

Introduction

In 2021, a multi-professional student SPDMC in each of the six Integrated Care Systems (ICS) in the South-East region of England was established. The opportunity is for student nurses, midwives, trainee nursing associates and allied health professionals who undertake practice placements in the region. The aim of the SPDMCs is to enable a strategic student voice in transformation work while fostering a sense of belonging for students at an ICS and regional level.

Background

Students and their education and learning experience are crucial to maintaining the pipeline for the future workforce. With the increasing focus on education and training, the importance of ensuring a student voice within the system to consider the quality and impact of education and training decisions needs to be recognised and supported.

We have newly established six multi-professional Student Councils across the South East region of England. There is one Council per Integrated Care System (ICS) and membership of the Councils includes student nurses, midwives, allied health professionals and trainee nursing associates.

The Student Councils enable student representation to actively support, inform and influence through local strategic discussions within their ICS in relation to the education, learning and quality agendas and allow for the escalation of issues and concerns. They provide opportunities for students to engage in the development of education and learning from a student perspective within their locality and enable them to have a voice within relevant projects and developments.

Discussion and Conclusions

A sense of belonging and identity amongst student nurses, midwives and allied health professionals has been fostered despite differing pre-registration education programmes, experience and geography. Yet the Student Council Members have connected in their shared-purpose and like-minded motivation for change and advocacy. All of whom have reflected that the investment and belief in them as Council Members has positively impacted on their education and future careers.



Leadership Development

All students have access to a bespoke leadership development programme alongside their role as Student Council Members which equips them with the skills and knowledge to tackle real workplace issues while having a deeper understanding of themselves and their impact on patient care:

- “Personal Presence & Impact” Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) Programme
- “Stepping into your Authority” module
- Introduction to co-consulting, a simple process for giving and receiving help leading in diverse cultures
- Individual assessment of leadership strengths and areas for development.
- Introduction to system-level leadership roles and landscape.

“As a first-year student working on the Frimley student councils programme run by Florence Nightingale Foundation; I have been offered many interesting and career enhancing opportunities.”

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