Improving the quality of administering complex specialist mental health assessments in research.

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The development of the Ratings Lead role has been implemented as a quality improvement project. Over 8 months, the Ratings Lead:

- Created an electronic staff training matrix.
- Identified staff training needs.
- Arranged bespoke in-house teaching sessions for staff delivered by our CRF Medics and Clinical Lead.
- Introduced a feedback form to capture the impact and usefulness of teaching sessions.
- Organised regular practice sessions for staff.
- Compiled an electronic library of resources (including research papers, worksheets, scoring guidelines and test materials).

The changes improved skills and competencies: of 14 staff, the number trained in 23 rating scales increased from six to eleven. Staff feedback indicated knowledge and confidence increased across all scales. Feedback suggested a need for practical learning opportunities to complement teaching, and feedback showed all attendees found “dedicated time set aside to practice was helpful”, that they would attend future sessions, and would recommend the sessions to colleagues.

The project.

Our CRF offers early-phase experimental medicine studies in mental and cognitive health. During study visits, we administer complex specialist mental health rating scales and assessments. After the introduction of a new Team Lead and the recruitment of additional research delivery staff we identified an opportunity to introduce a Ratings Lead role with the aim to:

- Increase the number of CRF staff trained in administering specialist scales.
- Have an improved method for identifying trained staff.
- Develop staff skills, knowledge and confidence in delivering scales.
- Improve the quality of delivery and data collection.

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In response to how well the project has been received at our CRF, we plan to have further discussions with our Research and Development (R&D) team’s Training Lead to explore whether the project could be expanded and implemented into the other specialist Research Delivery Teams within the wider R&D department at our Trust.