GUIDE TO HUB AND SPOKE PRACTICE
LEARNING IN MENTAL HEALTH NURSING

January 2013
Introduction to the Practice Learning Model

The School of Nursing and Midwifery, together with NHS Grampian, NHS Orkney and NHS Shetland, use a Hub and Spoke approach as the preferred model for practice learning within the mental health services. This approach is used to enhance the mentor experience and promote quality, appropriate and patient-centred learning experiences for students. Mental health nursing students are allocated one HUB placement which they attend for one placement in each stage of their programme. The placement is identified following consultation with the student as we aim to provide the HUB in an area of interest for each student. In addition, the student will have alternate clinical experiences during each stage of the programme, where the student will focus on learning specific to their field of practice to enable them to achieve the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) generic and field specific competencies, essential skills clusters and progression points.

It may be possible that the experiences gained during HUB placements can be enhanced by the student undertaking SPOKE learning experiences/placements. These are linked to the HUB placement speciality or service and aim to reflect the patient/service user journey so that a deeper understanding of their experience can be gained. The SPOKE learning experiences/placements can also provide inter-professional and inter-agency learning opportunities. The student will also gain understanding of how mental health services are provided and be able to develop their professional skills to achieve the requirements of the programme through completing a range of breadth placements. The breadth experiences will complement the students HUB placement, meeting the NMC requirement for students to gain experiences in community, adult and older adult services. Also included within our programme will be an allocated placement within a speciality area to enhance the overall student experience.

This placement model was introduced to the School in 2009 when the pre-registration nursing curriculum was updated to reflect the Review of Mental Health Nursing, Rights, Relationships and Recovery (2006). In addition, student and mentor feedback has been included in changes made to the approach which is designed to meet the following points:

- Creates consistency of student experience.
- Allows students to better understand service provision from the patients’ perspective.
- Enhances sense of belonging to placement area.
- Increases ownership of practice learning for mentors and students.
- Promotes integration of theory into mental health practice.
- Increases the student’s knowledge and understanding of mental health services, through the patient experience.

Many placement areas can be used as both a HUB and SPOKE with some being used as a SPOKE only; learning experiences within these can be one-off or on a regular basis, e.g. weekly, if feasible, or annually. The student will return to their HUB each year which enables both student and mentor to plan future learning and development, where appropriate.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, HUB placements cannot be changed and, if required, any changes will be facilitated by the University.
Each placement area will have identified SPOKE areas which are specific and mapped to the needs of patients/service users or the service provided. Individual clinical areas are responsible for identifying these learning opportunities and negotiations between mentor and student can take place to ensure that learning needs are being met. SPOKE experiences complement the learning expected of a student by providing depth and they should be appropriate for the stage of the programme, the patient/service user journey, carers’ experiences and the student’s individual needs.

The student’s journey through their programme can take a variety of routes and overleaf are some examples of a student’s placement allocation.
### Example 1 - Placement Options: Older Adult

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Older Adult HUB</th>
<th>Placement 1</th>
<th>Placement 2</th>
<th>Placement 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 1</td>
<td>Older Adult HUB - Ward placement</td>
<td>Adult - Community Grampian or Moray</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 2</td>
<td>Specialism placement</td>
<td>Older Adult HUB - Ward placement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 3</td>
<td>Older Adult - Community Orkney, Shetland</td>
<td>Acute Adult - Ward placement</td>
<td>Older Adult HUB - Ward placement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example 2 - Placement Options: Community Adult

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Adult HUB</th>
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<th>Placement 2</th>
<th>Placement 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 1</td>
<td>Adult Community HUB – Grampian, Moray or Islands</td>
<td>Older Adult – Ward placement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 2</td>
<td>Acute Adult – Ward placement</td>
<td>Adult Community HUB – Grampian, Moray or Islands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 3</td>
<td>Older Adult - Community</td>
<td>Specialism placement</td>
<td>Adult Community HUB – Grampian, Moray or Islands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example 3 - Placement Options: Specialism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialism HUB</th>
<th>Placement 1</th>
<th>Placement 2</th>
<th>Placement 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 1</td>
<td>Specialism HUB – i.e. forensic, YPD, SMS</td>
<td>Older Adult – Ward placement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 2</td>
<td>Acute Adult – Ward placement</td>
<td>Specialism HUB – i.e. forensic, YPD, SMS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 3</td>
<td>Adult – Community</td>
<td>Specialism – Ward placement</td>
<td>Specialism HUB – i.e. forensic, YPD, SMS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Practice learning HUB placements should:

- Have identified SPOKE placements which are relevant to their area and patient/service user needs for discussion with a student to identify additional learning experiences/opportunities whilst on placement.

