

What matters to US (Users of Services): discovering and applying user and carer perceptions of the requisite skills and attributes of health and care students to enable shared care and decision making

Project Abstract

Please provide a brief description of your project, including aims and methods.

The **aim** of the proposed project is to deepen and build on understanding of service user and carer perceptions of the professional attributes and behaviours that will enable them to participate in shared understanding and decision making in health and social care. A group of service users and carers (the **US** group) – who have already been prepared to work with West Yorkshire Universities to help students learn – will collaborate with practitioners, students and academic teachers to examine and apply that understanding to the assessment of students in the practice setting.

User and carer involvement in education will be expanded in the project through e-learning as part of a blended learning approach (Priestley et al 2006). This allows sharing of experiences with a wider audience through the use of re-useable learning materials e.g. podcasts and film clips of experiences. Participants have final editorial control over the materials that are produced (Priestley & Hellawell 2007) and, in this project, will co-design the assessment framework for their use.

This proposal provides an opportunity to explore what matters in the communication process and its context to local people who are the recipients of health and social care services and how to ensure their voice in assessment of the delivery of care. It will build on work already undertaken by members of the project group (O'Neill et al 2005; Morris 2006; O'Neill et al 2007) to develop and support patient and community voices in professional learning. Our learning from this has enabled us to identify what helps meaningful, as opposed to token, contribution by the public. The key is recognition of the value of the capacities of users and carers (rather than an emphasis on their deficits and needs) and of their role as co-producers in health, and then applying that to create processes needed for the necessary transformation of relationships in health and social care (Hasman et al 2006; Kilminster et al 2007).

Findings will facilitate more effective means of involving users and carers in the assessment of students' practice learning and inform and support the work of the ALPS common competency group that has identified the attributes of communication from a professional perspective. Understanding from the processes of the project will inform the growing field of patient and public involvement in professional learning (Towle et al 2006; www.leeds.ac.uk/medicine/meu/voices06.index.html) and help underpin their role in involvement in the NHS, outlined in recent initiatives. (DOH 2006; Andersson et al 2007)

Objectives:

- To establish a collaborative inquiry process with the **US** group to explore user and carer understanding and perceptions of the behaviours, attributes and context that health and social care students require for effective communication, shared decision making and partnership working with users and carers

- To conduct a Delphi exercise to widen the inquiry, including a critique of the current ALPS communication competency framework
- To extend the inquiry with practitioners, students, and academic teachers to establish implications for the assessment of students in the practice setting and practice related learning in the academic setting.
- To build on these processes to co-design and test one or more assessment methods.

Method:

The proposal builds on an existing and successful project, the West Yorkshire Service Users and Carers Involvement Induction Training (WYSUCIIT). This was developed by the 'Patients as Teachers' team at Leeds University who provide training and support for service users and carers interested in becoming involved in professional learning. The approach (Patient Learning Journeys) involves users and carers telling their stories to share their experiences in health and social care, evaluating what could have been done by the professionals, and also by themselves, to improve relationships and outcomes, and, finally, considering how to help learners gain from their experience. The workshops are led and facilitated by an individual who has experience both as a carer and educator working with a co-facilitator who is a service user, in a cascade approach. The group of users and carers has developed in this way to form the **US** group.

The steering group for the WYSUCIIT project involves 4 regional Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the Universities of Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, and Leeds Metropolitan University. These HEI's provide an extensive range of programmes that encompass the complete spectrum of health and social care. Individuals will be recruited from the **US** group of the WYSUCIT project to further examine their experiences of communication, involvement in decisions in care and partnership working in the practice setting.

A modified Delphi technique will be used to seek a consensus of opinion with health and social care users/carers and students about the behaviour and communication strategies that support user and carer active engagement in the decision making process in care. The Delphi technique is a survey technique that allows systematic, anonymous refinement of expert opinion to reach a consensus about a topic (Walker 1994). It is a method that helps to inform decisions about practice and it has been used to determine service user preferences (Lowe et al 1995). The procedure includes the selection of informed people or experts – in this case the service users and carers that have undergone the WYSUCIIT process (the **US** group), medical, health and social care students and educators – to respond to a series of questionnaires. Two members of the group have conducted Delphi inquiries (JP and SS).

The first round of the study will involve focus groups of users and carers who have been through the Patient Learning Journeys programme, to identify and prioritise the attributes, skills and behaviours that service users and carers expect in the communication process with health and social care professionals, to enable them to share understanding, decision making and care. The focus groups will be facilitated by an individual who has experience both as a carer and educator, working with a co-facilitator who is a service user. Discussion will build on the work already done in the Patient Learning Journey workshops and include reflexive story telling around communication processes.

