



Traineeship Evaluation Report

Medilink West Midlands





Contents

Introduction	3
The Programme	4
Evaluation	6
Trainee Feedback	8
Conclusion	11
Appendix A	12
Appendix B	13

Executive Summary

During the school holidays in summer 2015, Medilink WM successfully delivered a Traineeship programme for twenty young people in the West Midlands region. The Traineeship was designed to comply with all programme parameters set out by BIS, however, uniquely it linked up the 2 critical elements that make up the commercial aspect of the medical sector; placement within the NHS combined with placement in a Medically related industry SME. The eight week programme was developed to give 16-18 year olds an awareness of the careers available within the Life Science sector and also to help prepare them for the working environment. The programme comprised of three elements; classroom study based on employment skills, work placement within an NHS Trust and work placement within an Industry SME. This ground breaking collaboration proved hugely successful with all twenty students completing the programme in its entirety. This evaluation report details the programme and shows that the Medilink WM Traineeship model provides a true framework for future programmes and the continued link up of the NHS and Medical industry to support skills growth across an economically critical sector.

Introduction

The Medilink WM Traineeship was developed as part of the overall skills programme offered by the Science Industry Partnership (SIP). The SIP is a skills and education partnership led by employers for whom science and technology is critical to success. The Science Industry Partnership was set up to provide a new skills system for the Science Industries and address the emerging skills needs for employers. Medilink WM is a delivery partner for the SIP and is involved in the creation and delivery of two of the strands, one of which is Traineeships. Under this programme Medilink WM is contracted to deliver twenty Traineeship places across the West Midlands region to young people aged 16-18.

In designing its Traineeship, Medilink WM was keen to create a programme that was not only beneficial to the young people involved but also to the businesses involved. SME's have strictly limited time and financial resources and so it was considered fundamental to any design that any allocation of these valuable and finite resources must be beneficial to the SME as well as to the trainee.

The Medilink WM Traineeship programme was created in order to give young people an opportunity to develop skills needed for the workplace and to then allow them to put them into practice via work experience placements. In order to add additional value and in a ground-breaking first, these work experience placements were held within two complimentary employers within the sector; an NHS Trust, thereby giving students access to a hospital, the end user environment or customer, and the other being within a Medical related industry SME.

The Medilink Traineeship Programme was a resounding success for all parties involved. Twenty students started the programme on the 22nd of June and all twenty students finished the programme on the 28th August.

M Levermore

Martin Levermore MBE, FRSA
Chairman

The Programme

The programme parameters were set according to the rules governing what can constitute a Traineeship programme as outlined by National Government and the specific rules established by the SIP. The Medilink WM Traineeship, which conformed to the 2014/15 Framework for Delivery for Traineeship Guide from BIS, encompassed young people in the 16-18 age band.

The programmes aim was to give young people with an interest in the Life Sciences a greater awareness of the variety of careers that exist within the various facets of this key employment sector. On completion of the programme the trainees would have an increased awareness of the Life Science career paths available to them and this would allow them to take a more informed decision on which of the paths may be the right one for them; apprenticeships or courses related to those careers, or indeed inform them that a career in Life Sciences was not for them.

Trainee selection: In order to ensure a professional and practiced approach to selecting suitable students, Medilink WM worked with Clive Dalton and Aaron Mansfield from Healthtec, a not-for-profit health careers and education organisation which brings together curriculum linking educational courses with the health sector. Students from 5 schools located in disadvantaged areas of Birmingham were encouraged to apply for the Medilink Traineeship and applications to the programme become oversubscribed very quickly. As a result interviews were carried out with students to gauge the interest and suitability of those who had applied. Healthtec and Medilink WM were then able to select the final twenty students for the programme and provide constructive feedback to those students who had been unsuccessful. Healthtec supported students through the application and interview process and ensured each student was prepared for the start of the Traineeship by offering an induction day for the trainees prior to the programme start.

