Evaluation of the Key Characteristics which support the completion of Flying Start NHS® in NHS Scotland

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Where’s Worcester?
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Context

• Follows on from full programme evaluation by Banks et al (2010)
  – Focused on impact and effectiveness of Flying Start in supporting recruitment, confidence and skills development.
  – Significant variation in engagement in and completion of Flying Start
  – Programme was most successful where there was:
    • senior level support
    • Understanding of the purpose of the programme
    • Awareness of requirements to complete the programme
Aim of the project

• Main research question:

What are the key characteristics which support successful completion of the learning outcomes of Flying Start NHS® development programme for newly qualified NMAHP practitioners?

• Need to understand:
  – ‘Successful completion’
  – Management, delivery and support
  – Content of the programme
Data Collection

- Jan - Feb 2012
- Semi-structured telephone interviews
- Focus groups
  - Understanding of the aims and expected outcomes of Flying Start
  - Understanding of what constitutes ‘successful completion’
  - Prioritising Flying Start
  - Strategic, managerial, mentor and peer support
  - Acknowledgement of successful completion
  - Content, organisation and structure, clarity and relevance of information
  - Practical factors that encourage or inhibit completion
  - Key factors that make Flying Start successful and encourage use
Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Number of interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1 Strategic and management level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Executive Nurse/AHP Directors and Leads</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Leaders in HR, Learning and Development</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Managers and mentors</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2 Learners using Flying Start</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individuals who have completed Flying Start within the previous 24 months</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Individuals currently enrolled on Flying Start and due to complete in the coming 6 months.</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
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Management and delivery: Strategic/managerial respondents

- Clear understanding of Flying Start at strategic level; mixed response amongst managers and mentors
  
  “a problem that we have here is that staff supporting [NQPs] actually didn’t have a great understanding of Flying Start and what it was”
  (CM01, Manager, midwife)

- Prioritisation of Flying Start varied across Boards, reflecting the extent to which this had been embedded in the organisation

- Inconsistencies in the provision of protected learning time were noted

- Issues with supporting and monitoring different workforce types – bank staff, rotational placements
Management and delivery: NQPs

- Understanding of what was expected varied
- Support from manager/mentor was largely positive; this had a significant influence on the NQP’s experience. Peer support also important
- Perceived lack of consistency – prioritisation, support and assessment
- Time available varied – most were allocated some time to work on Flying Start, most did additional work at home
- Acknowledgement of completion was appreciated
- Majority liked the flexibility of a web-based programme
Content and material

• Structure was seen by some NQPs to be overwhelming; different approaches were adopted to work through the programme

• Relevance of content to current practice was recognised
  • Strategic level respondents - relevance within wider training and development programmes
  • Managers/mentors – highlighted relevance to clinical practice
  • NQPs – most modules seen as being relevant to practice, though not all; some content perceived as being too generic or focused on nursing
Content and material

Relevance and benefits of the programme were often not recognised until the NQP had completed Flying Start:

“I’ll be quite honest when I first started the programme I didn’t have a lot of faith that it was going to help me at all, but as I worked through it I actually found that, do you know what it really enables you to sit down and reflect on how you are as a practitioner, how you communicate with people, where people fit into the team role.” (BC002 - completer nurse)
What does completion mean?

Strategic/managerial respondents:
- Consolidating skills and knowledge
- Completing the ten learning units
- On-going monitoring helped understand when completion was achieved
- Foundation on which to build professional development

NQPs:
- Completing all concluding activities
- Meeting objectives set with a mentor/manager
- Recognition of no longer being classed as an NQP
- “to get it over and done with”
What does completion mean?

Completion needs to be clearly defined:

"One of the challenges that myself and my nursing colleague felt that it was a great programme but actually somebody could start on it and never know if they were finished."

(ES002, HR/Learning & Development)

“Well I don’t really know, I think it never ends”

(EU004, current user – AHP)
Factors promoting successful completion (1)

1. Effective communication
2. Embedding Flying Start throughout the organisation
3. Establishing clear links between Flying Start and Continuing Professional Development
4. Ensuring appropriate access to IT
Factors promoting successful completion (2)

5. Setting minimum standards for assessment
6. Taking personal responsibility for completing the programme
7. Providing time to do the work
8. Setting deadlines and sticking to them
9. Providing clear guidance for navigating through the learning modules
Factors promoting successful completion (3)

10. Having effective mentor and peer support
11. Having a clear understanding of what completion looks like
12. Acknowledging the achievements of those completing the programme
13. Having processes in place to monitor completion
Recommendations – NHS Boards

• Boards need to ensure that those undertaking the role of mentor for this programme, and managers of NQPs, have sufficient training and time to provide guidance to NQPs to assist them through the programme.

• Boards should consider adopting a specific policy about completing Flying Start, or explicitly including Flying Start with existing training and development policies. The policy should outline the support to be offered to NQPs, and this agreed at Board level, to ensure the necessary support is offered consistently across the professional groups.
Recommendations – NHS Boards

• The Board should **make information available for NQPs and managers**, outlining what the expectations are at Board level on completion of Flying Start.

• Having a mentor who understands the demands of Flying Start is central to keeping NQPs engaged in the programme. Boards should **encourage those who have successfully completed Flying Start to train as mentors**.

• NQPs felt that reaching the end of Flying Start was a significant milestone in their development, and wanted this to be recognised. **Completion of Flying Start should be acknowledged at Board level** in a timely manner.
Discussion

1. Looking at the factors leading to successful completion…
   – Which of these are already understood or being addressed within your health board?
   – Which need further work?

2. Looking at the recommendations to NHS Boards…
   – How can you help to implement the recommendations in your Board?
   – What can you do to promote the factors that lead to successful completion in your Board?
   – What support would you need to do this?