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Health Education England



Supporting the Development of Placements for Allied Health Professional Students in Public Health Settings: A Toolkit for education providers

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Section 1: Finding public health placements

Increasing placement capacity is at the forefront of most education institutions minds as we are aiming to increase the number of AHPs in the workforce. Finding placements can be a barrier to expanding into public health focused services and the administrative burden of setting up placements can further prevent this.

The following sections of this toolkit may seem obvious to many education institutions who have been setting up practice-based learning opportunities for years. Instead of a “how to” guide, they are intended to be a supportive guide for considering what might need to be made explicit when helping new, and potentially small, organisations set up a placement opportunity to help overcome some of the barriers they have told us exist. The first checklist below suggests some ways to try and find placements within the public health arena.

| Consideration | Complete |
|--|----------|
| Explore the services and organisations in your local area, for example, local charities. | |
| Research what the services/organisations do; who do they work with, what are the aims of the organisation, what services do they offer. | |
| Consider what you think a student could potentially do on the placement that would fit with what the organisation offers. Think about what the student would bring to that organisation and what skills, knowledge or attitudes they could develop from a placement with them. | |
| Consider what the benefits of working in partnership with the organisation would be for both you and for them; what would they gain from working alongside an education institution such as access to training and CPD, tariff funding or other recompenses, research and project development. | |
| Make contact, introduce yourself, explain that you are inquiring about placements for AHP students with them, and ask to speak to a relevant member of staff. | |
| Provide as many details as you can about the requirements of the placement; what students would potentially be doing, how long the placements would be for, what you would need the organisation to do. Consider the checklist on “setting up a placement”. | |
| If the organisation agrees to consider supporting a placement, continue with the process of setting this up as per your normal procedures or considering the checklist on “setting up a placement”. | |
| Consider how to make it less burdensome than setting up traditional placements with larger organisations (for example; preparation and reduction of documents, materials to explain expectations and highlight key dates and contacts). | |

Section 2: Setting up public health placements

Placements may take some time to set up although this can be managed effectively between the organisation and the education institution. It is worth considering how the administrative burden can be reduced to encourage organisations to offer practice-based learning opportunities. In order to support this process, we have included a checklist below that outlines considerations for setting up a placement that may aid in those initial discussions and enable organisations to prepare prior to agreeing to provide a placement. You may have a checklist you already use and documents prepared that provide a lot of the information that can be sent in advance of arranging a meeting.

One of the points to consider is the timing of the placement and if this will be completed as part of the academic year or during the students breaks (as demonstrated is one of the case studies). This information may change the responses to the questions in the checklist below and should be established at the start of the process.

| Consideration | Outcome | Completed |
|---|---|-----------|
| Gather details of the placement opportunity. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation's name • Manager/relevant contact's name • Address • Telephone contact • Email address | Details recorded | |
| Discuss when the placement will take place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it included in their academic year and as part of the course? • Is it an experience the student is aiming to undertake outside of their official programme? • What are the dates and length of the placement period? | Details recorded and following questions answered in response to this | |

| Consideration | Outcome | Completed |
|--|--|-----------|
| <p>Discuss any previous experience of supporting learners.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of student? • What did the student do and how were they supported? • Are there any existing learning outcomes for the organisation? | <p>Previous experience explored and any details recorded</p> | |
| <p>Discuss the expectations of the student.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What they will do on placement? • When they will work (days, hours, shifts)? • Where will they work (virtual/remote or in an office/at a base)? • Are there any limitations on working hours? • What is the expected code of conduct of the student? | <p>Expectations of students are clear and recorded</p> | |
| <p>Discuss the expectations of the education institution.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What support they will offer the student and organisation? • Any reciprocal arrangements? • Provide details on who to contact and any process for managing concerns | <p>Expectations of the EI are clear and recorded</p> | |
| <p>Discuss the expectations of the organisation.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will you need to provide for the placement? • If you will need to commit to any dates for training or induction sessions • Requirements of induction/orientation for health and safety • Your role in assessment of students | <p>Expectations of the organisation are clear and recorded</p> | |

