

**THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF  
DEVELOPING A RESEARCH NURSE BANK**

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I KNOW EVERYTHING  
HAPPENS FOR A  
REASON, BUT  
SOMETIMES I WISH  
I KNEW WHAT THAT  
REASON WAS.



## BACKGROUND – WHY?

- ❖ The ABUHB Research and Development management team identified a need for a flexible workforce in times of sickness or leave for continuity of the delivery of research.
- ❖ Changes to the management structure within the team – retirement and replacement of a leadership/management post. Time to look at the restructure of the team.
- ❖ Developing research nurses on the bank would enable the team to take on nurses to continue recruitment and follow up during a period of change within the delivery team.
- ❖ The increasing burden of follow up in clinical trials – in order to meet recruitment targets, it was envisaged that bank research nurses could assist with follow up and screening so that substantive staff could continue to meet recruitment targets.
- ❖ Fluctuating demands in research.

## REASONS FOR DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH BANK WORKFORCE

- ❖ Flexible workforce.
- ❖ Varying demands of research across multiple specialities.
- ❖ Unpredictable workload in research.
- ❖ Limited financial resource.
- ❖ Develop more disease areas.
- ❖ Aneurin Bevan's ability to offer more studies to more patients.
- ❖ Supporting clinical trials in research naïve areas.
- ❖ Meeting targets in line with the Key Performance Indicators for Research in Wales (Health and Care Research Wales).



## RESEARCH BANK IMPLEMENTATION

- ❖ One of the first steps to take was to contact our bank nurse department for ABUHB.
- ❖ Discuss the possibility of recruiting staff already known to R&D. For example, specialist nurses who may be involved in aspects of research, part time research staff who may have capacity to take on bank shifts.
- ❖ Consider the training structure of the department, and how you will deliver training to new staff (i.e GCP, essential documents) who may only be working 1 day a week.
- ❖ What is the burden on the substantive staff already working in research delivery?
- ❖ Do you already have the necessary experience and skill mix within the delivery team?
- ❖ The bank research nurses would need to commit to certain days every week in order for delegation of responsibilities to 'work'. I.e. these nurses would be working on the same trials every week/ attending the same clinics.

## THE RESOURCE BANK

- ❖ 'One stop shop' for a research nurse bank.
- ❖ Advertise internally and externally – encourage external research nurses into Aneurin Bevan UHB.
- ❖ Fast tracking of staff already working within Aneurin Bevan UHB.
  - ❖ DBS, Occupational Health and References all checked simultaneously on day of interview.
- ❖ The resource bank managed the recruitment of all staff outside of the UHB, easing the recruitment process for the department.

## EXERCISE – DISCUSSIONS

- ❖ Is there a need for bank research nurses in your area? What are the benefits?
- ❖ Think about your Health Board or NHS trust – what issues might there be to taking on new bank research staff?
- ❖ What is your training structure for research nurses?
- ❖ What financial implications will the research bank have on your department?

## CHALLENGES



- ❖ Who would deliver the research specific training? – The ABUHB team were lucky at the time to have the support of the HCRW support centre to deliver GCP training. Bespoke sessions were developed to train the bank nurses in batches.
- ❖ Bespoke sessions included GCP, Informed Consent, Essential Documents and a mini induction to the research delivery team.
- ❖ This service is now more difficult to deliver as the HCRW training structure has changed, meaning that the R&D department now have to source training through other avenues.
- ❖ Bank nurses do not have a 'base' within the health board. This has been a challenge as more research is being delivered in the community, requiring nurses to travel. Re-imbursing bank nurses for travel in the community required a change of policy.
- ❖ Measures of competencies would need to be determined for the nurses, as they often work autonomously.

## FEEDBACK - ADVANTAGES

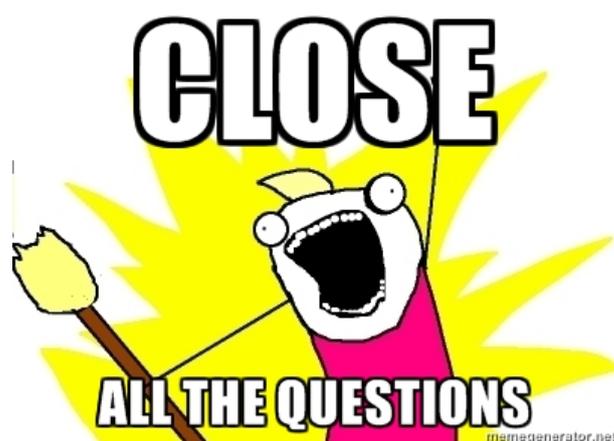
- ❖ A pool of nurses to call on when research demands increase.
- ❖ Many of the nurses recruited to the research bank were experienced in other roles. This brings a wealth of transferable skills and knowledge into the team.
- ❖ Some of the nurses trained up on the research bank went on to take up substantive posts within our Research Delivery team.
- ❖ Improve research knowledge via links to other departments – dissemination to external colleagues and improving the research culture and understanding.
- ❖ A flexible workforce offering financial savings.
- ❖ The initiative was recognised by Health and Care Research Wales, and subsequently rolled out within other health boards.

## FEEDBACK - DISADVANTAGES

- ❖ Substantive staff felt that a lot of their time was spent training/mentoring the bank staff. Does this have a delayed impact on ability to recruit?
- ❖ Bank staff are free to leave with no notice, or cancel shifts at last minute. Handover of trial tasks can prove difficult – leading to increased workload on substantive staff.
- ❖ Loss of investment - some bank staff have gone on to secure substantive research posts within other health boards, after receiving training through ABUHB.
- ❖ Some bank staff may decide research is not for them – and leave to work in other areas – this can have a negative impact on the morale of substantive staff as they have invested the training/mentoring time.

## TIPS AND TRICKS

- ❖ When recruiting, ensure that the staff member can commit to the same day each week, to enable continuity of service.
- ❖ Seek out your resource bank early and see how they can support the recruitment process.
- ❖ Secure block training so all staff are trained together. This also gives peer support to the nurses.
- ❖ Don't allocate overly complex studies to bank staff. They are often only there once a week.
- ❖ Buddy bank staff up with an experienced research nurse who is able to oversee the workload and support the bank nurse.
- ❖ Decide how you will ensure competency of the nurses to work unsupervised.



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