

Detailing my first impressions of the Early Clinical Career Fellowship

Julie Huntly (Sister & ECCF Mentor)

I was alerted to the Early Clinical Career Fellowship through receipt of the briefing papers explaining the background and rationale for the project. I was uncertain about the project as I hold the traditional opinion for newly qualified nurses to consolidate the knowledge and clinical skills recently learned prior to embarking on further studies.

My colleague, however, was very keen to pursue this opportunity and I quickly learned that she had been successful in gaining a place in the second cohort of nurses to embark on the Fellowships. I felt very proud of my colleague and also for my department considering there are so few places available for the 16 NHS Boards.

I have taken on the role of mentor, a role which I have found both interesting and motivating. I have, however, found it necessary to be sensitive to other members of the team who have not had the same opportunity of protected learning time.

Modernising Nursing Careers through the Early Clinical Career Fellowship remains in its infancy and it will be interesting to see what impact the project will have on the workforce. I look forward to continuing to mentor my colleague and see how she progresses.

This newsletter is available online at:

www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/nursing/eccf/

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The Benefits of Clinical Coaching

Charlie Sinclair: Depute Director of Nursing, NHS Fife Operational Division

"Each fellow meets regularly with their clinical coach on a one to one basis during the 3 year fellowship and onwards as they progress in their careers. The clinical coach is located outwith the fellow's clinical area and may be an expert/advanced nurse or midwife or a strategic lead within the NHS Board or Higher Education Institution who is not necessarily a nurse or midwife" (NES 2009).

From the range of support mechanisms in place to support ECC Fellows, my view is that this role requires to be flexible to meet the individual's needs. Coaching methodologies, both personal and professional, rely on the building of a relationship beyond mentoring for skill acquisition with a practice-based focus. The 'coach' provides the opportunity for structured reflection and the ability to explore experiences as the fellow builds their clinical experience base, from novice to expert, whilst progressing academically.

Clinical expertise will not necessarily be in the sense of a speciality base but will often demonstrate experience of a wider healthcare context, providing an overview of local and national contexts.

The coach can then use experience to help guide the fellow to consider: challenges and achievements; encouraging the development of personal and professional skills; reflection of personal styles; experiences of leadership in action; dealing with conflicting demands; and keeping a focus on the present while starting to consider future career progression.

In essence, the coach provides the opportunity to maintain a focus on patient care while sustaining Fellows' links to local organisational objectives and gaining a view that the policies of NHSScotland are about what being a healthcare professional means (CURAM, SGHD 2009).

Action Learning Sets

Hannah McCall, ECC Fellow, Greater Glasgow and Clyde

I didn't expect to like Action Learning Sets. I cynically imagined enduring long hours of group therapy with a room full of strangers. The only thing I was looking forward to was the free lunch. However, I was proven wrong.

For a start, my set is actually a rather friendly group: a mixture of older and younger nurses, a midwife and a mental health nurse. As we worked through some "team building" exercises, we found a lot of common ground despite our different specialities and could relate to each other easily.

For the first session I opted to be the Observer, looking on as the group helped the fellow presenting to discover different ways to approach the issue they were facing in their workplace. I heard the difference an open or closed

question made to the progress of the conversation; saw people's body language change as sensitive topics were broached; and understood the value of the Chair to help clarify points of discussion.

Next, it was my turn. I offered what I considered to be a minor work gripe, but as the session unfolded I was proven wrong again. It became apparent that after four months in my first post, I was feeling under-valued and unsupported. I have since spoken to my ward mentor and asked her for a review of my progress and feel better supported in my workplace. My ALS helped me uncover the real issue I was facing and to discover a solution too.

The free lunch was pretty good too.



NEWS

The Newsletter of the Early Clinical Career Fellowships

A word from the Chair of the ECCF steering group

Professor Angela Wallace, Nurse Director, NHS Forth Valley

I am delighted to be Chair of the ECCF Steering Group and it is a pleasure to offer a few words for this newsletter. This is an exciting and innovative programme, which we in Scotland, are piloting on behalf of the four countries in support of Modernising Nursing Careers (MNC).

The ECCF Steering Group comprises of a range of individuals who bring a unique perspective and contribution and who are committed to working in partnership. Our overarching aim was to design, develop, deliver and evaluate an early succession planning approach targeted at new registrants with study at Masters level at its core.

