

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Working together: asset based communities of learning in Higher Education.

16th International Conference on Integrated Care, Barcelona 23-25 May 2016

Helen Rainey, Elaine Gifford

University of the West of Scotland, United Kingdom

Introduction: This case study will explore the innovative development of the BA (Hons) Integrated Health and Social Care (BAIHSC) programme at the University of the West of Scotland.

Across Scotland integration planning and delivery principles are seen as the primary way in which the delivery of national health and wellbeing outcomes will be delivered (Scottish Government, 2014). It is recognised that this requires a flexible, multi-skilled labour force to meet service provision which has been further validated following the introduction of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Bill (2013).

This articulated, undergraduate programme is primarily for people working in health and social care including the third sector in care or administrative roles. Its ethos reflects the integration agenda striving to deliver a person centred, flexible, outcome focused service, which recognises and builds on strengths and provides students with autonomy and encouraging individual responsibility (Mussellbrook 2013)

Short description of practice change implemented: The BAIHSC programme was developed collaboratively between the School of Health, Nursing and Midwifery and the School of Business and Enterprise. The programme is targeted at those who currently work within health, social care and the third sector either in care or administrative roles who not want to undertake vocational programmes, such as nursing, but want the opportunity to progress within their chosen field. The BAIHSC programme equips them with an essential set of graduate skills necessary for a future career within the sector.

The aims of the programme are to develop graduate skills required for the changing landscape of health and social care, enabling graduates to support the most vulnerable in society through the delivery of evidence-based, integrated, person-centred services. This is developed through a shared understanding of integrated service provision – including the study of policy, practice, factors that influence health and social welfare and person-centred care. This then leads onto the development of professional, leadership and management skills enabling graduates to contribute confidently to evidence-based practice, informed by a value base of rights and respect for all within an integrated service.

The educational focus of the programme builds on existing knowledge and skills viewing the students as co-producers, thus adopting and supporting the philosophy underpinning

integration. The aim is to enable students to develop academically, personally and professionally supporting the concept of lifelong and career-long learning.

Key findings: The BAIHSC programme brings together students from various backgrounds and experiences who often lack confidence in their own capabilities and in valuing the role they play in the delivery of services. Students develop reflective and critical thinking skills, together with the application of evidence-based solutions, to justify the care and support provided. This reflects an asset-based approach to learning, recognising strengths and helping them feel they can contribute to their own educational growth. This is supported and encouraged through shared experiences and recognition of the importance of the roles they play in achieving positive outcomes for the people requiring their service. This in turn promotes confidence and autonomous decision making, which, the programme team view, as a key aspect of the current integration agenda within Scotland.

From the perspective of the academic staff, a key impact is in recognising that, whilst professional identity is important, the impact that having a shared understanding and valuing the roles played by all health and social staff in the delivery of person-centred services can be a crucial influence in the delivery of an integrated service. This ethos enables a shared and appreciative understanding of the experiences of those using and those providing the service.

Highlights: Although the impact of this programme has not yet been formally evaluated, positive feedback has been obtained through the UK National Student Survey 2015. The results demonstrated 100% participation with 100% of students overwhelmingly satisfied with every aspect of their programme.

The qualitative feedback from this survey highlighted the following:-

"It has given me greater knowledge of what is required in the private and public sectors to provide better care for our ageing population and how complex this provision can be".

"This course is a very good and broad especially if you want to progress in public services".

"I have enjoyed this course very much and feel it has widened my knowledge and will enable me to progress in my career".

"My confidence has dramatically improved since being at university, I am able to present myself in a more positive and confident way. If it wasn't for the lecturers and my colleagues, I would not be as confident as I am now".

"As a very mature student, it has definitely increased my confidence and made me very self-aware".

Conclusion: The programme continues to develop with an increasing number of applicants recognising the value of this degree to their work and ongoing career progression.

People who graduate with this degree will have a considerable amount they can bring to integrated services. This is not only from the graduate skills they have developed but also from their own personal and professional experiences.

Finally, employers need to recognise the untapped talent they often have within their workforce who already influencing person-centred and integrated services. Providing staff with graduate skills will only enhance this further and enrich the services delivered.

References:

1- Mussellbrook, K. Imaging the future workforce. Glasgow: Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services. 2013.

2- Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014. 2014 asp 9, Edinburgh: The Stationery Office.

3- Scottish Government. Topics: Health and Social Care Policy and Legislation: Integration of Health and Social Care: Principles. 2014. Available from: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Policy/Adult-Health-SocialCare-Integration/Principles> [Accessed: 20th March 2015]

Keywords: undergraduate education; asset-based learning; personal and professional growth; co-production