| Consideration | Outcome | Completed |
|---|---|-----------|
| <p>Discuss the expectations of the placement opportunity.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learning opportunities available • The learning outcomes and competencies to be achieved • Formative or summative placement assessment • Agree activities that benefit both the organisation and the student • Explore the learning areas in this toolkit • Discuss any assessment documents to be completed | Expectations of the placement opportunity are clear and recorded | |
| <p>Discuss supervision of the student.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will be the onsite supervisor? • Can they be a practice educator and if so, have they had training? • Who will be the long arm mentor if needed? • How will this work? • Are there any peer or education institution-led supervision initiatives and models to be used? • How could remote supervision work? • What to do if there is an issue | Supervision plans created and named supervisors/educators gained | |
| <p>Establish a partnership agreement including data sharing agreement (most education institutions will have a standard agreement that can be reviewed and signed, or your organisation may have one).</p> | Signed partnership agreement and data sharing agreement | |
| <p>Check indemnity insurance for learners and discuss how this will be covered.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask if the students are members of professional bodies • Do you have indemnity insurance that covers learners or can it be extended to cover? • Does the education institution have cover that is relevant for when the placement takes place/ type of placement? | Adequate indemnity insurance in place to cover learner activities | |

| Consideration | Outcome | Completed |
|---|---|-----------|
| <p>Where appropriate, discuss tariff payments for placements and set up a payments process if required.</p> <p>For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss if funding is available and what the funding is for • Explain how it can be claimed and how it will be paid | Clear understanding of tariff payments and process in place | |
| <p>Discuss the educational audit and any other quality assurance processes.</p> <p>For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there one in place already and if so, can a copy be shared? • What does an audit consist of? • How can it be completed? • When does it need to be completed by? • Does it cover health and safety requirements? • Are there any concerns from CQC, OSTED or similar inspecting bodies? | Educational audit completed and no concerns regarding quality of placement learning opportunities | |
| <p>Discuss student capacity.</p> <p>For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many students could you support at any one time/per placement opportunity? • Is there the potential for remote placements? • Can multiple students be supported as a group by one supervisor? | Student capacity agreed and recorded | |
| <p>Discuss any feedback mechanisms.</p> <p>For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the student provide feedback on their placement experience and if so, how will you access this? • Have you received feedback before and if so, discuss? | Feedback reviewed | |

Section 3: Learning areas

As students need to achieve certain standards/proficiencies in order to register with their regulatory body, this toolkit aimed to make it explicit how these can be achieved whilst in a public health setting. The Health and Care Professions Council ([HCPC](#)) Standards of Proficiency (2013; 2014) and the Osteopathic Practice Standards (2019) for each of the AHPs were mapped to the [Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework](#) (2016, updated 2019). This work developed an understanding of how some of the standards were aligned with the skills and knowledge identified as being crucial within public health settings. This alignment was used to develop seven learning areas that capture the work students may undertake that would fulfil both their requirements for registration and the development of public health skills and knowledge. The learning areas are as follows;

| Learning Areas | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Learning Area One | The Public Health Conversation: Communicating, using a variety of methods and techniques, with individuals, groups and communities, information on health promotion, harm prevention, and the wider determinants of health. |
| Learning Area Two | Working together to enhance the public's health: Enhancing collaboration, advocacy, leadership, and ability to influence in relation to the health promotion, health protection, health risks and the wider determinants of health. |
| Learning Area Three | Researching the public's health: Sourcing and analysing information on the wider determinants of health, using information to inform health improvement, health protection or reductions in inequalities. |
| Learning Area Four | Evaluating and quality assuring public health initiatives: Designing, conducting or analysing evaluations, audits and quality assurance processes of initiatives to support health improvement, health protection or reduce inequalities. |
| Learning Area Five | Public health policy, strategy and legislation: Understanding and engaging in safe and accountable practice within the public health domain. |
| Learning Area Six | Planning public health initiatives: Planning and designing assessments, interventions or education aimed at the wider determinants of health and promoting health, preventing ill health, and reducing inequalities. |
| Learning Area Seven | Delivering public health initiatives: Providing assessments, interventions or education to address the wider determinants of health, health protection, health improvement and to reduce inequality. |

