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# Development of an All-Wales Audiology Preceptorship Programme

## Preceptorship is defined as:

“A period of structured transition for the newly registered practitioner during which he or she will be supported by a preceptor, to develop their confidence as an autonomous professional, refine skills, values and behaviors and to continue on their journey of life-long learning.” (DOH 2010)

Preceptorships are used in many health professions such as Nursing, Midwifery, Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy. NHS Employers website states that a preceptorship programme gives a professional the best possible start in their career and is a structured transition period for newly qualified staff. Preceptorships are also thought to enhance innovation, increase independence, and encourage autonomous professionals (NHS Employers website).

Standard 26 of the Standards for Health Service in Wales (2010) states that the NHS workforce should be able to show evidence of providing support for their professionals to develop to their full potential, to demonstrate CPD and to access opportunities. A preceptorship is a way of doing this.

The aim of a preceptorship is to build upon the skills a newly qualified clinician has developed during their training in order to:

- help them settle into their new role
- develop their confidence in using their knowledge and skills gained during their training in their day-to-day clinical practice
- fine-tune clinical skills
- develop professional practice skills
- give them the support needed

to develop further and prepare towards the next step in their career

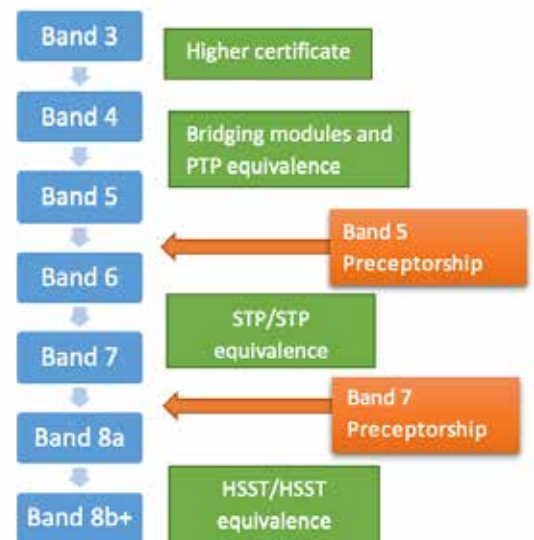
Preceptorship is not an assessment of skills, neither is it further training but rather a structured way that sits alongside appraisal and performance review (NMC Principles for Preceptorship). Ultimately the scheme is designed to help develop a clinician from a competent to a proficient Healthcare Scientist Practitioner.

A Preceptorship has many benefits to the Preceptee, the Preceptor and for the service. It allows the Preceptee to develop their confidence, skills, and expertise, to feel valued and part of the team and to encourage reflection on practice and awareness of professional practice. It will give the Preceptor the opportunity to develop appraisal and supportive skills, to promote high quality standards of care and service delivery and increased job satisfaction. The Audiology Service will benefit from enhanced staff satisfaction, reduced sickness and absence, enhanced service user experience and improved staff engagement.

### Initial development

In Wales we have well-established processes and pathways in place in terms of

progression for the workforce, however, there remains a ‘gap’ in development for newly qualified Band 5 Audiologists and newly qualified Band 7s Clinical Scientists post-STP, and the idea of a preceptorship scheme fitted well.



Firstly, I scoped what was already in use in Audiology across the UK and came across a few good examples of existing Preceptorship programmes that had a variety of structures and content. As there is no national framework on Preceptorship in healthcare science or Audiology specifically, we aimed to design a scheme that fitted our purposes.

The first challenge was deciding how to structure the Preceptorship programme. Despite not wanting the final document to look too much like a logbook, we felt that a competency-based approach was the best way of presenting the scheme in order for it to feel like a structured, development programme. The majority of other preceptorship schemes in healthcare are based on KSF domains. KSF domains are not widely used within healthcare science and therefore we based the competencies on the Academy of Healthcare Science Good Scientific Practice 2021 Standards to fit in with the Healthcare Science workforce pathways.

It was then a case of writing the individual competencies. Initial drafts were written and developed and I consulted with colleagues and Service Leads at BCUHB for feedback and comments in order to ensure that the standards reflected what we were trying to achieve.

