

Audience response to key discussion points

The discussion was undertaken as an open audience approach and was very lively with many people contributing both their views and examples of practice that appear to be making a difference. We did not go through all of the discussion points highlighted as time ran out however a summary of the main points is provided below.

1). Shared responsibility

The audience agreed that student attrition, support and retention is a shared responsibility between the HEI and placement provider organisations; although it was acknowledged that this was not always understood by all levels of clinical staff. There needs to be a shared philosophy of support and ownership of students to foster a culture of belonging, rather than students feeling that they are out in the wilderness. Especially important in early placement experience and where block placements take students away from the university setting for periods of time.

2). Impact of NHS changes

Concern that potential for lack of cohesiveness and significant reduction in CPD funds will impact on trust placement support and preparation and development of mentors. Need to ensure financial support for placements and concern over the delay of the NMPET review. The need for effective local leadership was highlighted alongside the need to ensure that the skills networks are on board. Partnership working is crucial to the future success and should build upon existing strengths

3). Supporting students

Recognised need for close connections between the university and placement staff promotion of team approach and need for visibility of academic and practice education staff. The use of a home base approach was suggested to facilitate integration and a sense of belonging, as well as providing consistency. One area identified that they allocate a sign off mentor to the student from the beginning of the programme which allows the student to build a relationship and have feedback throughout the three years. Academics need to have clinical visits built into their workload. Use of student ambassadors or befrienders

4). Flexibility

Some discussion around flexibility took place with a suggestion that the universities are potentially in a better position to provide flexibility to students. There was recognition that if it was a short term issue then placements would be able to accommodate changes. It was recognised that in recent years developments in supporting students with specific learning needs had been made and that adjustments in practice could be achieved.

5). Assessment

A tripartite approach was recommended and it was suggested that Nursing could learn from the Midwifery experience. Need to recognise mentors skills and only use the best

6). Self efficacy and resilience

Student engagement was seen as key to this, with the need for effective accessing of support available in universities. There was some feeling that excessive support in a way which makes the student dependent can be detrimental and can lead to a delay in attrition in the later stages of the course. Thus need to find a way of making students feel supported especially at the beginning of the programme whilst also fostering independence.