I am sure you will agree that we have achieved almost all of our aims with incredible positive results! With our final objective in respect to evaluation firmly in place we await those important findings in the not too distant future.

I have been privileged to meet some of our fellows and I know that their experience of this fellowship and the impact that their leadership is having directly on patient care is, I am sure, a key success factor of the fellowships.

One of the most important and exciting aspects of the ECCF is the focus on the

long term that this programme brings. Securing a system of identifying early potential strategic nursing and midwifery leaders for the future must be a priority for senior nurse leaders in the UK.

In closing I would wish to take the opportunity to thank the Steering Group for their contribution and leadership to date on delivering this innovative programme, in particular to Liz Jamieson and her team who has directed, championed and created an outstanding fellowship programme with all aspects of its development and delivery which is of the highest quality.

Finally a message to the fellows who are trail blazing in Scotland on behalf of the four countries. I wish them continued success in both their studies and development in service of caring for patients in Scotland.

The editorial group, which includes fellows, would value your feedback on this newsletter. Do send in comments via the project team at:

eccf@nes.scot.nhs.uk

Setting the national context

Karen Lockhart, Nursing Officer - Education & Regulation, Scottish Government Health Directorates

The Scottish Government Chief Nursing Officer Directorate is committed to ensuring that nurses and midwives are valued for the unique contribution they make to the patient's experience of care in NHS Scotland. As such we are keen to take all opportunities to ensure that nurses and midwives work to their full potential and one of the ways we have been exploring this is through funding Early Clinical Career Fellowships for newly qualified nurses and midwives.

With Flying Start NHS we have provided a means to support those new to the profession who are making the very challenging transition into their

new role as a registered member of staff. But in addition to this, we felt that there are some artificial blocks in place which prevent newly qualified staff from maximising their potential early in their career - a kind of need to serve time mindset - which may be holding the profession back.

The ECCFs are our attempt to unblock the system and assist staff to achieve Masters level practice and education at an early point in their careers. We will watch their future careers with interest, but already are assured that both those undertaking the ECCFs and those supporting the Fellows are noting benefits and seeing changes.

Detailing my first impressions of the Early Clinical Career Fellowship

Lee Nicholson, Early Clinical Career Fellow, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

It was during my final year at University that my tutor first brought the ECCF to my attention. I immediately realised what a fantastic opportunity it would be to earn my Masters, through protected study, whilst at the same time getting my first experience of working life as a Staff Nurse.

After starting my first post as a Staff Nurse and working on the Flying Start Programme I obtained my Ward Manager's approval and eagerly submitted my application.

The selection process for the fellowship was rigorous; it involved aptitude testing and an in-depth interview, with only a small percentage of applicants being successful. I was very proud to be offered a place in the ECCF and looked forward to sharing my success with my colleagues.

Regrettably not all of my colleagues were prepared to celebrate my achievement. I've even found myself defending the ECCF and my place on it after facing comments such as "what a waste of money!" To my great disappointment I've learned that I am far from the only fellow to suffer negativity. Many of my colleagues,

however, have been very supportive especially those undertaking similar part time study. We're often found engaging in healthy debates and discussions about what we've learned.

It has been a year now since I accepted a place on the ECCF and I continue to study for my Masters part time. It has been a tough challenge so far, but I believe the benefits for me have been significant and, for those colleagues willing, I have passed on my learning. I'm also aware there is a lot more to be gained and expect there to be a steep learning curve. I look forward to rising to the challenge.

The ECCF is an excellent programme. I would recommend to any nurse who has the opportunity and ability. I have met many wonderful people and would encourage anyone who has the chance, to apply and go for it!

Flying Start supports Newly Qualified Practitioners

Angela Tait : Lead Contact for Flying Start NHS Lanarkshire



Flying Start NHS is a self directed programme available to all newly qualified nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. It assists with the transition from student to newly qualified practitioner by facilitating learning in everyday practice through a range of activities with additional support from work-based mentors.

Two staff share their views:

"Flying Start was able to guide and support me through a wide range of varied topics within my nursing practice; it also helped improve my confidence, communication, clinical and reflective skills, which have been invaluable to my nursing practice." (Staff Nurse & ECC Fellow, NHS Lothian).

