

## Pan London Neonatal Nursing Workforce Working Group

### Qualified in Speciality (QIS) Training: Framework for Clinical Placement Support by NICU Services

#### Background

Across London's regional neonatal intensive care units (NICU), local neonatal units (LNU) and special care units (SCU), support for qualified in speciality (QIS) training is keenly embraced to allow a program of "grow your own" neonatal nurses.

Ensuring that nurses undertaking the QIS training are able to access a clinical placement that supports their practice to theory development in an intensive care setting within a tertiary level NICU, is often challenging.

These challenges are associated with a variety of issues;

- Securing a placement in a tertiary centre due to high number of QIS students already in that centre
- Support of the nurse to attend placement due to 'backfill' costing in home unit
- Tertiary support of supernumerary status of nurses on placement verses in-house student's being included in rota numbers
- Complexity of Honouree Contracts that are required for placements
- Travel and work-life issues for students if they do not live locally to their network's tertiary service.
- Variances in university placements impacting on mentorship work loads

The importance of a clinical placement in a tertiary NICU during the QIS training is strongly supported by educational providers and relevant publication and working groups associated with dedicated neonatal nursing workforce growth.<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8</sup>

#### Context

The Pan London Operational Delivery Network (ODN) senior nurses clearly recognise the value of clinical placements and have aimed to support placements whenever possible, as part of on-going commitment to growth of QIS nurses across London.

National shortages in QIS nurses are clearly identified,<sup>1,5,9,12</sup> this shortage is compounded in London due to the cost of living, the number of neonatal units in a tight geographical space and the retention of nurses within the capital in general.

The Capital Nurse program<sup>2</sup> outlines the concerns and issues from their program of work. The Pan London neonatal nursing survey also clearly demonstrates the gaps within the neonatal nursing workforce.

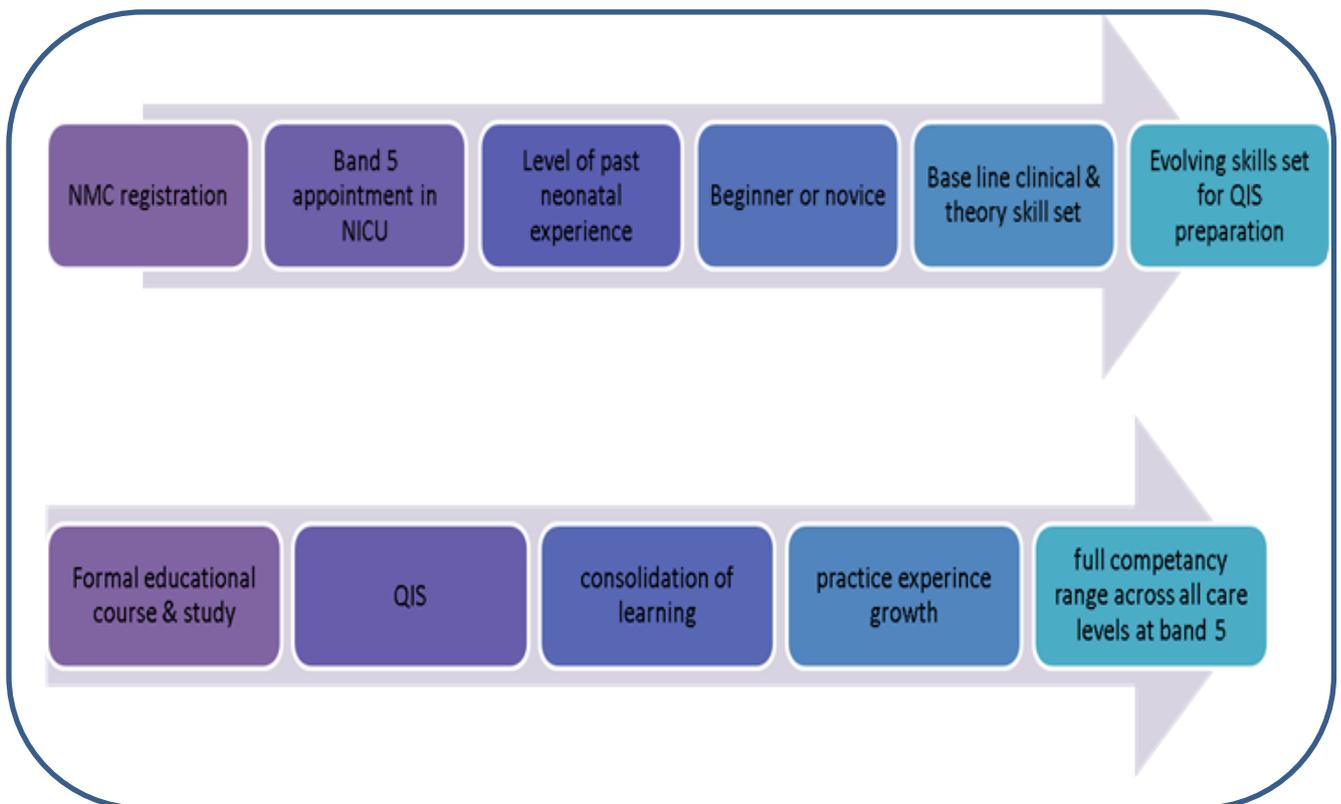
During the first meeting of the newly formed Pan London ODN nursing workforce working group the challenges of clinical placements was discussed, with consensus that availability of placements is of paramount importance for QIS students.

