

Wokingham North PCN: interview / reflections on their experience of Learning Environment approval, and hosting student nurses

1 Tell us about the experience of becoming a PCN wide Learning Environment

Our experience has been a positive one. It took a lot of work initially, but it was completely worth it.

We have created multiple opportunities for our students by networking with all the additional roles within the PCN, and our community, to enable our students to experience all areas of the three practices involved and surrounding areas. It has given us the opportunity to work closer with the other surgeries and services in the local community, which has been hugely beneficial

2 Were there any downsides experienced through hosting students at PCN level?

Yes, there were challenges initially, mainly teething issues as you would get when implementing something new. We overcame these by being transparent and open with everyone we were having discussions with, agreeing that it would be a lot of work but also that it would be worth it.

One of the team took on most of the responsibility for the student nurses by being the Practice Assessor, which relieved a lot of stress on the supervisors. A lot of this time has been covered within the PCN Education Lead role, set up with the funding given by the Primary Care School. If this role wasn't available then we would have faced more barriers

3 What changes have been made in response to student feedback on your Learning Environment?

Our first student fed back that one surgery within the placement appeared to be more unorganised than the others. Our Practice Educator is now spending more time with this surgery to help the organisation flow easier and offering more tailored support. We are hoping to enable a smoother transfer for the next student between the three surgeries. Some of the team also did not have access to the student rota, so we are working to resolve this.

4 What was your experience of the PCN approval process. What tips would you share with PCNs currently seeking approval?

The approval form was very comprehensive and lengthy. It was time consuming to fill in accurately with all the evidence required. However, our LEL spent time going through the form with me once completed and reassured me that the PCN was fulfilling the criteria required. They represented us at the verification panel.

The form needed clinical input and information gathering from all practices so get your team onboard! Again good communication needed to establish engagement in the scheme

5 What positive outcomes has PCN approval given your team?

Definitely a positive experience. Key factors were having the funding for an experienced practice educator and administrator. Also, our processes and practices already in place were acknowledged as reaching the standard of a Learning Environment, which was a positive recognition of all the hard work already being carried out in the PCN

6 What have been the challenges?

Filling in the form took a long time and was quite stressful! Including the right team members to help with the form at the beginning would have helped

7 What are you most proud of in your Learning Environment?

We are very proud of having hosted our first student with mainly positive feedback, and of the resources we have developed to support these students. We are proud of the extended opportunities we have arranged within the surrounding community that our students get to experience