

# Preceptorship beyond borders

Enhancing newly qualified practitioner support through virtual collaboration across the North of Scotland



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## Introduction

Preceptorship is a vital support system for newly qualified Allied Health Professionals (AHPs), particularly during their first year of practice, helping them develop competence and confidence in their roles. However, significant variation has been identified in the support provided to AHPs across the North of Scotland, where most preceptorship programmes are designed for Nurses and Midwives. In remote, rural and island areas, there is often a smaller number of newly qualified AHPs resulting in fewer opportunities for peer support and professional networking.

## Objective

To establish a collaborative virtual AHP preceptorship program that provides equitable access to resources and peer support for newly qualified practitioners (NQPs) across the North of Scotland, while promoting sustainability and collaboration.

## Methodology

A programme was developed:

- In alignment with Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) preceptorship principles (1) and key recommendations of NHS Education for Scotland national scoping exercises (2).
- To support completion of the Flying Start NHS® programme (3)



- Enhanced with opportunities for reflective practice, peer support, and signposting to relevant resources.
- Evaluation was conducted on a continual basis via MS Forms, drop in sessions with preceptees/ preceptors and end of programme preceptee interview

## The programme

- Pilot programme included 12 x NQPs
- Awareness and support sessions for managers, team leads and preceptors
- An introduction session for NQPs
- 4 x Online sessions on the pillars of practice (see image below)



- Drop in sessions with topics such as recording Continued Professional Development (CPD), managing challenging conversations and career development

## Analysis

### Preceptee feedback

- Increased confidence as a practitioner
- More equipped to undertake reflections and self-directed learning
- Better understanding of the requirements of Flying Start NHS®
- Highlighted value of peer support

### Preceptor feedback

- Reassuring to have the programme as another level of support for the NQPs
- Helped identify preceptor learning needs of pillars of practice
- Supported conversations regarding protected time for learning for NQPs

## Conclusion

The collaborative virtual preceptorship programme has proven to be an effective support mechanism for newly qualified AHPs across the North of Scotland and there is potential for this to extend to other transitional pathways.

By refining the programme based on preceptee and preceptor feedback, it aims to become a sustainable and vital component of professional development, particularly for AHPs in remote, rural and island areas, ensuring equitable access to opportunities for growth and support.

## References

1. The HCPC *Principles for Preceptorship* 2023 Available from: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/information/principles-for-preceptorship/>
2. NHS Education for Scotland *AHP Preceptorship Scoping Report* (2024) Available from: <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/76112>
3. NHS Education for Scotland. *Flying Start NHS*. Available from: <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/735/flying-start-nhs>