Supporting Quality in Pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery Education

Welcome to this fourth bulletin showcasing activities and outcomes arising from NHS Education for Scotland’s (NES’) role in the performance management of pre-registration nursing and midwifery programmes.
NES provides specific assurance to Scottish Government that the funding it invests in pre-registration nursing and midwifery education results in a strong health and care workforce, and that those emerging from programmes as registered practitioners share NHSScotland values and can provide person-centred, safe and effective care.

We work closely with our university and NHS board colleagues to explore areas for improvement and spread good practice. The Government’s Setting the Direction for Nursing and Midwifery Education delivery plan for 2015–16 provides fresh impetus and will be our key driver for change over the next few years.

This has been a busy year in an increasingly complex UK regulation and commissioning landscape. We have focused on how pre-registration nursing and midwifery students are supported and prepared to understand, reflect on and contribute to some key strategic issues.

Recognising the real health challenges facing Scotland as a nation, we’ve explored how physical and psychological well-being and physical activity are addressed within the curriculum. We’ve heard excellent examples of how they have been embedded in programmes and how students are actively engaging in health-promoting activities.

As part of our contribution to the UK Strengthening the Commitment work, we have looked at how students across fields of practice are developing enhanced understanding of the needs of people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. The exciting and innovative initiatives already underway strengthen our ambition to further integrate learning disabilities education within programmes across universities.

Professor Fiona McQueen, our Chief Nursing Officer, has reiterated her focus on Excellence in Care as a vehicle for providing assurance to patients, clients and the wider public that we are continually looking to use feedback, data and intelligence to shape care delivery. This commitment to evaluation, critical inquiry and improvement is shared across the professions, and our students have a key role to play. The incorporation of student feedback on their practice learning experiences into care assurance “dashboards” is a good example of this. It reflects the strong partnership-working between universities and NHS boards that aims to ensure the quality of placement experiences and increase understanding of how it reflects on wider educational and care quality.

I hope you will find the examples of good practice in this edition of our bulletin both interesting and encouraging and I look forward to continuing the strong relationship between NES, university and practice colleagues in the pursuit of excellence in nursing and midwifery education and practice.

Dr Colette Ferguson
Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions
Students’ feedback on placement learning experiences is set to make a key contribution to the Scottish Government’s Excellence in Care initiative, with two NES initiatives providing the vehicles for collecting and analysing feedback data.

The Scottish Student Placement Learning Experience Feedback (SPLEF) tool has been developed with university practice learning leads to provide a robust and nationally consistent mechanism for capturing student perceptions of placement learning quality. The Quality Management of the Practice Learning Environment (QMPLE) system offers easy and secure access for students to complete their practice placement evaluations online. Universities and practice partners can also access QMPLE for feedback reports.

“High-quality practice learning experiences, provided within a positive learning environment, support the development of healthcare professionals who can provide person-centred, safe and effective care,” explains NES Associate Director of Nursing and Midwifery Mike Sabin. “In this context, the Chief Nursing Officer has identified that the national Excellence in Care initiative will include measures that reflect aggregated data on students’ feedback on their learning experiences.”

The QMPLE tool, which incorporates the SPLEF, is designed to support structured online access for students, clinical practice leads and university staff and opens up new opportunities to capture, analyse and interpret feedback on practice learning environments. The model should significantly reduce the effort involved in collating and analysing data and considerably reduce reporting time.

NES is currently working with five universities and their NHS board partners in a stepped roll-out of the project, and is developing with partners a consensus position to enable nationally consistent agreements on data governance.

Universities and NHS boards are finding that the tools are encouraging student returns and providing the potential to increase placement quality, as Robin Ion, Head of School at Abertay University, notes.

“Having recently adopted the QMPLE tool, we’ve been able to encourage more of our students to complete their placement feedback questionnaire,” he says. “We’ve been impressed with how quickly reports can be generated to reflect overall and specific placement experiences.”
Eileen McKenna, Associate Nursing Director at NHS Tayside, sees placement learning quality as an important indicator of wider quality in wards and community placements. “Although the QMPE system has only just been introduced, we’re excited about the potential it provides to strengthen joint working between board and university in ensuring our placement learning experience is of the highest quality,” she says.

Mike Sabin believes that use of the tools over time will enable partners ultimately to improve placement experiences for students. “Placement experiences and learning support provided through our mentors, practice education facilitators and university practice placement leads are generally of a high standard, but we acknowledge that there are placement contexts in which targeted intervention might be required to improve the learning experience,” he says.

“You can find out more about SPLEF at: [www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/3319196/splef_executive_summary_published_final_version.pdf](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/3319196/splef_executive_summary_published_final_version.pdf)


Information about the Excellence in Care initiative can be accessed at: [www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/09/8281/downloads](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/09/8281/downloads)

The 2016 Nursing and Midwifery Pre-Reg Education Programme Survey is now live until 29th April 2016.

