

POSITION STATEMENT

DELEGATION

Responsibilities Of A Registered Nurse/Midwife When Deciding To Delegate To Non Registered Colleagues

Dear Member

In recent weeks the INMO Executive Council has devoted considerable time to the issue of ensuring that every nurse/midwife understands their continuing responsibilities when deciding to delegate a task/role to a non-registered colleague.

The need for this discussion, and for absolute clarity on this issue, arises from the revised Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics published by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) in December 2014.

It was also felt necessary to consider this issue in the context of the practice, in some units/wards, to delegate direct care tasks e.g. recording patients observations under the Early Warning Score (EWS) to non-registered work colleagues. According to the NMBI “*Delegation is the transfer of authority by a nurse or midwife to another person to perform a particular role/function*ⁱ. In addition the “*delegation of any task must be in the best interest of the patient*”

Against this background the Executive Council feels it appropriate to remind you of the following:

1. Under the new Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics the responsibilities of the registered nurse/midwife are clearly stated to include:
 - *you are responsible and accountable for your decisions and actions (including inactions and omissions) in your practice;*
 - *you are accountable if you make a decision to delegate a nursing or midwifery task to someone who is not a registered nurse or midwife;*
 - *The role of a Health Care Assistant (HCA) “supports the delivery of patient care under the supervision and direction of a registered nurse or midwife”ⁱⁱ*

Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) Level 5 is the recognised qualification for a HCAⁱⁱⁱ.

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- *if you delegate tasks or roles, you should provide comprehensive and effective assessment and planning, communication, monitoring and supervision, and evaluation and feedback.*
2. Against this background it is imperative that every member exercises their professional judgement, against clear criteria, when deciding to delegate a task or role.
 - The INMO will be engaging immediately, with the NMBI, seeking the required criteria arising from the obligations/responsibilities stipulated in the new Code.
 3. It is also necessary to exercise this judgement each time delegation is being considered, in the context of the skills, knowledge, competence and experience, at that point in time, of the person to whom you are proposing to delegate a task/role.
 4. Very careful consideration, with regard to delegation, is particularly necessary when the task or role involves direct interaction with the patient/client, and you must specifically consider how you will access the feedback from your colleague.

In order to maximise awareness of, and clarity about, “Delegation”, the INMO will be seeking, in direct contact with the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director of the HSE, the roll out of a national education/awareness programme with regard to Delegation. This must be a priority, throughout 2015, in the context of staffing/skill mix developments and, critically, the obligations which are clearly stipulated in the new Code.

Further updates will issue, on this matter, following our discussions with NMBI and HIQA. However the INMO Executive Council is anxious that every member clearly understands the issues that arise when delegating. Every member must exercise, on each occasion, clear professional judgement in the interests of best practice, patient care and their continued registration.

Issued by INMO Executive Council

ⁱScope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework (ABA 2000). The NMBI is currently revising the Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework (NMBI 2015)

ⁱⁱ Department of Health and Children (2001). Effective Utilisation of Professional Skills of Nurses and Midwives: Report of Working Group. Dublin The Stationary Office

ⁱⁱⁱ Health Service Executive (2006). Report of the High Level Group on Health Care Assistants Regarding the Implementation of the Health Care Assistants Programme.