These learning areas may be useful to determine the type of activities a student may undertake during a public health placement. The full document can be found on XXX (HEE weblink to be inserted) which includes the full mapping detailing which Standards of Proficiency/ Osteopathic Practice Standards and Public Health Skills and Knowledge criteria are met by each of the areas.

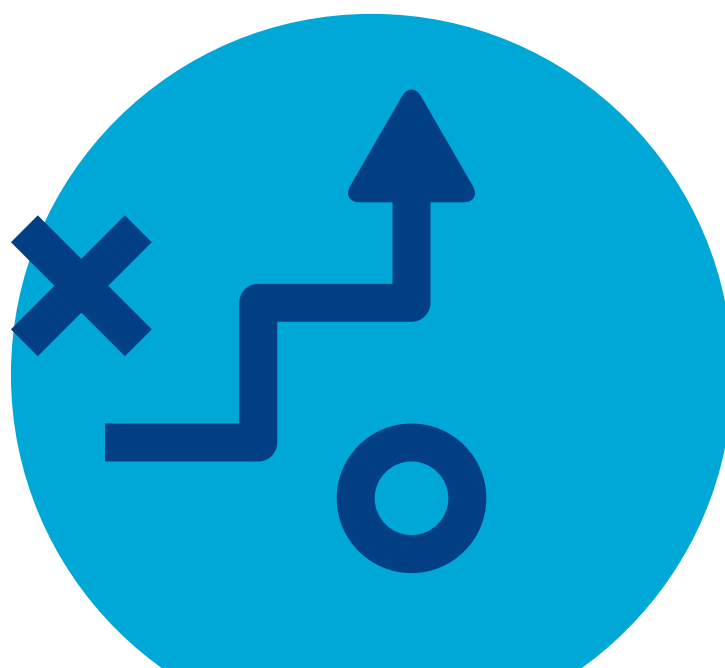
Section 4: Establishing what the students will do

The [case studies](#) in this document discuss various different activities AHP students have been involved in during public health focused placements. This includes project-based work, developing or delivering interventions for health promotion or education, exploring the wider determinants of health, and researching the needs of the local population. Students may have learning outcomes set by you, which you will have discussed when setting up the placement, or they may be able to set their own objectives. This should be done in collaboration with you and the organisation (discussed in the section on supporting students). The following table provides some ideas of activities students could undertake alongside which learning areas may be met.

| Activities | What the student may do | Completed | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|---|---|---|
| Project based work | The student may be asked to source and critically analyse information surrounding a public health topic that would benefit the organisation. They may work with other organisations, teams or individuals to complete the research and will be able to communicate this back to the organisation either verbally or in written form. The information may then be used to help plan for future public health initiatives and have an impact on the organisation. Alternatively, the student may be involved in designing or conducting research or analysing results, again working with others and communicating findings back to the organisation alongside suggestions for the implications for practice. The research may lead to the design of an evaluation or audit, or form a part of this. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| Activities | What the student may do | Completed | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|---|---|---|
| Evaluation work | The student may be asked to design, be involved in, or undertake an evaluation, audit or other quality assurance process of the organisation. They will work with other members of the team, or with individuals, groups or communities, to perform the evaluation and communicate findings in an appropriate way. They may use previous evaluation/audit information to help inform ideas for practice, critically analysing the information to make suggestions and effectively communicating the findings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Designing health resources | The student may design health resources focused on public health for the local population and that meets the organisation's need. The student would research the information needed, ensuring this was up to date and evidence based, and work with others to ensure different perspectives were gained. They would need to consider how they communicated the information in the materials to ensure this was appropriate and accessible. The resources may be used to plan a future educational session(s). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Education sessions | The student may conduct education sessions, working with individuals, groups or communities to conduct a public health focused intervention. They would need to ensure their communication style was appropriate and adapted to meet the needs of the audience, and to engage people in the session to encourage learning. They would need to ensure they are working within policies, guidelines and a safe environment. Alternatively, the education session may be to the organisations staff team about the role of the AHP, and how this may work alongside the organisation. | 1 | 2 | 5 | 7 |

