



West Midlands Education Innovation and Notable Practice

ESCALATING CONCERNS DURING CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

2010 - 2011



ESCALATING CONCERNS DURING CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Overview:	Recent events and subsequent inquiries within the NHS have directed significant attention towards standards of care and issues of public protection. The role of Universities and their respective healthcare students has also been alluded to in this context. Consequently, a framework of support has been developed in collaboration with the Legal Services Department at the University to enable healthcare students to fulfil their responsibilities with regard to raising concerns relating to standards of care they may experience during their clinical placements.
Lead:	Dr W. M. Daly, Senior Lecturer in Nursing, Programme Lead for QA&E w.m.daly@bham.ac.uk 0121 414 3231

The provision and maintenance of high standards of care is fundamental to professional healthcare practice as is the protection of vulnerable clients and colleagues. Moreover, the NMC (2010:4) regard failing to report concerns relating to poor standards of care or wrongdoing as unacceptable and in breach of the 2008 Code of Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics. The above responsibilities also apply to nursing students and are underpinned by the Guidance on Professional Conduct for Nursing & Midwifery Students (NMC 2009). The Health Professions Council (HPC) similarly, regard this as an important aspect of professional regulation and have recently issued guidance to its registrants regarding the issues of whistle blowing and raising concerns in the workplace. ['Raising and escalating concerns' www.nmc-uk.org/publications. (<http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/raisingconcerns/whistleblowing/>).

It cannot be underestimated, however, that students may find the prospect of reporting concerns, which may involve the very people they are being taught, supervised and assessed by as a daunting one and be fearful of the consequences of such action. The University of Birmingham takes these concerns seriously and wish to reassure students who embark upon such a process that they can be confident that the University will offer support as appropriate throughout the process in accordance with its perceived duty of care towards healthcare students.

The Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) guidance currently available identifies several stages in the process for raising and escalating concerns in the workplace, which range from raising concerns internally to the escalation of concerns to an external healthcare regulatory organisation or other medium.

The framework developed outlines the responsibilities and course of action that students should consider with regard to each of the stages of escalation. In addition to this the framework identifies the level and nature of support they can expect from relevant academic staff at each stage. The framework thus, acts as a guide and framework of reference to both students and academic staff involved in nursing and physiotherapy programmes at the University of Birmingham.

The framework is currently being made available to students via the University Virtual Learning Environment (CANVAS) and will be included in student induction processes and programme

handbooks. Future plans will involve monitoring the use of the framework, case by case evaluation of its impact and possible application to other healthcare programmes within the University.