Assistant/Associate Practitioner Steering Group Meeting
26th January 2009

Present:
Adedayo Odubayo (AO) NESC
Ann Stainton (AS) Progress South Central
Barry Hodgson (BH) Portsmouth Hospitals Trust
Emma Wilton (EW) NESC
Jenny Simmons (JS) Heatherwood and Wexham Park Foundation Trust
Joan Potterton (JP) Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
Mark Statham (MS) NESC
Mary Somerville (MSo) Skills Academy for Health
Ruth Monger (RM) South Central Strategic Health Authority
Sam Donohue (SD) Oxfordshire Assistant Practitioner Project Lead
Sue Byrne (SB) Oxfordshire PCT
Suzanne Rankin (SR) South Central Strategic Health Authority

Apologies:
Anita Esser Southampton University Hospital Trust
Liz Thomas-Wardle Oxfordshire & Bucks Mental Healthcare Trust
Camilla Leach NESC
Toni Sanderson NESC
Richard Billings NESC
Jon Bramley Hampshire and Isle of Wight LLN
Julie Abdalla Hampshire PCT

1. **Apologies and Introduction**
Introductions were made and apologies given.

2. **Minutes of Steering Group Meeting on 28.10.08**
   - The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3. **Matters Arising**
   - The Assistant/Associate Practitioner (AP) evaluation report has been finalised and will soon be available on the NESC website. EW will circulate a link once available.
     - MSo agreed to join the Steering Group to represent the Skills Academy for Health.
     - EW, MS and Lesley Sheldon met representatives from Foundation Degree Forward regarding development of an education framework for the AP.

4. **AP Demand Analysis for 2009/10 and 2010/11**
   - RM presented an analysis of AP demand from a scoping exercise carried out across NHS South Central in December 2008.
     - Fifteen Trusts and PCTs responded to the scoping exercise. Reminders will be sent to the organisations who have yet to submit a return.
     - Information returned indicates an increased demand for Health and Social Care Foundation Degrees to support growth of the AP. A number of organisations have clearly articulated plans to increase development of the
role. RM explained that it is difficult for NESC to respond to this increased demand within the constrained budget. Further discussions will be held between Trusts and PCTs and the Education Commissioning team regarding demands for Foundation Degrees.

- A discussion was held regarding skill mix and how to identify the number of APs required in a service area. Members agreed that without a quality matrix, it will be difficult to measure the impact of increasing the number of APs employed.
  **Action:** EW to contact NHS North West regarding measuring the impact of skill mix.

5. **CPD Framework Bands 1-4**

- MS and EW presented a draft version of the NHS South Central Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Framework for staff employed within bands 1 – 4. The Framework aims to provide a coherent and integrated framework for career development and progression for the whole workforce. The framework will be developed around the continuous professional development needs of staff working within bands 1 – 4 and will be aligned to development of staff in bands 5 – 9.

The draft framework incorporates nine clinical pathways (8 Next Stage Review and Learning Disabilities), seven core capabilities and is aligned to the Learning Beyond Registration Review for staff in bands 5 – 9.

The design and delivery of Foundation Degrees will be undertaken in partnership with employers and further and higher education providers to develop relevant, focussed education and training.

- It was felt that the Framework may exclude developmental needs of members of the non-clinical workforce. It was also suggested that the Healthcare Science workforce do not fit explicitly into any one of the nine identified pathways.

- Comments and ideas regarding the draft Framework are welcomed from members of the Steering Group.
  **Action:** Comments to be sent to EW by 27th February.

To inform the framework a scoping exercise will be undertaken across NHS South Central. The objectives are to build an understanding of the developmental needs of staff employed within bands 1 - 4, develop an NHS South Central wide training needs analysis for the non-registered workforce and inform the development of an AP strategy and education commissioning plans. NESC is exploring the possibility of working in partnership with the two local Lifelong Learning Networks to support this scoping exercise.

- A Consultant will be appointed, until the end of May 2009, to take this work forward and a task and finish group will be formed by members of the Steering Group to oversee this.

