



#150Leaders: Fostering Student Leadership

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Foreword by
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The Council of Deans of Health represents the UK's university faculties engaged in education and research for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. At any one time our members will be educating in the region of 120,000 future registered health professionals. Operating as a multi-professional organisation at the heart of policy and political debate, the Council aims to lead policy at national and UK level, promoting the essential contribution of our members to health and social care.

The Burdett Trust for Nursing is an independent charitable trust named after Sir Henry Burdett KCB, the founder of the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses (RNPFN). The Trust was set up in 2002 in recognition of the foundation, philosophy and structure of the RNPFN. The Trust makes grants in support of nurse-led projects, using its funds to empower nurses and make significant improvements to the patient care environment.



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Foreword



I feel very fortunate to have been involved with the Student Leadership Programme from its inception. In 2016, I was elected as the lead for the Council of Deans of Health's Education Impact portfolio and, a few months later, supported the staff team with its initial grant proposal to the Burdett Trust for Nursing. I was thrilled when the Burdett Trust offered the Council two years of funding. However, I did not envisage how successful the Student Leadership Programme would become. The Student Leadership Programme acts as a testament to what can be achieved by implementing what students told us they wanted and needed in a leadership programme which was captured in a national student survey undertaken by the Council.

Whilst I was an advocate for, and passionate about, the concept of students as co-creators of their own learning and in providing university colleagues with an opportunity to benefit from the Student Leadership Programme, it has exceeded all expectations. The impact has been phenomenal. Through the combination of residential conferences, networking events, an online community and one-to-one mentoring, the programme's students have been supported in winning national awards, actively engaging in social media, attending high-profile events, campaigning for patients, working with professional bodies and engaging in research. Students have been heavily involved in contributing to the recruitment and retention of healthcare students through university support groups, promoting their professions to prospective students and on social media, and by establishing online platforms that have now gone global. Students have disseminated their learning with their peers by organising regional leadership events, writing journal articles, speaking at conferences and making video recordings summarising their journeys and leadership development.

One of the key aims of the Student Leadership Programme was to provide recommendations of good practice for healthcare leadership teaching in universities across the UK. In addition to the recommendations featured in this publication, the results of an external evaluation of the programme will be made available by the end of 2018.

I would like to thank the Student Leadership Programme's Advisory Group, made up of leaders from practice, education, service users and students; they have helped to shape the programme to ensure its success. I must recognise the contribution made by mentors – practitioners, academics, leaders in professional/government bodies - who generously gave up their time to support the students. I continue to be amazed by the interest and support that the Student Leadership Programme has had from university colleagues, provider organisations and national bodies. Fundamentally, the students themselves have been truly inspirational, demonstrating their leadership skills at such an early stage in their healthcare careers. We look forward to seeing them succeed in their future leadership roles in practice, education, research, policy, commissioning and beyond.

I am proud of all the students and staff who have been involved in the programme and look forward to another #150Leaders over the next three years. Thank you to the Burdett Trust for Nursing for their ongoing support.

Professor Nigel Harrison

Council of Deans of Health Education Impact Lead

1 About this publication

#150Leaders Fostering Student Leadership, published by the Council of Deans of Health, offers an overview of student leadership in higher education. It draws reflections, recommendations and examples of good practice from a two-year student leadership programme bringing together 150 students from across the United Kingdom, now popularly known as the #150Leaders. The student leadership programme was delivered as a partnership between the Council of Deans of Health and the Burdett Trust for Nursing. The publication mostly uses data from reflective pieces written by students which form the final part of their programme. Evidence has also been drawn from event evaluation forms, student surveys and mentor feedback.



This publication is for students interested in leadership. The focus of the approach is experiential and multidisciplinary. This is not another publication about theories of leadership and management. Quite the contrary, it is about how students can be motivated to be leaders from the start of their higher education experience. Although all examples featuring in this publication are about healthcare students, a lot of the approaches could be transferred to many other disciplines and could indeed apply to different sectors and professions.

The publication is also for academics and strategic leaders in higher education. It is hoped that the findings and recommendations of this programme, which focus very much on leadership as experience and practice as opposed to theory, will influence the design and delivery of student leadership programmes within individual universities as well as regional and national initiatives.

Finally, the publication draws recommendations for policy makers and experts in higher education policy. These include the importance of students being co-creators of their learning, the need to learn as part of interdisciplinary teams, the importance of empowering students to take leading roles from the early stages of their education and the strengths of reflective practice, feedback and role modelling.

2 Executive Summary

2.1 Introduction

The past two decades have experienced a shift within higher education, embracing the concept of student leadership. Policy makers worldwide have encouraged students to co-design and co-create their educational experience, become advocates and participate in decision making to change the status quo.

Leadership development is particularly relevant to healthcare students in the UK. These students are being educated between theory and practice and thus get exposed from a very early stage in their studies to the environment they will operate in as future healthcare professionals. Some of them are mature students, which means they would have had professional or personal leadership experience before joining their programme. Students come from very diverse socio-economic backgrounds, which helps them embrace diversity and openness in their leadership.

In line with the approach to fostering student leadership through the method of co-creation, the Council of Deans of Health and the Burdett Trust for Nursing worked in partnership to develop the first ever UK-wide student leadership programme targeted at healthcare students from a variety of disciplines. The Student Leadership Programme offers innovative ways for developing leadership in future healthcare professionals. Targeted at 150 students of nursing, midwifery and allied health professional courses across the UK, the programme offers exposure to leadership development through role modelling, reflection, networking and mentoring.

The programme offers several important findings, relevant both to universities and the Council of Deans of Health. These are presented through a set of themes below and are offered as recommendations for the development both of leadership methods as part of undergraduate and postgraduate healthcare curricula and also as recommendations for the development of more programmes specifically designed for student leadership, whether these are developed nationally by the Council or locally by its university members.