| Activities | What the student may do | Completed | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------|---|---|---|
| Delivering initiatives | The student may be working with individuals, groups or communities, delivering interventions specific to their AHP role (including relevant clinical skills and knowledge). They will need to engage with the service users, using communication skills and working within guidelines and policy. | 1 | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Planning initiatives | The student may design or plan initiatives for the organisation, based on research and information obtained from previous evaluations. They may work with other relevant stakeholders, including service users, to design an initiative that is relevant to the organisation and the local population. This should be presented and communicated back to the organisation on completion. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Developing strategy or policy | The student may work to explore the strategy, legislation, policy or law surrounding the area the organisation operates in. This may involve analysing the information, including from previous quality assurance and audit processes, and making suggestions on how this could translate into practice, or by suggesting new processes for the organisation in order to implement changes in policy or strategic goals. The student would work with relevant policy and process makers for the organisation or sector, and communicate effectively their outcome. | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 |



Section 5: Supporting and supervising students

The organisation may be new to supporting and formally supervising students, and the requirements of this will need to be discussed with them. In addition, any documents that are used for the practice-based learning opportunity need to be discussed in full so the organisation is aware of their role in supporting the student.

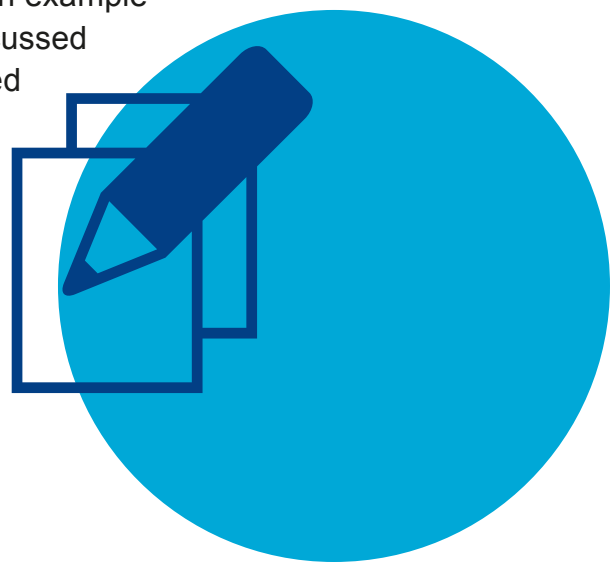
In the “organisations in the public health arena toolkit – section 5” there are templates that discuss induction checklists for students, initial, mid and final point interviews, student’s completing a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges (SWOC) analysis, and the setting of SMART goals to help develop learning outcomes if the students is able to set these themselves. It is acknowledged that you may have documents that contain these elements which would be shared with them, and these templates are intended as a guide for them to consider what might be asked of them when supporting a student.

As there are different models of supervision, the expectations of your education institution, or for this specific placement, would need to be discussed with the organisation during the setting up of the placement.

Section 6: Assessing students

Whilst setting up the placement, the nature of the assessment would need to be discussed, establishing if it is formative or summative, and the expectations of the organisation in completing any required documents.

If a placement is formative, or students are able to set their own learning outcomes, the placement provider may wish to develop their own way of assessing how the student is achieving these and is progressing in the placement. An example template for an assessment using the learning areas discussed earlier can be found below. This template can be amended to include the learning areas relevant to the placement experience. This assessment should be discussed with you and the student to consider its suitability.



