

Social and Vocational Studies

1) Outline the project or initiative and what makes it innovative and inspiring (max 300 words).

The project was for a member of the Perth College UHI Social and Vocational Studies (SVS) Department Care Staff to work in partnership with the NHS Tayside Community Learning Disabilities (CLD) Nurse to enable health input to SVS students in formal and informal settings within Perth College UHI with a view to allowing more timely interventions.

The benefits of the project have included:

- Prevention of crises
- Successful management of crises
- Maintenance of physical and mental health
- Reduction in referrals
- Delivery of health and wellbeing education
- Access to young people that Health Services find hard to reach
- Quick and reliable information sharing across services allowing for more effective interventions
- Better student retention due to reduction in withdrawals

What makes this innovative and inspiring is the close working partnership across NHS Tayside and Perth College UHI. The CLD Nurse is seen as part of the SVS team by our students. They value her input and know that they can approach her about issues outside college that may be having an impact on their ability to take part in classes or sustain their college place.

Although these things are hard to measure there is no doubt that the CLD Nurse input has prevented crises for some of our student group and helped student retention.

2) Detail how the project or initiative was delivered, from the planning stage through to its successful conclusion (max 300 words). Include details of timing* and funding.

Since September 2014 the CLD Nurse has been spending one day per week in the SVS department. On that day she has been delivering two sessions of health related topics; one to our first year students (12 students ages 16-17yrs) and one to our final year students (8 students 19-20yrs) as part of their curriculum. She also offers a drop-in service which is available to all students within the department to access when needed. Both the classes and the drop in sessions are supported by a member of our support staff who is able to ensure continuity of support for the students from across the SVS team throughout the week, should they require it. Our member of staff can also update the Nurse with any issues that may have arisen through the week thus ensuring a quick and appropriate response.

The project also allows the CLD Nurse to make appointments to see students at college out with her allocated day in circumstances where the home or clinical environments would not be appropriate.

There has been no additional funding required for this project as both parties agree that it is an effective use of staff time.

As the project has been successful the plan is for it to continue.

3) Outline the project or initiative's outcome(s) within the university and beyond with relevant supporting evidence, metrics or testimony where appropriate (max 400 words).

The classes cover topics associated with relationships and sexual health. They are often led by student questions and are recorded by the students as a group using the smartboard. Work is then printed out for the students and referred to when appropriate.

Since September 24 students have used the drop in sessions. Of these six have been referred on to other services, four have been taken on to the case load of the CLD Nurse and are seen regularly in and out with College, three are continuing to be seen whilst awaiting Psychology or Psychiatry input, one was signposted to an appropriate support service and 10 required no further action.

The project has worked with a number of outside agencies such as Perth and Kinross Council's Social Work Department and Education and Children's Services to ensure that there is a 'joined-up' approach to student support and that the student remains at the centre of all decisions being made.

Since September the CLD Nurse and college staff have successfully dealt with individual student crises such as pregnancy scares, family difficulties and relationship breakdowns which may previously have led to student withdrawals.

Student feedback has been consistently positive. Some of the comments are:

"The classes are good. I find it fun and I can print my work for my folder. My 1-1 sessions are good too – they help me embrace everything."

"The 1-1s helped a lot. She helped me with contraception. The classes have been really helpful as well. I've learned a lot of stuff."

"The 1-1 sessions were fantastic. After speaking to the Nurse I feel better. She's one of the best people to speak to if you have problems."