Training & placement within an NHS Trust: The advice and guidance required establishing the feasibility and propriety associated with the placing of young people in an NHS environment was undertaken with the help and expertise of David Taylor at University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (UHB). In order to be able to accommodate young people between the ages of 16-18, placements were arranged with Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust. The Trust, which could also act as the local training provider through its provider status contract with the Skills Funding Agency, was also able to provide the students with four weeks classroom based activities to prepare them for their work placements and in order to ensure the students were at an acceptable Level (2) in Employment Skills, Maths and English. During this four week period the students worked towards a Level 2 Award in Employment and Personal Learning Skills in Health along with the continued embedding of Maths and English for those trainees who had not achieved a Grade C at GCSE level.

Following their classroom based learning, the trainees then spent two weeks working within Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, allowing them the chance to experience first-hand the daily work routines in a busy Acute Trust and offering them the chance to explore some of the plethora of careers that exist within the National Health Service. Each trainee had a bespoke work experience placement, based as closely as possible to their areas of interest within the constraints of hospital policy. The trainees were able to shadow Nurses on hospital wards, gain experience of how to maintain equipment with Medical Engineers and assist within the Radiology department among other tasks. The Widening Participation Team at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust were instrumental in the success of the placements, in particular Tracey Nock, Parmjit Chera-Japper, Safia Bi, Pauline Griffiths-Paul and Shelley Baker.

Industry placement: In researching and establishing the criteria for a Medilink Traineeship programme, Medilink WM engaged and liaised with a number of local Life Science Sector employers in order to assess and establish their needs and requirements for engaging in such an initiative. Key to the engagement of industry was the NHS placement element. Ophthalmic Diagnostic Services, a specialist ophthalmic organisation offering services to both NHS and the private sector, was ultimately selected and was keen to take all 20 trainees as part of an overall programme of work. Managing Director of Ophthalmic Diagnostic Services, Ben Royal, was very keen to support trainees and raise their awareness of the different careers and entry paths into the industry as he himself started his career as an apprentice and was, therefore, very well placed to guide the trainees through a possible alternative approach to post 16 studies. As part of their two week placement at Ophthalmic Diagnostic Services the trainees developed both theoretical understanding and practical skills in the Ophthalmology field including OCT imaging, optical biometry and visual acuity assessments.



Evaluation

In order to evaluate the success of the Medilink Traineeship programme it was important to get feedback from all parties involved. The evaluation is broken down into three key areas; feedback and evaluation from students, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust and Ophthalmic Diagnostic Services. To ensure propriety, but equally to ensure all nuances were captured, the evaluation was conducted using standard anonymous questionnaires requiring a graded evaluation (appendix A) for the students which were then supplemented by face to face evaluation meetings with all parties. From this research, we have been able to gauge the overall success of the programme against our own objectives and also gauge the impact the programme has had on the students, the NHS and our industry stakeholder. From this, we can draw conclusions and make recommendations for any future programmes.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust Feedback: Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust was heavily involved in two aspects of the programme, namely the classroom based training provision and the facilitation of the two weeks of hospital based work experience. In discussing and analysing the programme these two elements were considered separately.

Overall Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust were pleased with how the whole programme had gone and would be willing to support any additional programmes in the future as they are able to link this with their apprenticeship recruitment activities.

Classroom Programme: The trainees spent four weeks at the start of the traineeship in a classroom environment with the tutors at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust and worked towards a Level 2 Award in Employability and Personal Skills for Health. This qualification is normally delivered as part of the apprenticeship programme offered by the Trust and therefore they had ample experience in its delivery. The

activities provided by the Trust were varied and inclusive; the activities ranged from team building days out to organising a fund raising day. All activities were taught holistically and functional skills for Maths and English were embedded into each session.

Training was delivered to all twenty students in one large group in order to create large group participation and to allow the trainees to work with numerous different individuals. On reflection, this was difficult for the tutors to manage due to the relatively large number and it meant that those requiring additional support didn't receive as much as they may have needed. If the programme were to be repeated, limiting the group size to ten is considered to be preferable to ensure the same level of group participation is achieved without compromising individual support requirements.

