

Foundation Apprenticeships

Developing the Future Workforce

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Introduction

Skills Development Scotland and NHS Lanarkshire embarked on a collaborative programme to develop and support the future workforce across health and social care. Young learners who expressed an interest in a career in healthcare were allocated to placement experiences within the NHS Board during their school academic year. Most students had placement experiences in both health and social care sectors.



Aim

The Healthcare Foundation Apprentice collaboration with the 2 Further Education Colleges in Lanarkshire commenced in 2022 and was expanded across 2023. The intention of the project was to provide further innovative pathways of learning to promote career aspirations; thereby supporting the future workforce across health and social care.

Giving the students this experience supported and encouraged the students to seek employment and / or continuing education in health and social care; aligned with their career choice.

Method

A programme of induction and support for the students was provided by the Practice Education Facilitator (PEF) team in partnership with SVQ assessors and Further Education Institution lecturers from the colleges. Where possible, specific learning opportunities were matched to the individual future career aspirations of the students.



In the first year of the programme, 10 students had a placement experience in outpatient departments. With the success of this test of change, the programme was further expanded for academic year 2023-24. Placements were sought across the NHS Board, in collaboration with New College Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire College. Several teams offered their support. Twenty-six students were placed within NHS departments and wards for 6 hours per week across a 4-month period.

Practice Experience Pathways

All students attended an induction workshop led by the PEF team. We explored their expectations, their anxieties and general induction information including confidentiality, infection control, health and safety considerations. Buddy supervisors in all placement areas were identified and invited to a preparation workshop to aid the ongoing support, supervision and guidance for the students. Students collated evidence for their SVQ modules and this was reviewed by their SVQ assessors. The PEF team had regular contact with the college, the students and the placement areas across the placements dates. Evaluations were carried out for each cohort to help review the experience and shape future practice.

To help develop career pathways, the FA programme and SVQ modules were recently mapped to the HCSW Induction standards to allow students a career pathway onto the HCSW nurse bank upon FA completion. A graduation ceremony was held at South Lanarkshire college to celebrate completion of the programme.

Results

The Healthcare Foundation Apprenticeship allows young people to experience health and social care and can support their career pathway choices. The experiences the students reported will help them identify their next steps for ongoing roles. Some of the challenges we encountered were the fixed days of placement. The students could only be on placement on set days which limited the continuity they could receive from the buddies in ward areas; and the variety of clinics they could observe in outpatient areas. More needs to be done to prepare the supervisor buddies and teams to give the students further support across their experiences.

Here are some of the positive comments from our young students:



Conclusion

The FA model in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire gives young people the opportunity to increase their awareness and knowledge; complete SVQ modules and allow a pathway of learning to support their future career development in health / social care settings.

Completion of the Foundation Apprenticeship has given insight into careers in health and social care, and experience of working within professional teams; alongside the development of some essential care skills and communication.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to PEF Lorraine McWilliams and our FE colleagues Morag Watt, Caitlyn McKeown and Leigh Wardlaw for their support.