



South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust Mentorship support plan

Introduction

Mentoring is a key element of the professional life of the paramedic, and is the underpinning factor that supports student and qualified staff as they develop their clinical and professional skills. Mentoring has been formalised in the ambulance services recently following the College of Paramedics Curriculum Framework recommendations in 2014.

The recent Placement Tariff Paper suggested that paramedic mentors supporting learners in the workplace in ambulance services are provided with an update on an annual basis. In the College of Paramedics Practice Educator Guidance Handbook (2017) it states that practice based education is a driver in the continued evolution and development of the profession and it is seen as a means of achieving high professional standards and quality of care. It recommends continuing professional lifelong learning and education for the practice educator, and that they should maintain a portfolio of evidence that documents their experience and learning. In addition it recommends the change from the mentor title to practice educator title as the role evolves.

The College of Paramedics (2017) also recommends a UK voluntary register of practice educators, to develop a community of practice and virtual network to support further learning, education and development and peer support that will allow transferability between employers. The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registrant is required to maintain a portfolio of clinical development and this should be built on with evidence of development in an educator role. In the portfolio the practice educators should document the progress and development of the learner, and reflect on and record events for their own development. This should include discussing feedback from the learner to support their development.

The Handbook also recommends the demonstration of the following competencies:

- The maintenance of HCPC Registration;
- To uphold values of person-centred professionalism;
- To have an understanding of the policies of the College of Paramedics, and associated educational institutions;
- To know the roles and responsibilities of a practice educator;
- To support and facilitate learning - including all HCPs;
- To understand and apply the evolving scope of practice as a practice educators;
- To understand the educational requirements and scope of practice of learners;
- To undertake and obtain a recognised practice educators award;
- To engage in ongoing continuing personal and professional development) CPPD;



- To understand the value of wellbeing and resilience;
- To develop and expand their communication skills, e.g. feedback;
- To demonstrate and promote the values of practice education.

The Handbook states that the CPPD should include:

- Leader: application recruitment interviews, action learning sets in the workplace and presentations to others on relevant topics of practice;
- Role Model: gathering 360° feedback from learners, peers, service users and supervisors to understand how you are seen by others;
- Coach: personality assessment and analysis, e.g. Honey and Mumford Learning styles, and reflective accounts on feedback the practice educator delivers to learners;
- Teacher: support the delivery of education of learners, e.g. skills lessons, peer review and presentations of specialist subjects;
- Mentor: shadow and observed an experienced practice educators, complete a debriefing skills course;
- Assessor: complete an annual review of your practice (specific to education), assist in Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs).

The Mentors, and university students, are supported by Practice Placement Coordinators (PPCs), one in each division. The Learning and Development Officers responsible for the mentor training and the CPD Lead for the Learning and Development Department work closely with the PPCs and ROC to ensure records of training are updated on GRS and ESR and to ensure that the learners allocated to the Trust are supported by qualified mentors.

Mentorship Training

In conjunction with its partnership universities the Trust offers a range of courses to ensure that the paramedic workforce obtains a mentorship qualification to meet the College of Paramedic's recommendations (2014), HCPC Standards of education and training (2017), that detail the requirements of placement providers and the HEE Learning Agreement and our partner universities workplace agreements. These courses include the following:

- UWE distance learning mentorship course: unaccredited.
- SWAST/Plymouth University Partnership course face to face mentorship course: unaccredited.
- SWAST/Plymouth University Partnership face to face mentorship courses: accredited level 6 and level 7.
- SWAST/Plymouth University Partnership face to face clinical supervision course: accredited level 6.
- UWE distance learning mentorship top up: accredited level 7.



In addition, in order to train its existing paramedics and NQPs the Trust is developing an on line distance learning mentorship course. This course is intended to be available in quarter 4 of 2019.

The Trust's CPD Department offers staff with no mentor qualification access to the above courses. At the moment this is focused on the Trust's NQPs and staff that are mentoring with no qualification. In the future it is intended to qualify all Band 6 Paramedics and NQP staff in the Trust using above courses.

New employees joining the Trust can register a previously gained mentorship qualification or equivalent from a previous employment or period of study.