Suggested assessment template mapped to the learning areas

| Learning Area | Suggested outcome | Achieved at mid-point interview | | Achieved at final interview | | Action plan to achieve/progress |
|---|--|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| 1 : The Public Health Conversation | The student is able to communicate effectively using verbal and non-verbal communication | | | | | |
| | The student is able to adapt their communication style to suit a range of audiences | | | | | |
| | The student has demonstrated their ability to listen, communicate, engage and respond to individuals, groups and/or communities | | | | | |
| | The student has effectively communicated information on health promotion, harm prevention and/or the wider determinants of health to reduce inequalities | | | | | |
| | The student is able to use a range of different medias to communicate with others | | | | | |

| Learning Area | Suggested outcome | Achieved at mid-point interview | | Achieved at final interview | | Action plan to achieve/ progress |
|--|---|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| 2 : Working together to enhance the publics' health | The student is able to build effective relationships with individuals, groups and communities | | | | | |
| | The student has demonstrated their ability to work in partnership with other staff members during the placement | | | | | |
| | The student has demonstrated their ability to work with individuals in a collaborative way that enables consultation and empowerment in decisions about their involvement | | | | | |
| | The student has successfully identified and made referrals to other services to support individuals | | | | | |
| | The student works in a way to empower and connect communities to access resources to support their health and wellbeing | | | | | |
| | The student works with others in a respectful and professional manner | | | | | |

| Learning Area | Suggested outcome | Achieved at mid-point interview | | Achieved at final interview | | Action plan to achieve/progress |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| | The student demonstrates leadership skills in the management of projects, service delivery or activities | | | | | |
| | The student has demonstrated their ability to share their ideas, knowledge and skills to help others to develop | | | | | |
| | The student has shared information in an appropriate way to ensure safeguarding of individuals | | | | | |
| | The student is able to effectively solve problems | | | | | |

| Learning Area | Suggested outcome | Achieved at mid-point interview | | Achieved at final interview | | Action plan to achieve/progress |
|---|--|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| 3: Researching the public's health | The student is able to obtain and organise relevant data in order to understand the health needs of the population | | | | | |
| | The student is able to interpret, appraise and present data on the health needs of the population | | | | | |
| | The student is able to critique and synthesise research evidence to reach conclusions that can be applied in practice | | | | | |
| | The student is able to use data and information to consider how to help improve health, reduce inequalities and work in a preventative way | | | | | |
| | The student is able to work with others to design research ideas or evaluations | | | | | |
| | The student is able to work with others to conduct research into the public's health | | | | | |

| Learning Area | Suggested outcome | Achieved at mid-point interview | | Achieved at final interview | | Action plan to achieve/ progress |
|---------------|--|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| | The student is able to identify gaps in research, evidence or knowledge that affects practice and can make suggestions as to how to address this | | | | | |
| | The student is able to undertake an economic evaluation of a service in order to establish the benefits of any costs | | | | | |
| | The student demonstrates the ability to appraise new technologies, services, activities or practices in a balanced and structured manner | | | | | |



| Learning Area | Suggested outcome | Achieved at mid-point interview | | Achieved at final interview | | Action plan to achieve/progress |
|---|--|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| 4: Evaluating and quality assuring public health initiatives | The student is able to collate and analyse information that can help towards future planning or decision making for the service | | | | | |
| | The student has participated in audits or quality assurance processes and is able to report the findings | | | | | |
| | The student has demonstrated their ability to consider what data is needed in the future for an evaluation and design ways to undertake this | | | | | |
| | The student has undertaken work to monitor and evaluate their practice and report back on the impact of this | | | | | |
| | The student has participated in the development of standards or protocols which incorporate best practice guidelines | | | | | |
| | The student has effectively conducted risk assessments and communicated any findings | | | | | |
| | The student assesses the impact the organisation, service, or activity has on improving the public's health and reducing inequalities | | | | | |

