

OVERVIEW: NORTH WEST AHP NETWORK EVENT: EARLY CAREER NETWORKING

On 11 March 2015 the North West Allied Health Professions Network hosted 'Early Career Networking - What can the North West AHP Network do for you?' at the Macron Stadium, Bolton. The event was attended by approximately 80 allied health professionals (AHP) from a range of disciplines, from dietitians to speech and language therapists, who are in the early stages of their career.

The objectives for the event were to:

- Explore how the North West AHP Network can support early career AHPs
- Share current work programmes and discuss delegates' views on these
- Facilitate networking and learning across AHPs
- Identify an action plan for future engagement with early career AHPs

There were also a number of stands at the event to provide the delegates with further information on professional development. There were representatives from a number of higher education institutes including:

- Liverpool John Moores University - School of Nursing and Allied Health
- UCLAN - CPD Events for Physiotherapists and Allied Health Professionals
- Lancaster University - Centre for Education, Training and Development (CETAD)
- Manchester Metropolitan University - Enhancing Professional Skills
- University of Chester - Department of Clinical Sciences and Nutrition

- University of Cumbria - Career Enhancing CPD for Health and Social Care Professionals
- University of Salford - School of Health Sciences

There were also representatives from organisations who can provide support to the AHPs, including:

- [Health Education North West](#)
- [North West Placement Development Network](#)
- [SN@P \(Numeracy Assessment Process\)](#)
- [PARE \(Practice Assessment Record Evaluation\)](#)

There was also information on the [Centre for Professional Workforce Development](#) and the [North West AHP Workforce Board](#).

The event coincided with NHS Change Day and the delegates were encouraged to make a pledge. The statements reflected the success of the event as many of the AHPs pledged to take an active part in the North West Allied Health Professions Network and to promote it to others.

Key Purpose

In 2014, Norah Flood, the Chair of the North West AHP Network, set an informal objective of broadening engagement and encouraging new faces to the network. In line with this goal, this event targeted an audience of early career AHPs, and indeed, when the delegates were asked who had not been to a North West AHP Network event before the room was filled with a show of hands. The aim of the event was to introduce the delegates to the network and to explore the symbiotic relationship between the AHPs and the network. It also provided a valuable opportunity for

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the delegates to make new contacts in their profession and across other professional groups.

Key Speakers

The presentations commenced with a welcome from the network's Chair whose key themes were support and share. Norah Flood highlighted the reach and value of the network – if one AHP asks a question or shares information it will be heard and answered by a huge number of people in the same profession – it provides a great opportunity to hear and learn from others and to give AHPs a strategic voice and direction. 'Do. Share. Inspire' was the key message from the presentation and delegates were encouraged to participate in the network. A brief overview of the network's recent activities was shared, which included projects involving public health, developing clinical leaders and the summer conference, which was then followed by group work.

The group work posed the question: what can the North West AHP Network do for you? The aim of this workshop was to encourage the delegates to consider what they could offer the network and what they wanted in return. Feedback from the sessions is available on the [North West AHP Network Website](#). There was a lively atmosphere and as well as being a reflection exercise, the delegates had the opportunity to network and were given a card to swap contact details with other AHPs. Feedback from the group session was shared by the delegates and further participation was encouraged via the steering group and communications committee.

The group work was followed by a demonstration of the [North West AHP Network website](#) by Sue Louth, North West AHP Workforce Lead (Health Education North West). The audience was invited to comment and provide feedback on the functionality and resources of the website.

Next Steps/Future Events

The event was well received as shown by comments on the evaluation form:

"Brand new area I wasn't aware of beforehand. I will definitely be taking what I have learned back to my colleagues."

"I enjoyed meeting with other health professionals and felt very positive about promoting networking further."

"Enjoyed networking and hearing about opportunities available to AHPs in the NW and also in different trusts"

"Found this event very informative. I didn't realise this network was out there."

The North West AHP Network holds three events over the course of a year and the next one, which will be the annual conference, will be held on 8 July 2015 at Old Trafford.

Useful Links/Resources

- [Presentations](#)
- [Workshop feedback](#)