Mentor and Charge Nurse:
- [https://response.questback.com/nhseducationforscotland/nyezbrg4op](https://response.questback.com/nhseducationforscotland/nyezbrg4op)
- [http://tinyurl.com/mentor-cn16](http://tinyurl.com/mentor-cn16)

Student:
- [http://tinyurl.com/nesstudent16](http://tinyurl.com/nesstudent16)

The results of the 2015 survey can be accessed at: [http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/3408657/overall_analysis_2015_comparison.docx](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/3408657/overall_analysis_2015_comparison.docx)

The Mentor Bulletin can be accessed at:
NES and Scotland’s universities are playing their part in promoting the Scottish Government’s national physical activity implementation plan, which was launched in 2014.

Three of the implementation programme’s key themes have a direct impact on nursing and midwifery education, as NES Programme Director Jane Cantrell explains.

“The national plan recognises the contribution that can be made by workplace settings,” she says. “Employers can make it easier for people to be more physically active as part of everyday working lives, hospitals and other health and social care settings can routinely support patients and staff to be more physically active, and all places of learning in Scotland can demonstrate that students and staff have increased levels of physical activity. It’s about ensuring that people in Scotland, including students on undergraduate programmes and their lecturers, enjoy more active lives and reap the health benefits.”

NES has engaged directly with each university as part of the annual performance review process to see how physical and psychological well-being and physical activity are being integrated within curricula and the wider university infrastructure, with positive results.

“Physical activity is part of a wider health improvement focus that also includes drivers such as the Health Promoting Health Service initiative and action to tackle health inequalities,” Jane says. “It’s clear that a focus on these issues is already embedded in curricula and that a number of institutions are supporting opportunities for their students to actively engage in physical activity, which in turn is being linked to their professional development in promoting health.”

Examples include space being created in the teaching schedule of The Robert Gordon University to allow students to participate in university sports teams, a Fitness Intervention Taskforce nursing initiative being launched at the University of the West of Scotland, and the development of a physical activity, diet and health research programme in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health at the University of Stirling. A number of universities have also started to collaborate across faculties and schools, particularly where a school of sports science exists, and many have signed up to the Healthy Universities Network.

NES has now encouraged all pre-registration nursing and midwifery providers to share their current best practice on physical activity with colleagues through the NES-supported Scottish Collaboration for the Enhancement of Pre-Registration Nursing (SCEPRN) group and to explore opportunities for further joint working.

You can access the Scottish Government’s national physical activity implementation plan at:

http://www.gov.scot/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/Sport/MajorEvents/Glasgow-2014/Commonwealth-games/Indicators/PAIP
NES is acting to ensure that NHSScotland’s core values are embedded throughout nursing and midwifery education, research and practice.

The core values – care and compassion, dignity and respect, openness, honesty and responsibility, and quality and teamwork – are defined in the Government’s 2020 Workforce Vision and are directly addressed within the Setting the Direction for Nursing and Midwifery Education delivery plan for 2015–16.

The aim is to ensure the values are included within all elements of nursing and midwifery education, starting from selection and recruitment. To this end, NES held a values-based selection workshop in November 2015 with participants from all universities that deliver nursing and midwifery pre-registration education programmes and representatives from NHS boards.

The workshop considered values-based aspects of selection and recruitment processes and reviewed application of NHSScotland values in NHS boards. A follow-up meeting to discuss options was arranged for December.

NES also carried out a scoping and literature review in early 2015 on the feasibility of a national recruitment and selection process for pre-registration midwifery programmes in Scotland.

The review used a range of methods, including questionnaires and face-to-face interviews with representatives of the three universities in Scotland providing midwifery education (Edinburgh Napier University, the University of the West of Scotland and The Robert Gordon University), to establish current selection criteria and processes and identify systems and approaches used by other professions that may provide valuable lessons for midwifery.

The review found that current processes are generally effective in recruiting students who are successful in completing the programme, but that they vary across the three universities.

“There was a considerable amount of duplication of effort in terms of reviewing and interviewing the same applicants, with disadvantages for the institutions and the applicants,” explains project lead Mary Ross-Davie, Education Project Manager for Maternal Health at NES.

“A national selection process for pre-registration midwifery programmes therefore has significant potential not only in terms of efficiency and reducing unnecessary duplication of effort, but also in ensuring a high-quality, evidence-based approach to recruiting the most appropriate individuals to become the midwives of the future.”

The results of the scoping review were presented to the Midwifery Education Group Scotland in May 2015, which recommended that NES seek Scottish Government support for a project to implement a national selection process for pre-registration midwifery as part of a national values-based selection process.

You can find out more about NHS Scotland values and the 2020 Workforce Vision at: www.staffgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/improving-employee-experience/2020-workforce-vision/

The Setting the Direction delivery plan can be accessed at: www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00484968.pdf
Universities in Scotland have identified Learning Disability Leads (LDLs) to support students on non-learning disability nursing programmes to achieve their objectives and develop deeper understanding of the needs of people in their care.

The initiative arose as a result of a recommendation from Strengthening the Commitment, the UK review of learning disability nursing, which states that students in non-learning disability fields of practice must develop the core knowledge and skills necessary to work safely and appropriately with people with learning disabilities who are using general health services. Similar requirements are set out in Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards for pre-registration nursing education.

