

Case Study: Newly Qualified Nurses Employed in Primary Care - an Enhanced Training Practice (ETP) example

The Practice Nurse workforce is ageing with almost one in five General Practice Nurses (GPNs) aged 55 and over (GP Taskforce, 2014). In 2009, Buchan & Seccombe warned that the challenge of replacing those who retire will become a progressively prominent issue over the next few years. Notably, The General Practice Forward View (2016) cannot be delivered without sufficient recruitment and workforce expansion. Historically, nursing students have little access to placement opportunities in Primary Care, therefore having limited appreciation of the role of the Practice Nurse and would not customarily consider Primary Care as an option after qualifying.

In September 2015, Health Education England (HEE) working across the North West made accessible a substantial investment to develop placements for healthcare students in primary care with the aim of recruiting and retaining a future healthcare workforce in the general practice setting. This investment has led to the establishment of 15 Enhanced Training Practices (ETPs) to provide exposure and breadth of placement experience for healthcare students through a 'Hub' and 'Spoke' model approach.



With the investment from HEE Sam Lacey, supported by Lorraine Wright (ETP Coordinator), have helped attract a new generation of Practice Nurses to Primary Care in the North West. After eighteen months developing and recruiting other General Practices, they have supported three nursing students to successfully gain employment as Practice Nurses within Wigan Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) while on their final sign off placement. They have identified the key education and training needs of student learners to ensure they have the essential exposure and the required skills to develop as effective future Primary Care Practitioners.

Key Outcomes

- Three students on their Year 3 placement or final sign off placement have been employed as GPNs within Wigan CCG.
- Student Learning Outcomes have been mapped against Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF).
- Basic GPN competencies have been achieved while on placement in preparation for Practice Nurse interviews and employment.

Background

Funded by Health Education England, ETPs are an exciting new initiative to develop placements for inter-professional healthcare students in Primary Care across the North West. Using a Hub and Spoke model, ETPs provide exposure and breadth of placement experience while also allowing general practice to address workforce shortages in primary care.

The NWPDN is funded by Health Education England and is hosted by University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust (UHSM). They provide and develop sufficient capacity to ensure high quality learning environments across the North West region for a range of healthcare learners, working across primary care, community, NHS, private, independent, and voluntary organisations.

Primary Care, and in particular care delivered by general practice, has been the foundation of the United Kingdom's Healthcare system since the launch of the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948. Good quality primary care is undeniably a crucial feature of all cost-effective healthcare systems (Deloitte, 2012). However, general practice faces an unprecedented workforce challenge, triggered by difficulties recruiting and retaining General Practitioners (GPs) and Practice Nurses in the face of rising demand for health services. At the same time, rising numbers of GPs and Practice Nurses retiring early has put the general practice workforce in decline (GP Taskforce, 2014).

The timing of this downturn in the workforce coincides with a growth in demand for health services due to an ageing population. As many as half of all people reaching the age of 75 have three or more chronic diseases, and the number of people aged 65 years and over is forecast to rise by 23% between 2010 and 2035. This will certainly increase pressure on general practice (GP Taskforce, 2014).

Historically, only a handful of student nurses gained any exposure to general practice nursing, and then only for short periods, attached to community staff such as district nurses in a largely observational role. Few student nurses saw practice nursing as a viable or desirable first career. The investment from HEE has led to the establishment of 15 Enhanced Training Practices (ETPs) to provide exposure and breadth of placement experience for healthcare students.

ETPs are a practice or group of practices accredited to provide undergraduate and postgraduate multi-professional training learning environments. As a Hub, the ETP takes the lead role in developing both sufficient capacity and quality of learning environments, whilst also creating a multi-professional learning organisation ethos. Each ETP has committed to accommodating a total of 80 learners incrementally over a three year period, through the development of high quality Spokes, otherwise known as associated hubs sufficient to accommodate 20 learners in year one, 40 in year two and 80 in year three. Associated hubs are affiliated providers of learning environments, recruited by the Hub and equally subject to eligibility and quality assurance criteria.

