

Visit to the University of South Wales School of Nursing

8 December 2022

Background

1. On 8 December 2022, the Health and Social Care Committee visited the University of South Wales Glyntaff Campus. The aim of the visit was to inform the Committee's ongoing work relating to the health and care workforce, including the planned session with the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales on 26 January 2023.
2. During the visit, Members toured the clinical simulation and Hydra critical incident decision-making facilities, and met academics, students and teaching staff. This note highlights key issues and themes discussed during the visit.

Clinical simulation and Hydra critical incident decision-making facilities

3. Facilities include a range of recreated settings, including wards, ICU, maternity, ambulance, GP practice, a domestic flat (allows simulation of assessments for activities for daily living and safeguarding), and the Hydra critical incident decision-making facility.
4. Simulation enables **some familiarisation in a safe clinical space** ahead of clinical placements. This includes, where possible, opportunities to use multidisciplinary classrooms and spaces to involve multiple professionals in joint training, including social workers, psychology and police.
5. The Nursing and Midwifery Council has allowed an increase in simulated training hours (as part of the overall training hours requirements) from 300 to 600.
6. The facilities can be used for both pre- and post-registration training.



- 7.** The University of South Wales is establishing a new training facility elsewhere within the Rhondda Cynon Taf area, but hopes to retain the existing facility as well if possible. It has strong links with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.
- 8.** Consideration is being given to the potential for virtual reality clinical simulations to enhance the flexibility and depth of learning available to students.

Academics

- 9.** The Committee met academics working on a range of projects and research areas within PRIME Centre Wales (Wales Centre for Primary and Emergency Care Research), including Family Resistance Assessment Instrument and Tool (FRAIT); learning disability services; spiritual care in nursing; violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence; health and social care integration; health and social care workforce; value-based care; primary care networks; and evaluation of transformation funding.
- 10.** Training does create an initially safe environment, but the **reality of care work can be much more testing**, and the space to think creatively is much more limited.
- 11.** Question about whether local care services **can be staffed and sourced** from local population. We're looking for a significant number of people to work in local health and care services; maybe we need to look also at better or different ways of organising or delivering care that reflect a potentially smaller available workforce.
- 12.** Need to build community of practice so we're **not constantly re-learning** lessons. Wales has provided an opportunity to scale up new and best practice, but we haven't realised it – there's an implementation problem.
- 13.** **Funds for transformation** get trapped in core funding and they should be about cutting edge transformation, not just 'more of the same'.
- 14.** **Short-term schemes** mean we're constantly employing and re-employing staff.
- 15.** There's a need to embed social prescribing, but also to get professions thinking **more about prevention**.
- 16.** Need **better data sharing**, which is about better technology and trust. There may be a case for focusing initial attention on more complex patients.

Students

Commissioned courses (including nursing, midwifery and occupational therapy)

- 17. Real financial pressures:** bursary doesn't cover enough, including 365 days or travel for placements. But many students wouldn't be able to do the course if there were no bursaries. There can be an impact on benefit entitlement.
- 18. Work-life balance:** there's a lot of pressure, including course work and clinical placements. Pressures on ward which you shouldn't have to deal with as a student – can be stressful.
- 19.** For some courses, it's people's 2nd degrees (average age on OT course was 42, much lower for nursing).
- 20. Health/social care as careers:** Some schools didn't know much or enough about these careers – there's no real knowledge, information or learning available. People may also not have the choice because of financial pressures and lifestyle – need to have incentives. The media coverage about service pressures and strikes won't help recruitment either.
- 21. Reasons for students dropping out:** Demands of course work, clinical placements, work/life balance, lack of support. There's a lack of accessible support beyond 9-5, and for smaller events/problems you don't get a chance for a debrief. One student talked about enormous pressure on one shift "and taking 20 minutes to cry, but those chances are very few". **Resilience is assumed, but not always easy to keep.**

Non-commissioned courses (including Health and Social Care Management, Community Health and Wellbeing, Childhood Studies)

- 22.** Working as Band 2, hoping for Band 4 (being paid less than the role they're working to). Wanting to progress (end of life, dementia nurse, or wound care), but concerned about the more academic side of training.
- 23.** Impact of working in a care home during COVID – home lost 22 residents.
- 24.** "Some people think care is easy" but don't realise the more stressful, physical, basic care side of nursing. "New students are very young, and often they don't realise what's involved". "What you hear and what you do is quite different". Courses should include time in a care home.

25. Health care is challenging and “you should do it whole-heartedly”. It can be very hands-on, and not everyone is ready for this. Requires a lot of patience, is mentally draining and courses need to show this more.

Teaching staff

26. Support for **placements in care homes**, as students who have worked in such settings are a little surprised at the range of skills needed to work with this degree of autonomy.

27. Biggest challenges for students include **tough working conditions** – some students leave as not able to deal with this. There’s little time to pause and reflect.

28. Non-nursing students don’t get a bursary.

29. **Limited clinical placements** available for Operating Department Assistants in Wales. Physiotherapy clinical placement is 33% of course, others it’s 50%.

30. Important that inter-professional education is built into courses (currently around 20% of courses). Enthusiastic support for the role of the **Professional Educator Facilitator** – Welsh Government have funded one for each LHB but only Cwm Taf Morgannwg have appointed as yet. Three days per week to support student placements.