Agreement by Audiology Heads of Service Wales

Following agreement of the document by the BCUHB Audiology team, the documents were then shared with Audiology Heads of Service Wales group. The feedback I received was very positive and so on completion of the documents, both schemes were approved and agreed by all seven Heads of Service to be implemented as an All-Wales scheme.

Being an All-Wales document, there are certain aspects of clinical work that are done slightly different across Health Boards, therefore all competencies can be edited so they are relatable to specific Health Boards if required.

### Preceptorship details

The final scheme is based around a two-year programme of development and the competencies include all areas of work that a

newly qualified clinician would be expected to develop in the first two years of their clinical careers at Band 5 or Band 7 level (post PTP or STP or post PTP/STP equivalence). They do not include any roles or responsibilities beyond the scope of practice meaning that they can fulfil the competencies as part of their day-to-day role.

The scheme is presented in a document that can be filled in online or in paper format with competencies presented in table format. The competency tables contain the Standard, a brief description of the knowledge and understanding behind the standard, and examples of evidence that the Preceptee can use as a guide for achieving the Standard. This is in no way prescriptive, and it is encouraged that Preceptees include other novel ways of presenting evidence to show how a competency is fulfilled. As a guide it would be expected that the clinician provides two pieces of evidence for each competency. The same piece of evidence can be attached to various competencies if it is found to meet more than one standard.

As Band 7 roles can be variable, the Band 7 Preceptorship involves a pick and mix approach of Adult Rehabilitation, Paediatrics, Auditory Implantable Devices and Vestibular Assessment and Management. It is only expected that the Preceptee completes the competencies that are related to his/her practice from the above four areas.

### Preceptorship delivery

There are 3 main roles within a preceptorship programme:

This Preceptorship is designed to be, first and foremost, Preceptee-led with the Preceptee taking all responsibility for their own development, progression and recording of activities for the scheme. The Preceptor is there to

support, facilitate and advise the Preceptee throughout the scheme. The Preceptorship Lead is there to support the Preceptors and co-ordinate the scheme within the Health Board.

### Next steps

We currently have four newly appointed Band 5 staff at BCUHB who are enrolled on the scheme as of October 2021. Other Health Boards in Wales are hoping to enroll new staff to the scheme over the next year. As BCUHB Preceptorship Lead I will be evaluating the scheme as it progresses over the next couple of years and will be meeting regularly with both Preceptor's and Preceptee's to gain feedback and any recommendations for improvements.

We are also hoping to share the scheme wider in the Audiology and Healthcare Science community.

If anyone would be interested in finding out more about the scheme or have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on [linor.ll.jones@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:linor.ll.jones@wales.nhs.uk)

With thanks to Audiology Heads of Service Wales for their support and to Alissa Moakes, Nottingham Audiology Services, Alexander Lindsay, ASPH Audiology department and Katherine Green Audiology department at Southend Hospital for sharing their existing preceptorship schemes.

### References:

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WHO?	ROLE	MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Preceptee</b>	The newly qualified staff member assigned to the scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake regular meetings with Preceptor</li> <li>• Identify and seek to address gaps in knowledge and experience</li> <li>• Onus on self to manage own progress</li> <li>• Commit to develop within B5/7 role in preparation for next role/post</li> </ul>
<b>Preceptor</b>	Supporting experienced Advanced Audiology Practitioner or Clinical Scientist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with Preceptorship team when required</li> <li>• Commit to holding regular meetings with preceptee</li> <li>• Facilitate preceptee to use learning opportunities for knowledge, reflective and competency development</li> <li>• Give constructive feedback to support confidence and best practice</li> <li>• Present as a role model</li> <li>• Approachable support to preceptee</li> </ul>
<b>Preceptorship Lead</b>	Health Board lead for preceptorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinate Health Board's preceptorship scheme</li> <li>• Identify staff requiring preceptorship package and assign preceptor</li> <li>• Monitor preceptees and preceptorship development</li> <li>• Provide preceptorship support to preceptors</li> <li>• Evaluate preceptorship and adjust as system evolves</li> <li>• Obtain feedback from preceptees and preceptors at the end of the programme</li> <li>• Communicate with other Preceptorship Leads on an All Wales basis</li> </ul>

[www.weds.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1076/doc%20doing%20well%20doing%20better.pdf](http://www.weds.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1076/doc%20doing%20well%20doing%20better.pdf)  
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