

Supporting Allied Health Professionals in their Role as Practice Educators

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1. Aim of this work?

What continuing professional development (CPD) do Allied Health Professions' practice educators (PEs) feel are beneficial for supporting positive learning experiences for students during practice placements?

2. Context to this work?

- Four Scottish-based universities run AHP pre-registration programmes for 12 discrete professions.
- In Scotland, placements are provided across 16 NHS Boards, in local government and the third sector.
- The AHP regulatory body requires practice educators to have regular CPD to support their role as a practice educator.
- Practice educator training sessions are provided to staff from all sectors by the universities. These sessions are open to practice educators within each profession & can take place in university or in a NHS site.
- NHS Education for Scotland (NES) funds AHP Practice Education Leads (PELs) within each NHS Board. The PEL supports increasing capacity & supports practice education within the AHP workforce.
- Little is known about what AHP PEs feel they require in relation to CPD for supporting student learning on placement.

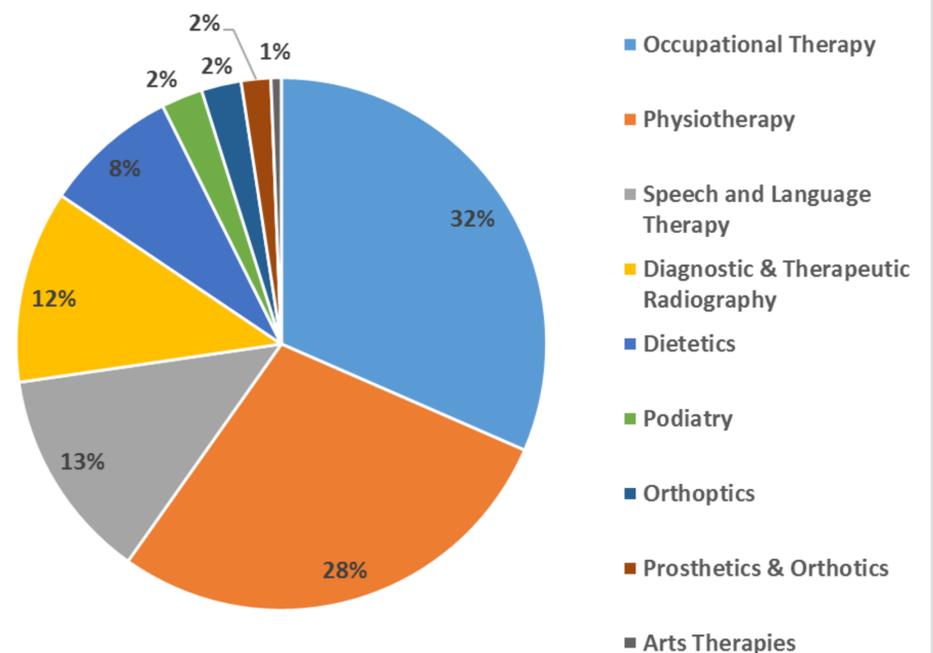
3. What approach has been taken?

Each university has a co-ordinator for PE preparation sessions. A short life collaborative working group with university co-ordinators, NES & PELs came together to create a questionnaire:

- Open & closed questions were used with a five-point likert scale for closed questions
- Topics explored included providing student support, facilitating learning & the role of the PE.
- Following piloting, the questionnaire was distributed through university & PEL networks to AHP PEs in all sectors in Scotland.

4. Who responded?

Percentage of Responses per Profession (N=1028)



1128 respondents

12 professions

Only 45 respondents from out with NHS

11% of NHS Scotland regulated AHP workforce

68% were experienced educators

63% full-time & 37% part-time employment

5. What were the findings?

The five most popular preferred CPD themes (in descending order) were:

1. Managing the needs of a failing student
2. Self-assessing skills as a practice educator
3. Conflict management
4. Providing reasonable adjustments for students with learning needs
5. Managing the needs of a high achieving student

Practice educators indicated they would like more support as a practice educator from:



Practice educators indicated that the CPD requirements of practice educators should include:

- Update knowledge of course content
- Support to manage a range of specific needs of students
- Support to develop general teaching skills as practice educators and to use specific facilitation activities

Practice educators suggested that further support could include:

- More regular and timely communication between universities and PEs before and during placement
- Regular updates on course content for different programme levels
- Clarification on expectations on students at different programme levels
- More peer support through groups and local networks