An intensive care unit (ITU) placement enhances learning and growth of skills for ITU care and without such placements the transferability across all the three levels of neonatal service provision, for the QIS qualification, becomes difficult due to the lack of exposure to acute ITU care.

This framework proposes an approach by the Pan London tertiary NICU services to undertake a commitment of support for clinical placements in their services for all London's training QIS nurses, which ever University they are studying with for their course.

The ODN Band 5 competency programme introduced in 2014<sup>9</sup> has been a very successful tool for supporting growth in Band 5 nurses to QIS level and onward to Band 6 competency.

The flow chart below shows the range of use for the competency tool<sup>9</sup> across the band 5 neonatal nursing role, including the progression to QIS training and onward growth and development after successful completion of the modules for all care levels;



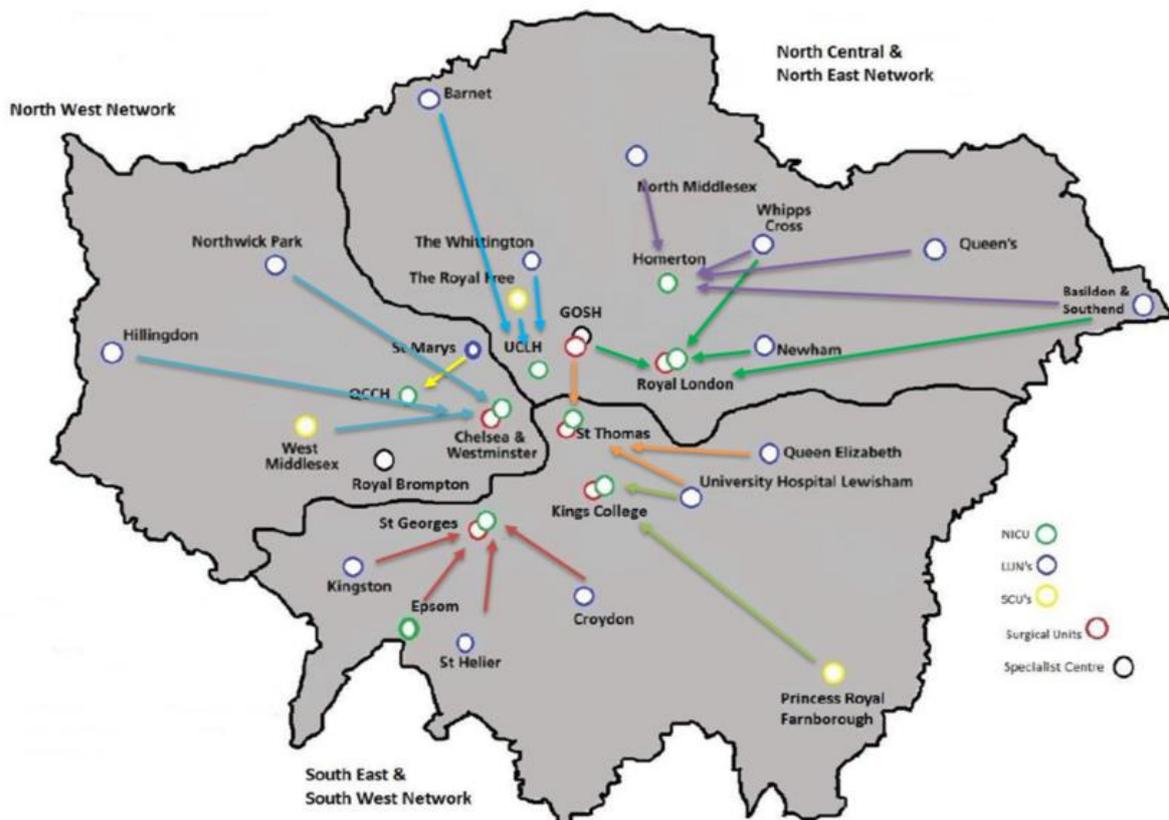
It is recognised that consolidation and practice experience growth will be inhibited if a NICU clinical placement is not facilitated.

