



## Case Study:

# How to build an experienced Practice Nursing workforce which is fit for the future

## The value of student nurses in Primary Care

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### Special points of interest

- A new way to recruit
- GPN Preceptorship course
- Student Nurse placements

## Background

Recruiting to Primary Care is increasingly difficult and this is particularly true for the Practice Nurse role. The national shortage of experienced Practice Nurses is hindered by the commonplace call that only experienced candidates should apply. The Sefton Training Hub is often contacted by students, and qualified nurses, who want to enter Primary Care, but find it difficult to get past first base.

This case study follows the journey of a newly graduated Learning Disability Nurse who, supported by the Sefton Training Hub, managed to get the General Practice experience that is so much in demand. We will demonstrate how new ways of training and recruiting helped her to increase employability whilst at the same time allowing the Primary Care Network, to benefit from her up-to-date thinking and professional capability.

## Meet Kim...

Kim approached Sefton Training Hub's Nurse Clinical Lead, Maggi Bradley, as a 2<sup>nd</sup> year nursing student. She'd heard about a project that Maggi was leading in a local General Practice Surgery, which aimed to increase access to Primary Care for groups of patients affected by the same condition, such as Asthma, and wanted to get involved. Following a brief introduction to the project Kim was invited to further support this work. As her specialism was in Learning Disability, she hadn't considered Primary Care as an option for the formal placement that her course required, but she embraced this as an opportunity not only to learn, but to influence positive outcomes.

Kim's dedication to making the project work for patients and the Practice, was impressive. She also managed to open the eyes of clinicians in the Practice to improvements which could be made to the management of care of patients with learning disabilities. This led to the delivery of an additional program to build a new approach to the annual review process for LD patients, which Kim was able to support, with another student from the same student cohort.

## GPN

### Preceptorship Course

This is run every April and September (subject to funding).

There is a mix of face to face and Virtual sessions.

The programme is delivered in collaboration with Buckingham University (Crewe) and is a level 6 accredited course based on a reflective portfolio format. There will be support from recently developed Practice Development Team which is a team of experienced Practice Nurses.

Courses fill up quickly and if interested please contact Sefton Training Hub for more information.

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## Barriers to the recruitment of new Practice Nurses

While it is evident that more and more Practice Nurses are needed, finding a suitable placement for Student Nurses in Primary Care can be extremely challenging. Often placements are viewed yet another challenge to an already overloaded working day and are dismissed out-of-hand by GP Surgeries.

Additionally, hands-on experience and understanding of Primary Care within the academic team at Nursing universities, is often limited, resulting in a bias to recommend secondary care placement options to the student body.

Kim says “Misconceptions still exist that the Primary Care is an environment for the more mature nurse, or, that you need to work in hospital before you should even consider a move to Primary Care. There are even those who think that clinical skills aren’t used in Primary Care, so it’s not real nursing! Many student nurses fail to clearly understand the role of a Practice Nurse and the complexities involved in the role. This is in part due to out-of-date preconceptions but also due to ways in which Primary Care nursing is covered in the formal teaching environment.”

### So what if a placement in General Practice can benefit the Practice as well as the student?

#### Changing Mind sets...

Every week it seems there is another new barrier to supporting patients. Be they financial, time-related or something else, the temptation is not to look beyond that particularly bad day when the last thing needed is an enquiring mind looking for new experiences.

Rather than hindering the provision of care, Kim brought a new and fresh perspective to the working environment. She was up to date with current thinking and best practice and radiated enthusiasm. She helped the Practice Team to move beyond a fear of change, to think differently, to see opportunities for improvement, and to take action to make improvements which would have a material impact on improved patient care. She was also able to take back those experiences in Primary Care to her student peers and course lecturers, influencing their views on the viability of Primary Care as a desirable and challenging option.

Maggi says: “Kim’s knowledge of Learning Disability Nursing and understanding of the different thought processes of people with learning disabilities really changed my mind set and ways of nursing. I am delighted that the Sefton Training Hub is now supporting four Learning Disability Nurse placements within Sefton Practices.”





## A dream come true... (and a vacancy

Following her placement, and the successful completion of her nursing degree, Kim registered as a nurse and applied for a community role in the ECHC Team. Not only did she get an interview, she got the job!

In this community based role Kim is continuing to use her learning to influence and challenge the ways service users with learning disabilities are helped. Notably she is improving the ways users can input into their own reviews and care plans.

An additional element of Kim's role within the PCN is to support the Sefton Training Hub's LD student nurses when they join us on placement. She also contributes to weekly student education sessions.

## Kim's conclusion on her placement

“Without the support that Maggi and the Sefton Training Hub, I wouldn't be in my dream job. Not only have I been able to achieve this role, the experiences the Hub secured for me, have given me confidence to put forward new ideas to benefit people with Learning Disabilities. This is something that that I am very passionate about”.



## Student Nurse Placements

The Sefton Training Hub helps PCNs to prepare for a student nurse placement.

It assists in the audit process and offers preparation for staff in terms of the provision of supervision and assessment.

A student support tariff is available circa £122 per week pro rata.

The hub can assist the PCN to open the placement and support the student to work across a number of practices. This is particularly useful for smaller practice which may have a part-time practice nursing team.

Students gain experience from the whole Primary Care Team. This includes, NAs, CSWs, GPs, Pas, Physios, Social Prescribers, pharmacy teams, etc. They don't have to be with a Practice Nurse all of the time.

## Sefton Training Hub

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## Benefits for both– try before you buy...

Kim says “I highly recommend and advocate for GP Surgeries to offer and provide placements for student nurses. By increasing availability of these essential experiences in which students gain exposure to the reality of Practice Nursing, Practices have the opportunity to learn from the Student, to improve the depth and quality of the talent pool and perhaps to, “Try before you buy”.

The Nurse Management Team said, “With recruitment being so tight in Primary Care, we had to think differently and consider a new approach to recruiting nurses in our enhanced health in care homes team. It was ideal that we already knew Kim before we interviewed and employed her. She is settling in well and is progressing in her skills and we have gained her experience in caring for service users with learning disabilities. We highly recommend taking students on placement to support recruitment to Primary Care.”

**Sefton Training Hub is a friendly team and we encourage Practices and PCNs to get in touch for more information on how we can make student placements work for them!**