Key Aims

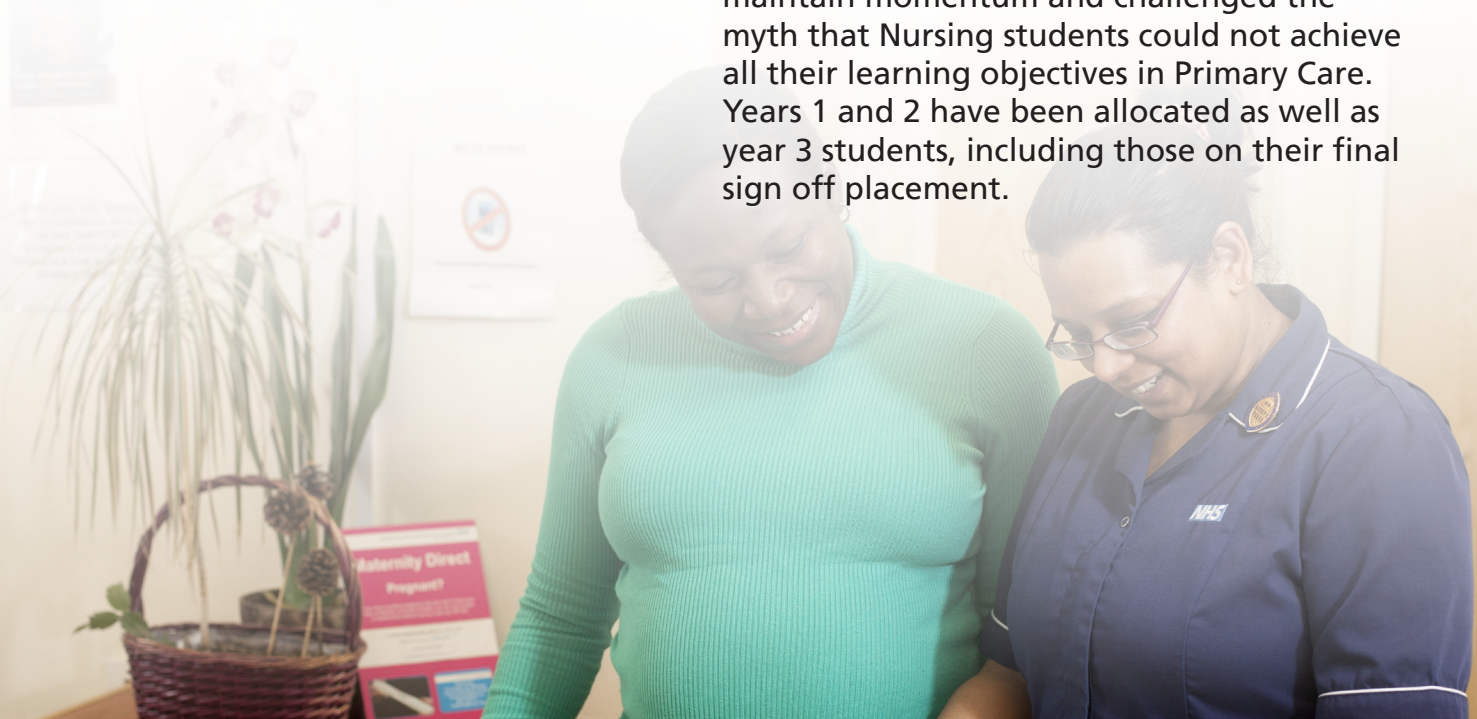
The key aim of the investment given by HEE to develop ETP training practices was to facilitate healthcare student placements to encourage recruitment into the Primary Care workforce. Wigan ETP have achieved the long term vision far earlier than expected with the employment of three students as GPNs.

Key Stages of Set-up

Sam Lacey, an established Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) recognised mentor, was anticipatory and already offered placement experience to pre-registration Nursing and Paramedic students. She successfully guided the collation of a bid for the investment being offered by HEE and Wigan ETP became operational in July 2015.

The first step of the project involved the recruitment of an ETP coordinator to manage the development processes of the ETP. Lorraine Wright, who had previous admin experience in Public Health, was employed for 16 hours a week, funded from the initial investment by HEE. The ETP Coordinator worked on a management infrastructure, formulated a Wigan ETP Educational Agreement (see Appendix 1) to ensure effective working relationships with the recruited associated hubs/spokes, and set up a central system to coordinate and manage student allocations.