## Current Pathways for Students Placements

The map below shows the current pathways for student support in their own ODN sector.

These pathways often follow the commissioned patient pathways for LNU's/SCU's to NICU.

Within the context of this proposal, agreement and confirmation of these pathways will be important to supporting the commitment of the tertiary units.



## The Proposal

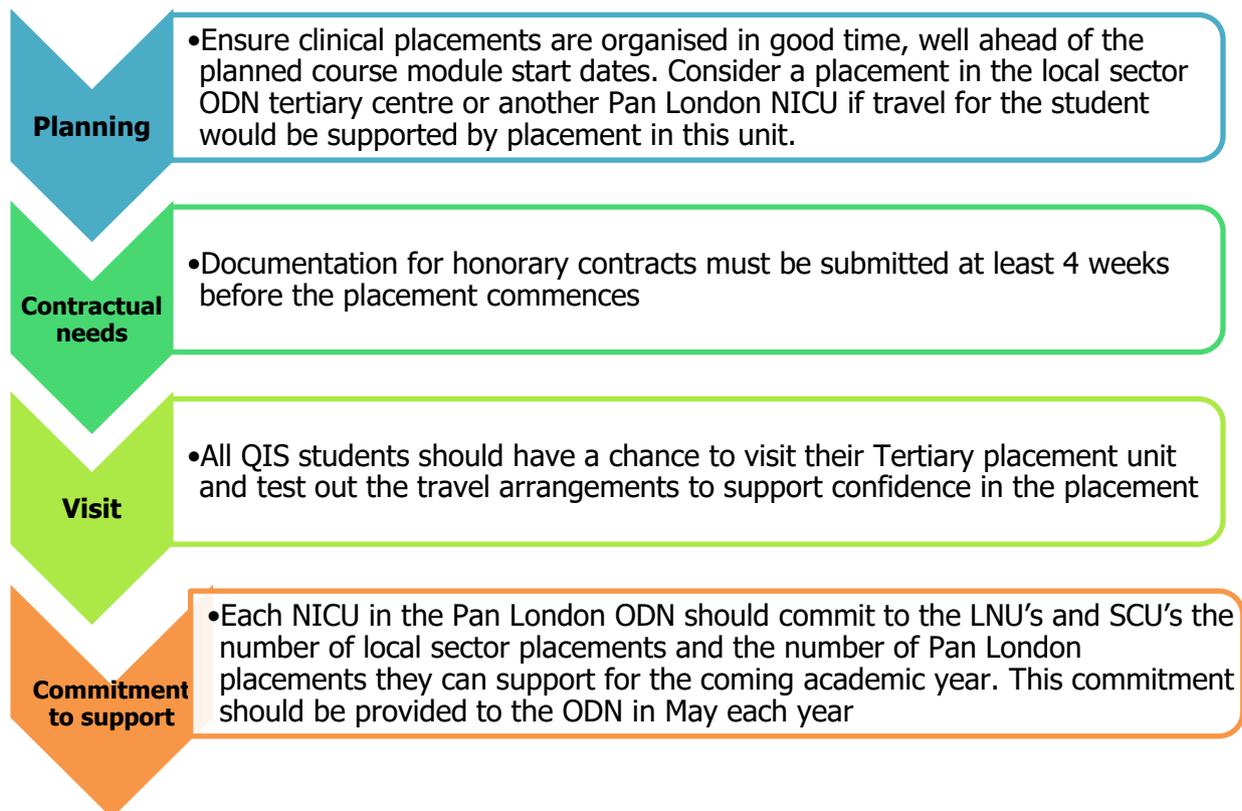
This framework is requesting commitment and support from the Pan London NICU's for:

