

Assessment and Learning in Practice Settings (ALPS)

ALPS Embedding Pilots

Final Report

Please return the completed report to the ALPS Mobile Technologies Project Manager (Tamsin Treasure-Jones – t.treasure-jones@leeds.ac.uk) by 26th April (unless another date has been agreed).

1. Project title

Exploring and Reducing the Barriers to Service User Engagement with the ALPS Assessment Suite – A Multi-Disciplinary Approach.
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2. Project leader

Title	Mrs		
First name	Lisa	Last name	Ward
Email	L.Ward@hud.ac.uk		

3. Total Funding Agreed: £4,672

4. Project Plan and Progress

i) Have there been any changes to the project plan since your interim report? If so then please indicate what changes have been made and why.

No changes have been made to the project.

ii) Have you completed all the activities that you set out in the original project plan?

Yes

iii) Did the project hit any problems and if so how did you overcome them?

No

5. Project Report

In your original proposal you identified (shown below) the results and outcomes you expected to be able to include in the final report.

How the project was managed:

The Project was managed on a day to day basis by Steve Lyon a senior lecturer who is part of the mental health team. Periodic review of progress was made and reported to the Universities ALPS Steering Committee, and the Academic Dean. Service users and carers were part of a project planning team.

How Service users and carers were recruited to the project

This was on a voluntary basis with existing service users (already involved with the University) being joined by three additional service users. These were recruited through the University's contact with local service user group and on the understanding that they would receive training through a mixture of formal training and a mentoring arrangement. They were aware of the

supportive provision and how this would keep them safe. The financial arrangements were explained and agreed prior to their full involvement. Service users were recruited on the basis of their willingness and availability on the dates planned.

How the 3 involvement training sessions went

Formal training consisted of an understanding of the assessment process and their role within it. Service users and carers were trained in what to expect from a second year mental health student nurse and how to feedback comments in a supportive but honest manner. They were introduced to processes for keeping safe in role plays and what role de-briefing played in this. An experienced service user demonstrated the role play process and service users took advantage of coaching in a 'mock situation'. They were familiarised with the assessment tools to be used and had opportunity to use these in simulated situations. Service users were frequently asked about their confidence with the task.

How the actual assessment of students was carried out

Students spent a day preparing for the interviews where they explored what would be expected of them in a 15 minute assessment with a 'client'. Assessments were planned allowing for frequent breaks for service users to avoid fatigue and to monitor progress. Each student was allocated 15 minutes in which they engaged with the service user. There was then a 15 minute interval where assessment feedback was collated, and students provided with time to self evaluate. The feedback process was a well managed and constructive process. Students were asked for their own reflections, followed by feedback from the 'client', then service user as assessor provided feedback, and the process finished with a professional providing the student with observations. Students were asked to reflect on their performance and feedback and to design their own development plan for implementation prior to summative assessment.

Key learning points from each of the groups involved:

- **Academics**

The process of service user and carer involvement in assessment, by its very nature, was a complex one. The service user desire for a positive student experience created for some challenges but which ensured the student experience was a better managed process – ie making sure the fine details were in place. Service users were very aware of the need to have their comments listened to and there is a need to be careful not to 'rush' the design phase of the assessment. The need to help students 'manage their nerves' is a theme that needs to be carefully reflected upon.

- **Students**

More confident students performed better than less confident ones. This showed in some of the ways in which 'demonstrating respect' was compromised by student anxiety. Less confident students asked multiple questions, did not listen to answers and moved too quickly towards solution. Some students managed their anxiety by being dismissive towards the assessment method, and this undermined their performance. Students were provided with an excellent opportunity to self assess their skills and engage in problem solving to achieve in areas they felt were in need of development.

- **Student peers**

Feedback is a skilled process, and as such can be an acquired skill. More time is required to develop the student's ability to provide feedback in a constructive and honest manner and this needs better management within the classroom. Student peers need to be better prepared to prevent the temptation to deal with important issues in a superficial manner especially involving friends. Groups should be mixed in a way that prevents friends being selected as the ones that

give peer feedback.

- **Service users and carers**

Fascinating insights into service user involvement were offered from the service users. The level of support offered each other is a valuable facility, and one that provided service users with a very satisfying and developmental experience. Service users felt very much empowered and respected during the project, although there was at times a view that their opinions were 'sidelined' for the sake of expediency. Insights into keeping safe in role play were worked through. Most service users felt more comfortable using own material but this had to be material that was not in the recent past and had been worked on – in other words, it did not cause too much distress to the client. Service users were both honest and sensitive to the feelings of students. They were self aware of their own need to rescue the anxious student, and they managed this 'in situ' with great skills and flair. Sometimes, service users were genuinely low in mood in conversation with students, and this had to be taken into account when assessing the student and certainly when feeding back to the student. Service users want to go on to demonstrating good practice in the classroom i.e. service user as professional – "How it could be done". They also want to be involved in a class debriefing and presentation of more complex issues.

Use of the ALPS Suite

The paper based ALPS Assessment suite was used throughout the pilot. This allowed for the assessment interview process to be the learning driver rather than the recording of the assessment process. It is important to get the assessment process right and to feel confident with the tools prior to adopting a more technical approach, and there were already many variables present in the assessment process. Further assessments using the same group could be done using more technology.

