

# Standard Operating Procedure for Supporting Pre-Registration Students in Practice Areas

Version: 2

<b>Summary:</b>	This Standard Operating Procedure states Southern Health Foundation Trusts position and expectation for all clinical teams with regards to supporting all Pre Registration Learners in Practice Settings.	
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# Version Control

## Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change
22/2/18		1	6	Review date extended from February to July 2018 Removed contact details for Ian Winkworth
18/6/18		1		Policy review – no changes required until new Nursing and Midwifery Council standards come into effect in January 2019. Review date extended to end of January 2019.
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## **Standard Operating Procedure for Supporting Pre Registration Students in Practice Areas**

### **1. Purpose of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)**

This SOP sets out an Organisational wide statement and vision on how Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust (the Organisation) plans to support pre- registration learners on professional programmes of education and the expectation on clinical teams to support them. It applies to Student Nurses, Trainee Nursing Associates and Student Allied Health Professionals.

This document will give guidance to managers and teams on how the Organisation expects pre-registration learners to be facilitated within practice settings; guidance on managing student related issues, the number of learners that teams will be expected to support and will make clear when it is acceptable to decline taking learners into practice settings and the process for doing this.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (2010) define a pre-registration programme as an education programme undertaken by nursing students to acquire the competencies needed to meet the criteria for registration with the NMC. All pre-registration students may apply for registration after they have successfully completed an approved pre-registration programme. The Nursing Associate is a new role being introduced to the health and care workforce in England from 2019. It is a generic role but within the discipline of nursing is intended to bridge the gap between health care assistants and registered nurses (NMC Standards of Proficiency for nursing associates 2018). Nursing Associates will be regulated and registered by the NMC, will follow a defined education programme, and will require practice related experiences/placements with assessment/support by a Mentor/Practice Assessor/Practice Supervisor. For Allied Health Professionals educational programmes lead to registration with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Health Education England –Wessex (HEE-W) (2017) states its commitment to improve patient care through investing in people and transforming the workforce to meet future challenges. This is also supported by Francis (2013) who states that “the patient must be at the centre of all we do”. This paper is designed to clearly show how Southern Health Foundation Trust will support these statements by ensuring that we invest in the development of our future workforce and health professionals who are trained to a high standard in order to deliver high quality patient care.

There is also an expectation that this will be considered as part of each Division’s business planning. This includes ensuring that there are enough sufficiently qualified staff with mentorship / Practice Assessor / Practice Supervisor / Educator qualifications to support learners in all practice settings.

### **2. Glossary of Terms**

**AEI** – Approved Education Institution i.e. universities who run approved programmes of pre-registration education

**CQC** – Care Quality Commission

**HCPC**- Health Care Professions Council

**HEE W** – Health Education England - Wessex education commissioner

**HEI** – Higher Education Institution i.e. universities

**Intensive Support** – Intensive Support is usually required when teams have a number of challenges at any one time that affect the team’s ability to perform as usual. During

this time the team require increased focus to ensure safe and effective care is delivered and that staff members are supported

**Learning Environment** – this is the placement area or clinical team supporting the student

**LDA** – Learning and Development Agreement

**LEL** – Learning Environment Lead/s – responsible within Southern Health for the quality of Student Experience and Learning Environments

**LET** - Learning Environment Team comprising Learning Environment Leads and Practice Educators

**NMC** – Nursing and Midwifery Council

**PAC** – Practice Academic Co-Ordinator within AEIs

**Practice Assessor** – this role will supersede the mentor role from September 2019 for most university programmes of nurse education. This role will assess student nurses and trainee nursing associates in practice

**Practice Supervisor** – this role will come into effect from September 2019 for most university programmes of nurse education. The role can be carried out by any registered healthcare professional working in the trust who has been suitably prepared. The role will support student nurses and trainee nursing associates whilst on placement, through a coaching facilitative style, giving feedback to the student and the Practice Assessor

**Practice Educator/supervisor AHP**- An AHP clinician who has completed one year in clinical practice and undertaken introductory educator training at an approved university (AEI) to be able to effectively assess AHP students in their placement settings

**Sign Off Mentor** – an experienced mentor with a higher level of accountability to sign off final placement nursing students prior to them joining the register. This is an NMC requirement under the 2010 standards. This role will be superseded by the Practice Assessor role from September 2019 for most universities in the region and by September 2020 for all universities.