2.2 Key findings

Students on the programme reported that as part of their university curricula, leadership was either taught as part of a theoretical module later in their studies or not touched at all as a subject. The teaching methods focused on academic theory and lacked the practice of leadership. In contrast, through this programme students had the opportunity to:

- be exposed to senior leaders with years of experience in leadership, see them as role models and learn from them
- practise reflection, either as a group on what they had listened to, or the opportunity to reflect on their individual leadership experience
- understand better the importance of emotional intelligence, having been exposed to specific group activities involving storytelling and art to demonstrate the power of emotional intelligence and the ability to 'bounce back' from adverse incidents in life and regain energy and focus
- empower themselves to think differently, take action and raise concerns about patient safety
- network with like-minded individuals from across disciplines and geographies, learning about different leadership contexts and situations
- engage with a senior leader as part of one to one mentorship to share their experience, learn from them and build their leadership objectives for now and the future

Role model inspiration

The Council's leadership programme sought to include role modelling as part of the leadership events, one-to-one mentoring and online community sessions. The students were able to engage with senior leaders in or outside healthcare, work with a mentor who had experience in leadership in a variety of healthcare settings (practice, academic, policy, charity work, advocacy/lobby, etc) and develop peer support and challenge mechanisms, and looking at their colleagues as role models for their leadership learning.

Reflection

Reflective practice is a key component of healthcare higher education and a requirement for being a registered professional. Students and professionals alike are encouraged to reflect on their day-to-day practice, their interactions with their colleagues, public, patients and their impact on patient safety. In this instance, students were invited to reflect on their leadership experience.

Emotional intelligence

The programme has helped students to reflect on their own emotions, understand the value of emotional intelligence in leadership and reflect on their own journey as healthcare leaders. As with reflection, they learned about emotional intelligence while practising, rather than out of a course book.

Empowerment and confidence-building

Empowerment and motivation have both been strong themes of the Council's programme. Students were encouraged to get out of their comfort zones, to have a vision and purpose as leaders. They were asked to be leaders through simulation and performing in front of an audience from day one of the programme.

Networking

Overwhelmingly students report that the programme offered them great networking opportunities particularly with their peers from other disciplines and fellow students from other universities across the UK. They reflected they do not experience networking as part of their programmes and they rarely meet with students from other disciplines.

Mentoring

One to one mentoring on leadership was a new concept to most of the students on the programme. Although many students were familiar with mentoring in practice, having one to one sessions on their leadership journey, helped them build their objectives, focus on their achievements, learn about themselves and plan their development for their future.

Storytelling

Storytelling has been a strong component of the student leadership programme. Speakers at the events came from all walks of life as leaders of healthcare, either in frontline service delivery, academia or business.

An inter-professional environment

One of the most important achievements of the Council's leadership programme has been the ability to bring together as part of a community students from different disciplines. This was highly valued. On the one hand, allied health professions students learned about each other's professions, understood they were part of a larger AHP community and got to reflect on their commonalities and differences. On the other hand, allied health professions students interacted with student nurses and student midwives, learning about different professions, and the different challenges of the variety of fields of practice.

2.3 Programme impact on the students

All the students that took part developed leadership skills that they took back to their university, but they also became strong advocates for their professions, engaged in recruitment and retention activities and developed skills in influencing policy, increasing the visibility of their professions. From winning the student midwife and student nurse of the year award to developing projects to enhance patient safety, students were able to demonstrate how the leadership programme supported their confidence and motivation to excel in their disciplines.

2.4 Recommendations for universities

The Council's Student Leadership Programme offers universities an opportunity to reflect on their leadership offer to their students. It not only enables universities to review or update their existing programmes and curricula, but it also opens the space for innovation in the practice of leadership including the development of specific leadership programmes for undergraduate and postgraduate students of healthcare courses.

Less theory, more practice

Students who have completed the Council's Student Leadership Programme reported that they would value leadership practice being better integrated within their academic study. Those who had been exposed to leadership education within their university, recognised that the approach was academic focusing mainly on the teaching of leadership theory. Students reflected that learning about theory was useful but not enough and they wanted to see more of the practice of leadership within their academic study. By 'leadership practice' they often referred to role modelling by their lecturers and educators as well as exposure to learning about the leadership journeys of the Dean and other strategic leaders within their university and senior leaders within their practice settings.

Feedback and reflection

In addition to role modelling, students valued the practice of leadership through offering and receiving positive and constructive feedback, reflecting on their own leadership and comparing their approach to others', reflecting together on what makes a good leader, what shapes their leadership journey and through scenario setting and simulation learning about leadership good practice.

Empowering settings

Students were supported through the programme to reflect on their own leadership style and appreciate themselves as leaders of here and now. One of the key messages in the programme was the idea of everyone being a leader as leadership is about behaviour and action as opposed to hierarchy and positioning. As many students embraced the opportunity to be considered as leaders at the very beginning of their professional experience, it is important that their university and practice placement experience continues to empower them to act as leaders in practice within the parameters of their student role.

Networking

Students valued practising leadership as part of a wider network. Within their university this could take the shape of a student leaders' group where likeminded students could learn from each other, seek peer support and get motivated to learn. Students reflected that although in most cases their leadership role models were senior leaders in their sector, they were equally inspired by fellow students and the strength of being part of a community. Interdisciplinary networking and learning was a strong component of a successful student leadership offer. Students valued learning about other professions, particularly those which were not widely known or promoted. Allied health professions students recognised the asset of being part of a wider, multi-professional community. Universities will want to think how they ensure as far as possible multi-disciplinary approaches to leadership practice, effectively mirroring leadership in real professional life.