The programme was designed to have all the classroom based learning at the beginning of the programme, however, an observation by tutors and the programme manager would be to split this block up into more manageable sections; for example spending two weeks in the classroom followed by one week in the hospital, then repeating this, would allow for the observational aspect of the qualification to be completed in the workplace as well as in classroom activities.

Trust-based work experience programme: The tutors and programme manager coordinated the placement of the students and monitored their attendance and performance during the work-based two week period.

The number of students involved on the programme meant the Trust were unable to find placements for all students at the same time and thus the group was split into two groups of ten, completing their work placements in consecutive two week blocks. This allowed for the monitoring of progress and meant hospital resources

were not put under strain during the placements.

The trainees were allocated set areas of the hospital to work in; these areas ranged from a Hospital ward to the medical engineering department. The trainees were required to sign in with the programme manager daily and to report any concerns or problems they had.

The placements are considered to have generally gone very well, with hospital staff feedback being very positive. Some of the staff commented that it was sometimes difficult having trainees with them for four weeks and that this could perhaps be resolved by reducing the number of trainees on the programme at any one time to a maximum of ten. Future programmes could also allow for students to rotate around different hospital areas on a more frequent basis, maybe every two-three days to limit any issues in departments and to provide Students' with even more NHS related careers experience. There were a couple of occasions when trainees didn't follow procedure and this was quickly followed up by the programme manager.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust offers a number of apprenticeships ranging from Business Administration to Healthcare Assistants and stated that they were very happy to consider applications from any of the trainees on the programme should they be interested in any vacancies.

Ophthalmic Diagnostic Services Feedback:

Ophthalmic Diagnostic Services (ODS) hosted the trainees for two weeks of work experience. This was spread out over a six week period with groups of students attending at different times. This approach was to ensure that the company was able to accommodate the students without the potential for adversely affecting the running of a busy SME.

The work placement at ODS focused on all areas of the business from activity in the private clinics to the company accounts

function. The trainees also spent two days learning both theory and practical skills within the field of Ophthalmology, including how to conduct a variety of tests using specialist equipment.

ODS found having trainees in smaller batches easier to cope with as a business and would not want more than a group of five at any one time. This number allows them to continue with essential business functions whilst also dedicating enough time to the trainees for them to get the most out of the time spent with the company.

Currently ODS do not employ any apprentices but are keen to stress that they would not rule this out in the future, however their main concerns centre around the ages of the people involved due to the nature of the work they carry out; issues such as the safeguarding of patients/data and the ongoing safety and supervision of the young person themselves are issues to be resolved.

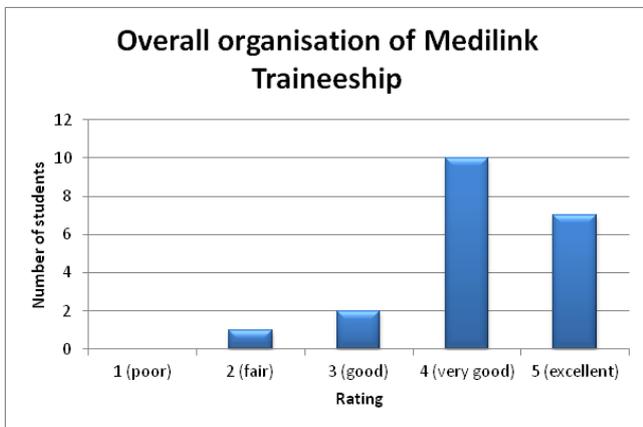
There is currently no framework for a specific Ophthalmology-related apprenticeship but ODS have been liaising with City and Guilds to try and get some training they have designed into an accredited format.

Overall Ophthalmic Diagnostic Services (ODS) was very pleased with the process of the Medilink Traineeship and would be willing to support and work with future programmes in order to continue to support young people into their specific field.

