

## All Learners Public Health Conference – Stockport NHSFT

In Stockport, we have always been very keen to engage our healthcare students in public health initiatives and ensure they are well-informed about the importance of maintaining a 'public health mindset' at all times, as an integral part of their role.

As part of this agenda, in 2016 a new initiative was planned in partnership with Stockport MBC, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust and Manchester Universities which involved delivering a 'Public Health Conference', for pre-registration health care students on placement in Stockport. The conference provided a wonderful opportunity for the students to learn more about public health services in Stockport and to explore their role in promoting health and sign-posting to services. In the afternoon, a 'market-stall' event was organized where a range of different public health staff attended and promoted their services. As part of the event, over 70 public health short ½ day or 1 day 'spoke placements', were offered, which students were then able to book onto. This enabled the students to see public health 'in action' in Stockport and helped them to link theory to real-life practice. During the event, the students completed 'pre' and 'post' questionnaires, to assess their confidence and knowledge, and each year the conference has been held these scores have risen in the "post" survey.

Over the past 3 consecutive years the conference has grown in success both in terms of number of students attending and the type of placements available, enabling a wide range of public health experiences for the attendees and consolidation of the public health agenda into the curriculum.

Some of the comments received from students attending the conference were:

- *"the market-stall event was amazing! with really good opportunities"*
- *"I now have the knowledge to make a difference"*
- *"Fantastic, I loved it! Very informative"*
- *"It was very informative and I loved the opportunity to maintain this learning via the spoke placements"*
- *"I feel more confident about promoting good health and have a better understanding about people's motivations or things that might inhibit their ability to change"*

Following the first event, one student had sent in a testimony, describing how she had put her new learning into practice and had helped a patient to consider life-style factors that were having a really significant, detrimental effect on her life. The next day, when the patient was leaving the ward, the patient called her over and said *"thank you... everyone needs a 'Sally' in their lives!"*. Through the students input, the patient stated *"I now feel I have a second chance to change things"*. The student stated how overwhelmed she felt by the patient's comments, which had reminded her exactly why she had chosen the nursing profession.

Following the 2017 conference the initiative won a national Student Nursing Times Award for Partnership collaboration.

Future plans are to continue with the conference annually and provision of a conference "Toolkit" which has almost been completed which would enable transferability of the conference to any setting.

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