- Enable students to take responsibility for arranging their SPOKE experiences with assistance from their mentor, if required. Practice placements should have already been liaised with SPOKE areas to confirm collaboration for learning experiences.

- Consider length of SPOKE placements: this can increase according to the student’s stage of the programme and the learning objectives set for the particular placement period. For example:
  - **Insight visits** – these can be a half day, full day or up to three day experiences.
  - **Regular attachment** – this can be a half day or a full day per week within a service or an annual return.
  - **Blocks** of learning up to 4 weeks, particularly if patient/service user is transferred to another care environment, such as admission to hospital from community or transfer home (or island setting – Appendix 1), or where there is a reciprocal arrangement in place agreed by Practice Education Facilitator and Practice Education Lecturer.

- Allow student to experience SPOKES within each HUB placement and have clear learning objectives devised in consultation with their mentor. The objectives should be recorded in the designated page within the student’s Practice Learning Assessment Documentation (PLAD). This experience should be commented upon on completion of the SPOKE by the person facilitating the SPOKE experience.

- SPOKE experiences should be taken into account when the overall assessment of the student’s performance is carried out so that the learning and development which has taken place contributes actively to final comments and grade awarded.

- Where appropriate, seek feedback from patients/service users and carers with whom the student has had involvement and complete a Service Users/Carers Review sheet (within the PLAD) which contributes actively to final comments and grade awarded.
Process within Placement (Mentor and Student)

When a student commences their placement, the following process should be undertaken:

- The induction process should be carried out as usual.
- Identification of learning objectives for the placement should be recorded in the PLAD by both student and mentor.
- Student and mentor should discuss development needs and identify relevant SPOKE experiences and opportunities within the clinical area.
- Further SPOKE opportunities can be discussed in relation to student needs, particularly around the NMC requirements, and unique elements of a patient’s/service user’s journey, and be facilitated, where possible.
- The student should ensure that all SPOKE experiences, irrespective of length of time, are recorded in their PLAD. This includes: dates, type of experience, objectives for SPOKE and comments on achievement from the experience. This is especially important if the SPOKE has been arranged to meet an NMC competency or essential skill.
- On meeting towards the end of the placement period, learning from the SPOKE experiences should be considered by the mentor, and contribute towards the overall assessment of the student’s performance. At this point the mentor can agree on the NMC competencies, essential skills clusters and progression points to be signed off for the overall experience. Arrangements may be made with other mentors to sign off particular skills being facilitated on a SPOKE experience.
- Discussion may take place about future learning and development plans for when the student returns to their HUB or alternative placement in order to give direction to the student’s theoretical and clinical learning.

SPOKE Experiences

Placements that are used as HUB placements, as well as those which are SPOKE only, need to agree on the scope of being used as a SPOKE experience. SPOKE placements will then be able to ‘offer’ such exposures or experiences in a manner that is managed, relevant to the student’s learning needs, valuable to the student and the service, and achievable in terms of capacity and service delivery.

Requirements when SPOKES are in Non-NHS Environments

Some SPOKES can be in areas which are independently funded to meet the needs of one particular client group, or be specific within a certain location. A placement within these areas adds an important dimension to the student’s learning experience of the patient’s/service user’s journey, offering insight into how organisations and agencies provide services to enable people with health issues and their carers to live with, and manage, their situation. On completion of this experience, the student will record their learning and may invite the facilitator to comment on their performance and/or involvement.
Mentors and teams who wish to facilitate student access to non-NHS services or organisations, especially those in the 3rd sector, may find it helpful to contact the Practice Education Facilitator (PEF) or Practice Education Lecturer (PEL) for support.

**When should a Student attend a SPOKE Experience?**

Learning experiences should be available within all placements. However, the mentor and the student need to discuss and agree the expectations required for successful completion of their placement. The Nursing and Midwifery Council make it clear that all students should gain depth and breadth of clinical learning and the HUB and SPOKE model which is in use facilitates the achievement of this aim.

Learning opportunities which enhance students’ knowledge and skills of nursing should be viewed as positive and recorded in their PLAD.