**Student** – A learner undertaken a programme of education at an AEI that requires a clinical experience within Southern Health

### 3. Background

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust is contractually obligated to the Learning and Development Agreement (LDA) which is an agreement between Health Education England -Wessex, Approved Education Institutions and NHS Organisations to support pre-registration programmes of education. Southern Health is a recognised 'teaching organisation' and receives funding by meeting its obligations in relation to the LDA.

**The Organisation expects all professionally registered staff to support learners in practice. This commitment is required due to the LDA and also as an organisational commitment to workforce development and quality patient care. Job Descriptions of registered staff employed within the Organisation should include reference to the requirement to support students.**

There is also an expectation from professional bodies such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) that Registrants support the development of learners in practice. The NHS Long Term Plan (2019) also underlines the importance of supporting pre-registration students to become qualified healthcare professionals of the future.

This support of learners can be either informal i.e. buddy mentoring/ Practice Supervisor, or formal i.e. completed a recognised education or mentorship course/Practice Assessor course. It is the responsibility of each team manager to

ensure that they have enough formally qualified Mentors, Practice Assessors and Practice Supervisors, Practice educators/Supervisors (AHP). This will include Sign Off mentors whilst relevant. This should form part the Division's workforce planning. Formal education and Practice Assessor / Practice Supervisor preparation courses will be available via LEaD.

AHP Practice educator/supervisor preparation and training is provided by relevant and approved universities.

All of the above is to ensure that the Organisation plays an active role in the development of the Health Professionals of the future, ensuring that they have the right skills and values to perform their roles and meet the future demands of the population they serve.

The philosophy of the organisation is that the quality of a workplace / team as a learning environment is directly linked to the organisational values and the quality of patient care.

## **4. Expectations**

### **4.1 Expectation to support students in practice settings:**

The Organisation expects **ALL** clinical areas and teams to support students from all professions. This is irrespective of the area and the stage of the educational programme. The only exception to this is with Students in certain Mental Health settings where previous learning is essential to ensure their safety in the learning environment and support the learning of the student.

The Organisation places a high priority on hosting students because doing so importantly contributes to quality care through the sharing of best practice and is also an opportunity to attract new recruits. Working alongside a student is part of a professional responsibility; for Registered nurses it is linked to the NMC Code of Conduct and is individually rewarding. Learners are our future workforce.

All Health Professionals employed by Southern Health are expected to support the education and development of Students in practice settings formally or informally. This includes all Nurses, Specialist Nurses, Doctors, Allied Health Professionals, Psychologists, and Social Workers. This expectation is to ensure that all Professionals meet both their Professional requirements and the requirements of the Organisation. The RePAIR project (2018) clearly identifies the importance to students of the clinical component to a course and the influence of clinical mentors and the culture of the placement setting.

It is a professional expectation that all nurse mentors attend an annual mentorship update to maintain their professional responsibilities. These updates will continue for Practice Assessors and Practice Supervisors from January 2019. These are bookable through LEaD.

AHP Educators and Supervisors are expected to attend an update every 3 years available through the AEI.

### **4.2 Expectation of completion of Placement Audits:**

Every Learning Environment (Placement Area) must engage in Bi-Annual Learning Environment Audits which are led by the Learning Environment Team in partnership

with AEI's. These audits will include discussion and agreement on the number of students that can be supported within each team.

The Learning Environment Audits also place a responsibility on each learning environment to produce a Placement Profile explaining the learning opportunities available for each student / learner coming into their team. It is the team's responsibility to maintain these. The placement profile should include all health care professionals that are part of the team. Placement profiles may be shared with AEIs to inform students of their allocated placement.

#### **4.3 Expectations following a Serious Incident that involves a student:**

A serious incident that involves a student or that is witnessed by a student should be reported as usual via Ulysses and notified to the Learning Environment Lead, who must in turn liaise with the relevant university and where necessary further investigate. This will support the organisational learning from the event. The Learning Environment Lead will also offer relevant support to the student in liaison with the university.

