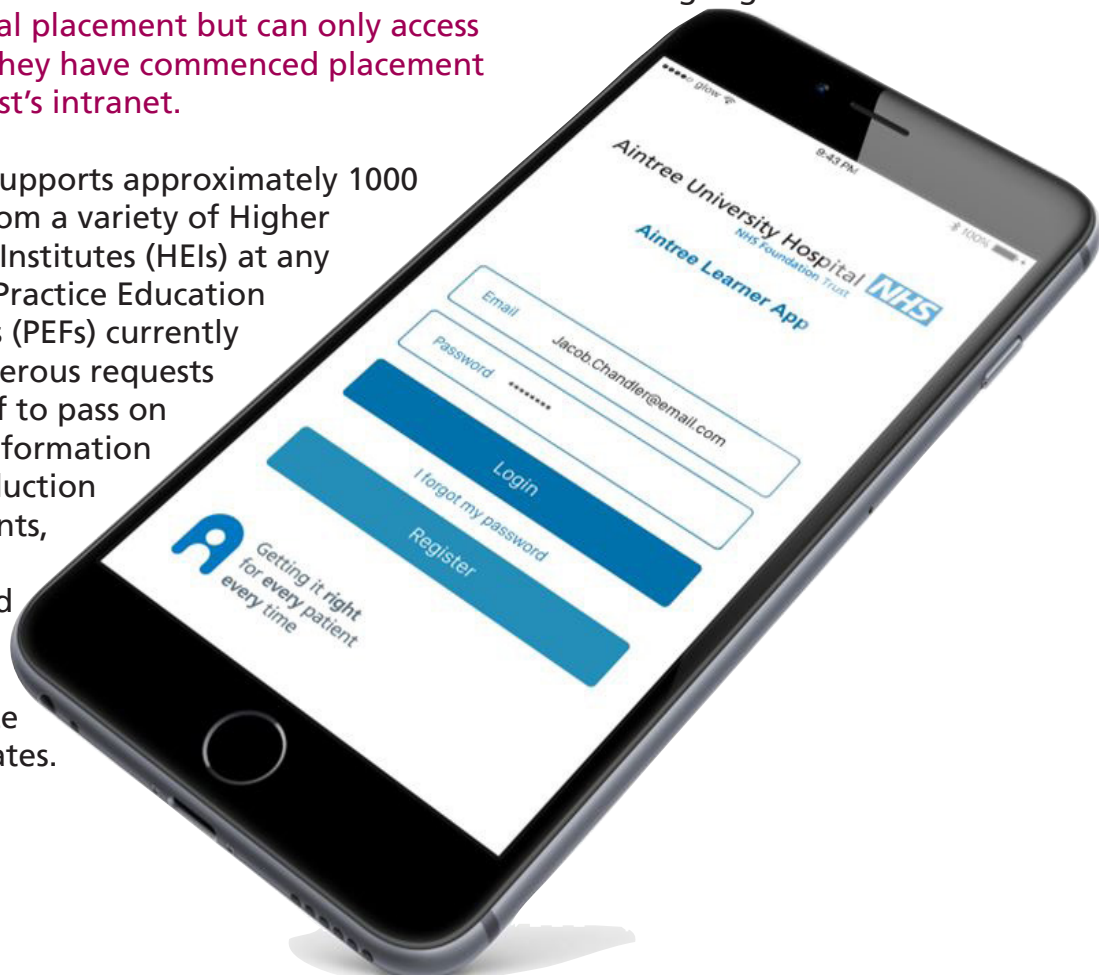


# Case Study: Development of a Multi-Professional learner app

An innovative and accessible app for mobile devices has been developed that can be utilised by pre-registration learners and Trainees across all professions as well as by their mentor/educator. It provides access to resources from within the Trust, and remotely, giving learners and staff greater flexibility and options to explore resources at times to suit them. Information sharing and communication with learners prior to and during clinical placements is a challenge - learners need to be provided with Aintree network accounts on arrival at the Trust for their clinical placement but can only access this after they have commenced placement via the Trust's intranet.

These could be provided through an App saving much valued time and resources. In addition this will enhance communication and improve preparation for practice enabling learners to work safely and effectively within Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. This resource will also provide guidance and support for mentors/educators in relation to their professional body requirements. The app enhances and raises the profile of Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust helping achieve its vision of becoming a "learning organisation".

The Trust supports approximately 1000 learners from a variety of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) at any one time. Practice Education Facilitators (PEFs) currently make numerous requests to HEI staff to pass on relevant information such as induction requirements, Student Friends and Family Test and appropriate training dates.



## Key Outcomes

Initial uptake was great with over 40 learners downloading the app on the launch day (See Appendix 2).

