Service User and Carer Feedback: guidelines for students and mentors

Introduction

Where appropriate, pre-registered student nurses are expected to seek and obtain feedback from service users and carers regarding their care delivery. The aim in obtaining feedback from service users and carers is trifold; to support evidence for the Ongoing Achievement Record (OAR), to assist mentors in their assessment of pre-registered student nurses, and contribute to individuals' personal and professional development. Student compliance with the Nursing and Midwifery Council's (NMC) standards is paramount to guarantee and promote service user and carer safety at all times. Therefore, within this process, students with the support of their mentors must ensure that service users and carers do not feel obligated to participate. Furthermore, assurances should be explicit to allay participant anxiety around potential contribution ramifications. It is essential that participating service users and carers be responded to individually and with respect. Participant anonymity and confidentiality should be promoted at all times.

The process

In theory, this process can be implemented within each placement throughout the pre-registration nurse programme however there may be clinical practice areas, which are not considered appropriate for this activity to take place. These may include psychiatric intensive care units (PICU) and crisis intervention teams. This process must therefore be discussed with your mentor(s) at the beginning of each placement. It is at the mentor's discretion to decide if this process can be implemented during your placement including service user and/or carer selection, in addition to the most appropriate stage of the placement. If a decision is reached whereby you are not permitted to seek service user and/ or carer feedback, it will not affect the assessment of your practice. A maximum of two feedback sheets per placement is considered appropriate.

Reassurance for service users and carers must be clearly explained and their right to refuse without ramifications made explicit. Where service users and/or carers agree to participate but do not feel able to record their feedback on the document, they should be encouraged to express their thoughts via an advocate who can write on their behalf.

It is the mentor's responsibility to approach the service user and/or carer to seek their participation. This approach must include an explanation of the process and clarify for the respondent an understanding that they are assessing the student nurse performance and

not any organisational issues. The mentor should be mindful of additional organisational feedback activities ensuring service users and carers are not overwhelmed with simultaneous processes.

If complaints are (mistakenly) highlighted regarding organisational issues, it is the mentor's responsibility to follow organisational policies and procedures. Should this occur, the suggested recommendation is for the mentor to copy the feedback sheets for further investigation, ensuring the service user and/or carer are reassured this information will be responded to in due course.

In the first instance, the completed feedback documentation should be returned to the mentor; they can then review this to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality is maintained before discussing this with the student. This joint review should form the basis of constructive feedback for the student with an opportunity for the student to reflect on the implications for future practice (verbally and in writing – see documentation) and contribute to the student nurse placement assessment.

Service users and carers should not be approached to discuss any points raised about the student's performance as this may lead to heightened anxiety and compromise the validity of the process. The completed documentation forms part of the University of the West of England's assessment strategy and securely retained by the student as part of their individual portfolio.