3 Context: Leadership in higher education

3.1 Student leadership in education

In the context of higher education, student leadership is often related to student voice, participation and advocacy. Recent research proposed a spectrum of student voice and participation that ranges from young people speaking out, to students having their share in decision making and building capacity for leadership (Holdsworth 2013) (Fielding 2005).

The past two decades have experienced a shift within higher education, embracing the concept of student leadership. Policy makers worldwide have encouraged students to participate actively in their learning. As such, they co-design and co-create their educational experience, become advocates and participate in decision making to change the status quo.

Student leadership programmes fit directly into this purpose by focusing on the development of student leadership skills. Such programmes seek to extend the public and private benefits for the individual, the university community, and society. Paulsen (2001) identified many public benefits including adaptability, political awareness, social awareness, less criminal activity, lower public expenditures, social returns, economic returns to the country, productivity, and greater citizenship. Bowen (1997) recognised many private benefits including personal development, life enrichment, development of knowledge and skills, monetary benefits, cognitive growth, emotional awareness, moral development, and practical competence. Each student stands to gain more skills through leadership training and education than those who do not participate. This differentiation in the individual attainment of private and public benefits is the result of personal motivation having a significant role in the acquisition of skills.



A recent review on student leadership carried out by academics in Australia spelled out the key areas that were necessary for student leadership to be effective. These included:

- Empowering students to make an impact in their educational environment
- Reimagining traditional leadership to make it more inclusive
- Offering as required professional development to those who teach leadership
- Investing in evaluation of student leadership initiatives and programmes to ensure the learning is fed back to institutions and policy makers

(Black, R., Walsh, L., Magee, J., Hutchins, L., Berman, N., & Groundwater-Smith, S. 2014)

3.2 Universities' role in student leadership development

As student leadership has emerged as a factor for student engagement and student satisfaction, it is relevant for universities to now start thinking how they can further develop their leadership offer to their students. Universities are encouraged to consider how to enable students to participate actively in their education, make decisions about their education, support their peers, enrich their experience through being engaged with policy debates, gain political astuteness, and advocate for their professions.

Leadership development is particularly relevant to healthcare students in the UK. These students are being educated between theory and practice and thus get exposed from a very early stage in their studies to the environment they will operate in as future healthcare professionals. Some of them are mature students, which means they would have had professional or personal leadership experience before joining their programme. Students come from very diverse socio-economic backgrounds, which helps them embrace diversity and openness in their leadership.

Leadership development has been recognised more prominently in the newly published regulatory standards for registered nurses (NMC 2018):

'Registered nurses must exhibit leadership potential by demonstrating an ability to guide, support and motivate individuals and interact confidently with other members of the care team'

Whether universities ensure they meet regulatory standards or focus on providing their students a strong education and practice experience, they are now more than ever educating the healthcare leaders of the future. Universities need therefore to ensure they have the right environment and methods to ensure their students get exposed to leadership development as much as possible.

It is with this developmental approach in mind that the Council of Deans of Health established the first UK-wide multi-professional student leadership programme.

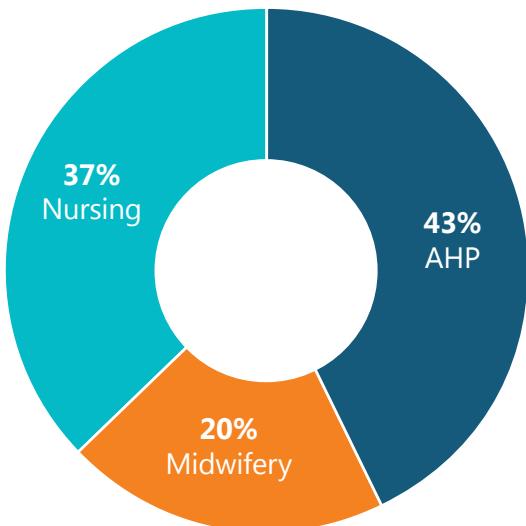


4 The Student Leadership Programme

The Student Leadership Programme offers innovative ways for developing leadership in future healthcare professionals. Targeted at 150 students of nursing, midwifery and allied health professional courses across the UK, the programme offers exposure to leadership development through role modelling, reflection, networking and mentoring. 60 students participated in the programme in 2017 and a further 90 students in 2018. Brought together they form the now well disseminated #150Leaders.

The programme includes:

- A welcome residential event focusing on practising leadership through role modelling, peer support, reflection, and giving and receiving feedback
- A personalised one to one mentorship scheme
- Face to face and online networking through social media
- Opportunities to participate in relevant regional or national conferences and events
- Promoting their professions via videos shared with the Council's membership under the hashtag #ThisCouldBeYou
- An online community of practice with discussions with guest speakers
- A final conference bringing all the students together.



The distribution of professions across the 150 Leaders

Applications

The uniqueness of this programme, vis a vis the myriad of other leadership programmes that already exist across the UK, lies on its typology and methods. The typology, which is one of its strengths according to the students that participated, involves many geographies and professions.

Over 70 universities across the UK participated bringing together students from Cornwall to the Isle of Skye. 11 professions participated in the programme, including students from very varied disciplines from all fields of nursing to midwifery, speech and language therapy, radiography and paramedic students. Bringing a varied geographical context and students from different disciplines meant that students were exposed to learning about different professions, different policy objectives and different ways of leading change, some for the first time.



5 Students as co-creators

In line with the approach to fostering student leadership through the method of co-creation, the Council of Deans of Health and the Burdett Trust for Nursing worked in partnership to develop the first ever UK-wide student leadership programme targeted at healthcare students from a variety of disciplines.

Keeping with the commitment to engage students as co-creators of their learning, a survey was conducted among students at UK higher education institutions (HEIs). This was to build a picture of students' perceptions of themselves as leaders, to understand the teaching of leadership in undergraduate curricula and to learn their preferences towards the structure and content of the student leadership programme.

The student survey identified the following areas that were used to develop the student leadership programme:

5.1 Commitment and motivation to leadership

Most students who participated in the survey were motivated by a desire to contribute to health and social care and by the future employment prospects offered by courses in health and social care. Many of them identified themselves as leaders, although this varied by profession.

5.2 Reflection on leadership traits

Students identified various personality traits with effective and successful leaders. These included adaptability, assertiveness, confidence, dedication, flexibility, integrity, professionalism, resilience and trustworthiness. Other skills identified by participants as being associated with effective and successful leaders included the ability to motivate, make decisions and delegate; being an effective listener with good communication and problem-solving skills, having up to date knowledge, skills and ability, taking an ethical approach to work and working well in a team.

5.3 Leadership in practice

Students welcomed the opportunity to develop their leadership skills during practice placements, particularly as these placed students in a position of responsibility. This also helped to foster communication skills and self-confidence. Also important was the theoretical input provided during lectures, scenarios, simulation and group work and the guidance offered by mentors. Students displayed a clear preference to learn leadership skills through direct contact with practising professionals, either via a mentorship or workplace shadowing programme. They therefore identified role modelling and exposure to the leadership journeys of successful and experienced leaders in healthcare as key to their learning how to lead.

5.4 Content and structure of a leadership programme

When considering the content of the student leadership programme, students were particularly interested in sessions that would help to build their confidence, resilience and ability to manage change, proactive and forward-thinking skills and understanding of leadership in both business and clinical settings.



6 Key findings from the programme

The programme offers several important findings, relevant both to universities and the Council of Deans of Health. These are presented through a set of themes below and are offered as recommendations for development both of leadership methods as part of undergraduate and postgraduate healthcare curricula and also as recommendations for the development of more programmes specifically designed for student leadership, whether these are developed nationally by the Council or locally by its university members.

The practice of leadership

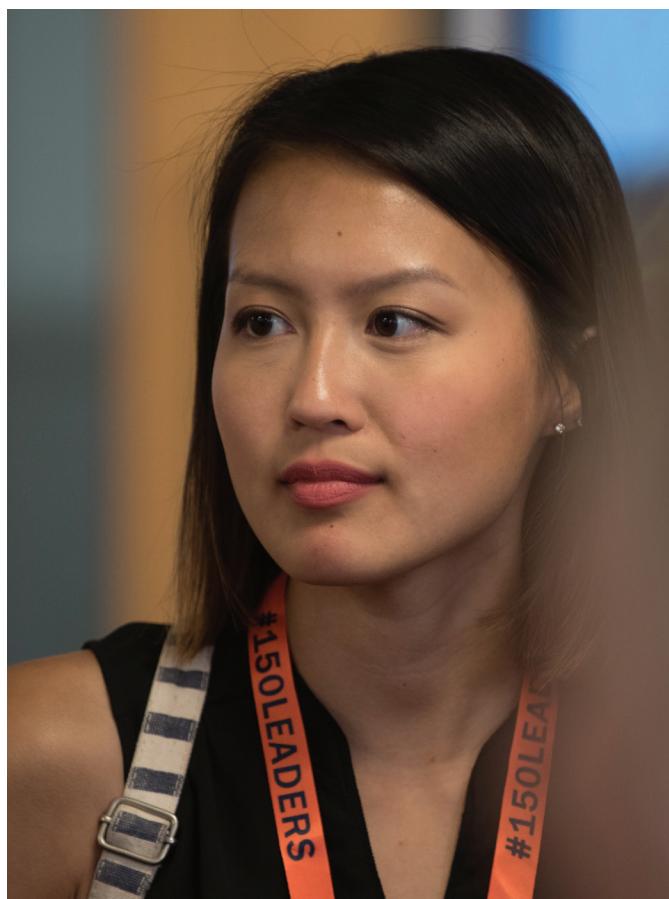
Students reported that as a result of the Council's leadership programme they were able to practise leadership in a way they had not envisaged before. As part of their university curricula, leadership was either taught as part of a theoretical module later in their studies or not touched at all as a subject. The teaching methods focused on academic theory and students reflected that the practical elements were lacking.

While in practice, on the other hand, they reported that it was rare that the professionals that support them discussed leadership with them or indeed talked about their leadership stories or journey. In many practice setting environments, students found that leadership practice was absent and role modelling was rare, coming only from a very small number of colleagues. They linked this to very busy working conditions, hectic learning environments and the need to have to fit too much content in a three-year curriculum.

In contrast, what the students most enjoyed as part of the Council's programme was the way they were able to practise leadership during the programme's duration. Through this programme, students had the opportunity to:

- be exposed to senior leaders with years of experience in leadership, see them as role models and learn from them
- practise reflection, either as a group on what they had listened to, or reflecting on their individual leadership experience

- understand better the importance of emotional intelligence, having been exposed to specific group activities involving storytelling and art to demonstrate the power of emotional intelligence and the ability to 'bounce back' from adverse incidents in life and regain energy and focus
- empower themselves to think differently, take action and raise concerns about patient safety
- network with like-minded individuals from across disciplines and geographies, learning about different leadership contexts and situations
- engage with a senior leader as part of one to one mentorship to share their experience, learn from them and build their leadership objectives for now and the future
- understand the method of storytelling as part of leading change and reflecting on how best to use it in their day to day practice, particularly with their patients that most needed it



These key themes that emerge from the Council's programme are analysed below supported by quotes from the students' reflections.

Role model inspiration

The Council's leadership programme sought to include role modelling as part of the leadership events, one to one mentoring and online community sessions. This was achieved at three levels.

Firstly, the students were able to engage with senior leaders in healthcare or outside healthcare, to listen to their leadership life experiences and engage in a debate with them around their opportunities, personal achievements, areas for improvement and challenge.