- ✓ **Placements of 4 - 12 weeks for local sector ODN students:** each tertiary unit should provide a base line number of placements that can be offered to students as a rolling number. It is likely there will be some variance in this number depending on the number of in-house students the NICU has at the time of placement requests, so this base line number should be the *minimum* that can be supported.
- ✓ **X1 Placement of 4 - 8 weeks for Pan London Students:** as some nurses commute to their ODN tertiary service may not fit well with where they live in London, having scope to undertake a placement at another NICU that is geographically more

suitable and local to their home should be supported. The tertiary NICU's should support at least x1 placement for a student who is *outside of their local sector ODN*.

- ✓ **Honorary Contacts:** The responsibility for arranging honouree contracts must sit with the student's home unit. This process is often convoluted and over complicated. A simple, safe and transferable contractual plan specific to the ODN pathway for QIS students is proposed, with a request that once defined the tertiary senior nurses discuss internally with their Human Resource teams (e.g. an employment licence). If successful, this process would then support on-going clinical placements for QIS nurses to allow short clinical placements as part of an on-going learning and development plan – this is a separate initiative that could be considered over time.
- ✓ **Interchanging placements:** Although the focus is mainly on NICU placements, it is equally vital to accommodate placements in LNU settings. It may therefore be appropriate to provide placements between NICU's, LNU's and SCU's allowing for flow and flexibility.

**The Flow Chart below summaries the sought commitment:**



## Next Steps

This framework will be discussed across the wider ODN setting for consultation and it is hoped that an agreement can be reached, as part of a model of excellence and quality improvement for QIS students.

During discussion at the workforce working group status of the students in relation to rota status i.e. supernumerary or inclusion in the shift numbers has been raised. For students who are undertaking QIS training in their home tertiary service, seeing students coming into the service for placements who are supernumerary may be a negative experience. To support this within the planning for this framework the group feel each unit needs to define student status clearly to their own team, the student and the student's home unit, which should also interface with the honorary contract statement about the experience that is being supported.

The success of the Pan London Band 5 competencies has provided a driver for this framework, as this work has demonstrated the collaborative strengths of working across the capital in an interfacing approach.

To reinforce this approach in the appendix are the signatures of all the London Neonatal ODN NICU Matrons and the ODN Lead Nurse by way of substantiation of this project.

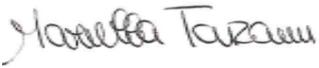
Authors: Jacki Dopran, Senior Nurse Homerton NICU and Jenni Jagodzinski, Lead Nurse London Neonatal ODN, on behalf of the Pan London ODN nursing workforce working group. December 2019.

## References:

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2. Capital Nurse NHSE & NHSI (2019) Neonatal Specialism Update Drivers, key points and next steps. Sally Barber. <https://hee.nhs.uk/our-work/capitalnurse>
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<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/spec>;
14. British Association for Perinatal Medicine (BAPM) (2012) Matching Knowledge and Skills for Qualified in Speciality (QIS) Neonatal Nurses: A core syllabus for clinical competency. BAPM London.
15. National Service Specification: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/spec-services/npc-crg/group-e/e08/>

## Appendices

### Neonatal Intensive Care Units, Commitment to Framework

Unit	Senior Nurse Signature	Date
Chelsea & Westminster	<i>Rebecca Davies</i>	04.09.20
Evelina (St Thomas')	<i>Alex Phillips</i>	23.09.20
Homerton		13.08.20
Kings College London	<i>Ade Omofade</i>	10.08.20
Queen Charlotte's		11.08.20
Royal London	<i>Tracy Fox</i>	04.09.20
St Georges'		10.08.20
University College London	<i>Rebecca Shelley</i>	14.08.20
Operational Delivery Network		10.08.20