



Diversity, !9 '7Ù«Â € Tg U VŽ P

THE ISSUES

Research to date

We have undertaken:

- A review of literature which found that there is a lack of conceptualisation and focus regarding mechanisms to encourage and support wider diversity of entrant to the profession. Interviews with 70 students and recent graduates from NHS-funded programmes.
- A review of institutional strategies to widen participation in health.
- A survey of 806 registered nurses responded to the online survey which sought to explore attitudes towards diversity.

In summary our research has discovered:

- A lack of clarity about what diversity and WP mean in nurse education context, including identification of target groups, recognition of intersectionality, and looking beyond access across the student lifecycle. Tendency to address at a generic level or to focus on a single aspect of diversity, such as race or age.
- A stronger focus on access, and less focus on retention and success in higher education, and progression into and retention in the workplace.
- Limited evidence base about how to expand participation and increase diversity and success, and existing research and interventions focus on what students lack, rather than the richness of what they bring to nurse education.
- Concern amongst existing students and workforce that funding changes will reduce diversity, and particular concern with regards to some WP groups.
- The importance of staff diversity for patient care and wellbeing.

Stakeholder contributors

Nursing students from Bournemouth University shared with participants their experiences, including what attracted them to study nursing, the challenges experiences, and the factors that have enabled them to be successful. Their stories were engaging and powerful, and reinforced the research findings demonstrating the importance of a passion for nursing, nurtured by exposure to healthcare professionals, the importance of financial support, and the role of family, friends and staff in supporting students to be successful.

GROUP DISCUSSION

During the afternoon those attending the day were asked to identify the strategies that will sustain the nursing workforce, and consider what evidence would be needed to implement these. A world café approach was adopted, and attendees moved around the room and asked to discuss:

Initiatives for widening **access** to nursing courses

Initiatives to improve diverse student **retention and completion**

Initiatives to support diverse student **progression into professional practice**

Finally, the attendees were asked to consider what evidence would be needed to implement these initiatives.

Access

With regards to access to nursing courses the discussion focused on improving an awareness of the career opportunities for nurses and promoting this to a more diverse workforce.

Incentives for mature students such as financial support was highlighted. It was felt that this should start with children at primary school age. They thought that Trusts should provide clearer career pathways for HCA's that would include apprenticeships, and associate nursing roles. There was a recommendation for stronger relationships between universities and NHS Trusts.

There was no mention for incentives for other groups to improve access to nurse education, such as those with disabilities, or men. Or career guidance in Secondary schools.

In response to the evidence required to support these initiatives, it was felt that there should be more information around the costs and benefits of the different funding streams for student nurses. Perhaps consideration of whether an HCA who converts to a nursing degree programme has a long term financial deficit. They also suggested that HCA's should be directed to access nurse education for the apprenticeship route, since this group would already have 'environmental connections'. Recruitment from other care providers such as HCA's from residential settings should also be considered.

Retention and Success

Comments were made around supporting students whilst in practice, from supportive mentors, practice educators and clinical supervision. The competing demands of academic assignments and placement cause additional pressure for students. Peer support from students in the year above in addition to managing student's expectations were suggested as additional factors that could support retention.

In response to the evidence required to support these initiatives it was felt that there was a need to identify the number of hours student work, particularly in placement and including travel time to different placements. With students now paying for their degrees the implications of them working long anti-social hours in a variety of locations may impact upon their ability to do this and undertake part-time work to supplement their incomes.

Unlike other non-health care students, nursing students only have limited holidays which again reduces their ability to supplement their income during the summer.

Other evidence that needs to be collected is the impact of disability on students learning time.

Progression to Professional Practice

Under this theme the subject of the image of nursing as a professional career was discussed. The impact of negative media coverage may prevent students from choosing to work in the NHS when they complete their course. A focus of the discussion was around encouraging

