

# Role-Emerging Physiotherapy Placements in Dementia Care; a service improvement



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## Purpose

A Physiotherapy Role-Emerging Placement (REP) can occur at sites where there is no existing physiotherapist or established role for the profession. With an ever-increasing older population and associated rise in dementia, this work has responded to an identified gap in knowledge and practice within the dementia care setting. Offering potentially rich learning experiences for students, REPs can highlight the value and impact of physiotherapy and facilitate the development of essential skills in caring for complex client groups in an increasingly diverse and evolving workplace.

## Methods

- A pilot REP placement was set up for the **Care Home Liaison Team**, part of **Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP)**, in collaboration with **The University of the West of England (UWE)**.
- Guidance was sourced from **Occupational Therapy** colleagues, as REPs are well established in undergraduate OT training
- Advise and support was also provided by the **CSP** and **HCPC**
- A **student selection process** was introduced by the university from the second year physiotherapy cohort
- **Pre-placement meetings** helped to manage student and staff expectations, together with determining how learning outcomes would be met and captured
- Students were **supported** by an operational supervisor, staff and care home managers and a qualified clinician as the 'long-arm' supervisor
- **Questionnaires and interviews** were used to collect feedback from students, staff, residents and managers

## Conclusion

Role-emerging placements in physiotherapy offer developmental opportunities in new settings and an important role in managing complex client groups. This work has identified a gap in knowledge and practice, and how placement opportunities are evolving in response.

## Implications

The success of the pilot led to the integration of role-emerging placements into the physiotherapy undergraduate training programme at UWE, together with potential for the model to be further rolled out to other under-represented complex speciality areas and other physiotherapy undergraduate programmes.

## References

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## Results

Thematic analysis of questionnaires, interviews and feedback forms identified four key themes.



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