The specific issues identified in these focus groups will be shared with focus groups of students, to explore commonalities and differences, and to lay further foundations of a co-development process of assessment criteria and methods, to run parallel to the defining Delphi inquiry. A joint user/care and student group will then co-design a self-evaluation tool for reflection on interaction between practice students/professionals and service users. This would be used by the service user as part of a diary of their experiences and by the student in a personal and professional development portfolio.

The issues will also be circulated to a larger sample including the members of the WYSUCIIT group, academics in health and social care education and a different sample of medical, health and social care students to rank the issues identified and reach a consensus of opinion. Analysis of the findings from the focus groups and Delphi will include the degree of correlation between service user/carer and student perceptions.

As part of the process, participants will be asked for permission to record the discussions at the focus groups, and informed consent will also be obtained to develop the stories and discussion as re-useable learning materials, in the form of podcasts, or film clips in the teaching of communication and related skills. A series of follow up days will be held to debrief the focus groups, evaluate the self-evaluation tool, co-design assessment frameworks and edit materials.

The findings of the final stage of the Delphi and focus groups study will be applied in a range of ways:

- To inform the design of assessment tools for the core common competencies of the ALPS project.
- To provide a reference group for validation and co-creation of assessment methods for current and developing teaching (eg., OSCE stations, scenarios for simulated patients, reflective portfolios).

Ethical approval will not be required from the regional research ethics committee for this proposal as individuals come from voluntary groups. Approval will be obtained at each of the participating HEIs in accordance with normal practice.

References

Andersson E, Tritter J, Wilson R (2007). *Health democracy: the future of involvement in health and social care*. INVOLVE/NHS Centre for Involvement, Warwick

Department of Health (2006) *A Stronger Local Voice: A framework for creating a stronger local voice in the development of health and social care services*. DoH, London.

Hasman A, Coulter A, Askham J (2006). *Education for Partnership*. Picker Institute, Oxford.

Kilminster S, Roberts T and Morris P (2007). *Incorporating patients' assessments into Objective Structured Clinical Examinations*. Education for Health. In press

Lowe JB et al (1995) *Community perceptions of bowel cancer: a survey of Queenslanders*. In Bowles N. (1999) *The Delphi Technique*. Nursing Standard. 13 (45) 32-35

Morris P and O'Neill F (2006) *Preparing for Patient-Centred Practice: Developing the Patient Voice in Health Professional Learning*. Paper presented at Beyond Reflective Practice conference, www.leeds.ac.uk/medicine/meu/lifelong06.index.html .

Morris P (2006). *The Patient Voice in Doctors' Learning*. In: Thistlethwaite J, Morris P. *The Patient Doctor Consultation in Primary Care: Theory and Practice*. Royal College of General Practitioners, London.

O'Neill F.; Morris, P.A.; Symons, J. (2006) *Bridging the gap: Learning with patient teachers in health professional education*. *Practice Development in Healthcare*, 5(1), pp.26-29 www.interscience.wiley.com

O'Neill F, Essen C, Rhodes C, Symons J, Townend K. *Developing ethical and effective approaches to service user and carer involvement in health professional learning across professional and organisational barriers*. Workshop at the Festival of Learning, Health Sciences and Practice Subject Centre, Higher Education Academy.

Priestley J, Hellowell M, Hinton J, Sharples R, Walkden B (2006) *Promoting a patient centred approach in pre-practice education through the use of blended learning*. *Blended Learning –Promoting Dialogue in Innovation and Practice*. University of Hertfordshire. Proceedings of the First Annual Blended Learning Conference. P.228.

Priestley J, Hellowell M. (2007) *E-learning and Service User Involvement*. A symposium at the Festival of Learning, Health Sciences and Practice Subject Centre, Higher Education Academy.

Towle A, Weston W. (2006). *Patient voices in health professional education*. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 63: 1–2

Walker A (1994) *A Delphi study of research priorities in the clinical practice of physiotherapy*. *Physiotherapy*. 80(4):205-207

Additional outcomes to the given required outcomes:

- Re-useable learning objects in the form of podcasts and film clips that have potential application for teaching, learning and assessment in the practice setting, across a diverse range of health and social care professionals
- Dissemination at a range of conferences with a range of themes, e.g. assessment of practice based learning, student and service user involvement in professional education
- A source of information to provide the service user and carer perspective to map against the professional perspectives of communication competencies identified

through the ALPS project.

- A reflective tool for both service users, carers and students to enable guided reflection on the communication process, and to facilitate active participation in this process in practice.
- Learning and teaching resources for communication skills that have been produced in collaboration with service users and carers, to promote insight into the patient experience
- Collaborative forum for educators, service users, carers, practitioners and students to design and develop learning, teaching and assessment strategies

Evaluation of the process: The process will be evaluated using a debriefing day. This will commence with feedback from the project team with subsequent break out groups for service users and carers to evaluate the major strengths and challenges of the project overall and the potential application of this approach to other core competencies.

