

Team Leeds Hearts and Minds

Findings from Team Leeds Chat (TLC)- (Inc. session notes)
-Health and Care Learners and Educators-

About Team Leeds Chats (TLCs)

Current and future workforce experience is critical for shaping the future of health and care in Leeds. TLCs create a space for our health and care workforce, learners and educators to talk, listen, connect and share experiences of living and working during the pandemic, or working in partnership with health and care colleagues from across the system. The learning that was shared will help to increase awareness and make Leeds an even better place to work.

Context

Covid-19 has disproportionately impacted certain groups of people. In acknowledgement of this a TLC was hosted with members of our **health and care learners (students, apprentices) and educators from further and higher education institutions**, who were asked to share their experiences of *living, working and learning during the pandemic*. The group comprised a mix of learners, student placement leads, directors of nursing, and newly completed students.

Key findings

The feeling in this group is summed up as a number of significant challenges /obstacles that have impacted both experience and outcomes for learners and educators.

The pandemic has negatively impacted the learning experience, for example:

- Availability of placements and some employers withdrawing offers at short notice.
- Reduced available support.
- Increased stress as a result of changing curricula, and changes to how teaching was provided.
- Lack of peer-to-peer support and a sense of disconnection.

Concerns were expressed about how their unique learning experience and the delays in qualifying will have longer-term implications, namely:

- Personal confidence and clinical / reasoning skills in the work place.
- Impact on earning potential.

There was a positive sense of #TeamLeeds and recognition of effective collaboration between health and care partners.

Conclusion:

There have been significant practical, emotional and developmental challenges for learners /educators during the pandemic. Creating urgent solutions for continuation of study and practice placements in a virtual setting is unprecedented. Learners and educators have embraced the challenge and demonstrated a 'can do' attitude. In spite of the challenges a sense of purpose and

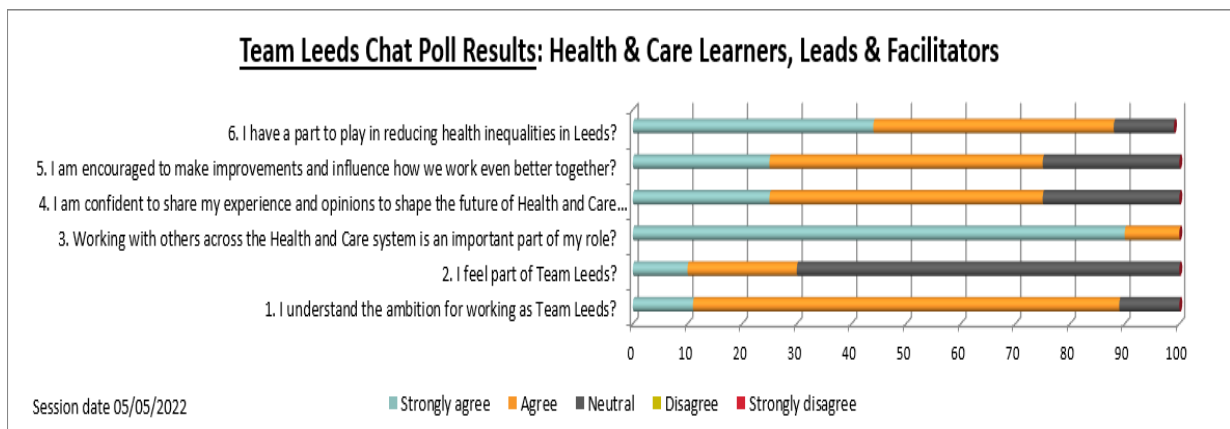
achievement is clear, with many feeling proud of the solutions that were applied and the positivity that many students still feel towards pursuing a career in health and care.

Top 3 Recommendations

- Workplaces are asked to demonstrate awareness of reduced confidence for post qualifying learners and adjust expectations /milestones accordingly.
- Workplaces are requested to provide increased pastoral support.
- The health and care system is asked to ensure learners and educators are regularly included in future engagement, development and culture change conversations for #TeamLeeds.

Team Leeds poll results

TLC participants were asked to take part in a quick-fire poll, which provides an indication of the learners /educators understanding of Team Leeds and our joint health and care ambitions.



The results from the TLC poll on this occasion indicate there are improvements to be made across many domains; perhaps *most notably for this group*:

- Creating a culture where all health and care learners and educators feel part of and included in #TeamLeeds.

