Checklist for social care providers

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

Introduction

This checklist has been developed to support adult social care providers in assessing how well they're meeting the ambitions of the 'Strategy to enable social care placements for student nurses and nursing associates'.

We know that providers are at different stages in offering high quality practice learning environments and contributing to the nursing curriculum and may want practical guidance to align with national expectations. This checklist offers a structured way to reflect on current practice, celebrate successes, and identify improvements to strengthen placement experiences.

Who may find this checklist useful

- Registered managers and service leaders
- Nursing and care home staff
- Practice assessors and supervisors
- Learning and development leads

It may also be useful for commissioners, integrated care boards (ICBs), and regulators who wish to understand how care providers are contributing to the nursing workforce pipeline.

Why we created this checklist

Placements in adult social care offer nursing students essential experience in prevention, complex care, and person-centred practice. By offering high-quality placements, providers not only develop the next generation of nurses but also enhance the knowledge, skills, and confidence of their own teams.

How should this checklist be used

This checklist is a flexible self-assessment tool that can be used to:

- review and improve placement processes and learning environments
- plan for placement expansion or new partnerships
- identify staff development needs and engage the whole team in supporting placements
- evidence compliance with education and regulatory standards.

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 with a gold standard commendation.

Providers can complete the checklist annually, as part of internal quality assurance, or when making significant changes to placement provision.

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
Clear communication channels established with local universities, colleges, integrated care boards (ICBs) and authorities to coordinate social care placement opportunities.		
Identifying your organisation as a learning environment for nursing students on your website and premises.		
Highlighting the variety of care settings on offer (e.g. residential homes, supported living, home care) and how placements in each setting develop key skills.		
Collaborating with universities/colleges to align social care placement activities with the nursing curriculum and explicitly mapping them to learning outcomes and Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards. The 'How to make the most of student nurse placements in social care settings' might be helpful.		
Demonstrating how social care practice learning environments meet national policy priorities and helping students to understand the role of social care in the health and social care system.		

2. Facilitate access to those opportunities

How is this demonstrated?	Achieved	Working towards
Developing inclusive recruitment materials (brochures, website content, social media posts) that showcase the diversity of social care practice placements.		
Collaborating with universities in joint recruitment events (careers fairs, open days, admission panels) to promote social care nursing as a rewarding career path.		
Including relevant placement information within your organisation website, including student induction details, primary contacts and examples of student experiences or testimonials.		
Collaborating with education and health partners to raise awareness of social care placements and success stories within relevant marketing activity, including social media.		
Participating in career talks and panels, ensuring social care nursing is represented, involving bodies like integrated care boards (ICBs), Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), and Royal College of Nursing (RCN) to highlight social care roles if underrepresented.		
Partnering with other social care employers (especially those with apprenticeship programmes) to build placement networks that offer reciprocal student placements and varied learning experiences.		
Working with higher education institutions to understand financial and administrative processes involved in developing placements and resolve any issues promptly.		

Supporting the on-going training and development of placement supervisors (facilitators) and assessors through signposting to university or local system programmes, so they're equipped to mentor and assess students effectively.		
Ensuring registered managers are equipped with resources (e.g. Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) guidance, case studies) to support student supervision.		
Maintaining structured communication with higher education institutions and escalating any concerns as they arise.		
Ensuring quality of the practice learning environment by keeping lead contact and assessor records up to date and including student mentorship responsibilities in relevant job roles.		
Encouraging incoming students to connect with the practice environment before the placement starts and to communicate any required support or adjustments in advance.		
Involving staff, the people you support, and their families in planning student placements – identify any training or resources needed and co-develop materials to enrich the learning experience.		
Collaborating with higher education institutions to plan placement dates around staffing levels so students can be accommodated without disrupting care delivery, ensuring a broad range of learning experiences.		
Implementing a comprehensive induction for each placement (covering values, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and regulatory requirements, expected behaviour and learning outcomes) and allocating protected time for students to reflect and work on quality improvement activities.		

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

How is this demonstrated?	Achieved	Working towards
Partnering with universities and colleges to co-create diverse marketing materials that raise awareness of social care placements among nursing students.		
Liaising with education providers to highlight and identify student ambassadors who have completed placements. Support them to mentor peers and share positive insights about social care nursing.		
Contributing to curriculum development by embedding social care nursing principles in degree programmes and helping to design realistic simulation scenarios of social care environments.		
Collaborating on educational content delivery (e.g. co-hosting guest lectures or workshops) and helping to develop future social care nurse educators through co-production with providers and people who draw on care and support.		
Gathering and reviewing feedback on placements and engaging students in quality improvement processes to continually enhance the placement experience and care quality.		
Advocating for and utilising appropriate placement funding and incentives (liaising with Council of Deans of Health (CoDH), regulators, funders) to support and expand social care practice placements.		
Engaging with workforce development initiatives (e.g. nursing apprenticeships, retention programmes) alongside higher education institutions and employers to build a sustainable social care nursing pipeline.		

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

How is this demonstrated?	Achieved	Working towards
Offering and promoting of work experience, internships, T-level placements, and apprenticeships related to adult social care to attract potential nursing students.		
Engaging with schools and colleges through outreach activities to raise awareness of social care nursing as a fulfilling career option.		
Actively dispelling stereotypes by emphasising the varied, rewarding nature of social care nursing roles in communications and student activities.		
Providing social care expertise to support course/ module-related activities.		
Ensuring academic staff understand nursing in social care contexts and explicitly encouraging students to consider social care careers during their training.		
Coordinating with social care employers so that all newly qualified nurses and nursing associates have access to structured preceptorship programmes in the sector.		

Name of person completing the checklist:
This should be the registered manager or equivalent role

Job title:

Organisation:

Date:
