

Welcoming learners and introduction to the values of the NHS Constitution

Project background

One of the HEE objectives is to engage with learners earlier in their programmes to develop a sense of identity and harness feedback. Local anecdotal evidence in the Thames Valley and Wessex areas suggested that learners were unsighted on 'how' their education is managed and 'who' does this; that there was a wider system in place to both plan their place as part of our future workforce needs and to manage the quality of their education.

Equally, we were aware that when we directly engaged with our learners this has been welcomed and has provided a useful route for dialogue. We were keen to develop the potential of this type of relationship as a foundation for other areas of work i.e. having established an identity and relationship with our learners we could use this to communicate with them at other points in the programmes such as 6 months prior to qualification to influence first post destination choices.

Finally we were also aware from a series of contract reviews that the NHS Constitution, whilst embedded in curriculum, was not at the time overtly referenced and there was an opportunity to reinforce the values used as part of new learners' recruitment at an early stage of their education.

Project aims

- Learners will receive a standardised welcome pack/induction within one month of commencing their programme of study; setting the foundation for continued engagement and support throughout their study and beyond.
- All learners will undertake their clinical/placement learning experiences in an environment that has a visible Learners' Charter; demonstrating the organisation's commitment to the values of the NHS Constitution and regulatory requirements.
- All learners will be supported in developing their feedback skills; developing confidence and capacity to identify best (and unsafe) practice in a timely and professional manner.

Process

In 2014/15 Health Education England working across the Thames Valley and Wessex areas developed a generic induction/welcome pack for all 'new' learners joining our programmes (pre-reg non-medical in Wessex and all learners in Thames Valley) that contained a range of information and resources (*messenger bag containing the following items: Credit card USB (preloaded with [HEE film](#) and some supporting documents), stationery, 'Proud of the NHS' magnetic badge, welcome letter from the MD, copy of the Learning Placement Charter, valuing feedback cards and a resuscitation mask key ring*).

The Learning Placement Charter was an existing resource that had been developed in partnership with trusts and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) but was non-medical in its focus. We used the opportunity of this project to update the wording of this and to make it multi-professional (copy attached).

The 'Positive about Feedback' cards were a response to comments from our trust partners and a suggestion from some Board members that it would be useful to encourage the feedback skills of our learners through developing their positive feedback skills. This idea was built up to link it with the NHS Constitution and with the ambition that the positive feedback loop would be instigated in placement areas.

The proposal was taken to the respective Expert Education Advisory Groups and the Learning Environment Leads Networks for their comment and approval.

The packs were distributed to HEIs in August 2014 ready for distribution to our learners for the 2014/15 cohorts through existing university induction processes.

Key challenges

Helping our HEI partners to understand our rationale for wanting to have closer engagement with our learners whilst recognising that our HEIs also invest in developing a relationship with them as students of their institution.

Impact

This work is also linked with a local pan-Local Education and Training Board (LETB) project to embed core evaluation questions into all placement evaluations and we hope this will influence completion rates (as learners start to develop their understanding of the value of their feedback in an education system).

We have deliberately decided to not collate data from the Valuing Feedback cards (as this may deter people from completing the cards) but will rely on informal feedback from our networks, including HEIs and Learning Environment Leads (LELs).

Examples of material produced

Please contact the team for a copy of the charter using the details at the end of this case study

Next steps and sustainability

- Following review of the pack and contents, for 2015/16 Health Education Wessex has reissued its welcome pack in a pencil tin to include:-

Welcome letter from the local LETB Director, USB (preloaded with [HEE film](#) and some supporting documents), 'Proud of the NHS' magnetic badge, copy of the Learning Placement Charter, 'how to give feedback leaflet', 'human factors leaflet', 'personal resilience leaflet', 'raising concerns/whistle blowing leaflet', information on accessing eLearning materials and a library service leaflet, a feedback form and various items of stationary.

The initiative will continue to be subject to ongoing review (through contract monitoring processes) and evaluation work.

- We are looking to develop a planned communication timetable for our programmes to build regular contact with our future workforce.
- We have piloted the 'Positive about Feedback' cards with patients and with our Learning Environment Leads in trusts.

Key Tips

- Engage HEI partners at an early stage of the discussions
- Allow ample time for development of the resources.

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