



Guide to late career AHPs supporting students in practice-based learning

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About this quick guide

The aim of this guide is to address the challenges identified in growing additional practice based learning capacity across health and social care systems and private, voluntary and independent organisations by supporting employers to offer flexibility to those staff that are considering retirement or would like a change in career direction before leaving the health service.

Introduction

Practice-based learning capacity is currently a national priority. The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, together with the additional healthcare places awarded to education providers by Department for Education in 2020, and an increase in individuals eligible for these places, means education providers and provider organisations need to develop innovative solutions to support our learners to become the workforce of the future.

NHS AHP staff retention in England is currently at 5.4 per cent (data from NHS England & NHS Improvement Workforce Dashboard), it is anticipated that following the second wave of COVID-19 and winter pressures, a large proportion of staff may make the decision to leave the National Health Service (6.8%). This would have the potential to create a workforce gap that will impact care delivery and result in provider organisations losing valuable individuals with extensive knowledge and skills that could be passed onto learners.

Now more than ever we need to focus on growing the future workforce by exploring new ways of working as set out in the NHS People Plan. This together with a commitment to increase undergraduate healthcare places and practice-based learning capacity to grow our AHP workforce are fundamental elements to achieve the goals and ambitions set out in the NHS Long Term Plan and People Plan.

Through a crowdsourcing project, HEE sought to generate insight from the AHP community to facilitate and support innovation in relation to practice-based learning. The ideas generated have been built upon to create a suite of resources for provider organisations and education providers to look at delivering practice-based learning in a different way.

In order to support employers to utilise the knowledge and skills of their retired workforce, and to offer an increased number of quality practice placements, this quick reference guide will outline the opportunities available to support the continuation of their service but with a change of focus to supporting the future workforce in practice.

Benefits of staff in later careers supporting students in practice

- Through focus groups with learners and AHPs in their late careers, the following have been identified as perceived benefits of individuals in late careers supporting practice-based learning.



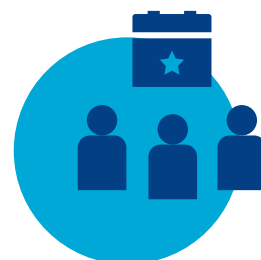
Benefits to learners

- Additional pastoral support
- Access to a variety of clinicians with a range of skills and experience
- Provides students with an additional resources to have discussions, caseload reviews and reflection.
- Allows students to speak to other healthcare professionals from other specialities.



Benefits to employers

- Retention of staff with vast experience, knowledge and skill
- Could provide additional team capacity to provide learning opportunities
- Students who receive a quality placement will consider employment within the organisation.



Benefits to AHPs in late career

- Opportunity to pass on their knowledge and skills
- Develop mentoring and coaching skills that could be used both in and out of the NHS
- Provide a transitional period for staff who are considering retirement.



Benefits to education providers

- More resources and support are available to students on placement
- Increased capacity to support learners in practice
- Opportunity for education staff to consider providing practical support in organisations to increase placement capacity
- Potential to increase learning opportunities in voluntary and charitable organisations as part of role-emerging or arms-length practice-based learning.



How to do it?

1. Consider where retirees could add value to practice placements and supporting services to continue to support learners. Look at the variety of placement models (see references) and speak to your education team to understand how a different role in the team could facilitate these.
2. Define the skills and training needs that retirees may require, in order to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the placements delivered. This would be dependent upon the role the individual was undertaking within particular models, their previous experience with supporting learners and their own developmental needs to enable their growth.
3. Seek out and engage with your workforce to determine the appetite for these opportunities. This could be via pre-retirement programmes offered within organisations, conversations with line managers about options for the future or even, trust-wide communication or a 'call to action'.
4. Engage with HR to ensure the best package is available to staff that does not negatively impact their retirement package. NHS Pensions has lots of information about flexible retirement options for staff and employers. Also, ensure that appropriate recruitment and governance processes are in place to ensure transparency and equity across the organisation.
5. Support the appropriate induction of staff choosing to move into this role. It may be that spending some time with the Education Team prior to supporting services is part of an induction and education programme.
6. Consider buddying up with experienced educators if the retiree has not supported learners in practice for a while, or a new model is being trialled.
7. Ensure robust communication and feedback with all parties involved so that appropriate learning can be captured and the impact of the role measured in relation to the benefits identified previously.

