Developing General Practice Nursing
(Promoting Placements for Student Nurses- October 14)

This paper has been developed by the steering group that is leading on the development of placements in general practice for pre-registration nursing students. This group is being led by HE-NCEL and has representation from the 4 universities within the LETB region that provide nurse education as well as the Community Education Network Providers (CEPN’s). It addresses some of the initial questions posed by staff in general practice that specifically relate to the provision of learning experiences for nursing students.

Introduction

Health Education North Central and East London (HE-NCEL) have set up an initial project team involving the LETB, HEI representatives as well as representatives from the 5 pilot Community Education Network Providers (CEPN’s) and the plan is to work collaboratively to develop the practice nurse workforce and promote practice nurse placements for pre-registration nursing students. This reflects the HE-NCEL Nursing and Midwifery Education and Primary Care Strategy.

Practice nurse placements have occasionally been utilised for nursing student placements though access to these areas has been challenging in a number of regions and hence student nurses have not benefitted from the unique opportunities that can be offered and pre-registration nurses rarely consider practice nursing as a viable career pathway. However, where appropriately supported the benefits are significant.

The Yorkshire and Humber region have been promoting student nurse placement in general practice since 2009 and currently have a network of over 60 practices which accommodate approximately 200 students a year. Student and mentor evaluations have been very positive with 90% of the practice nurses indicating they have furthered their professional development through mentoring and 91% of students stating that they are more likely to pursue a career in general practice. This initiative is being fully supported by HEE Yorkshire and Humber who is aspiring to give all student nurses a placement within a General Practice (Peake 2014).

Within HE NCEL there are 4 universities who run nursing programmes, each university is linked with one of the 5 pilot CEPN’s.

- Barnet CEPN - University of Hertfordshire
This document provides useful information in a question and answer format for staff in GP practices who might be considering a pre-registration nurse placement.

How are student nurse placements organized?

Pre-registration nursing student placements are likely to be between 4 - 8 weeks duration. The curriculum for these placements is provided by the university (which is quality assured by the Nursing and Midwifery Council).

General Practice is particularly suited to supporting the development of nursing students due to the wide range of learning opportunities and types of patient contact that take place in general practice settings.

What is a nurse mentor?

Nurse mentors are senior nurses who have “completed specific preparation in assessing students and are normally responsible for ongoing supervision and assessment in practice.” (NMC 2008). Preparation for being a mentor requires undertaking a specific and approved course through your local university.

What will happen if I as a mentor do not work full-time?

Nurse mentors are responsible overall for a student’s supervision and assessment. However, other professionals can also provide support, supervision and assessment. Nursing students benefit from seeing a broader range of approaches to providing clinical care, and practice staff will benefit from the learner contact and professional development made available.

If your non-nursing colleagues in the practice do not have an approved mentorship qualification they will need to familiarize themselves with the student programme and learning outcomes by attending a short 2 hour workshop.

I did my mentorship course a long time ago, can I still take students?

Yes you can and to help you do so we would invite you to attend a 1-day update course (run by the local universities). Many nurses will have continued to support new staff members and health care assistants. A one day update is an opportunity to refresh your knowledge and skills in mentoring and demonstrate that you have kept-up-to-date with NMC requirements in this regard. The NMC require an annual update.

I have never trained as a mentor. What is involved?

Being a mentor is a rewarding experience. And there is lots of support available. Each university
offers short courses in mentoring and the NMC indicates that it should take 10 days of study. The requirement for attendance does vary between universities and usually includes three to five of these days being spent in face-to-face protected study days and the remainder is directed/private study. Most mentorship courses run over no more than three months. HE-NCEL LETB is currently providing funding for mentorship programmes.

How should we structure a student nurse’s placement in our practice?

If you are a practice that trains medical students or doctors to become GPs then you will already have developed your own ideas about how to structure a learner’s working week. Student nurses also benefit from a similar range of learning opportunities. These include an effective induction, sitting-in with GPs, nurses, receptionists and administrators as well as community based visits with health visitors, district nurses and pharmacists. Additionally, learners from different professional backgrounds benefit from interacting with each other especially around patient care (see appendix 1 for a sample timetable recently developed by a practice in Barnet).

It is important that where a student nurse is seeing patients they have access to the nurse mentor, or an appropriately qualified named supervisor nominated by the mentor, in case there is a need to ask questions or clarify a clinical issue. It is also important that the mentor (or supervisor) has protected time at the end of a clinic to de-brief the student nurse and help them reflect on their learning during the course of a session. The NMC recommends that the student nurse should be supervised by the nurse mentor for a minimum of 40% of the working week.

Will my practice have to go through a visit and approval process to be able to take on student nurses?

We recognize that many practices are already approved for training doctors and medical students. The NMC requires that practices involved in training nurses are also approved to their standards.

Where possible we will review the information already available from other sources to avoid duplication. In addition to this we will arrange a one to one meeting with the practice nurse to discuss the potential learning opportunities and the needs of the mentor. This will take approximately one hour and may result in actions for both the university and practice nurse to ensure effective preparation of the learning environment.

What support do you provide for preparing practices to take on undergraduate nurses?