'Being part of the Student Leadership Programme has given me inspiration and motivation in my everyday life, whether being at University or out on placement. Better yet, it continues to give me ideas and motivation for my future.'

Tine Panduro, student nurse,
Oxford Brookes University

Secondly, each student worked with a mentor who had experience in leadership in a variety of healthcare settings (practice, academic, policy, charity work, advocacy/lobby, etc).

Thirdly and most importantly, students developed peer support and challenge mechanisms, being inspired by each other and looking at their colleagues as role models for their leadership learning. They recognised that they had entered a strong community of like-minded individuals all with similar goals and ambitions and the same motivation to learn and practise leadership. As such, they became role models for each other.

'I have truly been inspired by all those I have met during my time on the Student Leadership Programme, not only by staff, but by fellow students on the programme, who have truly shown me that there is real hope and opportunity for the NHS and future of healthcare'.

Sian Megan Smith, student nurse,
Bangor University

Reflection

Reflective practice is a key component of healthcare higher education and a requirement for being a registered professional. Students and professionals alike are encouraged to reflect on their day-to-day practice, their interactions with their colleagues, the public and their patients, as well as their impact on patient safety. In this instance, students were invited to reflect on their leadership experience. They either reflected individually, in pairs or small groups, and by doing that they were able to listen actively and think collectively. Using The Thinking Environment approach, as part of the reflective methods, allowed students to pause, demonstrate respect and share openly with others their thinking in a safe environment.

Their reflections not only demonstrate the impact the programme had on them as students but also how the process of reflective practice has helped the students to articulate their experiences in a more effective way. In most cases, students reported that reflection allowed them to build their confidence and increase their visibility within the group.

'The event in Birmingham allowed me to learn how to effectively reflect on my own leadership skills to improve my self-confidence. Since the programme ended, I have been using a reflective diary whilst on placement to think carefully about my experiences, to help identify areas where I need to improve and to celebrate areas I am good at'.

Abigail Spragg, student nurse at
Plymouth University

Emotional intelligence

The programme has helped students to reflect on their own emotions, understand the value of emotional intelligence in leadership and reflect on their own journey as healthcare leaders. As with reflection, they learned about emotional intelligence while practising, rather than out of a course book.

'It was valuable to listen to a health professional talk about emotional intelligence and know that it is ok to not be ok. It was quite reassuring to know we are not expected to be superhuman and show no emotion when something sad is happening, be it in the ward or in our personal life.'

Darragh McGee, physiotherapy student,
University of Bradford

The emotional intelligence sessions at the events focused on understanding how to be emotionally intelligent, maintain resilience and 'bounce back ability' through storytelling, and joint sessions involving arts and crafts. Focusing the mind on a very different task than usual (art in this case) helped students to unlock their thinking and potential and understand the concepts more easily.

'The programme has added value to my education experience as it has enabled me to understand leadership from a multidimensional perspective (e.g. aspects of emotional intelligence, emotional resilience and personality traits) that transcends the limited knowledge that I have gained about leadership within my course'.

Jaspreet Uppal, occupational therapy student,
University of Derby

Empowerment and confidence-building

The most significant finding from the students' reflections is that leadership is not about hierarchy and everyone is a leader. They clearly grasped the idea that management is about process, but leadership is about behaviour.

'I was able to learn key values of what a role in leadership looks like and be reminded of the fact that everyone has a role in leadership. I have not only grown in my confidence as a student nurse, but I also know that I can have a role in leadership even as a student and now feel I have the relevant skills able to carry this out.'

Katie Brown, student nurse, Queens University Belfast

'For some reason this had never occurred to me – leaders are not necessarily the people at the top of the hierarchy, even though it is their job title. Leadership can be seen everywhere and in everyone'.

Charlene Cole, student midwife, Coventry University

Empowerment and motivation have both been strong themes of the Council's programme. Students were encouraged to get out of their comfort zones, to have a vision and purpose as leaders. They were asked to be leaders through simulation and performing in front of an audience from day one of the programme. Although this was a more comfortable activity for some than others, students responded positively, and the peer support and motivation encouraged everyone to participate actively.

'The confidence I have gained from this experience is also one of the important lessons I have learned. This increase in self-awareness has had a noticeable difference in both the academic study and practice in placement. I no longer doubt myself in what I am able to achieve'

Charlotte Smith, orthoptics student, the University of Sheffield



Networking

Overwhelmingly students report that the programme offered them great networking opportunities particularly with their peers from other disciplines and fellow students from other universities across the UK. They reflected they do not experience networking as part of their programmes and they rarely meet with students from other disciplines.

'The opportunities provided to network and meet people within the healthcare community that we may not otherwise have done was so very valuable, not just from a connections point of view but also in terms of building our own confidence and ability to speak to people of all levels within our chosen profession.'

Eustacia Green, student midwife,
Staffordshire University

Allied health students reflected that the networking experience offered them opportunities to promote their professions to the wider student group. They reflected that they were not aware of the term 'Allied Health Professional' before they joined the Council's programme as most of their experience as part of their studies was within their specific professional group.

'I have connected with likeminded people from around the UK, forged real friendships and been welcomed into an exciting world of Healthcare. I recently attended an NHS England AHP Agenda workshop and was able to contribute towards potentially strategic level changes within the NHS. The power of the #150Leaders family is unquantifiable and I continue to pinch myself to have been afforded such an incredible opportunity.'

Alison Booker, student dietitian, Leeds Beckett University

Mentoring

One to one mentoring on leadership was a new concept to most of the students on the programme. Although many students were familiar with mentoring in practice, having one to one sessions on their leadership, helped them build their objectives, focus on their achievements, learn about themselves and plan their development for their future.