Evaluation of the outputs: The service user and carer perspective is integral to developing meaningful communication competencies. Audit of the final tool will reflect on the success or otherwise of this contribution

- Student satisfaction and facilitator survey will be used to evaluate the re-useable learning materials: this will be carried out as a pilot study with level 2 students in the Division of Rehabilitation Studies during their preparation for practice and with medical students in their Personal and Professional Development course.

Background

a) With reference to published literature and other work, what is the relevance of this project within the current field of study?

During the last decade government initiatives have aimed to modernise health and social services, driving a cultural change that is aimed at delivering a genuinely patient-centred approach to care (DOH 2000). There is widespread acknowledgement of the need to involve patients and the public in all aspects of health care (DOH 2005) and current policy sets out the statutory requirements in the Health & Social Care Act, 2011. In response the Department of Health has produced a draft framework for creating a stronger local voice in the development of

health and social care services (DOH2006), some regions have developed principles for service user involvement in educational practice (Trent NHS 2005) and work is under way (Laurent 2001, DoH 2005ii).

The challenge is to translate these requirements into practice not just in service delivery but also in education, ensuring the principles for user involvement are adhered to at all levels of health care. Involving service users in the education of professionals can influence practice by sharing experiences with the practitioners of the future, considering the needs and views of patients as central to management from the earliest stages of a professional's career.

This change culture is affording new opportunities for service users and carers to influence practice through involvement in the education of health and social care professionals. Practice placements provide an ideal setting for service users and carers to be actively involved in the learning experience of the student, including participating in the assessment of 'fitness to practice'. User and carer involvement should be supported by a systematic process that includes involvement from the initial stages, from the identification of common competencies for practice, to formulation of an assessment tool and ultimately participation in the assessment process. User voices are already defining the standards expected for appropriate involvement (Gell and Anderson 2005): this proposal will support leading efforts in the region to apply learning from involvement in educational change.

There are initiatives in action in the region and this proposal is linked to a current collaborative project, the West Yorkshire Service User and Carer Involvement Induction Training (WYSUCIIT) that is facilitating innovative ways of actively involving individuals and communities in the development and delivery of the education of health care students. It involves 4 universities, supported by the Strategic Health Authority and a widening participation initiative at Leeds Medical School that supports individuals with long-term conditions to become involved in the delivery of medical education. As part of this collaboration, a training programme for patients and carers is currently in progress in the West Yorkshire Region, from which the **US** group has emerged..

This proposal is aligned with the main aims of the Service User Involvement in ALPS Working Group (Appendix 1), in particular, the emphasis on enhancing the role of service-users and carers in assessment and learning in practice.

References:

Department of Health (2000) *The National Plan for the NHS . A Plan for Investment, a Plan for Reform*, DoH, London.

Department of Health (2005) *Commissioning a patient -led NHS*. DoH, London.

Department of Health (2006) *A Stronger Local Voice: A framework for creating a stronger local voice in the development of health and social care services*. DoH, London.

Department of Health (2005ii) *'Now I feel tall': What a patient-led NHS feels like*. DoH, London.

Department of Health (2006) *A Stronger Local Voice: A framework for creating a stronger local voice in the development of health and social care services*. DoH, London.

Laurent C. (2001) *'In fine voice'*. Health Service Journal, Jan: p.17

Gell C, Anderson J (2005). *Learning with Users: Good Practice Guidelines*. mhhe, Nottingham

Trent NHS Strategic Health Authority. (2005) *Principles for Practice; Involving service users and carers in health care education and training*. Trent Multi-professional Deanery. Nottingham

b) What are the applicability, currency and transferability of the intended outcomes?

Applicability: This proposal addresses what service users and carers perceive as good practice in the area of communication, therefore could act as a pilot phase for the subsequent investigation of user and carer perspectives on additional core competencies. This would support and inform the work of the ALPS common competency group.

Currency: Raising awareness of service user and carer experiences and capacity for involvement in care addresses the need to develop an enhanced person-centred approach that is central to many current national and regional initiatives, e.g. 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say' (DOH 2006).

Transferability: A collaborative forum for professionals, students and service users and carers provides many opportunities for addressing the need for a person-centred approach in inter-professional teaching, learning and assessment. The project will also provide increased awareness of what matters to people receiving services in the health and social care systems. This builds on the work of the local Patient and Public Involvement networks, facilitating user and carer collaboration not only in delivery of the curriculum but also in design and development of future provision. The IPL workshops for final year medical, nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and dietetics students are already delivered by user and carer trainers in the workplace: this project can help develop appropriate assessments for such learning.

The production of re-useable learning materials that have been produced with users and carers will provide a rich resource for further learning. 'Patient Voices' can be used to raise awareness of communication issues to prepare students for practice in a variety of formats. i.e. informing the design of case based scenarios, podcasts embedded in virtual learning environments, filmclips embedded in presentations.

Web-based materials will be produced with Course Genie to comply with accessibility guidelines.