

Centre for
Sustainable
Delivery



Wider Perioperative Team Development Principles



**A Framework for Perioperative
Services in Scotland**



Background

The Perioperative Delivery Group (PDG) was established in November 2023 to ensure a national approach to:

- Maximising flow through perioperative services
- Maximising productive time in theatres
- Reducing the time patients wait for perioperative services

As part of this work, a number of Task and Finish Groups were set up to focus on a number of emerging themes, which it is anticipated will help to realise the overall ambitions of the PDG.

The Wider Perioperative Team Development Task and Finish Group (T&FG), which was led by the NHS Scotland Academy, was established to review current training and education opportunities and practices to determine the requirements for developing high-performing perioperative teams, and make recommendations for further improvements, and shared learning.



Remit

Through stakeholder engagement and the expertise of its members, the remit of the group was to establish the education, training, and cultural requirements for a high-performing perioperative team. This included identifying existing learning resources, opportunities, and good practices, and make recommendations for further improvements.

Areas of focus included:

- Establishing education, training and cultural requirements for a high-performing perioperative team.
- Gaining a comprehensive understanding of existing education and training resources and areas of good practice.
- Maximising team performance and influencing flow.
- Improving the patient and perioperative workforce experience.



Defining the team

A team is a group of individuals with different skill sets who work together to achieve a common purpose. In this instance the safe delivery of high quality, person-centred perioperative care, achieved by promoting a positive working environment.

A high-performing perioperative team is personified by effective communication, collaboration, trust, continuous education, a shared commitment to patient safety and the delivery of high-quality care.

These elements work together to create a supportive environment where each team member can perform effectively. This in turn can lead to successful surgical outcomes and efficiency in perioperative care.

Teams require collaboration, where members contribute their unique skills, knowledge, and efforts in a coordinated way to complete tasks, solve problems, and deliver outputs.

The PDG Wider Perioperative Team Development T&FG has identified guiding principles for the education, training, and cultural requirements necessary to maximise high-performing perioperative teams and influence patient flow.



Principle frameworks

Principles Framework – Multi Professional Collaboration and Education

- **Multi-professional cross-functional team education:**
All perioperative team members should understand the roles and responsibilities of others. This promotes a shared understanding, improves collaboration and supports informed decision-making.
- **Simulation-based training:**
Use high-fidelity simulations to replicate perioperative scenarios, including unplanned events, emergencies, equipment failure, and complex procedures. This helps the team practice and improve coordination, communication, non-technical skills, human factors, and adaptability under pressure.
- **Multi-professional team building:**
Facilitate team-building activities that go beyond clinical training. These activities strengthen trust, improve communication, and strengthen mutual respect across disciplines within the perioperative team.

Principles Framework – Communication and Team Coordination

- **Role clarification:** Ensure team members know their role within the perioperative environment. Role clarity enhances team performance and reduces confusion, particularly in high-stress or unplanned and emergency situations.
- **Structured communication protocols:** Ensure all team members are familiar with standard communication frameworks to support clear and consistent information sharing, especially during critical transitions.
- **Regular briefings and debriefings:** Conduct daily pre- and post-operative briefings and debriefings to ensure team members are aligned on the goals, risks, and outcomes of surgery. This enhances team situational awareness and supports continuous learning.

Principles Framework – Cultural Humility

- **Cultural awareness and sensitivity training:** Ensure that perioperative team members are educated in cultural humility and trained in equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- **Inclusive team environment:** Promote a team culture where diversity is valued, and inclusivity is prioritised. This encourages different perspectives and experiences within the workplace.

Principles Framework – Patient Safety and Quality of Care

- **Patient and staff safety-focused education:** Provide regular training on patient safety principles. Promote a culture that prioritises safety to reduce the risk of errors and improve outcomes.
- **Adverse event reporting and learning systems:** Encourage learning within a non-punitive culture by reporting adverse events and near misses and using this insight to guide process improvements and staff training.
- **Empowerment to speak up:** Create an environment where every team member, regardless of role, feels empowered to raise confidence to raise safety concerns. Support this through team building, leadership, simulation, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Lifelong Learning.
- **Ongoing skills development:** Establish a system for continuous professional development, offering both mandatory training and opportunities for specialised learning in new techniques, technology, and in-situ simulation.
- **Mentorship and peer learning:** Support peer learning and mentorship across professions to strengthen knowledge transfer, and team cohesion, and shared learning. Peer learning through collaborative case reviews and shared learning sessions can strengthen team capabilities.
- **Adaptability training:** Equip team members with skills to adapt to new challenges. A focus on adaptability helps build resilience and ensures the team can respond effectively to unforeseen issues.
- **Resource planning:** Develop a system where team members can highlight resource issues, offer solutions, request resources, and receive updates regarding resource related activity.