*This is planned to be made available via video link during the Covid 19 Pandemic – This may continue as an option in the future for geographically hard to access areas.

Mentor Update Training

The Trust intends to meet the requirements of the College of Paramedics (2017) and the HCPC (2017) for mentor update training using a blended learning approach. This training will be carried out using a three year cycle. The cycle includes 7.5 hours of face to face training, up to 2.5 hours Workbook completion and a up to 2.5 hours completing an on line resource.

The Trust has over 500 paramedics mentoring across its 3 divisions. We have offered 620 places on the face to face course in 2019 – 2020. The Trust intends to offer a further 360 places in 2020 – 2021. They must be registered with the relevant practice placement coordinator to mentor a BSc or Apprenticeship student, and they must have a recognised mentor qualification to receive the incentives.

The resources will be reviewed on a three yearly basis to meet the changes to mentoring research, the programme curriculum at the partner universities, the differing internal development programmes being used by the Trust and feedback from the practice placement coordinators on common issues and problems. In the three resources the aim of the resource is similar but due to the method of update and the need for a wider scope of practice (College of Paramedics 2017) the objectives are slightly different. The 3 models of Update Training and their aims and objectives for this coming year are summarised below:

a) Workbook Update Training:

The Workbook will be carried out over a maximum of 2.5 hours, and provides CPD evidence of an annual update. It can be accessed on the ESR National Learning Management System. It will cover: professional aspects of mentoring including autonomy, accountability, responsibility and delegation of responsibility and the HCPC



Standards relevant to the role; the role and responsibilities of the practice educators; feedback and reflection and the practice placement assessment process.

It is intended to make this an on line resource using the ESR on line training facility in the future to allow staff access to this training as part of their mandatory training.

b) Face to Face Classroom Based Up Date Training:

The Face to Face course will be carried out over 7.5 hours and will provide CPD evidence of an annual update. This course will be facilitated by a qualified mentor working in a Practice Placement Coordinator or Learning and Development Officer role. It will cover: relationships between the learner and the mentor; feedback; the principles of assessment; professional aspects including autonomy, accountability, responsibility and delegation of responsibility and the HCPC Standards relevant to the role; the changes to the partner university curriculum and the completion of the learning activities using the current local curriculum framework and assessment tools.

c) On Line Update Training:

This will be carried out over 2.5 hours, and will review the practice educator's current knowledge in the mentoring role and provide CPD evidence of an annual update. It will allow them to reflect on their experiences of mentoring in practice and update and develop their knowledge of contemporary mentoring in practice. It will use scenario based learning to cover: supporting learning and assessment in practice including feedback and learning support needs; support mechanisms in place for mentors and professional aspects of mentoring professional aspects including autonomy, accountability, responsibility and delegation of responsibility and the HCPC Standards relevant to the role.

This resource is in development at the moment and it is hoped will be available shortly using the ESR on line training facility in the future to allow staff access to this training as part of their mandatory training.

Additional Development for Practice Educators

In addition practice educators and students can access a SWAST led CPD program that focuses on the core clinical skills that may not be regularly experienced in practice. These courses are intended to promote skill retention and learning through simulation for practice educators and provide competency sign off for students.

The practice educators also participate in an annual Learning and Development Review (LDR) conducted by a Learning and Development Officer in the operational environment. The LDR is intended to review their performance in practice with real time patients and



clinical situations and to measure their performance against given parameters to ensure their practice is to the required standards. Remedial Training is provided where required.

Training Records

In order to ensure that all staff requiring a mentor qualification are provided with a qualification course as soon as practicable all practice educators mentoring, or available to mentor students in the Trust are detailed on a divisional database held by the divisional practice placement coordinators. This database has details of their mentor qualifications, and also meets the local requirement for a mentor database (College of Paramedics 2017).

The mentor qualification information is also sent to the ROC Department Lead for entry onto the GRS System. This will ensure that when ROC administrators allocate mentors to a student that they are aware if the paramedic is qualified or not.

The mentor qualification courses are entered onto the Electronic Staff Records (ESR) system to ensure that each staff member's qualifications are registered on their personal training record. In addition, staff who attend or participate in one of the mentor update resources, will be entered onto ESR.