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|  | Health Education England, working across the South West  South West House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton Somerset. TA1 2PX  letterheads Jpeg template-bracket.jpg |
| All GP Practices |
|  | 7th March 2016 |

Dear Colleagues,

**Student nurses indemnity while they are in GP placements**

We understand there is some confusion about indemnity cover requirements for student nurses while they are in general practice placements.

Student nurses are similar to all other learners when they are placed in hospital placements; they are covered under the NHS Indemnity arrangements for Clinical Negligence Claims schemes (Crown indemnity).

However, student nurses, like other students, when they are in general practice placements, benefit from the individual supervising clinical teachers (in the case of nurse students, this relates to nurse mentors). This is achieved by agreement that general practice effectively makes the student nurses honorary members (similar to a work experience student), and student nurses are therefore covered vicariously.

Colleagues in other Health Education England offices have contacted various indemnity organisations to verify the above and a summary of their response is below;

**Medical Protection Society**: *MPS considers the training and supervision of nursing students on placement in general practice to be part of the responsibility of the practice partners. We would remind our members that they retain responsibility for clinical consultations, decisions and treatment, irrespective of the involvement of students, and that they should ensure that students are appropriately supervised at all times.*

*We do not require our members to inform us of their involvement in the training and supervision of nursing students in their practice.*

**Medical Defence Union:** *In the MDU’s experience it is unlikely that a clinical negligence claim would be brought against a nursing student (indeed we cannot identify a case to date) as in most cases we anticipate they would be present as an observer or in a directly-supervised role with the supervising doctor or nurse retaining responsibility for any patient contact. I can confirm that where MDU members (GPs or nurses) were involved in the supervision of a nursing student then they could approach us in order to seek assistance in the usual way if a claim subsequently arose out of a patient contact they supervised. MDU members do not need to notify us individually if they have nursing students on placement at the practice or are otherwise involved in their education.*

**Medical Dental Defence Union of Scotland (MDDUS):**

*The MDDUS does not provide membership to nurses. The indemnity we provide for work carried out by nurses is on the basis of vicarious liability. The partners who are our members would be vicariously liable for the actions of the nurses. If a number of partners are members of another medical defence organisation (MDO) then the MDDUS would normally expect to settle the matter based on a head count of partners. We would of course expect duties to be appropriately delegated to any nurses whether employed or on secondment as student nurses, in accordance with GMC guidelines, with appropriate supervision. The doctors who hold membership with the MDDUS will be covered for the work the student nurse is doing within the practice, the student nurses themselves are not covered by MDDUS as individuals.*

**Royal College of Nursing:**

*We generally expect healthcare employing organisations to make appropriate indemnity/insurance arrangements for all individuals working for the organisation in question, whether as an employee; locum; on a clinical placement; or otherwise. We would hope that a GP’s arrangements covered, in particular, students on a clinical placement.*

From **Health Education South West’s perspective** we believe student nurses placements in general practice carry a very low risk given that all placements are audited and assured by our universities who themselves are validated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

As a reminder, the safeguards that are required to be in place are:

Practice nurses acting as nurse mentors hold a mentorship qualification that meets the NMC guidelines.

All clinical members of GP practice should have an indemnity cover for their work, this will cover student nurses accordingly.

GP practices should sign a Placement Agreement with each relevant university to clarify what student nurses are able to carry out and at what stage of their study.

We hope this is reassuring for all involved in student nursing education and training and clarifies any student nurses’ indemnity concerns.

Kind Regards



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