

Developing nursing placement opportunities in social care

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Glossar of terms:

PVI - Private, Voluntary and Independent sector

HEI - Higher Education Institutions

SSSA Standards - Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment

NMC - Nursing and Midwifery Council

PA - Practice Assessor

PS - Practice Supervisor

AA - Academic Assessor

EPAD - Electronic Practice Assessment Document

ICB - Integrated Care Board

ICS - Integrated Care Systems

PEF - Practice Education Facilitator

Fore word from Deborah Sturd

Chief Nurse Adult Social Care, Department of Health and Social Care

to nursing and nursing students

Achieve Nursing and Midwifery

Return to practice

Some nurses may have left the nursing register and want to return to practice. They can either undertake a test of competence **or** a [return to practice course](#).

Return to practice courses must be Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) approved and are offered by various universities who offer shortened routes back into the profession. The length of the course can range from three to 12 months. This is determined by a variety of factors such as how many practice hours the individual will need to achieve, how long they've been out of practice etc. Completion of practice hours is a required element of this option so a placement will be sourced.

Nursing associate

Nursing associates bridge the gap between support workers and registered nurses and are a regulated profession in their own right. They were introduced to increase the capacity of the nursing profession alongside existing nurses and other members of multi-disciplinary teams to undertake more complex clinical duties. Nursing associates can complete a three-year course degree apprenticeships in that they are

I completed a foundation degree in 2021. I decided to pursue the nursing degree due to the ease of being able to continue working at my current role and also attending university 2 days a week. My employer supported me and helped me to gain more placements to complete my own placements and was able to provide me with different places. This helped to broaden my experience of different services. I absolutely love being able to advocate for my service users and ensure they receive the best possible care for them. I chose to pursue nursing as I am able to build a stronger relationship with my service users and have a stronger rapport with them.

Nursing Associate

Exemplar Healthcare



Where to start



I am really interested in hosting student placements although I wouldn't know where to start. Do our nurses have to have mentorship and preceptorship training to host students or has this now changed? Having students would be beneficial for our residents and for students as they can utilise and develop their clinical and communication skills to provide person centred support. It will also help them to understand the complex and varied needs of those we support.


Da n Cropper, RN (MH)

Operations Director, Northern Healthcare, Mental Health Supported Living Services




Liaising with higher education institutions

Most universities in England are very keen to increase their placement capacity, particularly in



Post-Covid, the placement circuit for nursing students in Leeds has faced increasing challenges and has highlighted a need to develop a diverse approach to developing learning opportunities. Since the start of 2023, nominated individuals from the three universities in Leeds (University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett and Leeds Trinity) have



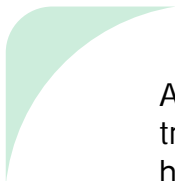
Anglia Ruskin University is committed to increasing placement capacity in health and social care settings, recognising the importance

The role of Integrated Care Systems and Boards

Integrated care systems (ICSs) are partnerships of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services. Each integrated care system includes an Integrated Care Board (ICB), and many are involved in supporting placement capacity, with some regions engaged in the Clinical Placement Expansion Programme (CPEP) funded by National Workforce, Education and Training Directorate at NHS England.

De on Clinical Placement Expansion Programme Report 2020-23 found that the benefits of placement expansion in primary /social care are that:

- workplaces become multi-professional learning environments
- experience in primary and social care develops more rounded practitioners
- they support the development of integrated practice within an integrated system
- students become more aware of people's holistic needs
- having students energises the workforce and the system learns to work and learn together.



As Integrated care systems become more involved in education and training planning there are opportunities to develop placements for healthcare students across primary, community and social care, to give students valuable experience in the delivery of care outside hospitals and introduce them to wider career opportunities. In my role in Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board the number of placement providers in social care has increased from five in September 2020 to 41 today. This is mainly in nursing homes but also includes some residential homes and domiciliary care providers. For nursing students, having placements in social care is so important as

The benefits of hosting students


There's a wealth of opportunities available to students within social care settings as outlined in our useful [placement guide](#). There are also a wide range of benefits for placement providers, including the opportunity to showcase the variety of careers on offer in social care with potential for social care to be a destination of choice for students once qualified.

In this section you'll hear from those involved in placements and the benefits for them.



Feedback from residents and staff at Highbur House Nursing Home in Stourbridge, part of the Rushcliffe Care Group.

