

Carer Competencies Staffordshire: Pulse Oximetry Protocol

This protocol provides advice and guidance for care managers and staff involved in taking pulse oximetry measurements in the care sector.

The important safeguarding message is that this is that the following protocol alongside training is to facilitate safe, accurate biometric readings that are carried out at the request of a **clinician** and passed onto that **clinician** in a timely way to ensure that clinical decisions can be made that will benefit the resident/service user.

Target individuals

Care managers and their staff who may have been delegated the task of pulse oximetry monitoring.

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Introduction to pulse oximetry

Pulse oximetry is a simple, non-invasive method of measuring a person's blood oxygen levels.

A pulse oximeter measures how much light is absorbed by a person's blood by frequently passing a red light and an infrared light through their fingertip or earlobe; the ratio of red to infrared light is calculated to determine the oxygen level (peripheral oxygen saturation).

Purpose

Defining boundaries and permitted actions when completing the task; so that pulse oximetry should only be carried out by staff who are trained and assessed as competent by appropriately trained healthcare professionals (accountable for delegation of the task).



Scope

This document applies to all non-clinical social care staff involved in a person's care who are carrying out pulse oximetry on behalf of clinical professionals.

Responsibilities

Care assistants must:

- Be responsible for their actions
- Work within the scope of their practice and job description
- Update their knowledge and skills with refresher training annually
- Receive approved training prior to carrying out pulse oximetry, demonstrate competence and attend annual reassessment of competence by an appropriately trained health professional

The appropriately trained healthcare professional delegating this task must be competent in training and assessment, accountable for all aspects of the pulse oximetry procedure and confident that care staff to whom the task is delegated are competent to carry out a safe, accurate pulse oximetry measurement.

Rationale

To ensure that all care staff using pulse oximetry equipment can obtain a safe, accurate pulse oximetry reading.

Maintenance and preparation of pulse oximeters

Maintenance: pulse oximeters may be provided by an external source or purchased by the Care team. It will be the responsibility of the home manager to have a system in place to monitor and maintain quality assurance for validated, reliable pulse oximeters.

Cleaning: the pulse oximeter must be cleaned with an anti-bacterial wipe between each use.

The pulse oximeter will only work accurately on a warm fingertip (clean and nail polish free) or if deemed necessary carefully place on the residents/service user's earlobe.

Guidance

All care staff undertaking pulse oximetry should only use reliable equipment supplied by the health care service/organisation requesting the task.

All care staff are responsible for following quality control guidelines as instructed when attending training sessions given by an appropriate healthcare professional or a competent member of the care team that has undergone training.

Training

All care staff employed who *may* be asked to undertake pulse oximetry must complete the approved training and be assessed as competent by a **registered healthcare practitioner or by a competent member of the care team cascading training.**

It is the responsibility of the Care staff manager to ensure accurate training records are maintained and annual competencies sessions are facilitated by appropriately trained healthcare professionals.

It is the responsibility of the care staff to work within their scope of practice and to seek further training/support/guidance if they do not feel competent to perform this clinical delegated task.

It is the responsibility of the appropriately trained healthcare professional arranged by the Care staff manager to ensure that they have trained and assessed care staff required to undertake this task as competent and offer on-going support as required to promote safe practice.

See video below

<https://vimeo.com/415485501>