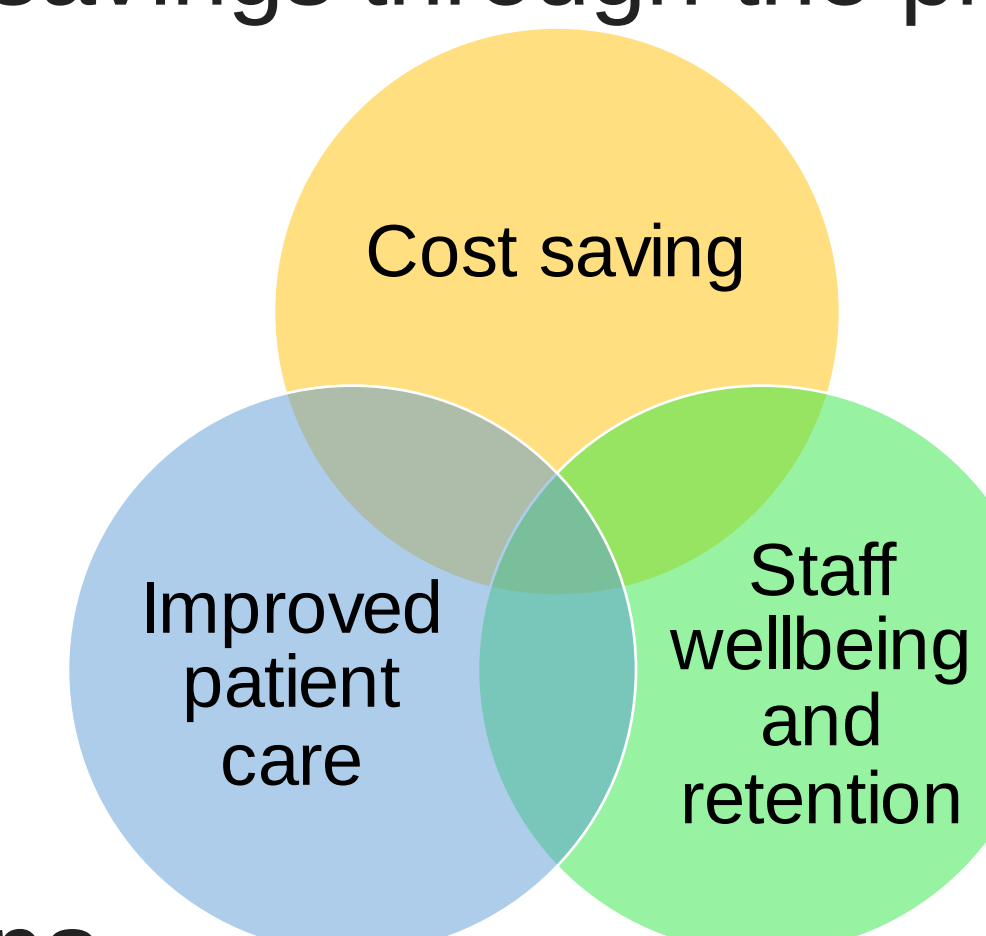


An example implemented by Rhea is changing to a fully circular shower gel produced in the UK. This means the company take back the empty containers and refill them. This will save around 125kg carbon emissions a year and halves the cost per wash. As well as carbon savings there will also be less impact on the oceans as the original item is shipped from China. This is a small change but imagine scaling it up across the whole health service.

Evaluation and Impact

As more nurses and midwives take up the role the greater depth of feedback will be gathered to begin to measure the impact of these roles. The feedback received so far is positive and great examples of triple bottom line outcomes have been captured through nurses having time to develop and deliver sustainability related QI projects. An example to demonstrate this shown by the quality improvement project at Charing Cross Hospital Emergency Department (ED), which found that;

86 per cent of patients attending a 24 hours consultant led A&E were cannulated and over 40 per cent of the cannulas inserted upon attendance were not used. A survey also revealed that 68 per cent of patients complained of pain and discomfort associated with cannulation due to increased risk of infection, phlebitis and infiltration, therefore reduction on unnecessary cannulation improves patient experience. A project to reduce the unnecessary cannulation by 25% in that department resulted in a cost saving of £95,000 and carbon saving of 19,000 KgCO2 per year. Here it is clear that the approximate cost of a Band 7 nurse or midwife in a 0.2WTE hybrid role post (£8,300) is outweighed by the potential savings through the projects that they lead.



1 person + 1 idea + dedicated time =
Finacial saving + carbon saving + improved patient care

Next Steps

The inclusion of structured mentoring and coaching is being investigated to strengthen the impact and influence of the role, and the confidence and competence of postholders. Feedback has highlighted the need for a standardised job description and guidance document, which are currently in progress.

The lack of funding available to support this role is a barrier. However, as highlighted above, this role can be an investment that pays for itself with the addition of receiving national senior support, increasing visibility and celebration of the roles successes. We are supporting interested parties in conversations with their Trusts, as sharing learning from other areas in terms of how and where funding was secured is beneficial to enable growth of the role. As more roles are established, we will be able to collect more data to evaluate and progress these roles and come close to delivering a net zero NHS.