Lesson learned

- Preparation of both service user and carer and student needs to be (and was) comprehensive.
- Student peers require much more training than was allowed.
- There needs to be a close look at the management of student anxiety in assessment.
- The assessment process and feedback was a constructive and professional one.
- Service users can be skillful mentors to new people joining the project.
- The 15 minute role play provides an excellent opportunity for students to practice most of the interpersonal skills required by a second year mental health nurse, and becomes a basis for development, assessment, and feedback.

Professional practice

Points of good practice to embed

- Mentorship arrangement can be reinforced. There is the start of a very useful process whereby both the academic and experienced service user can support the new service user in the process of role play and assessment.
- The preparation of students should be repeated and provide an opportunity to utilise the ALPS tools and the experience of providing peer feedback.
- The way in which the assessment was managed should be repeated.

Please can you report on your project below, describing the final outcomes of your project and commenting on how these compare to those you had anticipated.

The project outcomes was consistent with the project specification.

6. Barrier and Embedding Approach

In your original proposal you outlined (question 7) the barrier to embedding that your project was addressing.

Three main barriers have been perceived:

- 1 Acceptability to service users: this will be addressed by involving service users from the project initiation. Lisa Ward an ex-service user drafted the bid. The project would be service user focused with an academic lead. Involvement would help to make realistic scenarios. Feedback to students would ensure the project is worthwhile and not tokenism.
- 2 Engagement of academic colleagues: the project has both an academic and a project management committed to the successful implementation of the project. The project has strong support from the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching), ALPS site lead and Academic Lead for Service User and Carer Involvement. Dissemination activities and 'word of mouth' would be used to highlight the project approach to colleagues.
- 3 Barriers in practice: an exploration of the SU&C role. Robust feedback and evaluations will assist in exploring the sensitivities of SU&C engagement with student assessment in practice.

Please explain below to what extent your approach has overcome this barrier and how you evaluated this.

Barrier 1 - Initial feedback from the service users involved in the project have found the experience to be worthwhile.

Barrier 2 - The project was disseminated at the recent ALPS Conference. Feedback from participants was positive and highly supportive of the project. Service users were involved in the presentation write up. Further opportunities for dissemination are being considered.

Barrier 3 - The service user preparation session was an integral part of the process where ethical guidelines were developed. The process was thoroughly managed and supported before, during and after the project. Service users were fully involved in the design and delivery of the assessment process including feedback. Students valued the comments provided by service users.

There has been robust feedback provided to the students. Service Users have been involved in the writing up of the Project.

7. Relevance and transferability of the approach chosen

In your original proposal you explained (question 8) how other ALPS Partners could benefit from your project.

This project, builds upon our existing work in embedding the ALPS suite. It also moves our pedagogical research into a new practice area. Most importantly it engages service users in an innovative, authentic education process aimed directly at the area where students say they need the most support – assessment and feedback.

The lessons learned from this project can easily be transferred to other areas.

Please outline below how Partners are now able to use your results. How can the lessons you've learned help to inform other Partners' embedding decisions?

A key element of being an effective mental health nurse is carrying out assessments on service users. This is a skill that can be difficult to practice in the classroom. These assessments help to train students for what they will be doing in everyday practice, by developing a key skill in a safe and supportive environment.

For many students getting feedback from a service user in a practice setting can be difficult to achieve. There are ethical and practical issues to consider. For example it might be difficult to give feedback if the service user is vulnerable or unwell.

The project has simulated real assessments with service users acting out real scenarios. Most students took the process seriously and the few that did not got feedback on their performance. It was an excellent process, with the ALPS tools used as a strong support and feedback mechanism.

The way in which the assessment tools have been used in this project has demonstrated an method for the effective use of the tools which has been both acceptable and enthusiastically embraced by staff, students and service users. A true partnership approach to assessment and feedback.

A very good model of assessment and feedback including the preparation and management of the Project is one which could be adopted by others. The lessons learned should help navigate other academics away from potential pitfalls. The ethical aspects and their resolution are of value both within and outside the University.

8. Dissemination

Have you written an article for the ALPS Newsletter about your project's work? Have you disseminated the results of your work in any other way or do you have plans to do so?

The Project has been presented at an ALPS Conference. It is hoped to write up the Project for submission to a Journal.

9. Expenditure

Please indicate below the final project expenditure which you are claiming (note that it cannot exceed that agreed at the beginning of the project).

	Original Budget	Actual Expenditure
Time release* All Based on Buy back of teaching rate of £54 per hour Mental Health 3 x 2 hour planning meetings = £324 25 hours in assessments = £1,350 2 x one hour reflection meetings = £108 Academic and project leader spending one day each on report writing 2 x 8 x £54 = £864	£2,646	£2,646
Administrative/secretarial support* Time for administration and project support across the school, from the Service User and Carer Development office and support of academic partners is provided as matched funding and the current ALPS budget.	Nil	Nil
Other assistance (please specify) Engagement of 5 service users Attendance at 3 x 2 hour planning meeting @ £20 each =£300 Acting out Service User Scenarios and feeding back assessment t to students 25 x £54 Pt lecturer fee = £1,350 Attendance at feedback meeting @ £20 each = £100	£1,750	£1600 Plus £150 provisioned for feedback in June.
Training and professional development Included as part of engagement meetings. Training in social work and child nursing complementary. Use of technicians to set up iPhones and other technology complementary.	Nil	Nil
Travel and subsistence For service users as applicable £276	£276	£182.20 Balance of £83.20 to be used for refreshments at feedback meeting.
Consumables Complementary – supported by University <i>*any consumables must be individually detailed and costed.</i>	Nil	Nil
TOTAL	£4672	£4672

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