

Implementation of the Indirect Supervision Model of Learner Support: Fostering Collaboration at Universities of Chester and Huddersfield.

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In line with Knight 2021, we present an overview of the preliminary implementation process of an Indirect Supervision Model for learners (Long-Arm Approach to Placement Supervision and Assessment) at two UK NMC Approved Education Institutes (AEIs). The University of Chester and the University of Huddersfield are leading the way in driving the model's implementation in practice, using a flexible bank of nurses to support learners in environments who do not have practice supervisors and practice assessors (PS and PA). Placement capacities have increased significantly using this model. In this commentary, we articulate the uniqueness of the model, and examine how structured uptake of this innovative practice has been supported with inter-institutional dialogue, fostering a productive relationship between these two newly collaborative universities. Implementation of this model has established students' opportunities to undertake innovative placements extending beyond the NHS, which promote vital alternative, relevant, skillsets across diverse cultural and situational backgrounds.

As Hodge et al., (2021) outline, pre-registration student nurse training must offer an introduction to care within communities. They note that broadminded placement opportunities ensure that students are actively "afforded an opportunity to think about future career opportunities they might not have considered" (Hodge, et al., 2021: 1196). Increasingly, the training programmes offered by AEIs must offer pre-registration learners experiences which promote and engage their awareness of the broadened definition of healthcare at this moment in time.

As a result of its significant contribution towards the opening of new placement opportunities beyond traditionally defined healthcare settings, the Indirect Supervision Model developed by the University of Chester is pivotal in extending the range of placements available to pre-registration learners. Principally, the Indirect Supervision Model utilises a flexible bank of nurses, employed by the AEI, to supervise and assess student nurses in a diverse range of non-traditional learning environments which do not employ registered practitioners e.g. Private, Independent, Voluntary Organisations (PIVOs). This inter-institutional sharing of good practice has benefitted student nurse learning opportunities.

The model extends the capacity of AEI training programmes since it allows more supervision time within a comparable budgetary expenditure, hence, allowing more pre-registration learners to undertake placements on a year-by-year basis. Subsequently, this Indirect Supervision Model becomes a valuable contributor to the necessary paradigm shift towards AEIs' provision of an up-to-date impression of the changing health and social care landscape in the UK via the placements they offer to learners. As opposed to providing a rigid or narrow vision of healthcare, it ensures that learners' experiential knowledge developed at the pre-registration level will subsequently benefit a wide range of health and social care bodies.

The University of Chester have opened over eighty new placements using this model. At the University of Huddersfield, a successful funding bid from Health Education England (HEE) has enabled the piloting and adoption of the same innovative model, facilitating the establishment of beneficial learning environments. Specifically, six new learning environments were established during the project, which required support from indirect supervisors/assessors, as there were otherwise no, or a limited number of, health or social care registrants working in these environments. The 'opened' environments include a private social care organisation, and residential homes for people with learning disabilities. Following implementation at both AEIs, feedback from all concerned has been positive, establishing a highly positive benefit to students and course provision across each AEI's pre-registration programmes of study.

Feedback for the model at Huddersfield has recently been aggregated and collated into various themes, grouped by participant roles. Placement providers stated both that Indirect Supervision promotes a positive learning environment in the organisation, and that it successfully promotes consideration of nursing roles in the social care environment which are essential for the future development of the service.

Likewise, pre-registrants appreciated gaining support from many different people, and supervisors found that it enabled opportunities for students to learn in non-traditional settings. These overwhelmingly positive responses are fully in line with separate feedback collated from those who have participated in the Indirect Supervision Model at the University of Chester. In conclusion, we have been pleased to witness the transferability of the Indirect Supervision Model first-hand between the University of Chester and the University of Huddersfield, and hence, we strongly recommend its potential to be exported even more broadly across AEs nationwide.

References

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