

# Education - Supporting Redeployed Staff during the COVID-19 Pandemic



### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic required a significant increase in Critical Care bed capacity resulting in many non-Critical Care staff being redeployed to work in Critical Care (1). During the surge of critical care patients produced by the covid-19 pandemic in Spring 2020 this was managed by redeploying nurses from other areas of the hospital as well as Operating Department Practitioners (ODPs) from theatres.

NHS England produced a guide to provide principles for increasing the workforce in response to exceptional demand in adult critical care services. In it they stated that staff moved from other areas will be required to be supported to ensure safe practice, safe patient care and staff wellbeing, with appropriate supervision and delegation of care (2). These non-critical care staff needed training to care for critically ill covid-19 patients (3).

During the surge of patients in Winter 2020/21, staff were again redeployed from other areas of the hospital to increase critical care bed capacity. There were a variety of professions redeployed as ITU ‘nurses’ including non-critical care nurses, ODPs and medical and dental staff.

### Methodology

During Spring 2020 education had been provided to 350 nurses and ODPs to work in critical care providing nursing care to patients. However during the Winter 2020/21 covid surge many of those staff weren't available to be redeployed and some of those trained hadn't actually done any shifts meaning that additional training was provided at this time. As the surge continued medical and dental staff provided nursing care in Critical Care and training was developed to support these members of staff in this role. The training that was provided was adapted from that which was being provided to the nurses and ODPs.

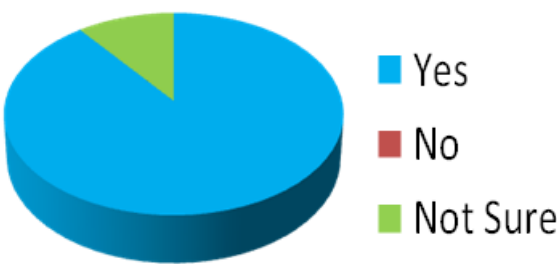
The training provided to Nurses and ODPs during 2020 had been evaluated and this training and evaluation was used as a basis for developing training for Medical and Dental staff acting as bedside nurses. This training involved familiarisation with the ITU chart and how to chart observations, fluid balance and ventilation observations, other documentation in use, care of patients with an artificial airway, arterial line sampling and medication administration.

Training was provided to 30 doctors and dentists over 5 sessions over a two week period. An online evaluation form was sent to all attendees and 19 were returned (63% response rate). The training was evaluated as the pandemic surge settled to try and understand the staff’s experiences of the training and to support further training if required.

### Results

Did attending the training help you whilst doing clinical shifts in ITU?

|          |    |
|----------|----|
| Yes      | 17 |
| No       | 0  |
| Not Sure | 2  |



A drop box of resources that had been created at the beginning of the pandemic when staff were redeployed to support and this was updated and staff were given access. 32 % of staff had accessed these resources.

Attendees were asked how they felt about redeployment to ITU before and after training. (On a scale of 1 to 10). On average:

| Before | After  |
|--------|--------|
| 4.7/10 | 7.4/10 |

### A sample of the comments received:

How did the training help?

- Had a vague idea what all the tubes were for.
- Appreciation of the charts, how to complete etc. It's been 10+ years since clinical medicine, so nice for a reminder

Where any of the topics particularly useful?

- Yes: Explanation of ITU charts and other nursing specific paperwork. How to do common things like safety checks and taking blood from arterial lines Explaining the role of support staff and reassurance that an experienced ITU staff member will be overseeing us at all times was hugely reassuring at a very daunting time!
- How to zero the art line and take gases.

Any other comments?

- Thank you. Couldn't really remember too much of what you said but it did make the ITU nurses job easier as I recalled some basic info.
- Thank you. I have enjoyed the experience
- Thank you for taking the time to train staff much appreciated
- Thank you for making it as easy as possible for us

### Conclusion

The training provided aimed to support staff during an unsettling and difficult time and support patient safety. The online survey conducted after the training indicated that redeployed staff found the training beneficial when doing shifts in ITU. The integration of redeployed staff into the Critical Care team allowed the additional patients to be cared for as safely. These staff required training to provide them with the information to care for these patients safely and evaluation of this training is important to aid future planning.

### References

(1) Aziz S, Arabi Y, Alhazzani W, Evans L, Citerio, G, Fishchoff K et al. Managing ICU surge during the COVID-19 crises: rapid guidelines. Intensive Care Medicine. 2020 June 8; 8: 1-23.

(2)NHS England. Coronavirus: principles for increasing the nursing workforce in response to exceptional increased demand in adult critical care. 2020. Available on: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/specialty-guide-critical-care-workforce-v1-25-march-2020.pdf>. Accessed on: 12/07/2020.

(3)Marks, S; Edwards, S. & Jerge, E.H. (2020) Rapid Deployment of Critical Care Nurse Education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurse Leader, Months 2020, pp. 1-5. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mnl.2020.07.008>