'The students we had were lovely and approachable. They were observant and were able to understand how to approach people based on their needs, as some people can be a bit more sensitive or require a particular level of support like prompting. It's important to build confidence and build a rapport and trust with residents so that they can come forward and be honest about how they feel. Learning how to be comfortable and communicate with people is important for students as breaking down barriers and learning what matters most to the individual is the most



It is vital for our student nurses and nursing associates to have the opportunity to learn in practice across a range of social care settings. This exposure ensures that they see the way in which care is delivered across the health and care system. It also allows our future healthcare workforce to see the value of social care career opportunities. Our student nurses and nursing associates will be providing care in an evolving health and care system. They will lead and influence the future of nursing care delivery, co-producing the social care nursing and nursing associate roles of the future. It is so important that they have this experience from the very start of their careers. Here at the University of Salford, we are committed to working in close partnership with key stakeholders in the development of the holistic and integrated workforce of the future; working to develop opportunities for our students in a range of practice learning experiences. The recent announcement that the University of Salford will host the RCN Foundation Chair in Adult Social Care Nursing embeds our commitment to this vital development. This role will take a strategic lead in shaping teaching and research in adult social care at a local, national, and international level.

Dr Vick Halliwell

Acting Dean, University of Salford

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Our placement providers get the opportunity to enhance their culture of learning in nursing practice, raise their profile of expertise, attract staff with the right values to aid recruitment, develop their teams through staff engaging in critical inquiry and implementing evidence-based practice, whilst enabling their nurses to evidence continuing professional development. These placements also increase the profile of the social care sector as a potential career opportunity, enabling integration of health and social care in a holistic approach.

And Cunningham

Healthcare Practice Placement Development Lead (PVI Placement Team), University of Plymouth

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With our student placements, we can offer first-hand experience of living with a brain injury for those training in clinical professions. This enables students to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges patients with brain injuries may face, and the life and therapies available to them and their families outside of clinical settings. This increased awareness and understanding can help future clinical practitioners to support patients more effectively through treatment and recovery and help improve services overall for those recovering from brain injury. In addition to this we really benefit from the energy

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The benefits to having student nurse placements is the added vibrancy that the students bring, the questioning, the desire to learn and for our nurses to be able to share their very unique expertise and skills and add value to their training to ensure that the next generation of qualified nurses have a rounded and holistic picture of not only health but social care as well. It supports our nurses to maintain their skills in teaching/training, meeting their learning objectives and supports their revalidation.

Niki Richards

General Manager, RN, South Africa Lodge, Cornerstone Healthcare, Waterlooville, Hampshire



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Working in older people's care, students are able to experience a branch of nursing that is given very little focus during training despite the huge numbers of nurses employed by the sector. Students are the most up to date in terms of practice and so learning is a two-way experience. I can personally say my passion for nursing was ignited due to a placement where my mentor was an inspirational character. There is no downside to student placements, extra workload is minimal compared to the benefits they bring.

David Willis

RMN, Home Manager, Barty House Nursing Home, Maidstone, Canford Healthcare

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When I received my first placement within a nursing home, I did not know what to expect. I think people have perceived images of what nursing homes represent and look like. I was pleasantly surprised when I started my placement, the home was welcoming and clean and fresh. I was welcomed into the team straight away which made me feel comfortable in my learning, nothing was too much trouble from care staff, nurses or management if I was unsure or needed help with something. I loved the residents and their different personalities. I also enjoyed the fact that the home had three floors with different nursing needs, from challenging behaviour, mental health to dementia and end of life care. My placement was an awesome experience and I loved every minute of it.

During the second and third year of my course, both the manager and some of the care staff kept in touch with me. I was overwhelmed when the manager approached me during my third year and offered me a job, which I accepted without hesitation. Since starting work at Belvidere, with the continued support and help, my confidence is starting to improve immensely. All the staff are always on hand to help me if needed and the teamwork is impressive. They have also been supportive in working my shifts around my children too. I would say to people to never dismiss working in social care, as you may find just what you are looking for and the job is so rewarding.

Ann Marston

Newly qualified RN (MH), Belvidere Court Nursing Home, Bilston

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Part of the audit will include an appraisal of whether the placement area operates in line with the [Nursing and Midwifery Council \(2018\) Standards for student supervision and assessment](#). Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor training is offered by many universities.



Dr Julie Dixon, Nurse Education Adviser at the NMC says:



We hope that this update will increase the breadth of practice learning experiences available to students, which is a crucial step towards ensuring future nurses and nursing associates learn the knowledge and skills needed to deliver the safe, person-centred, holistic care that people have a right to receive - we believe students accessing and learning in social care environments offers an invaluable route towards achieving this.



Other professionals can continue to support student learning and assessments by liaising with practice supervisors, providing feedback and sharing observations. If your organisation doesn't have anyone that meets the above criteria, then there is still the option to consider indirect supervision using the six principled approach - [Supporting Information on Indirect Supervision - The Nursing and Midwifery Council \(nmc.org.uk\)](#).