'My mentor was able to give me a great, unbiased insight into my personal and professional abilities. Although she is not a healthcare professional, she provided me with tailored feedback, problem solved scenarios and, most importantly, reassured me that I am doing a fantastic job!'

Carolina De Freitas, speech and language therapy student, City University London

'Her guidance and advice has been invaluable, particularly as she was able to tailor so much of this to my specific circumstance as a mature student facing a shorter career path within the NHS, therefore focusing on the most effective way to maximise the opportunities that my management and leadership experience bring.'

Sam Richards, student mental health nurse, University of Swansea

Feedback on the mentorship, however, was mixed. Although all students enjoyed the concept of it, getting the right mentor or meeting student expectations has not always been easy. Lessons learned from this exercise is to ensure that mentors and students can 'test chemistry' between them before embarking on a mentoring exercise.

'The importance of mentoring is not something I had been very aware of prior to the programme so it was enlightening to hear so many influential people talking about how much mentors had helped guide them. As I develop my professional career I will seek out mentors to help guide me and will also look to be a mentor to others.'

Rebecca Casalicchio, student physiotherapist, Brunel University

Storytelling

Storytelling has been a strong component of the student leadership programme. Speakers at the event came from all walks of life as leaders of healthcare, either in frontline service delivery, academia or business.

'We heard from a variety of leaders within healthcare. They shared their stories of leadership; their successes and failures, their lessons and their journeys. They encouraged us to be bold, to be brave and to challenge the status quo with professionalism and courage. These were important lessons on how to really make an impact, from people who have lived and triumphed through many combined decades of experience.'

Leanne Patrick, student nurse, University of Stirling

6.1 An inter-professional environment

As mentioned before, one of the most important achievements of the Council's leadership programme has been the ability to bring together as part of a community students from different disciplines. This was mostly valued. On the one hand, allied health professions students learned about each other's professions, understood they were part of a larger AHP community and got to reflect on their commonalities and differences. On the other hand, allied health professions students interacted with student nurses and student midwives, learning about different professions, and the different challenges of the variety of fields of practice.

'It leaves me with great hope that one day, the Student Leadership Programme will make a great difference in reducing the barriers of inter-professional working and will encourage communication within nursing, midwifery and allied health professions, which overall, will vastly improve the quality of care our patients receive.'

Anna Watkinson, student nurse,
Northumbria University

'The programme helped me understand other people's roles (for example in optometry in the NHS) and highlighted areas of clinical crossover (such as between midwives caring for post-natal depression and how mental health nurses may share a role in this care)'.

Matthew Meegan, student mental health nurse,
King's College University

'Having a chance to network with nursing students has allowed me to have a better understanding of their profession and generates collaborative working in future practice. I enjoyed promoting my profession as many of the other students did not understand what occupational therapy was. To my future profession, I believe this was an extremely valuable part of the programme'.

Kate Tilley, occupational therapy student,
University of Derby



7 Impact of the programme on student achievements



Laura Thomas (centre), Student Midwife of the Year 2018. Credit: Student Nursing Times Awards 2018

The programme has clearly had a significant impact on the students that took part. Not only have they developed leadership skills that they took back to their university, but they also became strong advocates of their professions, engaged in recruitment and retention activities and developed skills in influencing policy, and increasing the visibility of their professions.

From winning the student midwife and student nurse of the year award to developing projects to enhance patient safety, students were able to demonstrate how the leadership programme supported their confidence and motivation to excel in their disciplines.

7.1 Awards and recognition

It is excellent to note that several students on the programme were nominated to several national student awards while three of them won awards for their contribution to their professions through their studies.

- Three students invited to a Buckingham Palace reception hosted by HRH The Prince of Wales to celebrate the contribution of nursing to society
- Student Nursing Times Awards: Student Midwife of the Year and Outstanding Contribution to Student Affairs (seven nominees from the programme)
- RCNi Awards: Student Nurse of the Year (two nominees from the programme)
- Finalist in the Scottish Health Awards
- Successfully elected chair of the university's student midwife society
- Nomination for Student Woman of the Year
- Nomination for Academic Representation and Engagement Award
- Elected Students for Global Health President

7.2 Social media



Although most of the students were familiar and comfortable with the use of social media, as they entered their programme their engagement with social media was mostly on a personal individual basis (for e.g. using Facebook to share personal or family stories with limited references to their studying). There was an impression amongst the students that social media was not suitable for student professional practice and not a place to discuss their professional challenges or share their thoughts about their study, profession or academic environment.

Through the empowerment, reflective and role modeling approach of the programme, the students were encouraged to use social media appropriately. Guidance issued by professional regulators in this area was discussed and, in most cases, students were encouraged to join Twitter, follow their role models and express their leadership learning via the #150Leaders hashtag. This quickly turned into a positive movement, gaining momentum for the programme and creating a solid and sustainable community for the students.

- Many students took up the opportunity to engage more proactively and on an ongoing basis with social media communities.
- Two students approached @WeNurses and established the first @WeStudentNurses account
- Most students connected with other students and mentors on social media
- Many students Joined @WeAHPs and @ WeMidwives running twitter chats and debates
- One student used Twitter to strengthen retention and peer support amongst student nurses
- One student used Twitter to survey students in Scotland on the need to set up a student council to influence healthcare higher education policy in Scotland
- AHP students have been active promoting #AHPsActive on Twitter

7.3 Campaigning and advocacy work

Campaigning for student rights is something that students would have been familiar with particularly for those engaged in student union activity. However, campaigning for patient safety, women's choice and better maternity services were areas that were explored as part of the discussions with mentors. The programme clearly offered opportunities for students to engage in campaign and advocacy activity beyond their local student community. Making good use of their reflections on their role models, discussion with mentors, networking and social media, the students started building their leadership profile in advocacy and campaigning. This was no longer about a small internal issue affecting students in their local area and within their university but rather expanded to something bigger and national: a maternity leader campaign, or a stronger student voice across the university.