#### **4.4 Expectations regarding managing students:**

Students who are off sick when expected on placement should report to the relevant placement area contact. If no contact has been received on the day a student is expected, the placement should attempt to contact the student if contact details are held. If this option is not available, the Learning Environment team will need to be notified so that contact can be made with the relevant university.

Where a student is in need of Reasonable Adjustments, (e.g. a student who is pregnant or who has a latex allergy) whilst on placement, the university must inform the LET and the placement prior to the placement starting so that arrangements can be made within the placement team for a risk assessment if necessary and appropriate arrangements to be put in place.

Students must dress according to the stipulations of the placement to which they are allocated and must abide to the Trust's infection control policies and local procedures.

Concerns over student progression whilst on placement must be addressed as early as possible. Mentors/Practice Assessors and Practice Educators/supervisors (AHP) will seek guidance from the Learning Environment Lead, and in turn the relevant university.

Students are expected to provide an evaluation following their placement which is reported to the Learning Environment Lead who will disseminate accordingly to the appropriate team.

### **5. Process for Temporary Interruption of Student Placements**

The temporary interruption of student placements **will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.**

General issues such as staff shortages **are not** considered to be exceptional circumstances. These are seen to be a reality of working life and as such students cannot be protected from them. It also does not mean that staff should reduce their professional responsibilities during such times.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include;

- Reported issues regarding quality of patient care being delivered by the learning environment/placement
- Evidence of bullying or harassment within the learning environment
- Concerns raised by AEI's through student evaluation
- Poor evaluations from external monitors such as CQC

All Learning Environments are open to inspection to monitor quality of patient care by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This is a normal part of the Governance process and should not be something to cause concern.

A CQC visit is an opportunity for Learning Environments to celebrate and share good practice as well as make improvements where appropriate.

Often, after a CQC visit, actions taken by the organisation provide an excellent learning opportunity for students in practice. The importance of this process should not be underestimated in forming part of the development and knowledge of future health professionals.

However, on occasion it is necessary to take action to both support the student and the learning environment and the below flowchart (Appendix 1) shows how Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust will respond to ensure the wellbeing of learners on placement within its Learning Environments

If there are concerns identified within the Learning Environment or Division, these should either be raised directly with the appropriate Learning Environment Lead or with the Director of Nursing and AHPs or AHP Lead. The only person who has the authority to stop student placements to an area is the Director of Nursing and AHPs or their nominated representative in liaison with the Learning Environment Lead.

Teams that are in 'Intensive Support' need to notify the relevant Learning Environment Lead to ensure that the team can be supported and arrangements made to have the input from a Practice Educator where appropriate. Intensive Support **does not** mean that teams can refuse to host students. Instead, it provides an opportunity for students to understand the management of such situations.

Team managers should follow the Safer Staffing Policy when there are concerns regarding staffing levels and the consequent level of service provision and safety of practice.

The standard for temporary interruption of students should be followed as stated above and in Appendix 1. This process should be followed by teams to escalate concerns that impact upon hosting a student placement.

If the Director of Nursing and AHP (or their delegated representative) agrees that a placement should be temporarily suspended, they will contact the appropriate Learning Environment Lead to discuss the reasons behind the withdrawal of students, and agree an action plan that is clearly time defined detailing actions required to ensure the Learning Environment will be able to support students again as soon as possible. The Learning Environment Lead will manage communications with AEI's.

The Learning Environment will monitor these action plans and the Associate Director of Nursing will nominate someone to be accountable for actions.

The Learning Environment Team will support Learning Environments as appropriate to ensure they achieve action plans.

## 6. Contact details for the Learning Environment Team.

Lucy Abraham – Learning Environment Lead  
Mental Health Nursing Students  
[lucy.abraham@southernhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:lucy.abraham@southernhealth.nhs.uk)  
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Mobile: 07469 573492

Learning Environment Team Contact Telephone Number (Calls monitored) 023 8047 5835

## 7. References / Resources

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## Appendix One

### Flowchart for the temporary suspension of students to a Learning environment / placement area

