



**ALERT** 

ACUTE LIFE-THREATENING EVENTS RECOGNITION AND TREATMENT

The one-day ALERT<sup>®</sup> course is a multi-professional course created to teach clinical staff a structured and prioritised approach to the assessment and management of the acutely ill patient.

## The ALERT® course was originally developed in 1999 by Professor Gary Smith and colleagues in Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, with the most recent update having been launched in early 2020.

The course has now run successfully for over 20 years and has been delivered in over 100 centres in the UK and overseas, including Eire, USA, Middle East, Australia and New Zealand. More than 100,000 healthcare professionals have been trained worldwide. There is a body of evidence showing that recognition of the deteriorating patient by clinical staff is often delayed and/or not escalated to the appropriate person.

In the UK, national bodies have responded by recommending:

**“Staff caring for patients in acute hospital settings should have competencies in monitoring, measurement, interpretation and prompt response to the acutely ill patient appropriate to the level of care they are providing. Education and training should be provided to ensure staff have these competencies, and they should be assessed to ensure they can demonstrate them...”**

NICE clinical guideline 50  
– Acutely ill patients in hospital July 2007.  
[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

**“There is a strong body of evidence showing that delays in recognising deterioration or inappropriate management can result in late treatment, avoidable admissions to intensive care and in some cases, unnecessary deaths. Studies show that Hospital staff may not understand the disturbances in physiology affecting the sick patient; frequently ignore signs of clinical deterioration...”**

Competencies for Recognising and Responding to Acutely Ill Patients in Hospital, UK Department of Health Guidelines March 2009.  
[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

**“People who use services can be confident that: Staff will quickly recognise when a person who uses services becomes seriously ill, physically and/or mentally, and requires treatment, and immediately respond to meet their needs.”**

Outcome 4C Care Quality Commission's Essential standards of quality and safety March 2010.  
[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

**“Care before the cardiac arrest. Where patients continue to deteriorate after non consultant review there should be escalation of patient care to a more senior doctor. If this is not done, the reasons for non-escalation must be documented clearly in the case notes.”**

NCEPOD. Cardiac Arrest Procedures  
– Time to Intervene report June 2012.  
[www.ncepod.org.uk/cap](http://www.ncepod.org.uk/cap)



## The course objectives are:

- To teach healthcare professionals a structured and systematic approach to the assessment and management of patients.
- By using a structured and systematic approach deteriorating patients will be identified earlier and care will be escalated to others when appropriate. This approach can reduce avoidable in-hospital deaths and cardiac arrests.
- To teach healthcare professionals that involving expert senior help early, such as Critical Care, will enable appropriate and timely intensive care unit admissions.
- To introduce tools to healthcare professionals which will improve team working and communication.

## The course incorporates:

- A comprehensive reference manual which the candidates receive pre-course.
- Interactive presentations which are adapted to meet local policies and procedures.
- Practical demonstrations.
- Role-play of clinical patient based scenarios during which the candidates are encouraged to reflect on their actions and to consider 'What would I do next?'

## The course has:

- A blended, flexible, learning approach.
- A proven track record of delivery of more than 20 years.
- A multi-professional candidate applicability.
- A candidate course certificate that is recognised by deanery's, acute trusts and professional bodies in the UK and abroad.
- A straightforward programme to organise and deliver with minimal equipment required.



It is expected that the introduction of the ALERT® course will result in specific benefits to patients, their relatives and hospital staff, such as:

Improvements in the general ward care of patients.

A reduced number of cardiac arrest calls on general wards.

Earlier, and more appropriate referrals to the intensive care unit.

Fewer re-admissions to the intensive care unit.

Fewer avoidable in-hospital deaths.

Improved decision-making regarding the resuscitation status of patients.

Improved multi-professional teamwork.

Improved communication.

Fewer complaints from patients or their relatives.

## Requirements to deliver the course

- Purchase of an annual license fee and manuals from Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust.
- Adherence to the course regulations which can be found on [www.alert-course.com](http://www.alert-course.com).
- Courses would be delivered locally by appropriately trained staff from your organisation.

## Contact details

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