GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT NURSES AND STUDENT MIDWIVES ACCOMPANYING AND ESCORTING PEOPLE WHILE UNDERTAKING PRACTICE LEARNING

Background

These guidelines are designed for managers and mentors who organise transfers of people to, from and within practice learning settings when a student of nursing or midwifery is involved. They have been jointly created by the University of Ulster and Queen's University Belfast in collaboration with Practice Partners. They provide direction regarding student nurse/student midwives accompanying and escorting people. The term *People* will be used to reflect patients, clients and service users, in line with terminology used by the Nursing and Midwifery Council. These guidelines are designed to ensure that the safety and welfare of the people, student and any member of staff involved is protected.

Accompanying and/or escorting may be necessary when people require investigation or treatment in another practice setting. These situations are often very valuable learning experiences for nursing/midwifery students. Whatever the circumstances, staff and managers need to be clear about what is expected of them, and their responsibility/accountability to the student, people, the law, the NMC and their employer.

The duty of care to people requires that their needs are not compromised. Therefore, clear guidelines are necessary to ensure that student nurses/midwives may continue to be involved in valuable learning experiences while ensuring the duty of care to people is maintained. This requires an unambiguous awareness and appreciation of what the difference between accompanying and escorting people means. Additionally, staff organising such events need to be aware of their responsibility and accountability in relation to delegating activities to a student nurse/midwife, whereby the delegating registered nurse/midwife or other member of staff retains overall accountability and responsibility. Registered nurses/midwives are directed to the *Central Nursing Advisory Committee Operational Framework for Delegation Decision Making* (DHSSPSNI, 2009) to determine the appropriateness of delegated activities (See Appendix 1). Other professionals considering the delegation of activities to student nurses/midwives are also referred to the above CNAC framework as a good practice model for decision making.

Definition of Terms

Accompanying refers to going with people from a practice learning environment to another area when no on-going nursing/midwifery care is required by people during their time in the new environment. This is often a very valuable learning experience for the student.

Escorting refers to the professional role of attending to people when in transit from one care environment to another (i.e. the person requires nursing/midwifery care). This requires the supervision of a registered nurse/midwife, which may be direct or indirect. A student nurse/midwife may then be involved in escorting people under supervision and direction of a registered nurse/midwife or other appropriately, professionally qualified person.

Supervision: According to the NMC (2008, pg30), *The nature of supervision will vary from direct to indirect depending upon the:*

- *Nature of the activity the student is engaged in.*
- *Evidence of their current competence.*
- *Need to assess achievement of NMC outcomes or competencies for progression on the programme.*

Mentors will use their professional judgment and local/national policy to determine where activities may be safely delegated to students and the level of supervision required. They are accountable for such decisions and for ensuring public protection.[1]

[1] Nursing and Midwifery Council. 2008. *Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice.* London: NMC

Accompanying People

- The student may solely accompany people who are on a recreational visit or outing, providing a qualified nurse or other appropriately professionally qualified person has determined that it is appropriate for the student to do so. Permission/consent should be sought from the person being accompanied where possible.

- Students may also solely accompany people on an observational visit such as to X-ray departments or clinics, providing their role is not to deliver any care that would require a registered nurse/midwife. The area(s) to be visited should be made aware of the student's intended visit and obtain agreement for the visit from the manager in that area.

- Students have a responsibility to raise any concern they may have in relation to accompanying a person with their mentor/sign-off mentor or nurse-in-charge prior to accompanying taking place.

- The registered nurse / midwife / mentor /sign-off mentor retains full professional responsibility and accountability for the student and their actions.