| Learning Area | Suggested outcome | Achieved at mid-point interview | | Achieved at final interview | | Action plan to achieve/ progress |
|--|--|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| 5: Public health policy, strategy and legislation | The student is able to manage personal information in line with the organisation's policy | | | | | |
| | The student is able to manage their own workload and resources in order to work effectively and complete tasks | | | | | |
| | The student acts in the best interest of individuals and treats everyone with the same respect | | | | | |
| | The student acts in line with current legislation around their role and those that affect the organisation | | | | | |
| | The student is able to gain consent from individuals, groups or communities | | | | | |
| | The student maintains confidentiality where applicable and is aware of the limitations of this | | | | | |

| Learning Area | Suggested outcome | Achieved at mid-point interview | | Achieved at final interview | | Action plan to achieve/progress |
|---------------|---|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| | The student is aware of and acts within their duty of care | | | | | |
| | The student seeks out opportunities to develop their skills and continue their professional development | | | | | |
| | The student is able to keep accurate and legible records in line with the organisation's policy | | | | | |
| | The student maintains the safety of the individuals, groups or communities they are working with and acts in line with all health and safety policies | | | | | |



| Learning Area | Suggested outcome | Achieved at mid-point interview | | Achieved at final interview | | Action plan to achieve/progress |
|--|---|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|---------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| 6: Planning public health initiatives | The student is able to plan different initiatives using a variety of approaches | | | | | |
| | The student is able to plan for emergencies where applicable, or for unforeseen circumstances related to the organisation and suggest alternative actions | | | | | |
| | The student has demonstrated their ability to scope ideas for future projects, activities, interventions or initiatives to address health inequalities, promote health or prevent harm, and presents these ideas with supporting evidence | | | | | |
| | The student is able to plan for the use of resources in order to deliver initiatives to individuals, groups or communities | | | | | |

| Learning Area | Suggested outcome | Achieved at mid-point interview | | Achieved at final interview | | Action plan to achieve/ progress |
|--|--|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | |
| 7: Delivering public health initiatives | The student is able to work with individuals, groups or communities with the aim to facilitate change to promote health, prevent ill health or reduce inequalities | | | | | |
| | The student effectively implements interventions, projects, activities or initiatives to individuals, groups or communities | | | | | |
| | The student is able to make decisions on what interventions to use and implement these | | | | | |
| | The student is able to effectively and collaboratively problem solve should the situation require this | | | | | |
| | The student demonstrates the ability to undertake assessments with individuals, groups or communities to assess their needs or to help implement initiatives that help to promote health, prevent ill health and reduce inequalities | | | | | |
| | The student demonstrates their ability to create and work within a safe environment when delivering initiatives to individuals, groups or communities | | | | | |

Top tips for organisers of placements/ education institutions from the case study authors



- Take as many different types of placement opportunities as possible, even if these can only be insight days, and embrace many different ways of working.
- Be prepared and review your own skills before undertaking the placement as well as during and after which helps to show how much you have learnt.
- Be committed to understand what a public health perspective is asking of you.
- Keep an open mind to opportunities.
- Try to understand the population and their complexity of need; shift your perspective to working with complexity not conditions.
- Aim to look under the bonnet of everything, understanding reality and how it connects with theoretical ideal world scenarios.
- Ask as many questions as possible and put yourself forward.
- Clinical skills are just one part of what you do; administration, communication, negotiation, being strategic, managing ‘team dynamics’, and how to facilitate change are all skills you need to thrive in a team and the wider system. These skills help to develop our identities and you should try to develop these in your placement experiences.
- The placements help to enhance your skills and so use these placements as an opportunity to have public health conversations and help behaviour change.
- Talk to everyone and try to make connections.
- Appreciate and understand the working practices of other Allied Health Professionals.
- Work across the Allied Health Professions to try and create a common dialogue to support the public health agenda.
- If you are running an event, try to do as much collaborative PR as possible to help attract people to events as well as casual passers-by.
- Consider what the local population’s needs are and the best time to hold an event to enable people to stop and talk.
- Acknowledge that you will be challenged professionally and personally but the benefits are worth the discomfort you might have.

Link to case studies

- [links to A student perspective](#)
- [links to An organisation perspective](#)
- [links to An education provider perspective](#)



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