Safeguarding students

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Supporting information on safeguarding for students who start their nursing, midwifery or nursing associate education programme before 18 years of age

Relating to: Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education

Introduction

The NMC's programme standards set out the regulatory expectations regarding safety and effectiveness of learning environments within Approved Education Institutions (AEIs) and practice learning environments. This is to make sure that students can learn and develop their skills in safe and effective ways.

Overview

Our nursing and midwifery programme standards were underpinned by EU Directive 2005/36/EC[1]. During the review of our programme standards, we worked with subject matter experts and gathered evidence[2] which facilitated the removal of the EU Directive from our programme standards.

Removal of the EU Directive from our programme standards means that the requirement for a student to have evidence of 10 or 12 years of general education is no longer included in these standards. Removing this requirement increases the flexibility for AEIs to set their own entry requirements. This aims to make nursing and midwifery programmes more accessible to people who may not have evidence of 10 or 12 years of general education, such as those that have had alternative schooling, refugees, or people from travelling communities.

By removing the requirement for a student to have evidence of 10 or 12 years of general education, AEIs entry requirements can enable students under the age of 18 to join their programmes. Our Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education[3] states the following:

> "Public safety is central to our standards. Students will be in contact with people throughout their education and it's important that they learn in a safe and effective way."

To make sure that students can learn in a safe and effective way, and that the public are also safe, we have added a new standard to the Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education. This standard has been added to make sure that students who may start their nursing or midwifery programme before the age of 18 are appropriately safeguarded, and importantly so are the people they care for. The new standard states the following:

> "Ensure that for students below the age of 18 on admission to their intended programme, appropriate safeguarding measures are in place to support them and people in their care."

For students who start their programme under the age of 18, AEIs should have appropriate safeguarding measures in place.

What measures may need to be put in place to safeguard students under the age of 18?

AEIs have recruitment and selection processes in place which appraise the capability, suitability and maturity of applicants for nursing and midwifery programmes. If a student starts a programme when they are under 18 years of age, AEIs and practice learning partners should discuss the local Trust/Health Board and non-NHS placement requirements for those students. This is to assure a student's wellbeing and that of people within placement settings. The following may need to be considered:

1. The suitability of some placement settings and experiences whilst the student is under the age of 18. The suitability of certain shift patterns, such as night duty, whilst the student is under the age of 18.
2. Determining which proficiencies may need to be achieved later in the student's programme when they have reached the age of 18.
3. The creation of a more bespoke student journey which is tailored to the needs of the student, such as extending the length of the programme.

The standards framework for nursing and midwifery education references safeguarding measures that AEIs should have in place. The standards are included below for ease of reference:

l Learning Culture

Standards

1.1 The learning culture prioritises the safety of people, including carers, students and educators, and enables the values of The Code to be upheld.

Requirements

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

1.1 Demonstrate that the safety of people is a primary consideration in all learning environments

1.2 Prioritise the wellbeing of people promoting critical self-reflection and safe practice in accordance with The Code

1.3 Ensure people have the opportunity to give and if required, withdraw, their informed consent to students being involved in their care

1.4 Ensure educators and others involved in supervision, learning and assessment understand their role in preserving public safety.

2 Educational governance and quality

Standards

2.2 All learning environments optimise safety and quality, taking account of the diverse needs of, and working in partnership with, service users, students and all other stakeholders.

Requirements

Approved education institutions, together with practice learning partners, must:

2.1 Comply with all relevant legal, regulatory, professional and educational requirements.

1] DIRECTIVE 2005/36/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL https://eur-ex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:255:0022:0142:en:PDF

2] NMC programme standards review, Harlow and Traverse reports. London. Available at: www.nmc.org.uk/education/programme-of-change-for-education/how-we-reviewed-our-pre-education-programme-standards/how-we-reviewed--our-education-programme-standards/

3] NMC Standards framework for nursing and midwifery programmes. London. Available at: www.nmc.org.uk/standards-for-education-and-training/standards-framework-for-nursing-and-midwifery-education/