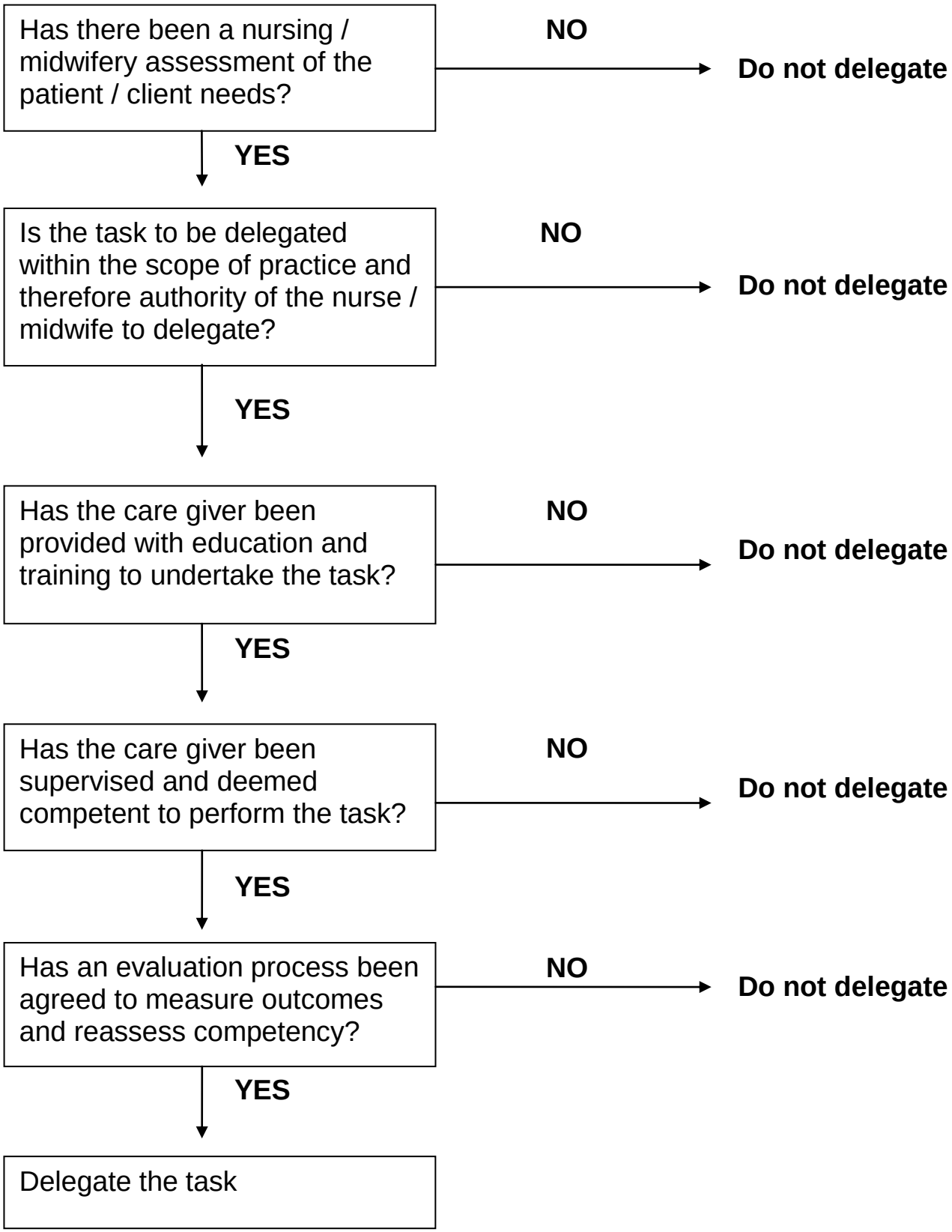
Escorting People

- Student nurses/midwives may escort people under the supervision and direction of a registered nurse/midwife or other appropriately professionally qualified person for educational purposes. CNAC guidelines should be followed (appendix 1) in this process. Permission/consent should be sought from the person being escorted where possible.

- Students have a responsibility to raise any concern they may have in relation to escorting a person with their mentor or nurse/midwife-in-charge prior to escorting taking place.

Additional Points

- It is considered best practice to document in a person's healthcare records the reason(s) for the provision of an escort, or where an escort is not required. This normally includes the time people leave the practice setting & the time they return. Upon return to the practice setting, it is considered best practice that the person who delegated the task to the student should seek a report of the event and record this.
- People who are confused or disorientated will require an escort.
- Accompanying/escorting should only occur in transport organised by the care provider/organisation and that which has suitable insurance/indemnity cover.

Students may accompany or escort a person on Northern Ireland Ambulance Service vehicles in the same capacity as a Health and Social Care Trust employee and under the guidelines outlined above.

Central Nursing Advisory Committee Delegation Decision Making Framework