Managing AHP Practice Placement Cancellations: Guidance

NHS Education for Scotland
AHP Practice Education Programme

Review date: July 2017
Content Summary

This guidance introduces an escalation process to manage risks to placement provision. The guidance supports Health Boards to introduce a robust approach to manage any alterations to Allied Health Profession (AHP) student practice placement provision in a consistent manner. This approach supports the AHP Practice Placement Partnership Agreements (PPA) with their partner universities that host AHP pre-registration programmes. This guidance has been developed in partnership with university colleagues, AHP directors and the NHS AHP practice education community. There may be requirement for some local interpretation of this guidance to reflect individual organisational structures, terminology and roles, however, the principles remain relevant to all settings.

The aims of the escalation process are to:

- Find efficient solutions to minimise risks to fulfilling agreed AHP student placement opportunities
- Outline responsibilities of all involved parties, including individual practice educators and their line managers
- Ensure that all necessary communication happens in a timely manner

The escalation process is recommended to be used within the context of the practice placement agreements but will also assist with other placement experiences e.g. AHP support worker HNC placements.

Jenny Miller
AHP Programme Lead for Practice Education
NHS Education for Scotland

Review Group August 2014

A period of consultation with all parties for feedback and comments was held. This guidance was then reviewed by representatives from NHS Boards, Scottish universities and students. Real life scenarios informed this updated guidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>NHS Education for Scotland</td>
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</table>
Managing AHP Practice Placement Cancellations: Guidance

What is this?

This Allied Health Professions (AHPs) guidance for managing risks to practice placement provision within Scotland has been developed as part of the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) AHP Practice Education Programme. It aims to enrich the quality of the student learning experience and operates within the context of the Practice Placement Partnership Agreements (PPA) that have been introduced in each Health Board during 2011 and 2012. The guidance applies to both standard and elective practice placements.

Why has the guidance been developed?

This guidance has been developed in response to issues about cancellations of pre-registration AHP placements across NHSScotland. The high level of cancellations has highlighted the need for wider local awareness of placement provision and cancellations to prevent major placement provision issues again in the future. This guidance promotes a consistent Scotland-wide approach to managing local risks of practice placement cancellations.

Who is this for?

The guidance is for all those involved with the provision of AHP pre-registration practice placements within a Health Board in NHSScotland. This guidance was developed in partnership with university colleagues, AHP directors and AHPs in Health Boards that have an existing placement cancellation process.

What is a ‘Placement Cancellation’?

Within the context of this document, the term ‘cancellation’ is when an AHP pre-registration practice placement has been confirmed to be provided by a Health Board service and then the offer is withdrawn by the placement provider and the placement does not take place. If a placement is re-scheduled by the placement provider in agreement with the university, within the same academic year, then this is not considered a cancellation.

A placement requires to satisfy the needs of the Health Board, university and student. The table below presents different scenarios to help explain what is considered a placement cancellation.
### Scenarios Related to Practice Placement Cancellations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Is this a cancellation?</th>
<th>Cancellation Reporting Form to be completed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I informed the university of when I could provide a placement. The university did not need the placement and did not accept my offer. Later on, the university asked me to provide the placement during the period that I had offered, however, I was unable to provide it.”</td>
<td>No. The placement offer was not confirmed as being accepted.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A placement was agreed to be provided in my NHS service, however, I required to cancel it. I sourced another placement within a local private sector care home. The university then accepted this placement.”</td>
<td>No. An alternative placement within the academic year was negotiated by the placement provider. It does not matter that the placement is now provided by another organisation.</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>“A placement was agreed to be provided, however, I required to cancel it. I sourced another placement within another team later on in the academic year. The university accepted this placement.”</td>
<td>No. An alternative placement within the academic year was offered which met the needs of the Health Board, university and student..</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A placement was agreed to be provided, however, I required to cancel it. I sourced another placement within another team later on in the academic year. However the university could not use this placement.”</td>
<td>Yes. Despite an alternative placement being identified within the academic year, if the university is unable to use the newly offered placement then the originally agreed placement has changed status to a ‘placement offer’ which unfortunately cannot be used. Therefore the original mutually agreed placement is cancelled.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I agreed to provide a placement. Unfortunately I required to cancel it. I was unable to find another placement within my team or in another service in the Health Board. It was then agreed with my line manager to cancel the placement.”</td>
<td>Yes. An alternative placement was not offered within the academic year.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A placement was agreed to be provided. The university then cancelled the placement.”</td>
<td>This guidance does not cover this scenario. This guidance is focussed on placement providers. However, the university would record that they cancelled the placement.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Refunding Student’s Costs Incurred Related to Placement Cancellations

The AHP Directors Scotland Group have agreed that in principle, and in rare situations where NHSScotland Boards have to cancel a placement, any financial costs that have already been incurred by a student will be reimbursed by the NHS Board. This decision will be at the discretion of the AHP Director/ Lead.

### Managing AHP Practice Placement Cancellations: Guidance

The following pages introduce the three levels of escalation, to be taken to manage the risk of an AHP placement being cancelled by the placement provider within NHSScotland. Each level of escalation is initiated by a trigger, which is an identified risk to a practice placement being provided. The local actions and communication to be undertaken to manage the risk are then stated. If the risk cannot be addressed, then progress to the next level in the escalation process.
Three Levels of Escalation to Manage Practice Placement Cancellations

This guidance may need local interpretation to reflect individual organisational structures, terminology, and roles. However, the principles of this guidance for managing the risks to placement provision remain relevant.