Positively, there is group consensus that working with others across the health and care system is an important part of their roles.

Thank-you to everybody who took part in this Team Leeds Chat: we hope this findings report provides a good summary of the key issues discussed. If you have would like to provide further feedback please email us at: leadsth-tr.heartsandmins@nhs.net.

Appendix – Example notes from the Team Leeds Chat

What did participants say were the challenges/ experiences of living, working and learning during the pandemic?

- Remote studying; no face to face observations, meetings, or college attendance - all contributed to a sense of disconnection, and reduced confidence. Some student cohorts have not had face to face interaction at all.
- Educator: teaching on-line has been a challenge and increased staff stress levels. Staff exhausted. Reduced inter-personal skills with students. Long-term impact on student confidence. Placements assimilated into one block and held virtually. Students appreciative of virtual opportunities though.
- Some organisations have felt under pressure to accommodate more students, but have needed to be clear of boundaries and capabilities whilst still managing pandemic related issues. Yet huge health and care vacancies in the system creates dilemma.
- Student experience adversely impacted.
- Some students expressing they want to work for the NHS more than ever having studied during the pandemic.
- Surprisingly, there has been no increase in drop- out rates for some courses- new innovative ways of studying and learning have been implemented.
- Lots of opportunities to see people working together across boundaries, which has been inspirational.
- Flexibility that has been implemented during the pandemic has given students false expectations re what they might expect from health and care employers. The number of roster requests has increased.
- Poor internal staffing levels in workplaces are impacting the release of students to attend academic study.
- Colleague deaths from Covid-19 have psychologically impacted people. Particularly those from ethnically diverse backgrounds, who have been disproportionately affected.
- Continued discomfort is experienced for those continuing with high levels of PPE.
- Lower expectations of students ability upon qualification -whilst deemed safe to practice they may have had less hands on opportunities than previous cohorts.
- Offer increased pastoral support.
- There were lots of positives for practice leads and learners, including good coordination re placement information, good linking between HE + Trusts, good student access to vaccines, good Q&A opportunities for students.
- Overall practice leads felt learners have been accepting and grateful for placements - and that there was a reduction in placement difficulties / complaints.
- There was a perception of less anxiety and worry in learners.
- There was a good sense of Team Leeds and many aspects of joint working and collaboration had worked really well.
- Students had benefited from the social conditions of the placements themselves and felt part of team.
- Placement opportunities remained high in number (dropping only 16% of pre-covid levels).
- There was strong creativity in the placements offered and lots of service development / flexibility shown.
- Helpful consideration and support offered around mental health; strong Preceptorship model and on-going consultation with students.
- Nursing learners have felt most worried of different student cohorts. Thought to be nature of placements but not clear. V Important feedback is that nurses (and other students) feel exhausted... very much like other sections of workforce. Noted that as lockdown ends

student socialising increases - there is a contrast and lack of practice of being in frontline/person facing work and starting this is impacting on people's energy / tiredness.

- Recognition that the students coming through have had significant different learning experience - they treat virtual as the norm, changes seen in clinical reasoning skills, changes in how they perceive services being delivered.
- Placements have opened up in new specialist areas. These include placements in veteran's services and in gambling support services. Placement style may evolve to be a greater use of mixed / blended placements. Capacity to continue to think creatively is however limited by capacity in practice leads/placement coordinators e.g. teams of 1 in some providers.
- Recognition of need to capture students direct input as well. Suggestion that this is via asking students to self-video against a given question (e.g. 'what was it like to learn during lockdown' etc.). Suggest 2 min Whatsapp video is most useful accessible forum but open approach too with other formats accepted. Would be good to create a library / place where videos could give a 'tapestry' of student experience that HE / NHS and care orgs could use as resource.
- Students seemed to deal very well within the lockdown as their learning was transferred to virtual very quickly. They found it harder to set up connections with other students but did not feel that overly impacted their experience.
- Physical face to face placements were very well received when they came as it allowed the students to 're-enter the world'. However it did feel as if they were thrown into the deep end when placements started. Often with little support for their first few days, or several weeks for some.
- Educators had to redesign their learning processes with immediate effect and support their students through a very turbulent time. Many of them already had home working ability but had not done it long term before and their work-life balance suffered as a result. They feel now as if they have made very good progress but it has taken a huge amount of effort to get there.

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