Trainee Feedback

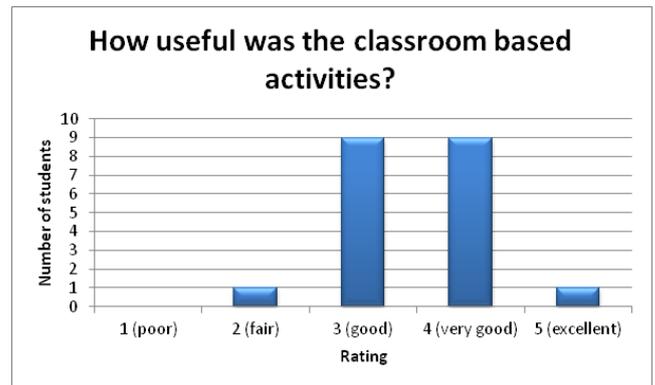
Trainee Feedback: Evaluation of the Programme from the trainees’ perspective was conducted via a questionnaire (appendix A) asking eight questions; five with a rating score from 1-5, two further questions exploring students’ views with regards their future plans and a final free-text question to inform Medilink for any future programmes.

Q.1 The trainees were asked how they felt about the overall organisation of the Traineeship Programme. 95% of the trainees rated the overall organisation as good to excellent.



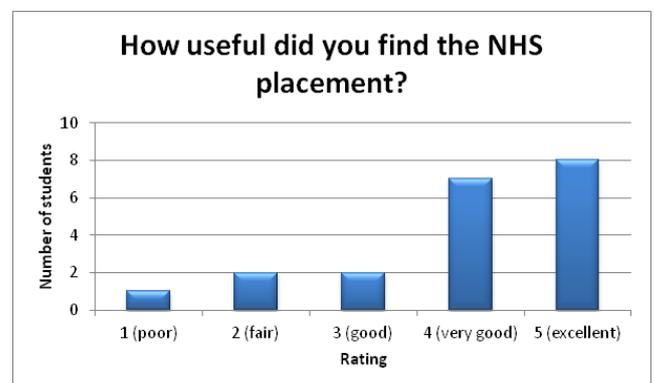
Q.2 The students were asked how they rated the classroom based element and how well it prepared them for their work placements. The classroom based element encompassed activities from team building exercises to the creation of presentations on NHS related careers. 50% of trainees rated this aspect of the programme as very good or excellent with a further 45% saying they found this part good. The trainees were all very keen to take part in the work experience aspects of the programme and as a result some of the feedback related to spending less time in the classroom environment. However, in order to fulfil the criteria of a Traineeship the four weeks spent completing the Level 2 Award in Employment and Personal Skills in Health was necessary. It also allowed the trainees

vital time to develop work related social skills.

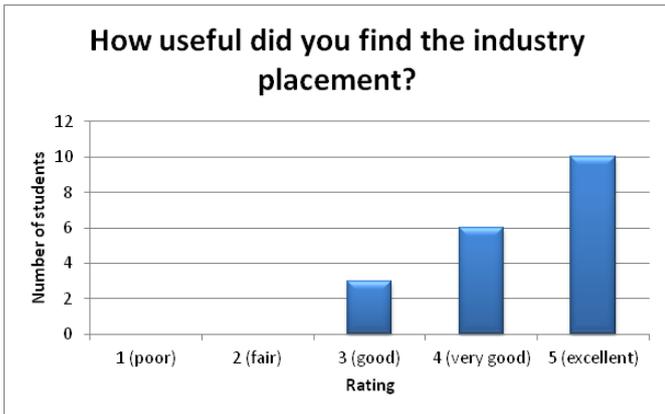


The work experience element of the Traineeship was split over two placements and the trainees were asked to rate each placement separately.

Q.3 The NHS placement element was considered good to excellent by 85% of the trainees with 15% of the trainees rating the NHS placement fair or below. Those rating the placement lower made comments such as; ‘more exciting things to do in the NHS if you’re under 18’ and from speaking with the trainees, it is clear that they would have liked more hands-on opportunities within the NHS placement, however, the nature of the environment is such that ‘hands on’ opportunities are understandably limited. To balance these perceptions, other trainees fully embraced the opportunities, stating they would ‘make the hospital part longer as I personally could have gained more experience’.

