

Creating the resources to support role-emerging student placements with Alzheimer Scotland



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Introduction

Literature within occupational therapy has pointed toward the benefits of role emerging placements for occupational therapy students, (Cooper and Raine 2009, Overton et al 2009, Thew et al 2008). Role-emerging placements also support expansion of boundaries and spread the value of Occupational Therapy (COT, 2006).

Background of Work

From research we know that student placements have a huge impact on where students want to work and their understanding of who they want to work with (Aslop and Donald 1996, Overton et al 2009). We also know that wherever our AHP workforce work, they will work with people with dementia and it is essential that all staff are equipped to work with people living with dementia (Scottish Government 2011). For this reason we wanted to develop 30 allied health profession (AHP) student placements in Alzheimer Scotland from 2012-2016 with the aim to:

1. Provide AHP students with much needed undergraduate experience of working with people with dementia, therefore contributing to the skills of the future workforce.

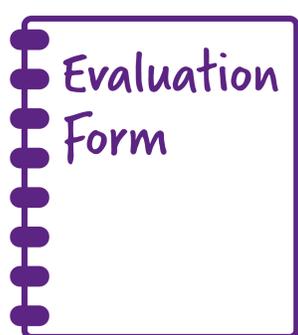
2. Provide AHP students with first-hand experience of working with and gain an understanding of Alzheimer Scotland as the leading organisation in dementia.

3. Provide an opportunity for staff in Alzheimer Scotland to work with a range of allied health professionals for mutual benefit. A need to develop key resources was identified to support successful implementation of placements. To help us with this we decided the best person to complete that was someone with first hand student experience, an occupational therapy intern.

What was produced

The resources which were identified as being required were a pre-placement information pack, role and remit sheet, 3 evaluation forms (one for students, one for staff and one for the people we work with) and a welcome and thank you letter for the beginning and end of placements.

Creating the documents involved a scoping exercise, consultation with partner organisations, evaluation and review of student and staff experiences on pilot placement during academic year 2013/14 and an extensive literature search.



Ongoing Benefits

The evaluation forms are being used regularly allowing on-going improvements to be made and provide a solid evidence base of the AHP Student placements.

We have extended the AHP placement offers to art therapy, music therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy for 2015.

We continue to develop and support a partnership approach to AHP internships and are now looking at a programme of AHP volunteers in Alzheimer Scotland, Scotland's leading dementia organisation.

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