If you agree to consider taking undergraduate nursing students, a senior member of the local university will arrange a time to come and meet the nurse and practice staff. We will seek to identify your strengths and areas of potential development, and then work with you to support your relevant educational development needs. This will include provision of relevant training for nurses and other staff.

We will determine whether your nurses need specific support with their mentorship qualification, ensure that the practice meets relevant standards of care provision (e.g. Care Quality Commission
standards), role-model good clinical care (e.g. through the use of evidence based guidelines), and work with you to identify the range and breadth of learning opportunities.

Once we have allocated nurse students to your practice you will also have access to a Link Lecturer who acts as a resource, support and adviser to the mentor and practice. Your link lecturer will visit your practice to support you and build a relationship with your team.

**Will there be any funding to support this?**

The good news is that some funding is now available to support the quality of practice learning for student nurses. This is known as the non-medical tariff and will be paid directly to the CEPN’s, initially via their host organisations, and equates to £70 per student per week. In addition, for the financial year 2014-15 HE-NCEL will provide financial support for the educational development of current and future mentors.

**How is insurance managed?**

We have been advised by HE Yorkshire and the Humber that no additional insurance was required by practices who gave placement opportunities to student nurses as this was part of the established indemnity cover. Individual practices did however inform their insurance companies that they were providing placements to student nurses.

**What is the proposed timescale for the implementation of this project?**

Practices within Barnet started to support students from University of Hertfordshire in July 2014 with positive feedback received from students and mentors (Appendix 2). Since some other practices have also expressed an interest in supporting student nurses we are hoping to secure approximately 5 student placements in each CEPN by January 2015, though this is also dependant on the placement patterns for each university and local factors.

**Further Information / Contact Details**

If you require further information or clarification regarding any of the issues raised in this paper then please do not hesitate to contact Kathy Wilson, Head of Practice-based Learning, School of Health and Education, Middlesex University, k.wilson@mdx.ac.uk. Your local University representative will also be able to provide advice.

**References:**


Appendix 1 – a sample programme recently developed for a University of Hertfordshire student in a General Practice in Barnet (July 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday 7/7</th>
<th>Tuesday 8/7</th>
<th>Wednesday 9/7</th>
<th>Thursday 10/7</th>
<th>Friday 11/7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 am</td>
<td>Practice Manager- induction, policies</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-General clinic, including baby clinic</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-General clinic</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-General clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1 pm</td>
<td>Mentor- Introduction to Practice Nursing</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-General clinic</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-Asthma/COPD Clinic</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-General clinic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discuss learning needs- time management, clinics</td>
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<td>Attend wellbeing coffee morning 10-11 am</td>
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<th>Monday 14/7</th>
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<th>Friday 18/7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 am</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse</td>
<td>Reception surgery 2</td>
<td>Sit in with secretaries</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-General clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 pm</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-Cervical screening</td>
<td>Sit in with admin team- emis training, searches, QoF</td>
<td>Safeguarding training</td>
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<td>Reflection, own learning time</td>
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<th>Monday 21/7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 am</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-General clinic</td>
<td>Sit in GP</td>
<td>Attend diabetes clinic at local hospital</td>
<td>Sit in with HCA, hew patient checks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 pm</td>
<td>Sit in with Health Visitor</td>
<td>Attend community respiratory nurse clinic</td>
<td>Tutorial with PM (CVD and hypertension) then Alison LR</td>
<td>Independent learning</td>
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<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-hypertension/CVD, then tutorial (diabetes)</td>
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<th>Monday 28/7</th>
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<th>Wednesday 30/7</th>
<th>Thursday 31/7</th>
<th>Friday 1/8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 4 am</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-General clinic</td>
<td>Sit in with Health Visitor</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-General clinic phlebotomist 10.30-12</td>
<td>Day out with District Nurses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4 pm</td>
<td>Baby clinic BO then GP</td>
<td>Sit in with Practice Nurse-General clinic</td>
<td>Tutorial Mentor-diabetes</td>
<td>Local pharmacy</td>
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<td>Day out with District Nurses</td>
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Appendix 2: The Barnet Experience (September 2014)

Project Team:

Paula McLaren  
Practice Nurse, Watling Medical Centre  
Research Lead, Burnt Oak & Colindale Clinical Network Nurse Lead, Barnet Community Education Provider Network

Lynn Quinlivan and Kathy Whayman  
Student Experience Transformation Placement Project Team  
School of Health and Social Work  
University of Hertfordshire

Student Feedback:

"I've really enjoyed my placement and increased my confidence in working independently"

"My timetable has been flexible, allowing me to spend time with the TVN, HV, DN and DSN"

"I would definitely consider a career in practice nursing and hope that I will get the opportunity to join a practice when I complete my training"

Mentor Feedback:

"The students have fitted in well and even joined our local nursing forum. I have begun to identify their individual strengths and work with them to develop these"

"I will miss them when they finish actually"

"This has been a positive experience for both the nursing team and the student. The paperwork has not been onerous (as it sometimes is!) and we have shared a wide range of experiences with our student. She has worked with other team members to gain an all round view of how primary care is delivered"