The next stage was to raise awareness and generate interest. The General Practice Nurse and Enhanced Training Practice Lead consistently did this at GP, Practice Nurse and Practice Manager Forums. This helped maintain momentum and challenged the myth that Nursing students could not achieve all their learning objectives in Primary Care. Years 1 and 2 have been allocated as well as year 3 students, including those on their final sign off placement.



UCLAN recruited a Project Lead on a 12 month secondment to support the process. Incited by the questioning from the ETP Lead, NMC requirements were reviewed and a UCLAN ETP Practice Placement Handbook was developed mapping learning outcomes and addressing concerns that learning objectives could not be achieved in Primary Care. Simultaneously, a Student Training Pack (see Appendix 2) was developed by the ETP.

To ensure the GPN mentors were adequately supported, a Mentor Handbook was developed and monthly mentor meetings were held offering face to face support as well as answering any queries the mentors had; this in turn improved the quality and safety of placements and promoted best practice.

The NWPDN provided ongoing support, advising on audit and mentor processes, liaising with Higher Education Institutions and helping the ETPs to extend their placement capacity. They facilitated monthly meetings bringing the three stakeholders together to ensure collaborative working.

The Project Lead developed a strategy to deliver mentorship training to already overstretched GPNs in an encouraging and accommodating way, making the learning appropriate to their role. All applicants have completed the Multi-professional Support of Learning and Assessment in Practice (MSLAP) module. Peer support in the form of a social media group was encouraged; the GPN's undertaking the bespoke mentorship training met in their own time to support each other, share good practice and to network.

How it Works

Wigan ETP have now recruited 15 other Practices as associated hubs/spokes. Last year they exceeded the target set by HEE of 20 students in Year 1, having had 24 Non Medical students allocated in the form of Pre-registration Nursing and Paramedic students.

The ETP Lead and Coordinator engage with each Practice on an operational level, they inform the NWPDN who support the audit and sign off process linking with the UCLAN Project Lead who then signs off each new Practice as a learning environment and supports any mentorship update requirements.

Resources

ETPs received significant investment from HEE to help resource the development requirements. In keeping with the DH placement tariff arrangements for Trusts, both the ETP Hubs and Associated Hub Practices receive the placement tariff associated for healthcare learners in the clinical setting. HEE have also provided backfill monies for mentorship course and updates.

HEE ring fenced funding for mentorship for ETPs and UCLAN were awarded the tender in the Cumbria and Lancashire locality to deliver bespoke mentorship training for the ETP and their associated hub/spoke practices.

Key Challenges

Challenging the perception that nursing students could not achieve learning objectives in Primary Care, and that students on their final placement requiring sign off could not be placed in the Primary Care Setting, has been crucial to the successful employment of the two Nursing students. The driving force behind the success of Wigan ETP has been the ETP Lead's passion for her role combined with her infinite energy and enthusiasm. The clever concept of linking learning objectives to QOF has resulted in a consistent approach. As all practices utilise this same quality framework then in effect all practices could have students on placement. Furthermore, this concept has actually made having students on placement financially viable by helping practices to achieve their QOF targets.

Key Learning

The ETP developments have moved the boundaries and instead of students spending time observing general practice on an ad hoc basis, students can now spend full placements in primary care. Sam Lacey has moved the boundaries further by making sure student placements involve active engagement rather than purely observation.