We are opening social care placements at scale, that extend beyond traditional health care. As a university we have a bank of nurses who provide indirect supervision and assessment, so are able to support students in social care who maybe do not have health and/or social care registrants. This model works well as we have opened over 200 private, independent and voluntary organisation and social care placements in 18 months across our region.

Dr Kate H Knight

RN (Child), Associate Professor, Head of Practice Learning, University of Chester

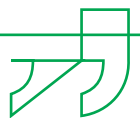
Practice assessor role

All nursing students on placement must be allocated a practice assessor. This must be a Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) registered nurse or in the case of student nursing associates this may also be a NMC registered nursing associate. For nursing students this role

In my role as academic assessor, I provide the link between practice environments and the university setting, which can take a variety of forms, depending on what is needed. It might be offering practical information about the course, how practice fits into the overall programme, or how the assessment document should be used and completed; and it will always include communicating with the practice assessor as we both input into our sections of the assessment document. On the (rare) occasions where a practice area has concerns with a student's progress, the academic assessor will visit the practice area, meet with the practice assessor and the student, and support the development of an action plan to guide the student's progress for the rest of the placement.















Dr Louise Bouic

Senior Lecturer - Mental Health Nursing, Academic Practice Lead,
University of Wolverhampton



Electronic versions of practice assessment document

Most students in practice will be shifting towards using an electronic version of what was the paper practice assessment document. Different universities and regions have different versions of this but these typically enable documentation to be completed in relation to:

Who signs that?	Practice Assessor	Practice Supervisor	Academic Assessor
Confirmation of practice hours			Completes verification
Orientation to practice area		 and/ or nominated individual if indirect supervision	
Initial interview			
Midpoint interview			
Final Interview			
Assessment of proficiencies			
Professional values			
Episodes of care			
Medicines management			
Ongoing Achievement Record			

Simulated practice learning

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards (2023) now specify that for pre-registration nursing programmes, up to 600 hours of the required 2,300 hours of practice learning can be simulated practice learning. This is particularly useful where students may struggle to practice a certain skill in a practice environment due to lack of opportunities to do so, such as nurses in the field of mental health who may not have as much exposure to procedures such as catheterisation for example.

Students may inform their practice assessor that these proficiencies have been achieved through simulation within a simulated practice environment at their university. It is important for practice assessors to liaise with academic assessors to confirm what students may have achieved through simulation.





Appendix 1: Case Study 1

Appendix 2: Case Study 2

Rebalancing Health and Social Care in the North West of England

Innovations by the University of Chester - leading the Cheshire and Merseyside (C&M) Practice Learning collaborative consisting of four Higher Education Institutions:



The purpose of the C&M collaborative is to work together to increase quality and capacity of student nurse and allied health professional placements within social care, with the aim to provide a high-quality learning experience for our students to ensure all learners experience placement learning within social care to promote more students transitioning into this

Resource Pack for Placement Areas: includes a handbook with key document templates for adaption to practice area and signposting to resources.

Webinar with Social Care Colleagues: a platform to explore the challenges and find solutions to some of the myths surrounding social care as a career and provide peer to peer support.

Additionally, we have recently piloted supporting students on a corporate/leadership placement within the team, which not only provided an excellent leadership and learning opportunity for the student but also provided us with that all important student perspective, feedback as follows:

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Before coming on placement, I had a lot of reservations about social care and saw this as “just” nursing home care, I was under the impression that there was not much range for learning, and I felt proficiencies would be difficult to achieve. But I can certainly say now. That all of that is not the case and I’ve had my mind completely changed. Social care is a vital part of the nursing field, it is flexible, valuable, and most importantly the front line to supporting individuals within our communities in a safe and homely environment. Without social care, there would be many individuals who would struggle at home and wouldn’t be able to receive personalised care to the extent they can in social care settings.

As a student, I’ve been welcomed, encouraged, involved, and valued every time I’ve been a part of a social care experience. Social care gives students a huge range of opportunities such as spoke days, time with the wider multidisciplinary team (as they have more exposure to this than the hospital setting), and even sign off most proficiencies. But most importantly, they WANT students there, they want us to learn, and the social care placements understand how vital students’ learning is and they always say how students are valuable to them as an organisation. I can certainly agree, **I have never felt more valued as a student nurse.**

These social care settings are a gateway for student nurses to work across disciplines and really develop professional relationships with other fields of nursing to bridge the gap between these fields. I feel honoured as a student to have had the opportunity to delve into social care placements on my time on placement and I thank every single person I’ve met during this time and thank them personally for their kindness.

3rd year nursing student adult field

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Going forward we will continue to build professional relationships with our social care