Doing it...

Health Education England (HEE) over the last 12 months have run a series of webinars and provided a vast amount of resource to support both education providers and provider organisations to think innovatively about how practice-based learning can be offered. Through the Clever Together work, there were six emerging themes identified with some clear areas for exploration that staff in their late careers could be involved in.

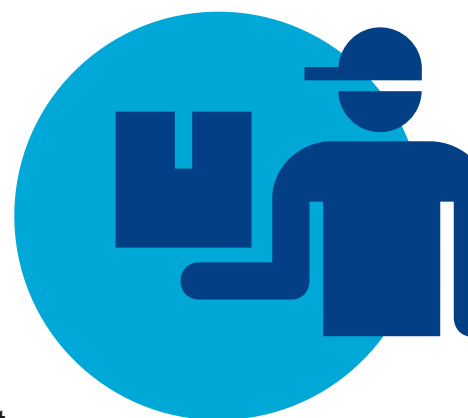
National AHP Pre Registration Student Practice Learning Programme

Location supervision, timing PIVOS/care homes/ primary care etc Long arm supervision. Academic/Teaching/ Research Management/ leadership Public Health Professional body	Post-Placement facilitator roles Leadership across systems Regional/national approaches to allocation Communication and Coordination	National Paperwork Allocation Models More alignment standardisation	Distil out what needs to be done where i.e. what must be done with a patient/ client what can be done elsewhere Place of simulation Developing reasoning/clinical decision making skills	Placement is everybody's business - HCPC National statement similar to NES Team approach - EASI model Supervision models Learning rather than teaching focus - CliPP model? Peer support Long arm supervision	Language 'the student' Valuing students Inspire to hire view of the world Part of the team Creating pull in the system
Diversity	Coordination	Joined up	Overall redesign	Educator capacity	Culture & Attitude

Models of delivery

There is already excellent practice in provider organisations, who have been able to realise the potential of staff considering retirement (or have already retired) to support ongoing work in the NHS. Methods of application for employers to consider could be:

- **Honorary contracts** – some individuals may hold honorary contracts with their previous employer that will enable them to provide services and/or support. This would work well for student supervision sessions, group teaching and other elements of pastoral support. Contact can be facilitated either face-to-face or virtually so would be beneficial to students who may have to shield or self-isolate as well as those on site (see quick reference on shielding and self-isolating for students).
- **Reduced hours** – taking into consideration the impact this may have on an individual's pension (see NHS Pensions link in references), there may be an opportunity to reduce hours and have a change in focus. Registrants could provide the same support as indicated above as well as clinical exposure with dedicated time for this as part of their new role.
- **Move into the education team** – there may be the option for staff to move over into the education team within provider organisations. These teams will support a variety of learners in practice and allow sharing of knowledge and skill across a multi-professional platform.
- **Bank contract** – As HEIs administer practice-based learning in a variety of formats there are often times when there is higher demand for these placements. By offering individuals a bank contract, there is flexibility for both employer and employee in terms of working pattern as outlined above.
- **Voluntary work** – as part of their extra-curricular activities, individuals may be involved or work with charitable organisations. There may be an opportunity for learners to access role emerging learning within these organisations with pastoral support provided by a registrant (or previous registrant). In line with The Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Education and Training and HEI requirements, the students would also have a registered practice educator external to the environment. This would allow those who have not retained HCPC registration to continue to support the development of the future workforce.



References

- [NHS Pensions – Flexible retirement options](#)
- [HEE – Practice Learning Resources](#)
- [Feedback regarding the introduction of retired Occupational Therapists as mentors on current educational courses: Postgraduate Diploma \(First Years 2020\), Cardiff University](#)