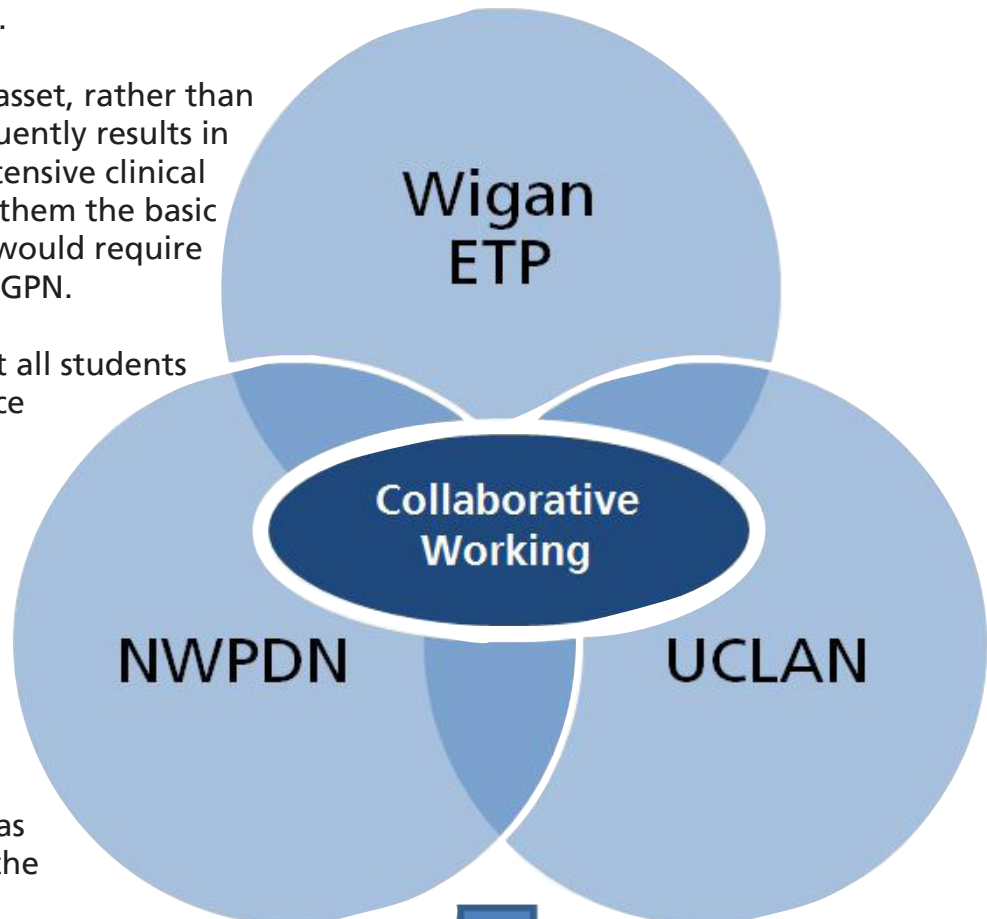
This makes students an asset, rather than a burden, which subsequently results in the students gaining extensive clinical skills which in turn give them the basic competencies practices would require when employing a new GPN.

Acknowledging that not all students will be able to experience a placement in primary care, Sam Lacey worked collaboratively with UCLAN and delivered a lecture on “long term conditions and management” to emphasise to groups of pre-registration Nursing students the potential benefit of GPNs as well as to stimulate interest in the role.

The management infrastructure put in place by the ETP Coordinator is key to the success and sustainability of this development. The management arrangements and strong collaborative working ensured that any associated hubs/spokes were fully informed and have ongoing support. Wigan ETP have been asked on several occasions to share best practice and have discussions with other developing ETPs. The Wigan ETP Educational Agreement (see Appendix 1) has been shared with other ETP Leads and has assisted in their development.



3 Students employed
in General Practice
Nurse Roles within
Wigan CCG



The close collaborative working between three different stakeholders has certainly been central to the success of the Wigan ETP development. Regular meetings between the ETP Lead and Coordinator, UCLAN Project Lead and the NWPDN have fuelled new ideas and kept the development on course. UCLAN were visionary by creating the Project Lead post to steer the development.

Sustainability

Wigan ETP are already on target to surpass HEE target of 40 students in Year 2 with 37 students having already been allocated so far this year. The ETP Lead is still raising awareness at every available opportunity to encourage more practices to come on board. Student allocations are managed centrally by Lorraine Wright in collaboration with the Placement Learning Support Unit at UCLAN.

Next Steps

- To continue to create additional capacity for undergraduate healthcare students.
- To continue to recruit Associated Hub practices to provide breadth of experience.
- Develop more mentors and sign off mentors in the general practice setting.
- To continue to harness and assure future workforce supply.

Supporting Material

- Appendix 1 – Wigan ETP Educational Agreement
- Appendix 2 – Wigan ETP Student Training Pack

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GP Taskforce. (2014). *Securing the future GP workforce delivering the mandate on GP expansion: GP Taskforce final report*. Health Education England. [Online] [Accessed 3rd May 2017] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/GP-Taskforce-report.pdf>

Further Links

Health Education England. (no date available). *Enhanced Training Practices*. [Online] [Accessed 3rd May 2017] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/north-west/our-work/attracting-developing-our-workforce/enhanced-training-practices>

Sincere thanks to all key stakeholders and collaborative partners:

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Health Education England working across the North West

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