- A student midwife developed a #maternity leader campaign including film making about the vulnerabilities of a leader, and a film about emboldening women in their maternity experience.
- Another student midwife campaigned about stillbirth through a video about both parents and clinicians affected.
- An advocate of student leadership promoted leadership within their own university becoming a leadership champion
- Student midwives organised charity events for midwifery FGM awareness and normality in midwifery, in collaboration with the radiology society

'I took leadership into my placement, I have become more involved with trying to get wider participation within the university to help the community in Edinburgh, particularly with homelessness'

**Emma-Jane Robertson, student nurse,
University of Edinburgh**

7.4 Engagement with professional bodies

Although some students were already engaged with their professional bodies when they joined the programme, some had not had any communication with them and were eager to learn and understand more about their role. The programme allowed them to make contact with their professional bodies, which in many cases led to them joining their professional body as a student representative, a leader of a campaign or a student information officer.

- One student joined the RCM leadership framework
- Students chaired sessions at the RCM conference
- Students became involved as information officers at the RCN
- One student was appointed to the CSP's Professional Committee
- Students joined the RCN scrap the cap campaign
- One student officer for the RCOT's specialist Children, Young People and Families section
- Student physiotherapists act as student representatives for the CSP

7.5 Engagement in strategic meetings

One of the most unusual experiences for the students on the programme was the opportunity to join national strategic meetings and participate in policy debates affecting healthcare higher education. Students were very receptive to the experience and appreciated being asked to be part of strategic groups influencing the future of healthcare. This experience highlighted the value of the programme being run through the Council of Deans of Health, who were able to facilitate engagement with national strategic agendas.

- Students became part of the validation process with the NMC
- Students got involved in the CNO England strategy Leading Change Adding Value
- Students engaged with the development of the strategy for the CAHPO England

- Students engaged with the NHS Leadership Academy and the Maximising Leadership Project feeding into HEE strategic delivery of leadership
- One student was successful at being the only student on the marketing strategy committee of their university
- Students engaged with university widening participation policy schemes
- Students presented at the CNO Scotland conference
- Students observed activities at a clinical commissioning group
- Students became involved in a university curriculum steering group
- Students were included in student recruitment activity at university UCAS interview days
- Several students presented at Council of Deans of Health events and were part of the Council of Deans of Health Scotland Retreat discussions

7.6 Media engagement

Many students reflected on their leadership experience in the press and media. This allowed them to be exposed to being interviewed by a journalist (for some this was the first time they had a media engagement), written an article or a blog.

- Students wrote articles for their university journal
- Many students have written in The Nursing Times on issues including **self-care, addiction nursing, the benefits of conferences and courage**
- One student has written in the British Journal of Midwifery on the transition from being a student midwife to a qualified practitioner
- A radiography student was published in Synergy News (the newsletter for the Society of Radiographers) about her leadership experience
- A student has published an article in The Practicing Midwife Journal on adverse childhood experiences
- Many students have set up their own blogs and vlogs

7.7 Students engaged in research activity

For some students, research activity was something distant in their leadership journey as they joined the leadership programme. However, role modelling and mentoring meant that those students who were interested in research were encouraged and empowered to lead research activity during their undergraduate first or second year of study. This led to some impressive results with some of the students.

- A student has been published in the **Journal of Research in Nursing**
- A student put forward a PhD proposal for dementia research leading projects and events
- Another student applied for research funding

7.8 Speaking and organising conferences and other events

Public speaking was an area that some of the students identified as a development objective for them when they joined the programme. However, by the end of the programme and with support from their mentors many students led public speaking engagements, many at national level in large events and a group of students organised a regional student leadership conference. This was the outcome of the empowering, mentoring and role modelling method of the programme.

'This program has allowed me to see how others have succeeded in their career paths. The variety of speakers at high positions who gave up their time to come and address us, interacting and responding to any question and offering encouragement was awesome. It has given me the courage to project one of my interests to the University, that of the medical emergency response charity CitizenAid, and I am seeking to run events within Leicestershire universities to share the skills that this teaches – preparedness in the event of catastrophe. By doing this I hope to encourage others that their good ideas should not remain bottled up, but that they should share and act on them.'

*Feray Macmillan, student nurse,
De Montfort University*

- A student developed a drug calculation support group
- Students set up student societies including nursing society and emergency medicine society
- A small group of students engaged presenting papers in international conferences including healthcare visits to Berlin and Helsinki to learn from other healthcare systems
- Students presented at conferences including Cancer Care Conference, European Network for Occupational Therapy Education and the International Forum on HIV & Rehabilitation in Canada
- A group of students presented at the Royal College of Midwives' Annual Education Conference
- Students features on Nursing Times Careers Live
- Students presented at the NMAHP Conference 2018
- Students took part in public speaking at the House of Commons on funding for student nurses
- Student midwife invited to give the pre-dinner speech at Health Research UK dinner

7.9 Leading in practice

Many students reported that as a result of their exposure to leadership practice, they were able to be more proactive in their practice placements. For instance, students felt empowered to raise concerns more openly when they observed risks to patient safety or engaged more assertively with their practice teachers and facilitators in providing feedback on their placement experience.

Approachability, engagement, teamwork, communication and many more of these are skills I have looked into and began to develop thanks to this programme. I now know that when I am on placement, I have to be assertive yet approachable as it is my learning experience, and I am not scared to speak up if something does not seem right.

Amy Butwell, student nurse, University of Southampton



8 Recommendations for universities



The Council's Student Leadership Programme offers universities an opportunity to reflect on their leadership offer to their students. It not only enables universities to review or update their existing programmes and curricula, but it also opens the space for innovation in the practice of leadership including the development of specific leadership programmes for undergraduate and postgraduate students of healthcare courses.

