

Delivering non-patient facing placements within an integrated care board (ICB)–utilising multi student models across a team, sharing learning and outcomes to enable future growth.

Background

Practice-based learning is an integral part of healthcare programmes and is a requirement to gain registration with a regulatory body. With a growing number of training places, the demand for placements increases and more practice-based learning opportunities are needed.

The delivery of placements during the pandemic saw innovation and growth in the diversity of placements and non-patient facing placements, through leadership and research focused learning opportunities. Non-patient facing placements provide the opportunity for students to develop a range of key, transferable skills in diverse settings (Health Education England 2021).

The placement expansion team within NHS Kent and Medway have a responsibility to support the growth of placements across the system. The team consists of two occupational therapists and a school nurse, who are educators, a project assistant and team manager, enabling us to embrace a multi-student model.

Placement design and delivery

As a team we previously delivered a non-patient facing placement for two students using a 2:1 supervision model. Although it was a successful placement, we felt there would be greater opportunities for peer learning if we were to offer to multiple placements, using the 2:1 model with three sets of students. Reviewing placement dates, we were able to identify students from differing professions and universities with a maximum overlap of five weeks. The placements provided were full-time, of differing lengths, to four occupational therapy and two physiotherapy students.

In designing the placement, we wanted to make sure we were able to create an environment that enhanced student belongingness offering learning opportunities to support personal and professional development and peer learning. Students had individual virtual pre-placement meetings with their educator, to enable learning needs to be discussed, expectations to be explored, and a welcome pack shared.

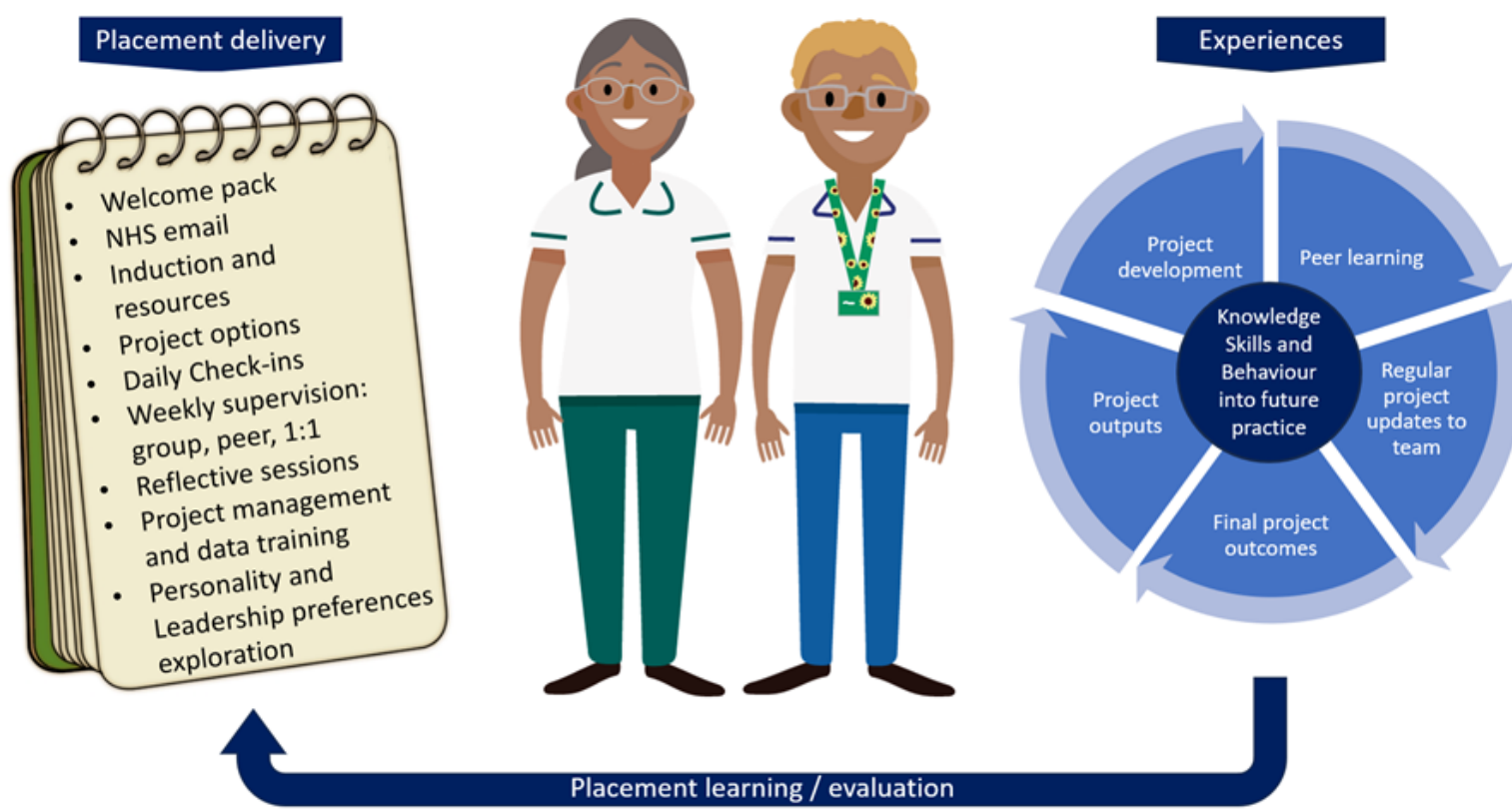
Two students	Four students	Six students	Four students	Two students
2:1 supervision model BSc Occupational therapy apprentices year 2 OT educator Twelve weeks				
	2:1 supervision model MSc Occupational therapy year 1 OT Educator Seven weeks			
		2:1 supervision model BSc Physiotherapy year 2 Nurse practice supervisor / Physio indirect educator Six weeks		