PEFs will also complete a thorough six month evaluation this month where further outcomes will materialise. To date 114 learners have downloaded the app with approximately ten educators engaging with the app. Clearly more work needs to be done in marketing the app which will be highlighted in the six monthly evaluation to the Trust's Education and Learning Group.

Learners were overwhelmed with the amount of education and study sessions that are available in the Trust and inter-professional learning has increased as they book onto these sessions.

*"This is really good, I can access learning that I wouldn't have been able to before"*

*"This is really helpful when you're new to the Trust"*

Feedback from learners

The Trust supports approximately 1000 learners from a variety of Higher Education Institutes (HEI) at any one time. Practice Education Facilitators (PEFs) currently make numerous requests to HEI staff to pass on relevant information such as induction requirements, Student Friends and Family Test and appropriate training dates. To save valued time and resources these requests could be minimised if the relevant information were to be provided through an app.

It was envisioned this would also enhance communication and improve preparation for practice enabling learners to work safely and effectively within Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Francis (2012) proposes that every organisation should provide all learners with access to policies, procedures and support which in turn fosters a culture of safety, openness and transparency. He also recognises learners as being one of the most "vulnerable" groups particularly in relation to raising concerns.

The Trust is required to enable mentors/educators to keep up to date in their educator role complying with regulatory body requirements. Furthermore, access to this app allows for self-directed learning thereby releasing time to care.

## Background

Aintree University Hospital in Liverpool provides general acute services to a population of 330,000 in North Liverpool, South Sefton and Kirkby and specialist services to a population of 1.5 million across the North West and North Wales.

Employing more than 4,000 staff, 5.85% of which are in the age group of 16-24 years, Aintree was authorised as a Foundation Trust on 1 August 2006, and has more than 13,000 public and staff members.

The app project contributes to achieving the gold standard: "evidence that the placement provider has established/set improvement measures internally across learning environments evidencing year on year improvements" within the Practice Education Facilitation report (Schedule C of the Learning Development Agreement) for Health Education England - North West (HEE NW).

The Trust Vision is to be a world renowned educational provider. The app supports this vision as it provides a sustainable platform for all learners to utilise and has the potential to incorporate elements of wider education provision within Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. These might include; Preceptorship programmes, Clinical Skills training, Mandatory training and Simulation.

## Key Aims

- Improve communication between the Trust and learners visiting the Trust on placement
- Promote and develop learner engagement with Trust Policies and training information thereby improving the quality of placements and reducing clinical risk
- Improving training opportunities for both learners and staff
- Promote Inter-Professional Learning
- Enhance quality of education at Aintree
- Reduce admin time for Universities and PEFs

## Key Stages of Set-up

Project Approach: Three themes have been identified as requirements for this project:

1. Development of products: including evaluation questions (See Appendix 4), app on both platforms, (Apple and Android) information for upload to the app, marketing materials (See Appendix 5)
2. Marketing and engagement: Including champions and influential staff, target audience, links with Communications team.
3. Evaluation: Following testing for any amendments and of achievement of aim prior to Phase 2.

Membership: Amanda Hughes and Jeanette Wilding (Practice Education Facilitators); Associate Director Organisational Development; Engagement Coordinator; App developer and Communications Team

Project Timeline: The project has been split into two stages of Testing and Rollout. Testing will be completed by the end of November to begin Rollout in the beginning of December with a rolling programme of incoming student cohorts. In Summer 2016 the uptake will be assessed against the project aim and scoping will begin for potential Phase 2 for staff training to be added to the app.

Some of the key stages of setup so far have included; development of an Android and Apple version of the app, collation of materials for handbook, app testing period, launch event and marketing (See Appendix 1)





## How it Works

Learners are advised about the app through flyers in the various universities, on induction to the Trust, flyers in the education buildings and word of mouth student to student. The app is free to download and can be found in the Apple Store and Google Play for Android.

Registration for the app requires a code which learners are given in the flyer. This prevents anyone external or anyone not authorised accessing the app although there is no sensitive information held on it. Learners/ Students register as; "nursing", "nurse mentor", "medical/dental under grad", "medical/dental post grad", "AHP", "Health Care Science", "Trainee Assistant Practitioner", "Skills for Health", "Pharmacy", "Medical Educational Supervisor", or "AHP Educational Supervisor". These categories reflect the types of users that come to the Trust for Placements, and their educational supervisors and mentors, for whom the app was designed.

The app is sectioned into "Documents", "Events", and "Messaging" so learners can access what they require immediately. PEFs also have access to a "Users" section via the administration system so they can monitor uptake.

PEFs currently populate the app via an administration system on a separate server (see Appendix 6). Events delivered by the PEFs are added to the app.

Initially students booked on to Trust wide events via the app but upon their arrival the event organiser was unaware students had booked places – as a result all events not delivered by PEFs are now advertised using posters and flyers. This was an initial teething problem which has been corrected.

