

## CASE STUDY: VALUES BASED RECRUITMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS

### Project background

In July 2013, the Nursing Department at the University of Birmingham asked the newly appointed Nursing Admissions Tutor to lead on reviewing the selection procedure for the Bachelor of Nursing (BNurs) programme. The department wanted to be confident that those applicants offered places on the BNurs programme, would become practitioners who demonstrate the qualities of a caring professional; respect, dignity, commitment and compassion (NHS Constitution 2013). In addition we wanted to involve the 'patient voice' in the interview process through the development of service user videos.

We needed to demonstrate that we were recruiting to values based upon the Francis Report (2013) which clearly stated 'that selection of recruits to the nursing profession must ensure that applicants demonstrate:

- Possession of the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours, the ability and motivation to enable them to put the welfare of others before their own interests;
- The drive to maintain, develop and improve their own standards and abilities; and
- The intellectual achievements to enable them to acquire through training the necessary technical skills.

The use of videos and associated questions would address the departments obligations regarding recruiting to values.

### Project aims

To produce service user videos to be used in the values based selection of undergraduate nursing students.

### Process

The Department of Nursing at the University of Birmingham has a Public Engagement in Nursing (PEN) group. The Nursing Admissions Tutor attended a PEN meeting and asked if members were willing to assist in producing videos talking about their experiences of health care. Eight people eventually agreed to take part in the filming and their stories represented the adult, child and mental health fields of nursing practice. The stories belong to the individuals who narrated them and guidance was given to the service users about how their stories would be used in the BNurs interview process.

The shortlisting criteria and the interview questions were reviewed and updated to ensure that they represented the NHS Values within the NHS Constitution (2013) and reflected the responses of the PEN group on the values and attributes that they felt made a good nurse. The NHS Values are:

- Working together for patients
- Respect and dignity
- Commitment to quality of care
- Compassion
- Improving lives
- Everyone counts

To ensure that applicants were fully informed of the process, the interview invitation letter included the following statement regarding the use of the service user videos.

'The interview day will start with a welcome talk which will include watching a service user film which lasts 5 – 7 minutes. In this film a service user will tell you their story regarding their experiences of being ill and during the interview you will be asked about what you thought of the film.'

Disability Services within Student Services at the University of Birmingham were contacted for advice regarding whether any reasonable adjustments were required for applicants with disabilities. They advised that none were required as all applicants were allowed to make notes when viewing the video and were allowed to take these notes into their interview.

On interview days, applicants were shown one of the videos and they were asked questions about what they had seen and heard. For instance, in order to determine if the applicant demonstrates compassion we ask, 'What are the main concerns of the service user?' To determine commitment we ask, 'What applicants think the nurse or other health care professionals could have done to improve the situation for the service user.'

## Key challenges

When introducing the service user videos into the undergraduate nursing interviews, the Nursing team were unsure how applicants would respond to the videos and the depth of understanding and analysis that would be demonstrated in the applicants responses to associated questions. Therefore the decision was made to pilot the approach in its first iteration and limit the questions about the service user video, to avoid affecting an applicant's overall score at interview. There are 10 themes within the Bachelor of Nursing undergraduate interview schedule and questions were only asked in relation to one of these themes.

The interviewers were sent a hyperlink to the relevant video, a week before they were due to interview applicants. Interview panels consist of a nurse academic and a nurse from clinical practice. Some of the nurses in clinical practice have found they were unable to view the videos because trust internet server security settings did not allow access to the site where the videos were stored. Clinical partners are now advised that if they are unable to view the video, they will have the opportunity to do so before they start interviewing.

## Impact

The process was piloted during 2013/14 to consider:

- The practical implications of introducing the initiative
- The acceptability of the approach to interviewers and applicants
- The impact of the initiative on recruitment to values

We monitored the practical and administrative issues associated with the approach throughout the recruitment period and made refinements as required. We asked all interviewers to provide verbal feedback on their perceptions of the initiative following each interview day.

Interviewers indicated consistently that the videos were a useful resource that animated the service user perspective. They stated that the initiative helped them to differentiate candidate's portrayal of values and to distinguish between the weaker and more able students in terms of insightful thinking and problem solving skills. In general, interviewers believed that when compared to usual interview process the applicants showed a better understanding of the care environment having viewed the video.

The applicants indicated that they enjoyed viewing the videos, felt that they brought the patients perspective to life and helped them to frame their answers in advance of the interview.

## Next steps and sustainability

At the end of the 2013-2014 undergraduate nursing interview cycle, the Department of Nursing met to discuss and evaluate the changes to the BNurs selection process.

Given the success of the initiative and the positive results of the pilot, all staff demonstrated a full commitment to further integrating the service user videos into the interview process. Thus, for the 2014-2015 recruitment cycle, questions relating to the service user video will form a third of the interview and given its prominence in the recruitment to values process, an interview question answer guide has been written. This ensures that all interviewers are clear about the level and depth of insight expected of applicants in response to the questions relating to the service user video.

### Key Tips

A number of service users originally volunteered to be part of this project but were either unable to attend on the days when filming took place or decided they no longer wanted to be involved. Therefore, it is important to over recruit so you are able to produce sufficient videos.

When using a variety of service user videos, it is important that your interview questions are generic and can be applied to all of the videos.

**This case study has been produced by the University of Birmingham, for further information please contact:**

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