



The Association  
of UK Dietitians

# Accountability and Delegation

## Case studies

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### Case study 1

Lucy is a dietetic support worker, her colleague, Francesca, is a registered dietitian. Francesca has asked Lucy to go to the ward and start information gathering from the medical notes ahead of her dietetic assessment and to complete a diet history for the service user. Francesca knows this is within Lucy's job description and Lucy's scope of practice, as she has previously trained Lucy on both tasks following the local protocols and Lucy has achieved these competencies. Francesca advises Lucy that once she has completed the tasks, she would like her to feed back the information on the ward approximately an hour later and if she has any difficulties, Lucy can contact her via the bleep system.

Lucy accepts the task. Lucy knows this task is within her scope of practice as she has attended training and tutorials on these tasks and achieved her competencies for information gathering and undertaking a diet history. She is aware of the escalation procedures and knows she can contact Francesca if she needs to.

Francesca has appropriately delegated this task to Lucy. She is accountable for her decision to delegate the task.

Lucy has accepted the task which has been delegated. She has a responsibility to complete the task, is accountable for her actions and has a duty of care to the service user when completing this task.

## Case study 2

Ben is a community dietitian. A new dietetic support worker, Suraya, has recently joined his team. The team haven't had many dietetic support workers before, and Ben is new to managing a member of the support workforce.

Ben would like Suraya to assist with weighing service users attending the clinic, ahead of their appointments.

Ben believes this is within the roles and responsibilities of a member of the support workforce as he is aware other support workers have performed this task. He refers to Suraya's job description, and tasks listed include taking the anthropometric measurements for service users. Ben assesses the risks associated with this activity by undertaking a risk assessment. He concludes the activity is low risk. He produces a protocol for a member of the support workforce to weigh service users on the stand on scales, seated scales and wheelchair scales that are present in clinic. From these protocols he drafts a competency document that he and his colleagues can use to assess Suraya's competence. Ben then creates a tutorial for Suraya, including the theoretical elements of weighing service users, why it is important, and the practicalities of weighing the service user safely, including when it is not appropriate to weigh. He outlines in both the tutorial and protocols that an annual refresher will be required.

Ben shares this with his team and informs them that the task of weighing service users in clinic on the different scales listed will be the responsibility of the Suraya, once they have completed the training and achieved competence in this task.

Ben delivers the prepared training session and observes Suraya weighing service users on the different scales competently as per the protocol. Once Suraya has been observed completing the task competently the required number of times, he is confident of her ability and signs her competency framework document. He also checks that Suraya feels happy and confident to undertake the tasks.

This task has been appropriately delegated to a member of the support workforce.

## Case study 3

Daniel is a dietetic assistant practitioner in the home enteral feeding team (HEFT). Jenny, a registered dietitian, in the HEFT has asked him to undertake a home visit to check a service users balloon gastrostomy tube (BGT) balloon water volume.

Daniel has recently undertaken training on this task. He has attended the relevant tutorials and has worked through the written competency document. Last week he achieved sign off on the required 3 observations. He feels confident in undertaking this task.

Jenny was informed by Daniel's line manager that he is now competent to undertake the task, and is aware Daniel receives monthly supervision from his line manager. Jenny confirms with Daniel that he feels confident to perform the task, he has no questions, is aware of the escalation procedures and how to contact her. Jenny asks him to feed-back following completion of the task.

Daniel agrees to undertake the task. Jenny has appropriately delegated this task to Daniel. Jenny remains accountable for her decision to delegate the task and check on its safe completion. Daniel has accepted responsibility for the completion of the task. He is accountable for his actions and has a duty of care to the service user when completing this.

## Case study 4

Rachel is a dietitian working in a busy acute department. Rachel usually works with dietetic support worker, Annie, who is off unwell. A colleague offers the support of their new dietetic support worker, Chantelle, to support Rachel on the wards.

Rachel accepts the help of Chantelle but does not have the time to speak with her directly as she needs to attend a ward round. She leaves a note for Chantelle on her desk asking her to undertake a diet history review for 3 of her service users, a task which Annie was due to do that morning.

When Chantelle returns to the office, she sees the note from Rachel. Chantelle has not yet achieved the competency for completing a diet history and does not feel confident to undertake the task. Chantelle decides not to undertake the task as she has not received the required training and therefore is not competent. Chantelle contacts Rachel to inform her that she cannot undertake the delegated work.

Rachel has not delegated appropriately. She did not establish that Chantelle was competent to undertake the task prior to delegating. Chantelle has acted appropriately by not undertaking a task outside of her scope of practice and has communicated this to Rachel appropriately. Chantelle does not hold a duty of care to the service users. She has not been able to safely accept responsibility for the delegated task and has highlighted that she does not have the required competencies.