

Bitesize Case Study: a Non-Commissioned BSc (Hons) Nursing (Adult) programme

Voluntary Sector North West

This case study is one in a series of studies curated to capture best practice, and highlight innovations, from the joint Health Education England (HEE) working across the North West and Voluntary Sector North West 'Learning Matters' awards 2017. The awards are part of a cross sector adult learning campaign delivered for the health and care sector through a number of key regional partnerships and collaborations. The overarching theme of the awards is simple: lifelong learning is good for people, organisations and health.

HEE Quality Standards met:

5 - Developing and Implementing Curricula and Assessments

What was the issue or problem? What did you set out to do?

It was recognised nationally that there was (and still is) a shortage of nurses (Department of Health, 2006; Wanlass, 2002; DH, 2004a; DH, 2006a; Willis, 2012; Willis, 2015) and that there was a need to seek new ways in which NHS Partner Trusts could ensure the future supply of nurses to care for their service users. This is coupled with the demands and needs of the local population, whose needs continue to change, alongside NHS Trusts needing to ensure that they are able to care for service users by having a suitably qualified and trained workforce in place. In addition, for some time the University of Bolton wanted to make a valuable contribution to the pre-registration education for Nurses, however, the historical contracts currently in operation excluded them from the opportunity.



What did you do? What was the intervention or initiative?

The project that was developed and implemented is in relation to an innovative non-commissioned BSc (Hons) Nursing (Adult) Programme, 'The Bolton Model', in collaboration with Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Trust and other local NHS Trusts. This is the first nurse education programme that is not funded by Health Education England (HEE) in England and has been approved and validated by the NMC and the UoB.

In 2015, CMFT approached University of Bolton to work in partnership to provide a non commissioned Pre-registration Nursing Programme (Adult Branch). This programme is innovative in terms of partnership working because its origin was in a shared vision between NHS trusts' colleagues and University of Bolton staff to make a real difference in practice in the regional locality. Since the first communication with the University we have developed a true partnership, have been involved in the curriculum development, NMC validation, implementation and evaluation of the innovative programme.

This non-commissioned programme works in partnership with:

- Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Bolton Foundation NHS Trust
- Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust (subject to validation)

The University Nursing and Healthcare Education academic team are proven in flexible and responsive relationships with local Trusts and have previously developed NMC approved non-credit bearing Multi-Professional Support for Learning and Assessment in Practice (mentorship) programmes in order to facilitate and enable adequate numbers of mentors to facilitate student learning in practice.

Indeed, it is as a result of this (working in partnership with the local Trusts) that enabled the initial discussion and project to commence. The team at Bolton has the breadth and depth of professional experience to develop a contemporary nursing curriculum that will meet the NMC standards. They have sufficient experience to ensure that the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment of students will be maintained and enhanced throughout. Thus the project involved the development and implementation of an innovative model of nurse education to ensure the provision of additional student nurses in training to supplement those places already commissioned by Health Education England.

Many NHS trusts across the UK were, and still are using agency and internationally recruited nurses to alleviate some of this demand. This is also compounded with the predicted aging workforce and potential loss of nurses in the next few years. The need for additional trainee nurses was obvious.

Therefore, additionality of trainee nurses to the student population and recruitment onto the non-commissioned programme along with the current commissioned nurse training places, will help to lessen the gap of the nursing workforce shortfall.

What were the Key Outcomes?

The programme and model has been recognised as good practice by Health Education England and features in the Willis (2015) report.

- The Department of Health requested advice, knowledge and experience in preparation for the parliamentary debate that took place in January 2015.

- There has been huge media interest. The programme has featured in numerous articles in the nursing and education journals including: the Nursing Standard and the Nursing Times, along with features in the local media.

- The programme has received recognition and has been nominated for a number of awards: Lancashire Teaching Hospital NHS Trusts - Quality Awards for Partnership Working and NHS Fab stuff.

- The innovative programme has been presented and published at a number of national and international conferences, for example, the RCN Education Forum National Conference and Exhibition, the NHS England and RCN Conference, and the NET 27th International Networking for Healthcare Education Conference.

'The Bolton Model' has contributed to the decision to change the way in which nurse education will be funded from September 2017 with the announcement following the spending review (DH, 2015) that more places can now be made available to assist in reducing workforce shortages. The programme has started to contribute to approximately 6% to the Governments pledge of 10,000 more nursing students – initially started with:

a cohort of 15 in 14/15

15/16 – 93

16/17 – 217

17/18 – 430

18/19 – once at full capacity for the agreed provision today the numbers will total 660 rolling numbers

What were the lessons learned?

As the programme has been in place for in excess of twelve months, CMFT has been able to see the benefits of working closely with such a forward thinking university including:-

- The students were recruited in full partnership with the University and interviews were undertaken within CMFT, which immediately supported the student's connection to the Trust.
- In the second year the theoretical aspect of the programme is delivered within CMFT, which harmonises theoretical learning and clinical practice enabling the students to constantly relate their learning to practice. In addition the onsite learning further supports the student connection to the Trust, but it also enables clinical experts to support the delivery of some of the theoretical aspects of the programme.
- By working in partnership with the University, CMFT can ensure the allocation of placements are carefully managed to ensure students have a wide variety of experiences.

- The students are taught within very small cohorts, which provides the students with the confidence to speak up and have issues/concerns addressed immediately whilst also personalising the learning experience.

Overall the partnership between CMFT and the University of Bolton has been exceptional. The team are working together towards a vision to develop a registered nurse who can work flexibly, inter-professionally and collaboratively in a way that is meaningful and relevant within an evolving NHS.

During the development of the project it was clear that

- A close collaborative relationship would be beneficial as there were many issues and concerns
- Buy in from the key relevant stakeholder is critical at executive level
- Equal ownership of the project

References

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Following the development and implementation of this project along with critical reflection it has become apparent that:

- HEIs need to establish true effective partnerships and work in true collaboration with their local NHS Trusts and healthcare providers by being open, honest and transparent in order to meet workforce and service user needs.
- HEIs need to be more flexible and responsive to meet local workforce nurse education requirements.
- HEIs, NHS Trusts and Healthcare providers need to be innovative, work together to have a clear workable vision and models in creating nurse education programmes to meet local workforce needs.
- It is essential that there are clear and explicit strategies for communication to local, regional and national stakeholders at the start and throughout any innovative project.
- Continual research and evaluation of 'The Bolton Model' of nurse education is required in order to enhance the model and share best practice.

Level of award:

Highly Commended - Projects

Organisation(s): University of Bolton in Partnership with Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Trusts, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, University Hospitals of South Manchester Trust (UHSM subject to validation)

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