Checklist for higher education institutions and colleges

Supporting the ambitions of the Strategy to enable social care placements for student nurses and nursing associates

Introduction

This checklist has been developed to help higher education institutions (HEIs) and colleges assess how well they're meeting the ambitions of the 'Strategy to enable social care placements for student nurses and nursing associates' through their nursing programmes and partnerships.

We recognise that HEIs and colleges are at different stages in embedding adult social care into their placement offer and may need clear, practical actions to ensure alignment with national policy and National Midwifery Council (NMC) requirements. This checklist supports institutions to systematically review current provision, showcase good practice, and plan improvements.

Who may find this checklist useful

- Nursing programme leads
- Practice learning leads
- Practice education facilitators and managers
- Academic assessors and educators
- Faculty quality and compliance teams
- Directors of nursing education
- Partnership and employer engagement teams

Why we created this checklist

Embedding social care placements helps prepare students for the full scope of nursing practice and supports workforce priorities across health and social care. We developed this checklist to:

- help HEIs review and strengthen social care placement provision
- ensure alignment with NMC standards and wider workforce policies
- support curriculum development that reflects the importance of adult social care as a learning environment and nursing career choice
- enable institutions to demonstrate commitment to building a flexible, skilled nursing workforce.

How should this checklist be used

This checklist is designed as a self-assessment and quality improvement tool that can be used to:

- review current placement partnerships and strategies
- identify gaps in curriculum, placement capacity, or partnership working
- prepare for education audits, programme reviews, or accreditation
- inform action plans for expanding and enhancing placement opportunities
- engage faculty and placement teams in continuous quality improvement.

Achieving the Gold Commendation Award

Skills for Care will acknowledge, recognise and reward the commitments made to achieving the ambitions of the strategy through our commendation process. Those who have achieved all the recommendations of the placement strategy will receive the Gold Commendation Award.

HEIs and colleges are encouraged to use the checklist regularly —for example, during annual programme reviews, or when exploring new placement partnerships.

Recognition will also be given to those who have **met more than 50%** of the strategy's recommendations and **working towards** meeting the remaining recommendations. Where gaps in provision are identified, action should be taken collaboratively with providers and system partners to strengthen provision and support progress towards achieving the Gold Commendation Award.

Follow the commendation process to receive your award.

1. Understand the opportunities that social care has to offer

How is this demonstrated?	Achieved	Working towards
Dedicated section on the university/college website relating to social care placement opportunities and on-boarding process for potential new placement providers.		
Collaborating with local integrated care boards (ICBs) to ensure social care placement information is featured on their websites and resources.		
Partnership working with social care providers.		
Embedding social care within the curriculum and within module and/or programme learning outcomes.		
Developing a curriculum which reflects the diversity of social care settings and the roles available to all fields of nursing practice.		
Integrating relevant health and social care policies into teaching (such as care closer to home) to highlight the importance of social care nursing in population health.		

2. Facilitate access to those opportunities

How is this demonstrated?	Achieved	Working towards
Inclusive recruitment materials showcasing the diversity of social care settings/roles to prospective nursing students.		
Partnership working with social care providers in student recruitment activities and careers fairs.		
Advising providers of the value of featuring student placement opportunities on their websites (e.g. induction details, contact points, student testimonials).		
Collaborating with care providers and integrated care boards (ICBs) to share placement success stories and raise the profile of social care nursing within marketing activity, including social media.		
Representing social care nursing in career events and panels and involvement of key organisations (integrated care boards (ICBs), Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), and Royal College of Nursing (RCN) to emphasise social care if underrepresented.		
Facilitating apprenticeship placement networks in coordination with providers and employers to offer students a range of social care experiences.		
Training sessions, resources and ongoing support provided to social care practice supervisors and assessors (facilitators) to enable effective supervision and assessment of students in practice learning settings.		

Guidance and resources offered to social care managers (including non-nurse managers) on the implementation of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Standards for Student Supervision and Assessment.		
Financial and administrative processes for practice placements explained in a timely fashion e.g. tariff/payments, process of allocation, dates placements are required, number of students and how to escalate concerns.		
Placement information is provided to students early (including logistics and expectations), and they're encouraged to clarify any support needs with providers in advance.		
Collaborating with providers to plan placements around staffing, ensuring students can be accommodated without disrupting care.		
Collaborating with providers to develop consistent student induction programmes and ensure students have protected time during placements for reflection and study.		

3. Maintain and grow the quality and capacity of social care practice placements

How is this demonstrated?	Achieved	Working towards
Co-producing marketing content with providers and stakeholders to attract students to social care placements.		
Identification and support given to potential student ambassadors with positive social care learning experiences to promote interest in the sector.		
Embedding social care nursing principles throughout degree programmes.		
Partnering with social care employers and people who draw on care and support to co-deliver relevant curriculum content and develop future social care nurse educators.		
Systematic evaluation of social care placements through feedback from students to improve and monitor the quality of the practice learning environment. Evaluations are shared with providers in a timely fashion.		
Supporting “reforms to clinical placement tariffs for undergraduate and postgraduate medicine, as well as a targeted expansion of clinical educator capacity” as per the 10 Year Health Plan.		
Developing and supporting apprenticeship and retention programmes (with providers and employers) that strengthen the nursing workforce pipeline in social care.		

4. Increase students' understanding of social care and inspire them to work in the sector

How is this demonstrated?	Achieved	Working towards
Integrated social care career pathways (work experience, T-levels, apprenticeships, internships) in recruitment messaging and outreach activities for prospective students.		
Including social care nursing careers in outreach activity for schools and colleges and student work experience programmes.		
Collaborating across the nursing profession to break down stereotypes about social care roles and emphasise respect for all nursing career pathways.		
Invitations extended to those with social care expertise to contribute to and support relevant course/module-based activity.		
Commitment from within the academic faculty to incorporate social care nursing into teaching activities and actively promote it as a viable and fulfilling career option to students.		
Use simulation-based learning to create realistic social care scenarios (e.g. community care, end of life) so students gain practical experience with social care environments.		
Coordinating with social care employers to ensure newly graduated nurses and nursing associates have access to high-quality preceptorship programmes in the sector.		

Name of person completing the checklist:
This should be the head of nursing or equivalent role

Job title:

Organisation:

Date:
