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Effective Practitioner Funded Projects 2013-14 Evaluation Executive Summary



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Executive summary

The Effective Practitioner (EP) initiative was launched by NHS Education for Scotland (NES) in June 2011. In 2013/2014 NES funded 34 projects for Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional (NMAHP) staff with the focus on using the EP resource to impact positively upon staff, service users and/ or service delivery. In order to evaluate whether or not the funded projects met their intended aims and objectives NES commissioned an independent reviewer to conduct a meta-evaluation of them. The aims of the review were to evaluate the short and medium term impact of the EP funded projects; the use of the EP resource; and the supporting infrastructure.

A comprehensive range of data sources were used in the evaluation: reports from the Project Leads, Practice Educators and Practice Education Leads; Google Analytics; and delegate feedback from the EP National Event in 2014. The majority of these data was collected by the NES team and supplied to the reviewer. The reviewer also contacted all the Project Leads to explore the medium term impact of their projects. To enable the systematic extraction of consistent qualitative and quantitative datasets data extraction templates were created and piloted by the researcher. Quantitative data from Google analytics were analysed for the time period from April 2013 to December 2014.

The project leads were from a wide range of NMAHP staff from nine of Scotland's Health Boards across a variety of practice settings, e.g. Mental Health, Cardiovascular, Neurology, Learning Disabilities, and frail Older Adult Care. Project topics areas encompassed the Quality Ambitions of Safe, Effective and Person Centeredness, including: leadership; quality improvement; health and social care integration; enhanced patient centred care and experience; service users and carers; and self-management. Good use was made of a broad selection of the EP resources consistent with the specific objectives of the project.

There were many different project outputs, the most common (n=14) being training sessions or workshops. Some specific 'products' were developed as the result of some projects, such as: delirium cards; self-management resources; and an activity resource directory.

The short term impact reported by the project leads included: increased staff confidence in evidencing practice; enhanced interprofessional communication and team working; increased knowledge and skills in psychological therapies; development of care pathways; development of training materials; enhanced person centred care and self-management; and service improvements.

In the medium term (9 months post project) the majority of projects appeared to demonstrate service delivery improvements and service user satisfaction. Of note, work from one of the projects was used in a health economic evaluation; another led to improved service user feedback mechanisms being put in place; and one led to efficiency savings due to fewer 'wasted' appointments occurring in the service.

Projects demonstrating organisational level impact reported factors such as: the development of a new Health Board policy; sharing of practice across different Health Board areas; service users' views being heard and represented; service improvements for Learning Disabilities; improved referral pathways; faster access to assessment and treatment; enhanced effectiveness of the Learning Disabilities User Reference Group across Health Boards; and the creation of a Scotland wide Learning Disabilities service directory. One of the projects was showcased to the Health Board's Chief Executive and the Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP) for Health. These commendable successes should be capitalised upon as case studies and used for promoting the EP resource amongst current and future stakeholders.