

Ward, Richard ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8776-0824> , Freeman, Antony and McDarby, Frances (2023) Live virtual placements, the future of paramedic education? *Ambulance Life*, 23 (5). p. 7.

Downloaded from: <http://insight.cumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/7122/>

Usage of any items from the University of Cumbria's institutional repository 'Insight' must conform to the following fair usage guidelines.

Any item and its associated metadata held in the University of Cumbria's institutional repository Insight (unless stated otherwise on the metadata record) may be copied, displayed or performed, and stored in line with the JISC fair dealing guidelines (available [here](#)) for educational and not-for-profit activities

provided that

- the authors, title and full bibliographic details of the item are cited clearly when any part of the work is referred to verbally or in the written form
 - a hyperlink/URL to the original Insight record of that item is included in any citations of the work
- the content is not changed in any way
- all files required for usage of the item are kept together with the main item file.

You may not

- sell any part of an item
- refer to any part of an item without citation
- amend any item or contextualise it in a way that will impugn the creator's reputation
- remove or alter the copyright statement on an item.

The full policy can be found [here](#).

Alternatively contact the University of Cumbria Repository Editor by emailing insight@cumbria.ac.uk.

Live virtual placements, the future of paramedic education?

By The University of Cumbria



• The technology set up in Ship Street surgery.

Placements are key to students developing the necessary skills and experience required to become qualified paramedics and the pressure is on universities to offer a wide range of placement experiences to prepare them for work after graduation.

Often, universities struggle to find placements that offer the right level of experience and learning opportunities for students or secure them in sought-after clinical areas such as primary care. This shortage can affect the experience that students accrue before qualification.

Often, universities struggle to find placements that offer the right level of experience and learning opportunities for students or secure them in sought-after clinical areas such as primary care. This shortage can affect the experience that students accrue before qualification.

Coupled with increasing numbers of students wishing to enter the profession, a shortage of trained professionals to mentor students, and the requirement from the Health and Care Professions Council for future paramedics to be able to consult

patients virtually, this further complicates matters for universities.

To address these challenges, we are piloting a series of live virtual placements for paramedic apprentices that provide essential placement experience in primary care to multiple students at the same time, virtually.

Live virtual placements differ from simulated placements because they feature real, live patients in real clinical settings. Video conferencing technology live-streams events from a clinical environment to a classroom to provide a safe and controlled learning environment for students.

Thanks to a £50k grant from Health Education England, the first pilot live virtual placement took place in April.

Digimed, a medical media company, provided the techno-

logical solution and a live clinic was beamed out of Ship Street GP surgery in Mid Sussex. 30 paramedic apprentices from North West Ambulance Service observed the clinic from a classroom in University of Cumbria's campus in Lancaster.

The surgery was kitted out with cameras and microphones which were positioned so that students could zoom in to see the patients' concerns up close and hear how the GP dealt with each case.

During the placement, students interacted with the GP after each patient, providing a comprehensive and immersive learning experience. In the afternoon, the apprentices consolidated their learning in seminars linked to the morning's experience.

Student feedback from the exercise overall was supportive, with one student saying that they had their eyes opened by time constraints faced by GPs and another said that the experience was engaging and that it was good to understand healthcare from another perspective.

The video stream of the first placement was recorded for future use in the programme's



• GP Claire O'Leary and Digimed setting up the cameras to live stream

curriculum. Eventually, we want to develop the model for other disciplines and placement settings.

Already we can foresee that one of the most significant benefits of using live virtual placements is that they will be to help address the shortage placements available to paramedic students and apprentices in the future.

With live virtual placements, students can access a more extensive range of experiences, without needing to be physically present at a particular location. This accessibility can help to ensure that more students can gain the experience they need to succeed in their future careers and the paramedic profession benefits from an experienced workforce.

With virtual placements, universities can offer a more scalable learning experience, allowing universities to accommodate more students without needing to increase physical resources. This scalability can help to ensure that students receive a high-quality education, even as student numbers increase.

In conclusion, live virtual placements for paramedic apprentices in primary care offer an innovative solution to some of the most significant challenges facing paramedic education and can help to enhance the educational experience of paramedic students and apprentices. They may not entirely replace in person placements, but they certainly can complement traditional training experiences.

THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW

NEC | BIRMINGHAM | 19-20 SEPTEMBER 2023

PREPARING OUR EMERGENCY SERVICES FOR EVERY RESPONSE



FIND OUT MORE WWW.EMERGENCYUK.COM | #ESS2023