In this section we provide specific recommendations for universities both for existing curricula and future activities.

8.1 Focus of leadership education

Less theory, more practice

Students who have completed the Council's Student Leadership Programme reported that they would value leadership practice being better integrated within their academic study. Those who had been exposed to leadership education within their university recognised that the approach was academic, focusing mainly on the teaching of leadership theory. Students reflected that learning about theory was useful but not enough and they wanted to see more of the practice of leadership within their academic study.

By 'leadership practice' they often referred to role modelling by their lecturers and educators as well as exposure to learning about the leadership journeys of the Dean and other strategic leaders within their university and senior leaders within their practice settings. By using storytelling and learning about experienced leaders' achievements, the students felt they could be inspired and empowered to be the system leaders of the future. Inspirational talks by a Dean, Director of Service or senior system leader were greatly appreciated by the students, helping them realise that those in senior positions had experienced good and difficult times, shaping their leadership through change and adversity. In that sense, role models were not super humans but individuals like students, passionate for healthcare.

'A real difference between the programme and my university course is current healthcare leaders explaining their leadership journeys. This has made me believe that roles within leadership are not out of reach and can be achieved'.

Scott Rodden, student nurse, University of Central Lancashire

Feedback and reflection

In addition to role modelling, students valued the practice of leadership through offering and receiving positive and constructive feedback, reflecting on their own leadership and comparing their approach to others', reflecting together on what makes a good leader, what shapes their leadership journey and through scenario setting and simulation learning about leadership good practice.

'The Student Leadership Programme has given me the confidence to challenge myself on placements, but also has reassured me on how leadership can be demonstrated within all roles of all levels of seniority, even as a student.'

Bev Goodman, student occupational therapist,
University of Essex

8.2 Type of education environment

Empowering settings

Students were supported through the programme to reflect on their own leadership style and appreciate themselves as leaders of here and now. One of the key messages in the programme was the idea of everyone being a leader as leadership is about behaviour and action as opposed to hierarchy and positioning.

As many students embraced the opportunity to be considered as leaders at the very beginning of their professional experience, it is important that their university and practice placement experience continues to empower them to act as leaders in practice within the parameters of their student role. Some students found that the leadership programme gave them the tools and confidence to be a leader, to challenge bad practice and champion patient safety. However, when they returned to their study they experienced a less encouraging approach in some of their education settings, being told they were 'just a student'.

'I would love to see more of the concepts from the Student Leadership Programme incorporated into the standard nursing and allied health curricula. In hindsight, I feel that the most valuable lessons I have learned were also some of the simplest, and could be translated effectively into lectures and tutorials across fields.'

Jessica Sinclair, student nurse, University of Dundee

Networking

Students valued practising leadership as part of a wider network. Within their university this could take the shape of a student leaders group where likeminded students could learn from each other, seek peer support and get motivated to learn. Students reflected that although in most cases their leadership role models were senior leaders in their sector, they were equally inspired by fellow students and the strength of being part of a community. While the Council will continue the networking both through social media via the now well recognised #150Leaders brand and its online leadership community, it will be good for universities to reflect how they can strengthen student leadership through networking within their own institution or region. This could take the shape of supporting the development of regional student networks in partnership with other universities within the same region or university networks across different disciplines both within and beyond healthcare.

'The Student Leadership Programme has also had an impact on my educational experience... I have been developing my academic network using Twitter, Researchgate and by having the confidence to simply email people and ask for help'.

Ruth Rodgers, student midwife, City University London

Interdisciplinary networking and learning was a strong component of a successful student leadership offer. Students valued learning about other professions, particularly those which were not widely known or promoted. Allied health professions students recognised the asset of being part of a wider multi-professional community. Universities will want to think how they ensure as far as possible multi-disciplinary approaches to leadership practice, effectively mirroring leadership in real professional life.

8.3 Local leadership programmes

While the Council will continue to run a national, UK-wide multi professional student leadership programme, universities may consider building their own capacity locally within their institution, regionally with other universities and local partners using some of the methods that have mostly appreciated in the Council's programme.



The following check list below offers some tips in the development of a local/regional student leadership programme:

- Identify the targeted audience: which student year group, how many students, which professions?
- Involve students early: student needs analysis, student group to be involved in the design and co-creation of the programme
- Think small: designing a small summer school as a starting point may be more effective than setting up an entire new module or programme
- Seek partnership and sponsorship: within own university in partnership with business/management school, local sponsors from public local authority and regional commissioners to private sponsors
- Build interactive elements of the programme: networking face to face and online, social media, local roadshows and events
- Follow as far as possible the elements of the SLP: role modelling, feedback, reflection, authentic leadership, empowerment, networking
- Link with the Council for advice and support: engage the Council in supporting the development or delivery of the programme
- Use former #150Leaders for dissemination and support to the new student group
- Build a network of local coaches to offer one to one coaching sessions
- Evaluate and refine the programme on an ongoing basis using feedback from the participants



9 Conclusions

Healthcare students already experience leadership in several shapes and forms as part of their education experience. They engage in leadership theory as part of their curricula, are exposed to leadership in their academic and practice settings and engage in several activities within their universities and beyond. All these experiences allow students to foster their leadership potential by supporting recruitment and retention or representing student interest at high level policy engagements.

What the Council's #150Leaders programme clearly demonstrated is that students learn most effectively about leadership if they practise it actively and collectively. The power of networking, role modelling, mentoring, group reflection and assessment of emotional intelligence are not new to leadership and should not be any different to students in healthcare higher education than to other settings and sectors. By strengthening the practice of leadership in interdisciplinary settings and by encouraging strong role modelling by the most senior members of the academic and practice teams, students should be motivated to become leaders from the early stages of their education and bring this leadership later in life as part of their future professions and careers.



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