

Case Study: Student Paramedic placements in General Practice

The North West Placement Development Network (NWPDN) works in partnership with colleagues from Healthcare Providers and Universities in the North West; ensuring the provision of high quality multi-professional learning opportunities in practice to meet the education and training requirements for all healthcare learners across the region. The NWPDN has worked with the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) and Edge Hill University based in Manchester for several years to source high quality placements providing breadth and inter-professional learning. The students are a mixture of new recruits and secondments from NWAS.

This project looked at providing additional capacity for the course and providing them with a 'rich' experience that would equip them for future healthcare delivery. One area identified as being a potential learning experience to provide breadth was time within a general practitioner setting.

Background

The North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) NHS Trust was established on 1 July 2006 as the result of the merger of ambulance trusts from Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Merseyside, Cumbria and Lancashire. NWAS currently delivers a service to a population of around seven million people across a geographical area of approximately 5,400 square miles. The Trust employs just over 5,000 staff that operates from over 100 sites across the region.



The trust has also recently taken over the NHS 111 contract. There are numerous ambulance stations distributed across the region, a number of these are used as the 'Hub' placements for the students and all placement experiences within other areas are classed as 'spokes'.

There are approximately 60 students within each year of the two year programme from Edge Hill University, approximately 45 of which would be undertaking a general practitioner placement as part of their first placement. This placement is a four week rotation placement to include outpatients, urgent care desk, and ambulance control.

Key Outcomes

- Additional placement capacity and breadth of experience
- Student placed in a general practice setting that was within the same community as their 'hub' ambulance station
- Multi professional working opportunity – students have the opportunity to engage with other members of multi disciplinary team and carers within that community
- Students exposed to self help groups and private, independent and voluntary organisations within that area
- Increased opportunity to; practice basic skills, history taking ,triage, understanding of protocols, interaction with local practitioners, decision making, communication skills, chronic disease management
- Understanding the prevalence of health and social issues within the conurbation and action taken locally to address these
The impetus for this initiative was the increase in paramedic commissions.

This was viewed as an opportunity to look at potential learning environments that have not been previously used for student paramedics but one which would provide breadth of experience.

Key Aims

For the Student:

- To increase breadth of experience
- Inter-professional learning
- Acquisition of various skills
- Parameters of care within a general practice setting
- Roles and responsibilities
- Accountability
- Services provided by 'others' within a local community and how these compliment services provided by the NHS

For the Learning Environment:

- Involvement in teaching and learning
- Sharing of Knowledge
- Recognition as a learning environment
- Future relationships established
- Inter-professional working



Key Stages of Set-up

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead Placement Development Manager for paramedics within GM met with Director of programme in spring 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capacity and breadth requirements identified for the placement taking place Nov/Dec 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PDM fed back to GM team outlining requirements and number of GP learning environments required for this opportunity to be viable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PDMs within boroughs sourced learning environments within general practice settings and followed 'new' placements process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All information collated and submitted to Allocations departments for the paramedic programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allocations sent to general practitioner learning environments Sept/Oct 2015
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How it Works

Students over a four week period rotate through four areas one of which is the general practitioner placement - this is managed by the allocations department within Edge Hill University once the availability of the practices has been submitted by the Placement Development Network in a timely manner. There is an even distribution of placements geographically across Greater Manchester so that as far as possible students are placed near to their 'hub' placement. Students will contact the placement a few weeks before the start date and arrange start times etc.

Resources

- Multi Professional Audit carried out by NWPDN if not already in situ in collaboration with Edge Hill University.
- Support of Supervisors and Educators by designated University Link Lecturer from the paramedic programme team
- PEF notified of all allocations and contact details given to placements
- Suggested learning activities discussed with learning environment
- Evaluations carried out by paramedic programme team

Key Challenges

General Practitioner placements where apprehensive about whether this would impact on patient time – to combat this a full explanation of student expectations was given and advantages to all parties highlighted. It was also stressed that all members of the practice could be involved in the students learning as it wasn't a requirement that the paramedic be with a registered mentor.

Key Learning

- General Practitioner placements make excellent learning environments that provide a 'rich' experience for all learners
- Staff within the general practitioner setting found the experience very enjoyable and rewarding

'We certainly would welcome any future paramedic students at the practice and feel exposure to primary care is a crucial aspect of training for any health professional'

Roz Hughes, Specialist Nurse Homeless Healthcare Team, Urban Village Medical Practice

Sustainability

Students are aware of their rotation at the start of the academic year and will be placed in surgeries that are ideally near their 'hub' ambulance station. The list of surgeries is provided by the NWPDN a few months before the rotation is due to commence and is submitted to the allocations department within an excel spread sheet. These learning environments will have been contacted by the NWPDN if an existing placement or will have been visited as a 'new' placement if they have not taken learners prior.

The learner will work alongside a supervisor who will feed back to their mentor at the hub and will also have the opportunity to highlight anything within the practice assessment document. The students will have suggested learning outcomes that are used as a guide whilst they are on placement. Consent is always obtained from the patient for student presence and practice. Staff that support students have access to CPD opportunities which helps ensure practice remains current and evidence based. Student evaluations are encouraged and the placement site embraces constructive and positive feedback.

Next Steps

- To increase the number of General Practitioner learning environments that will accommodate various learners
- To look at the possibility of incorporating the experience into the second year of the paramedic programme – this will build on knowledge and skills acquired from the first placement.

Further Links

North West Ambulance Service (Nwas)

www.nwas.nhs.uk

North West Placement Development Network (NwPDN)

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/north-west/our-work/attracting-developing-our-workforce/placement-development-network>

Edge Hill University DipHE Paramedic Practice

www.edgehill.ac.uk/study/courses/paramedic-practice



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