### 1st Level of Escalation

**Trigger - Unanticipated risk to a student placement**

For example:
- Practice Educator has to take emergency leave
- Unanticipated building work/ change of premises
- Staff shortages

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<tr>
<th>Coordination within the Board/Organisation</th>
<th>Coordination with the University and Student</th>
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**1st Level Actions to Avoid Placement Cancellation**  
(As soon as the risk is identified and where possible at least 6 weeks before placement is due to commence)
- Practice Educator informs line manager / Practice Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) and local solutions to be explored.

Solutions to consider are:
- Can another Practice Educator take the student?
- Can the placement be split with another team or a non-NHS site e.g a care home or local charity?
- Can another Practice Educator take 2 students instead of one?
- If appropriate, can someone from another profession take the student over the challenging period?
- Could the student’s working hours be altered to suit?

Have above actions been processed with a successful outcome?
- Yes:
  - Inform university of any changes to structure and content of placement (if appropriate)
  - Risk to placement provision removed. No need to complete the Cancellation Reporting Form.
- No:
  - Progress to 2nd level of escalation
2nd Level of Escalation

Trigger – Unable to source a local solution to student placement cancellation

For example
- Local solution not available
- Alternative placement opportunity does not meet university requirements
- Student unable to work out-with office hours due to caring commitments etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordination within the Board/ Organisation</th>
<th>Coordination with the University and Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2nd Level actions to Avoid Placement Cancellation (where possible at least 4 weeks before placement is due to commence) | ➢ Check any specific university placement requirements
➢ Coordinate with university and student
➢ Offer another placement within the academic year to the university |

- Practice Educator informs line manager / Practice Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) of actions taken and communications with university to date
- Agree plan with line manager to approach other areas within the Board/ Organisation to source an alternative placement.
- Consider contacting AHP Practice Education Lead for advice/ guidance.

No

Have above actions been processed with a successful outcome?

Yes

Inform university of any changes to structure and content of placement.

Risk to placement provision removed and alternative placement offered. No need to complete the Cancellation Reporting Form.

Progress to 3rd level of escalation

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## 3rd Level of Escalation

### Trigger – Unable to source a solution within the NHS Board/Organisation

For example:
- No alternative placement solution available across the organisation
- Alternate placements do not meet university requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordination within the Board/Organisation</th>
<th>Coordination with the University and Student</th>
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</table>
| **3rd Level Actions** (where possible at least 3 weeks before placement is due to commence) | ➢ Inform university ASAP
➢ Complete the Cancellation Reporting Form |
| • Inform line manager / Practice Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) of actions taken and communications with university to date | |
| • Only line manager / Practice Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) may take the decision to cancel the placement | |
| • Placement cancelled by line manager / Practice Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) | |
| • Inform AHP Practice Education Lead (using standardised form) | |

### Follow-up actions:

- Line manager/ Placement Co-ordinator (or equivalent) to keep a record of the issue, solutions sought and reasons for placement cancellation.
- Line manager/ Placement Co-ordinator (or equivalent) informs the AHP Practice Education Lead of the cancellation using the standardised Cancellation Reporting Form
- AHP Practice Education Lead monitors cancellations on behalf of the signatory of the AHP Practice Placement Partnership Agreement/AHP Director (or equivalent)
- If the student has incurred a financial cost as a consequence to the cancellation, then the university will contact the AHP PEL to discuss reimbursement
# Overview of Guidance for Managing Practice Placement Cancellations:

## Trigger - Unanticipated risk to a student placement: 1st Level of Escalation Process

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1st Level Actions to Avoid Placement Cancellation | ➢ If unanticipated risk arises less than 2 weeks before placement is due to commence – continue to work through escalation process and inform university of risk immediately.  
➢ Coordinate with university and student (if appropriate) |

- Practice Educator informs line manager / Practice Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) and local solutions to be explored.

## Trigger – Unable to source a local solution to student placement cancellation: 2nd Level of Escalation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Coordination within the Board/ Organisation</th>
<th>Coordination with the University/ Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2nd Level actions to Avoid Placement Cancellation | ➢ Check any specific university placement requirements  
➢ Coordinate with university and student  
➢ Offer another placement within the academic year to the university |

- Practice Educator informs line manager / Practice Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) and agrees plan to approach other areas within the Board/ Organisation to source an alternative placement.

## Trigger – Unable to source a solution within the Board/ Organisation: 3rd Level of Escalation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordination within the Board/ Organisation</th>
<th>Coordination with the University/ Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3rd Level Actions to Cancel Placement | ➢ Inform university ASAP  
➢ Complete the Cancellation Reporting Form |

- Only line manager / Practice Placement Coordinator (or equivalent) may take the decision to cancel the placement
- Inform AHP Practice Education Lead

### Follow-up actions:
- Line manager/ Placement Co-ordinator (or equivalent) to keep a record of the issue, solutions sought and reasons for placement cancellation
- Line manager/ Placement Co-ordinator (or equivalent) informs the AHP Practice Education Lead of the cancellation using a standardised form
- AHP Practice Education Lead monitors cancellations on behalf of the signatory of the AHP Practice Placement Partnership Agreement / AHP Director (or equivalent)

Name of AHP Practice Education Lead is: X

Name of Health Board AHP Practice Placement Signatory is: X
Example AHP Practice Placement Cancellation Reporting Form

If an AHP Practice Placement has been cancelled, please complete the following form and return to AHP Practice Education Lead.

Placement site:

Placement description (e.g. Year, MSc / BSc, Specialty):

Date of placement:

University:

Name of Practice Educator:

Placement cancellation authorised by line manager: Yes / No

Reason for cancellation:

Please describe what actions were undertaken to reallocate the placement e.g local team approached, other services in organisation contacted, discussion with line manager/placement coordinator:

Please indicate how many placements have been cancelled in this placement area within the last 12 months?

Line Manager………………………………………………………………………..

Signature…………………………………………………………………………………

Date………………………………………………………………………………….……

RETURN TO: Add PEL’s contact details

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