SPOKE learning is negotiated between the mentor, the student and the SPOKE area and should be related to the patient’s/service user’s journey or student’s development needs. Below is guidance on good practice to ensure equity and fairness of experiences; however, some areas may have set up an approach that is working for them that is slightly different:

**Stage 1**

- Students may have a minimum of two insight SPOKE experiences (from 1 - 3 days duration) and/or one longer block SPOKE placement of 2 weeks duration in their HUB.

**Stage 2**

- Students may benefit from a range of short and longer SPOKE experiences to consolidate learning and development of skills. The identification of SPOKES can be dependent on many aspects, such as the patient’s/service user’s experience, the student’s need and clinical activity. However, SPOKES may consist of 3 – 4 insight SPOKES and one block SPOKE, of up to a total 4 weeks from their HUB placement.

**Stage 3**

- Students at this stage would be expected to identify and organise their own SPOKE experiences following discussion with their mentor and on the basis of their experiences in stages 1 and 2 and the relationships they have developed with other services and clinical areas.
- These experiences should be able to demonstrate understanding and application of NMC competencies for this stage of the programme.

**Points for Consideration**

Students may, in some instances, return to the same SPOKE experience each year to consolidate learning, e.g. islands, specialist services, etc.

For all SPOKE experiences, students must prepare specific learning outcomes and document them in their Practice Learning and Assessment Document (PLAD) prior to commencing the SPOKE placement. If possible, these should be emailed to the person facilitating the experience ahead of the placement.
Please note that the above guidance reflects basic requirements, but any arrangements should fit into the agreed objectives for the student’s development and overall progress.

**Students requiring Reasonable Adjustments**

Where a student has reasonable adjustments in place, such as use of equipment and/or other measures, e.g. extra time for writing notes, the requirements will also apply during SPOKE experiences and it will be recorded within the student’s Practice Learning Assessment Document (PLAD). The student will take on the responsibility to ensure that SPOKE facilitators are aware of any reasonable adjustments unless there is a need for a risk assessment to be carried out. In this situation, the risk assessment will be arranged by the School’s Disability Officer.

**Cause for Concern Process**

If a student’s performance is not meeting the NMC domains/competencies, then the normal process for raising a cause for concern should be implemented with the student, the mentor and the appropriate Practice Education Team member.
Appendix 1: Process for Managing SPOKE Placements to Orkney

SPOKE placements will normally be facilitated when students have HUB placements within the Acute Admission wards at RCH that take patients from Orkney. This is in order to follow the patient journey before and after admission to an acute ward on the mainland. However, other students will be considered where they are able to articulate clear learning outcomes for a SPOKE placement in Orkney.

Students will negotiate the support of the HUB placement mentor to take forward proposals for a SPOKE placement in Orkney. This might be during the HUB placement later in the student’s course, e.g. proposal raised in Stage 1 for a SPOKE in Stage 2, or raised in Stage 2 for a SPOKE in Stage 3, etc. A student may return for a SPOKE placement in stages 2 and 3. An Orkney SPOKE will be a minimum of 3 weeks and a maximum of 4 weeks for each student.

Where a student wishes to have a SPOKE Placement in Orkney and this is agreed by the HUB placement mentor, the student should contact the Practice Education Facilitator (PEF) for mental health nursing, or the Practice Education Lecturer (PEL) for mental health nursing. The PEF or PEL will give the final go ahead for the SPOKE placement to be organised following consultation with colleagues in Orkney.

Students must prepare specific learning outcomes for the SPOKE placement in Orkney and document them in their Practice Learning and Assessment Document (PLAD) prior to commencing the SPOKE placement. Students should be encouraged to email their proposed learning outcomes to the person managing placements within the designated area (details available from PEL) ahead of time. Each student will have a named mentor for the duration of their SPOKE placement. If students plan to drive to Orkney, they must ensure that they follow the procedures associated with car insurance and travel expenses in liaison with the University. Travel expenses must be approved before students make the decision to take their car. Details on how to complete this process can be found on the Practice Education web page.

Travel expenses accrued on the SPOKE placement must be reasonable. If unsure about the extent of expenses a learning experience might attract, e.g. following up small caseload of clients by car, the student or mentor should liaise with Linda Anderson. Linda will consult with the PEL or Programme Leader if necessary.

The named mentor can sign off the proficiencies set out within the PLAD where they are satisfied the student has demonstrated achievement of the proficiencies. The student and named mentor should record in the PLAD their assessment of the student’s performance on the SPOKE and the learning achieved. The named mentor may wish to liaise with the student’s named mentor in the HUB placement for the purposes of informing the assessment of student performance and the final grade awarded.