P162 **TIME & SUPPORT – THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEALTHCARE ASSISTANT**

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Introduction A competency framework was implemented for band two and three Healthcare Assistants (HCA's) in 2010. This highlighted areas of extended practice outside of the core competencies.

Aim The HCA's expressed a strong desire to enhance their role, increase job satisfaction and feel valued within the organisation. A training and support structure was implemented to enable them to achieve this.

Method The HCA's self assessed their performance against the competency framework and then had a 1:1 meeting with their manager to discuss:

▶ Individual strengths and interests
▶ Professional development
▶ Training needs.

The competency workbooks provided information which helped the planning and implementation of a bespoke training programme for HCA's.

To ensure the staff were able to take on additional roles, protected time for education and peer support was introduced.

Results As a direct result of these initiatives, the HCA's have been able to enhance their job role. Some examples include participation in audit, presenting patients at multi professional team meetings and a more active role during handover. Specific new roles have also been introduced for them including responsibility for fire prevention and training, moving and handling, NVQ assessing, external presentations around End of Life Care, infection control, nutrition, and IT champions.

Discussion The general consensus from the team of HCA's is that they feel happier with the new aspects of their role and they sense that their presence in the organisation is greater.

Conclusion Healthcare assistants perform better by being offered variety within their roles without extra financial budgetary implications. They feel empowered, valued and supported and this is echoed in feedback from other professionals within the organisation and external partners.