

# **AHP PrBL Recovery**



**Paramedic Science 2023**

## **AHP Practice-based Learning (PrBL) Recovery: Paramedic Science 2023**

### **Situation and background**

2020 saw the launch across Scotland of a Paramedic Science Degree being delivered by five Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with only one having prior experience of paramedic science. Prior to this the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) provided a Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE) programme, allowing technicians to progress to registered paramedics. This will cease in summer 2023.

Initially, each degree student required 60 weeks of practice-based learning (PrBL), 50% of which would be in cross / third sector settings (non-SAS settings). This was a significant new requirement for health boards and Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Healthcare Profession (NMAHP) educators. In the summer of 2022 these hours were revised to 18 weeks within a board setting. There are currently a total of approximately 893 paramedic students in Scotland.

The purpose of this project was to work with key stakeholders involved in paramedic PrBL to help identify and support initiatives that will increase placement capacity in a sustainable way. The project had the following key objectives:

1. By March 2023 all 3<sup>rd</sup> year students will be allocated non-SAS placements meeting at least 80% of their timetabled hours for semester 1/2.
2. By March 2023 at least 25% of year 3 non-SAS placements will be based on a non-traditional placement model.
3. By March 2023 at least 14 Allied Health Professional (AHP) Practice educators (PEs) will have facilitated a non-SAS placement for one or more student.
4. By March 2023 at least 20% of 3<sup>rd</sup> year non-SAS placements will be in new setting.

The main stakeholder group for the project was identified as the Scottish Collaboration of Paramedic Education (SCoPE). Five 'project support groups' were established, one based around each HEI delivering the paramedic science degree, with representatives from the HEI and each associated Health Board and local stakeholders. The scope of the project

focused on non-Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) practice placements; however, we worked in collaboration with SAS as a key stakeholder.

## **Task**

In September 2021 less than 80% of placements were confirmed, with an approximate deficit of 47,800 hours across Scotland. There were specific challenges placing students in speciality areas such as paediatrics, maternity, and theatres partly due to competition for these placements from paramedic DipHE, nursing, and midwifery students.

A report was commissioned to help collate the experiences of PEs supporting paramedic students on non-SAS placements and better understand the challenges faced. The report identified the following main themes:

- There was a lack of understanding amongst educators about what paramedic students could do or gain from a placement and unfamiliarity with documentation.
- Resources and training were required to help PEs and placements better support paramedic students.
- The need for good communication and links between HEIs and PEs supporting paramedic students.
- Better understanding and appreciation of the transferrable skills and knowledge other AHPs can bring to enhance paramedic student learning.

One HEI shared data from pre and post placement surveys of PEs supporting paramedic students in non-SAS placements in semester 1 (Sept –Dec 21). Feedback identified the following key themes:

- The importance of good communication and support from the HEIs to PEs supporting paramedic students for the first time.
- The requirement for students to be well prepared prior to attending the placement with clearly defined and student led learning objectives.
- PEs reported they were very likely to have further students and students had been well motivated.

In April the project facilitated a day long workshop with Scottish Ambulance Service Practice Education Leads (PELs) and HEI paramedic leads to look at the practice-based learning landscape and some of the challenges both within SAS and in the boards. The key learning points were the need to recruit additional Paramedic PEs within SAS and the need for collaboration between the HEIs and SAS to develop and deliver PE training days.

## **Action**

**PrBL opportunities:** New placement opportunities were identified within the Scottish Trauma Network and NHS 24. 12 students were placed with the Trauma network at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Glasgow. It was a blended placement model, with students placed within the adult and paediatric trauma teams for 1 week and 1 week working on a project to produce a learning resource for their peers. NHS 24 pilot placements are due to take place in May 2023 with 4 students over 4 weeks. These will be blended placements located within NHS 24 call centre in Glasgow.

**Resources:** available to view on Toolbox: <https://api.ltb.io/show/ABSQE>

- A Question-and-Answer resource, hosted on Turas, was developed to provide guidance and support to PEs for paramedic students out with the ambulance service.
- A short animation was created aimed at helping paramedic students prepare for non-SAS placements. A second animation is in development to support PEs.
- A 'How to' webinar was hosted for PEs discussing how to support a paramedic student on an interprofessional placement. This was a live event and has since been made available on the Turas AHP learning site.
- All 5 HEIs in collaboration with Scottish Ambulance Service PELs designed and delivered a Paramedic PE training day for qualified paramedics.