Principles Framework – Leadership and Shared Decision-Making

- **Distributed leadership:** Foster a culture of shared leadership, where team members lead based on their expertise and the specific situation. In perioperative environments, this means promoting dynamic, role-specific leadership and reducing reliance on rigid hierarchical structures.
- **Emotional intelligence and conflict resolution:** Provide training in emotional intelligence for team leaders, focusing on civility, empathy, self-regulation, and conflict resolution.
- **Inclusive decision-making:** Encourage a culture where all team members are involved in decision-making. Valuing input from the entire team strengthens collaboration and leads to more holistic, effective problem-solving.
- **Educational decision-making:** Promote transparency around decision making processes, helping teams understand the rationale behind actions. Advocate senior leadership buy-in for multi-professional perioperative training programmes and ensuring junior members of the team have the opportunity to contribute to any programme development.

Principles Framework – Team Culture and Psychological Safety

- **Fostering respect and trust:** Create a team culture based on mutual respect, trust, and inclusivity. Every team member should feel valued and respected for their unique contribution to perioperative care.
- **Building psychological safety:** Establish an environment where team members feel comfortable expressing concerns, asking questions, and acknowledging mistakes without fear of blame. Psychological safety is essential for team innovation, continuous improvement, and patient safety.
- **Health, wellbeing and burnout prevention:** Implement programmes that support the physical and emotional well-being of team members. Increasing resilience, addressing fatigue, stress, and burnout through wellness initiatives helps maintain high performance and supports staff retention.

Principles Framework – Technology Integration and Competence

- **Training in new technologies:** Provide education on emerging perioperative technologies, to ensure teams remain up to date and confident in using new tools that can improve patient outcomes.
- **Optimising workflow:** Equip teams with the skills to effectively use digital tools to streamline perioperative processes. These tools improve efficiency and prevent delays in patient care. Workforce planning should take into account the optimal skill mix required for different surgical and anaesthetic procedures.
- **Data-driven practice improvement:** Promote the use of data and analytics to monitor team performance, track patient outcomes, and identify opportunities for improvement. This supports a culture of evidence-based decision-making and continuous process enhancement.

Principles Framework – Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- **Real-time performance monitoring and feedback:** Provide timely feedback to the team, to enable adjustments that enhance performance and patient outcomes.
- **Learning from outcomes:** Encourage routine review of both successful and challenging outcomes as part of the team's continuous improvement cycle.
- **Open communication feedback loops:** Maintain regular feedback channels among team members to support transparent communication about performance, resources, challenges, and successes. This promotes shared understanding, accountability and ongoing learning.



Further recommendations

Development of a national Wider Perioperative Team Development digital resource.

Resource Framework

The following framework outlines the main components of a national digital resource with the inclusion of some available resources for illustration. A national digital resource would ideally be accessed via TURAS Learn and maintained by NES.

This development would be centred around the NHS Employers Team Toolkit, with links to resources aligned to the Principles Framework. The resources suggested are examples and not definitive or exhaustive.

Resource Hub Team Toolkit

- [NHS Employers : team toolkit | Turas | Learn](#)
- [Do OD TEAM toolkit | NHS Employers](#)
- [Stages of team development | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Meredith Belbin : team roles | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Belbin team roles | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Effective Team Working | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)

Interprofessional Collaboration and Education

- [Careers | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Perioperative Workforce Guide | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- Perioperative Teams - [HighPTeam RCSE 2014.pdf](#)
- Human Factors and ergonomics - [Human Factors Educational Resources | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- Continuous learning using simulation- [NMaHP Perioperative Event - Maintaining Strength - education enhancing the perioperative workforce, pandemic and beyond - video by Jerry Morse | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [In-situ Sim Poster.pdf](#)

Communication and Team Coordination

- [Develop high-performance teams | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [SBAR | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Structured Handover Education Project | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)

Patient Safety and Quality of Care

- [Patient Safety e-modules | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Quality Improvement journey | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)

Leadership and Shared Decision-Making

- [Managing your team | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Managing peoples' performance | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Delegation and empowerment | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Managing conflict | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Do I empower my team? | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [How to empower your team | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Self-leadership | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Understanding 'set-up-to fail' syndrome | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/11246/leadership-and-management-programmes/leading-for-the-future/emotional-intelligenc>
- [Shared Decision Making \(DECIDE\) | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)

Team Culture and Psychological Safety

- [Home | Civility Saves Lives](#)
- [Cultures, leadership and teamwork for high quality care in NHSScotland | Turas | Learn](#)
- [High-performing teams need psychological safety : here's how to create it | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Identify your team's wellbeing goals exercise | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Wellbeing for Workplace Joy | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [IHI Framework for Improving Joy in Work | Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#)
- [Why we all need to practice emotional first aid | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Psychologically Safe Workplaces - National Wellbeing Hub](#)

Technology Integration and Competence

- [Quality Improvement Zone | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Getting Started with AI | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)

Cultural Humility

- [Cultural humility | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)

Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- [Non-technical skills structured observational marker system overview and guidance | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)
- [Non-technical skills structured observational marker system tool | Turas | Learn \(nhs.scot\)](#)

This resource would also include links to the:

- Knowledge Network.
- Case Studies across NHS Scotland.
- Talking head videos of good practice examples from across NHS Scotland.
- Shared resource suite – a suite of Perioperative Simulation Scenarios and Blank templates that can be populated for use.
- Resources for evaluating impact – team development and IPE.
- Contact information for Team champions across NHS Scotland.



Membership

Wider Perioperative Team Development, Task and Finish Group Chair:

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