Placement structure

To manage the workload and resources, we needed to consider students' learning requirements so activities could be delivered concurrently. Development sessions were delivered including activities to identify and reflect on their learning, leadership, and communication styles alongside project management and data analysis training. A choice of projects was identified for the students to lead that were based on the team's workstreams with the overarching goal of improving placements within Kent and Medway. Time was allocated at the weekly team meeting to develop their leadership skills and present their project progress, which culminated in a final presentation to key stakeholders.

To create a sense of belonging, an NHS email was created for each student for the duration of their placement enabling easier access to ICB internal website, MS Teams and individual calendars. Diary invites for a daily morning check-in were established to help coordinate the student's working day and offered a valuable communication and wellbeing space. This was delivered by one educator, enabling opportunity to work across the student group and to release time to other educators for their own workload management.

Each pair of students participated in weekly individual and peer supervision with their respective educator. One supervision relationship included meetings with the educator and a physiotherapy long arm supervisor to ensure that professional assessment outcomes were signed off. To support the educator's assessments, feedback was obtained from the wider team to provide examples of their application of knowledge, skills, and behaviour.



Student peer working

Students were enabled to lead their projects using their newly acquired project management skills and supported each other through peer exploration. As a peer group they initiated the development of a self-facilitated support group. Meeting weekly they were able to find a space to explore placement successes, challenges, and personal development.

In addition, for students across the south east allocated a non-patient facing placement, a project management peer support group was held weekly delivered by the team.

Placement development

- Ongoing use of student evaluations to develop the placement delivery.
- Introduction of educator meetings during the placement for support, feedback and to share learning.
- Addition of a welcome meeting discussion guide to aid consistency.
- Sharing learning through a standard operating procedure to support other teams at NHS Kent and Medway to deliver placements.
- Working with universities to increase opportunities for non-patient facing placements.

Using a multi student model within a non-patient facing placement provides an opportunity to develop leadership skills and professional behaviours through peer working that would be difficult to replicate in a single model approach. Opportunities exist to develop these placements to enable students and educators learning that will benefit the future workforce and placement capacity.



- Preparation is key to coordinate opportunities for peer learning.
- Use your whole team, they have knowledge skills and experience that can support the students learning.
- Choose an authentic project knowing what impact it will have, with a clear output.
- Have a daily check-in to include a wellbeing chat and tasks for the day.
- Agree expectations for a remote placement such as keeping in touch, time keeping, professional behaviours.
- Encourage weekly reflection to enable application of experiential learning to knowledge and future practice.
- Communicate as a team to help consistency for students.