A Paramedic Practice based learning Teams channel was established to facilitate communication, share resources, and continues to be widely utilised. Regular Paramedic keeping in touch (KIT) sessions were established to support all Board PELs involved in paramedic placements. The establishment of the 5 project support groups facilitated the

sharing of information and resources between HEIs and Boards, in addition to the development of closer working relationships between Board PELs, Nursing and midwifery colleagues and the HEIs.

## **Impact**

Board PELs reported that the 1:1 placement model was predominately used, but alternative models including PAL, Blended, Hub and Spoke have been used in 7 of the 12 health boards. A pilot PEEP (Peer Enhanced E-Placement) model for paramedic students is currently being developed at one HEI. Half of the board PELs reported that between 75% and 100% of their placements had never previously hosted a paramedic student. Approximately 68 new AHP Practice educators were identified and participated in paramedic student training across 8 health boards.

Feedback from a questionnaire collated from the five project support groups demonstrated that participation had the following benefits and impact:

- Improved communication between Board staff, HEIs and SAS which enabled better coordination and quick resolution to issues.
- The opportunity to identify common issues and develop a co-ordinated national response to drive changes such as number of non-SAS PrBL hours.
- Access to additional educational resources to support students and PEs and increase the confidence of all staff supporting paramedic students.
- Raised awareness and better understanding of the paramedic PrBL programme and clarity on each stakeholders' responsibilities.
- Participants reported that they felt better supported and there was improved collaboration both locally and nationally.

The 'How to' workshop run in May 2022 was attended by a total of 187 participants (with 320 registered). Of these, 96% were from the NHS and consisted of 67% from nursing and midwifery and 32% from AHPS. This workshop sparked great discussion with participants' confidence levels increasing by 21% after the session. In addition, 68% agreed and 23%

strongly agreed that this workshop gave them new knowledge. 9 Board PELs reported that they had utilised this resource to support new third sector placements.

Analysis of the evaluation from the paramedic PE training days showed that:

- 98% of those attending either agreed or strongly agreed that they gained new knowledge that they could apply to their working practice.
- 100% of participants that completed the evaluation either agreed or strongly agreed that they would apply what they had learnt.
- 90% felt that they now felt prepared to support a student.
- One third of attendees that completed the survey had registered as qualified paramedics since 2021 which indicates a willingness on the part of new registrants to become practice educators.

### **Learning/Recommendations**

To help sustain and develop the significant work that has been done the following recommendations are made:

- Continued representation and support from NES in Scottish Collaboration of Paramedic Education (SCoPE) as the main stakeholder group for paramedic education, and the 5 project support groups.
- Ensure consistent approach to role and expectation of Board PELs from each HEI and work towards HEIs using a similar placement process/model to other AHP programmes.
- In future it would be of benefit to integrate the SAS PEL role into the national AHP PEL community, helping embed paramedics into the AHP family.
- Continue to communicate and share resources via the Paramedic PrBL Teams channel and encourage paramedic discussion in the Scottish AHP PrBL virtual community.
- It would benefit all stakeholders to continue to collaborate on, and extend their use of alternative placement models, in addition to a greater use of third sector

placements. Once the paramedic PEEP resources have been developed by QMU there is the potential for these to be shared and used across all HEIs.

- There is a need for continued development of new resources to support staff who are facilitating paramedic students for the first time. As more PEs are trained this will lend itself to introducing more interprofessional placement experiences.
- To include paramedics into the AHP electronic system that is currently under development. A system whereby paramedic students and HEIs could gain access to placement area details, and Quality Standards for Practice Learning (QSPL)/ Quality Standards for Practice Placements (QSPP) details can be retained, would further aid paramedics to becoming part of the AHP family.

Considering the significant challenges, the success in identifying, facilitating, and supporting practice-based learning has been truly remarkable. This is testament to the dedication, tenacity, and resourcefulness of the Board PELs working in collaboration and support from multiple AHPs, Nursing and Midwifery colleagues, SAS PELs and the HEIs. The first nationwide cohort of paramedic science students from 5 Universities in Scotland are on track to graduate later this year.

This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages. Please contact us on **0131 656 3200** or email **altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk** to discuss how we can best meet your requirements.



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