“Learning disabilities remains a national priority for the Chief Nursing Officer,” NES Programme Director Hazel Powell comments. “The introduction of LDLs is just one of many measures being taken forward in Scotland under the Strengthening the Commitment banner that are aiming to improve education for nurses and others with the ongoing aspiration of making the lives of people with learning disabilities, their families and carers better.”

NES organised three Thinking Space events over 2014/15 to enable relevant stakeholders to consider the key issues and evolve plans for action. Participants at the events believed that the LDL role should be developed as a resource to ensure that students have a named contact to approach for support.

The LDLs are active across all fields of nursing and midwifery, championing learning disabilities in universities and developing understanding of current policies, legislation and other drivers of service delivery. The role includes cascading information and guidance to colleagues, promoting learning disabilities across curricula and courses, and ensuring NMC competencies are embedded transparently in programmes. Monitoring of the impact of the role is now part of university performance management processes.

Hazel believes that universities and students are recognising how helpful it is to have LDLs in place.

“People are beginning to see the benefits,” she says. “Indeed, some universities have been so impressed that they are looking to appoint specific LDLs for each of the non-learning disability field programmes, rather than having one to cover all programmes. They can see it is a really helpful model.”

The LDLs have been instrumental in supporting non-learning disability nursing students across Scotland to arrange a national conference, to take place in 2016. The hope is that the conference will become regular, with representatives of successive cohorts taking on the baton of organising and running events either nationally or within their own university.

Associate Chief Nursing Officer Hugh Masters welcomes the advent of the LDL role.

“It’s important to ensure nurses emerging from programmes from all fields have a sound insight into how to care for people with learning disabilities, their families and carers,” he says. “Too often in the past, content and resources on learning disabilities have featured in programmes only through the interest and energy of individual lecturers. This is now changing, with LDLs driving the integration of learning disabilities education within programmes in all universities.”

Find out more about Strengthening the Commitment at: www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/5274
The University of Stirling School of Health Sciences and partners’ Being Dementia Smart initiative has been recognised in the 2015 Scotland’s Dementia Awards.

Scotland’s Dementia Awards are run in partnership by Alzheimer Scotland, NES, NHS Health Scotland and the Scottish Social Services Council to mark World Alzheimer’s Day. Professionals and communities who are committed to enhancing the health, well-being and experience of people with dementia and their families are encouraged to showcase and promote their work through the awards.

Being Dementia Smart was a finalist in the Best Educational Initiative category and is now embedded in the pre-registration BSc Nursing programme at the university. Working with colleagues in the school and the Alzheimer Scotland Dementia nurse consultant from NHS Highland, Dr Leah Macaden, a lecturer at the school’s Highland campus, conceived and developed this innovative dementia curriculum.

“Caring for someone with dementia in any setting requires knowledge, skills, rights-based values and expertise, and nurses are central to the provision of care,” Leah explains. “I recognised that nursing students could become change agents for improving care and support for people with dementia. And as an academic, this is an area of nursing in which I am passionate. I wanted to contribute and make a real difference to the experiences and outcomes of people with dementia and their families and carers.”
Being Dementia Smart integrates the philosophy of the Standards of Care for Dementia in Scotland and Promoting Excellence framework. The eight-semester curriculum uses a range of teaching and learning methods and is mapped along the stages of the dementia journey, covering a range of topics that include both the early and advanced stages. Key aspects include types of dementia, post-diagnostic support, improving community connections, risk and vulnerability (including risk enablement), assessment of cognition, function and behaviour, carer support and the role of environment and assistive technology.

NES Programme Director Susanne Forrest welcomes the programme and sees it as a positive example of innovation in dementia education and practice.

“Many congratulations to Leah and her colleagues for their excellent work and their success in being a finalist in Scotland’s Dementia Awards,” she says. “I would encourage other university providers of pre-registration nursing programmes, and other professional programmes, to learn more about the work being taken forward.”

You can find out more about Being Dementia Smart by contacting Leah at: leah.macaden@stir.ac.uk

To find out more about Promoting Excellence and a wide range of educational resources NES and the Scottish Social Services Council have designed to support implementation, see:

NES, in partnership with the Scottish Collaboration for the Enhancement of Pre-registration Nursing (SCEPRN) group, which represents all the universities in Scotland that offer pre-registration nursing education, has commissioned a number of reports during 2014–15 that focus on essential features of undergraduate student programmes.

Researchers from Edinburgh Napier University, the University of Glasgow and Queen Margaret University reviewed the literature on how the complex challenges of providing meaningful feedback to students in practice learning environments can be addressed. The review identified seven key areas, including the relationship between mentors and students, the timing of feedback and length of the practice experience. The aim now is to develop a larger project to investigate current practice in Scotland.

Students' and mentors' understandings of fitness to practise processes was the focus of work carried out by researchers from the University of Edinburgh and the University of the West of Scotland. Titled “These terrifying three words”, the project built on previous NES-funded SCEPRN work to explore students' and mentors' understandings of fitness to practise processes. It found uncertainty, misunderstandings and even fear, but identifies opportunities for universities to take positive action to better educate students and mentors about the processes.

These and other reports emerging from the NES/SCEPRN collaboration can be found on the NES website at: www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/