

EXAMPLE OF MEDIUM RISK: PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT REQUIRED



SITUATION

John is a 58 year old man who has had a laryngectomy valve in place for 22 years. His wife Joan has carried out the twice daily cleaning of the valve because he has always found it difficult to manage himself. Joan has recently developed sight difficulties and is no longer able to clean the laryngectomy valve. There are no other family members able to provide care. John has been referred to the District Nursing team.



ASSESSMENT

An assessment is made by the District Nursing Sister, Gina who manages the team, and a plan of nursing care described working with John to agree an appropriate level of care. Using the decision support tool, Gina realises that most of the indicators for the task of caring for the valve could potentially be 'green' allowing delegation to occur, if the team had the knowledge, skills and confidence to carry out the task, the process for the task performed in steps and the outcome consistently predictable, linked to the stability of John's condition. Both registered and un-registered staff within the team are not competent in caring for a laryngectomy valve and the stability of John's condition is not known. The visits will be required indefinitely which will have an impact on the capacity of the team.



DECISION

The district nursing team members agreed that they were not competent in care of a laryngectomy valve. Three members of the team attended a local care setting of excellence in practice to undertake training. This ensured all registered staff were competent in care of laryngectomy valve BEFORE considering delegation to a Senior Nursing Assistant (SNA).

The current trust policy did not include care of a laryngectomy valve in a community setting - which required changing.

A process to assure and monitor the ongoing competence of SNAs was approved and implemented.

Registered staff carried out the task for a period of time to assess the predictability of the outcome, the systematic steps in the process and the stability of John's condition, before delegating.

Having assured and recorded all of this information the task was delegated to competent SNA team members, with regular review by the District Nursing team.