- The following individuals volunteered to participate in the task and finish group: SD, JS, MS and Jo Sandy (on behalf of Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust).
• A summary of the CPD Framework was presented at the NESC Widening Participation Network which was generally support of the concept. However concerns were also raised about the need to include the non-clinical workforce.

• MS gave a brief introduction to ‘Releasing the Talent’, a document which outlines a Strategic Approach to Widening Participation. This is still in draft format and is yet to be published but will be discussed further at the next Steering Group Meeting.

6. **Terms of Reference Review**

• When reviewing the Terms of Reference, members agreed that the purpose of the steering group is still relevant, to facilitate development of the AP across NHS South Central. However, it is necessary to recognise the importance of developing the workforce within bands 1 – 3, to supply our future APs. Therefore links need to be made to groups such as the Widening Participation Network. It was also felt that links should be outlined to key workstreams and strategies which will impact upon development of the AP, such as development of an all-graduate nursing workforce, the Learning Beyond Registration Review, and Modernising Scientific Careers.

• The Skills Academy for Health and FDF will be added to the membership.

• Some key responsibilities have been achieved over the last year and some have evolved and need to be added to the list, such as development of the CPD Framework and the scoping exercise.

  **Action:** EW to update the terms of reference to include deliverables and timescales and circulate to Steering Group members for comment.

• Members agreed that the Steering Group still has a pivotal role to play in development of the AP and therefore should continue to meet.

7. **National Standards for AP Steering Group**

EW is now a member of the National Standards for AP Steering Group which is chaired by Skills for Health.

• Skills for Health are funding a scoping exercise to establish how the AP is developed across the country. The scoping exercise will be completed by the end of March and will help to inform development of national standards for the AP. This piece of work is being carried out by the Mackinnon Partnership who plan to undertake telephone interviews with key stakeholders.

• By November 2009 the group aims to recommend national standards for the AP which will involve defining the role, developing an AP competence framework and recommending appropriate, transferable levels of education and training.

8. **Service User Mentor Updates:**

• NESC is supporting a Health and Social Care Foundation Degree: Long Term Conditions Pathway. This is being piloted with the University of
Southampton, who commenced the programme in September 2008, and Thames Valley University who commence in February 2009.

- NESC is working with the Expert Patients Programme Community Interest Company (EPP CIC) to develop Service User Mentors. Students will be paired with a Service User Mentor who will act as reflective practice facilitator to increase the student’s understanding of what it is like to live with a Long Term Condition.

- SUMs attend a six week EPP CIC programme and a 2 day mentor preparation course.

- NESC is currently discussing evaluation of the pilot to explore dissemination of Service User Mentors across other foundation degree pathways.

9. **Next Steps and Priorities**

- EW to circulate the CPD Framework for comments by 27th February.

- Task and Finished Group to be formed to oversee the CPD scoping exercise.

- EW to update Terms of Reference to include deliverables and timescales.

- EW to contact Chris Mullen (NHS North West) for information regarding measuring the impact of skill mix to inform development of the AP.

10. **Any Other Business**

- It was made clear at the National Standards for AP Steering Group that national discussions are taking place regarding registration of the AP role. Members will be briefed as soon as relevant information becomes available.

- Work is being undertaken to develop Maternity Support Workers across NHS South Central. In partnership with key stakeholders, the Skills Academy for Health has developed a competence framework at bands 2 and 3. Development of Maternity Support Workers at bands 2 and 3 is being undertaken across other SHAs and the Skills Academy for Health are attending a national meeting to discuss development of the role. Growing the AP role within maternity is currently not considered to be a priority.

- AS informed members of a Health and Social Care forum which will be held in May 2009 and hosted by Progress South Central. AS will circulate an invitation to all members.

- Development of the SHA as a clinical change organisation may enable more detailed modelling of the workforce around the identified clinical pathways. Development of the AP role will be considered by the appointed workforce leads.

11. **Date of next meeting**

- The next meeting will be held on the 28th of April 2009, (14:00 hrs – 16:00 hrs) in the Kennet Room, NHS South Central, Rivergate House Newbury. RG14 2PZ.