PEFs can also contact learners via the app to remind them of upcoming events via push message. Only those registered with the app will receive this notification as a pop up on the app.

## Resources

Project Budget: Funding of £5000.00 was secured from the Directors' Dragons' Den Innovation Fund in March 2015. The innovation is defined as "an idea, service or product new to the NHS or applied in a way that is new to the NHS, which significantly improves the quality of health and care wherever it is applied."

The Practice Educator Facilitators along with a 3rd year nursing student presented the idea to the Directors' Dragons' Den panel which is comprised of senior directors within, and associated to, the Trust.

The development and testing of the app have incurred some additional costs which have been addressed by the Associate Director of Organisational Development.

Time was required from the PEF team to employ an app developer and to meet with them at regular intervals to oversee its development. The app developer, from a local company, was sought via Google and provided the best quote and value for money. The app developer designed the app and the administration system, taught the PEF team how to use the system, and attended the launch event to assist with any technical questions that the PEF team were unable to answer.

## Key Challenges

**Project Management** - It was identified that the PEFs would benefit from support from a team with project management experience. Mentorship and assistance from Organisational Development was provided and a project plan produced.

**Engagement with learners, mentor/educators and relevant stakeholders across professions** – it was difficult to capture all learners as there is no one forum where learners come together from all disciplines. Mentors and educators have little time to engage as they are working with patients and the availability of stakeholders was again difficult due to time constraints.

PEFs sought learners to pilot the project as they visited their placement areas. The PEF team sought help from the Director team to engage with the stakeholders and once this was overcome they became extremely interested in the project.

**IT in the Trust** was a challenge. As the Launch date loomed access to Wi-Fi became an issue. The PEF team worked closely with IT to overcome the issue, iPads were loaned on the launch day. The IT department were available on launch day if Wi-Fi became a problem.

## Key Learning

If the PEF team had known the project would become so big they would have sought project management advice from the OD team at the beginning and will endeavour to do so for Phase 2 and other projects. Help from OD really took the development forward and gave the team timelines for completion of each stage which helped keep the app developer on track too.

PEFs learnt that everyone in education is enthusiastic about their role and their learners were completely engaged with the app. The team sought help from the Directors for the initial engagement but once they understood the benefits to their role/department this was a helpful partnership. Leads for the various departments were forward thinking and understood the new ways technology can enhance education helping provide a good quality learning experience for all professions.

The process of booking students onto events was revised after a few teething problems. Learners used the app to book on to events but event organisers were unaware of app bookings resulting in more attendees than expected turning up at sessions. This has now been rectified – any educational event that is not delivered by the PEF team is advertised as a “Document” on the app including details of how to book on to the course or study session.

The app was a small project – the pilot provided small changes from the evaluation which were dealt with before the Launch. The Trust has shown interest in developing the app and Phases 2 and 3 are under discussion with the app developer (See Next Steps section).

Occurrences of inter-professional learning in the Trust are highlighted and can be monitored via the app. The app has the ability to advertise all education being taught to individual professions to all professionals. Attendees can then learn from each other; for example study days currently available in individual departments are now advertised widely. The administration system will provide PEFs with the number of inter-professional study days/sessions that have occurred. Future work will allow PEFs to determine numbers in attendance - this would need to be included in Phase 2 or 3 of the project where it is envisioned that all events can be bookable via the app.

## Sustainability

PEFs will manage the app initially by advertising events and downloading new initiatives both from the Trust and HEE in order to keep learners and their mentors/educators up to date.

Currently the app does not alert the user if there is a new document or event. This is something that could be included into Phase 2 and 3; currently the team rely on users randomly opening the app to check for new content. PEFs will remind learners about the app and continue to communicate with the leads for education prompting them to update the app with new information. Eventually this will become the work of an administrative assistant as this is currently unsustainable for the PEF team.

The terms and conditions of the app clearly state that if a user has not used the app for six months their account will be deleted – the team can maintain this through a user management tab on the administration system.

## Next Steps

- Putting in place administration support for the app
- Name change and flyer updates to include all staff
- Look at the possibilities for the app becoming a Trust wide booking service for all education activities in the organisation
- Phase 2 - add a section on to the app for junior doctors to input their hours at the end of a shift (junior doctors will be able to provide exception reporting when they have worked beyond their rostered hours or been unable to take breaks - this will be reviewed by the Compliance Manager and the Guardian for Safe Working); provide resources for those undertaking the Care Certificate. (Both of these activities are currently a work in progress)
- Phase 3 - enable all staff at Aintree to access learning materials including mandatory training through the app

## Supporting Material

**Appendix 1** - app Rollout plan

**Appendix 2** - app uptake graph from January 2016

**Appendix 3** - Learner app project poster

**Appendix 4** - Evaluation questions for the app pilot

**Appendix 5** - Flyer

**Appendix 6** - app Admin screenshot



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