"I felt Flying Start provided the stepping stone I needed from being a student to a health practitioner without compromising any opportunities that came my way. It enabled me to routinely gather evidence for my development at suitable times, which can be used for NHS Knowledge and Skills development reviews and regulatory purposes. Information and suitable resources are plentiful through the Flying Start website so it can take some time to become familiar with its content. However, in time, I was able to refer to the learning units and the possible activities that I could carry out regularly that would specifically benefit me" (AHP, NHS Lanarkshire)

Flying Start NHS supports practitioner development of skills for lifelong learning and CPD in the workplace therefore enhancing patient care and service delivery.

Submitting an abstract for conference

Darren Wilkinson, ECC Fellow, NHS Fife

I feel that being selected as one of the ECCF fellows entails publishing and disseminating evidence to a wide audience. I decided presenting at a conference provides one such avenue and thought I would give it a go!

When it was suggested that I submit an abstract for the British Institute for Learning Disabilities (BILD) International Conference on Positive Behaviour Support my initial thought was "What me? Who would want to listen to me drone on and present a workshop for 75 minutes eerrgh..... and could I talk in a coherent fashion for that length of time?"

After a short period of consideration I decided if you don't try you won't get! So after downloading the proforma abstract and information package from the BILD website I started the application process.

Surprisingly the process is straight forward. After completing the required personal details section, the selection of a snappy hard hitting headline and a grabbing title is the first order of play.... eerrgh such as mine...

"Student Nurse proximal attitudes to the use of coercive measures: a cross countries examination"

... Well I think it has a certain ring to it and it is the topic of research for my ECCF sponsored Masters Degree!

The next task is to write six hundred words or so, on the selected topic which should be referenced to preliminary source journals.

This was then submitted to BILD. All I had to do was sit back and wait.... I received an email confirming that I had been selected to present a workshop on my selected topic.

The confidence I've gained since embarking on the fellowship gave me the courage and determination to make the application. I'm still surprised but also very proud and excited that I've been selected to present.

Reflection on delivering a presentation

Nancy Njoroge, ECCF Fellow, NHS Lothian

I recently delivered a presentation on subarachnoid haemorrhage: a potentially life-threatening condition where blood leaks out of blood vessels over the surface of the brain. My mentor and I agreed this could help develop my understanding of this topic. I researched the topic thoroughly as I wanted my presentation to be interesting, informative and clear.

However, I was dreading the day of the presentation since it had been a long-time since I last did a presentation. No matter how prepared I was, I still felt nervous especially when I learnt I would be presenting to my senior charge nurses.

Nevertheless, I have to say that the presentation went surprisingly well - better than I expected. Once I started

my nervousness disappeared and I was able to look directly at the audience rather than concentrating too much on the computer. Reflecting back I feel that the audience looked interested and were paying attention to what I was saying and were even asking questions.

I received very positive feedback as well as suggestions of how I could improve my presentation. Our education co-ordinator also requested if I could do the same presentation to other junior nurses and students in the coming months. I was delighted to hear this and felt privileged that I can share the knowledge I have gained with others. This gave me the morale and confidence to even want to do more in my clinical area.

A Fellow's Perspective on Advanced Practice in Mental Health

Ross Cheape, ECC Fellow, NHS Forth Valley

When I began my nurse training in 2005, the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 was coming into effect and was about to change mental health practice in Scotland. Since then other publications such as Rights, Relationships and Recovery and Modernising Nursing Careers have reshaped the landscape of mental health care; roles and responsibilities have been reassigned and advanced nursing practice has become more common place. Nurse-led services, such as Intensive Home Treatment Teams and Psychiatric Liaison Services are now well established. These practitioners have sound knowledge of mental illness and considerable experience in practice with significant post registration experience; they work autonomously, assess, treat and take care decisions which traditionally were taken by medical staff.

In order that the public can have

confidence in the profession's ability to take on these roles, practitioners must be equipped with the theoretical knowledge to inform practice, rather than relying on experiential learning alone. As a practitioner aspiring to work at an advanced level I can see how continued education, hand in hand with a clinical experience, is essential in developing skills, knowledge and confidence to deliver expert care and treatment across a range of arenas in a fast paced and multi faceted health service.

There is clearly a need for experience before adopting an advanced role, but with an ageing workforce and many nurses retiring over the next decade, experienced nurses are set to become a finite resource. The inexperienced nurses of today are the experienced nurses of tomorrow and if advanced practice for nursing is set to continue, the profession must continue to support practitioners to develop academically.