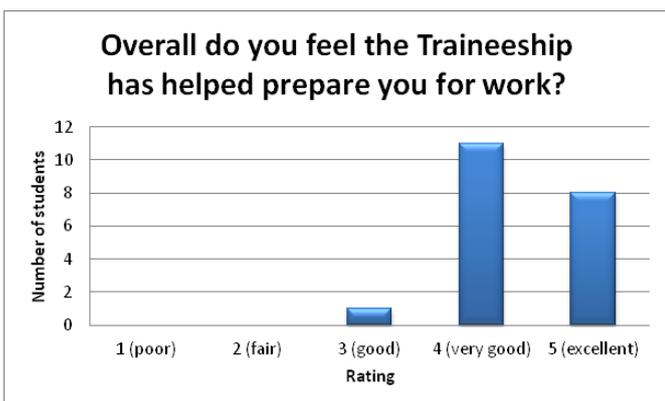


Q.4 The industry placement was considered good to excellent by 100% of the trainees. When speaking with the students they mentioned that the variety of tasks undertaken kept them interested and they felt they gained a great insight into what happens within a private company. 'My favourite part has been at Concorde House just because the experience has been so helpful'



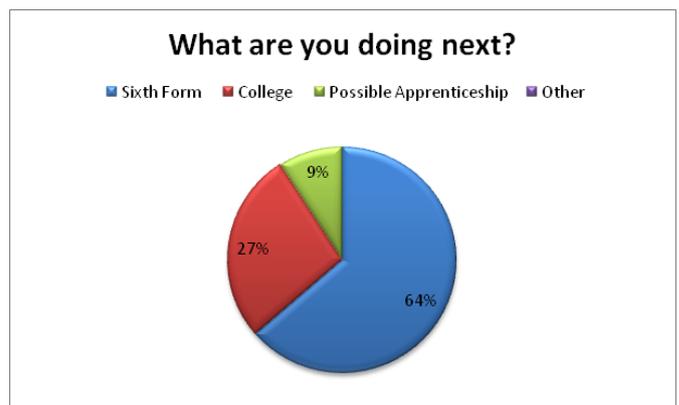
One of the purposes of the Medilink Traineeship was to help the trainees with getting ready for an apprenticeship or job. With this in mind the trainees were asked how prepared they felt after completing the programme to enter the working world.

Q.5 95% of the trainees rated their preparedness for starting work or an apprenticeship as very good or excellent. The varied programme offered to the trainees allowed them to experience work in different environments as well as learning some of the essential skills needed to perform well in a work place. The result of this has left the trainees feeling equipped with the knowledge and experience to work in a range of situations.



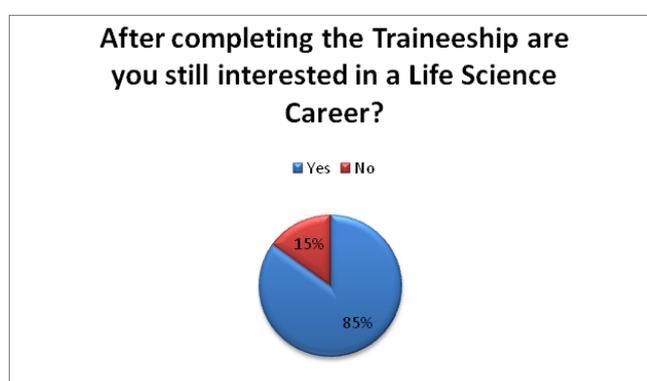
The Traineeship Programme set out to raise the trainees' awareness of Life Science occupations and the different avenues they could take in order to access their chosen career path. There are potentially multiple methods to achieving the same career destination and the trainees were asked what their plans were after completing the programme.

Q.6 The majority of the students (70%) had secured themselves places in school sixth form. This was mainly to study A Level subjects, but in some cases it was also to study vocational courses such as BTEC's in Applied Science. The remaining 30% of students had applied for college places. The subjects they intended to study were focused around Health and Social Care at varying levels. On speaking with the students they stated that they still wanted to be part of the education system but wanted a more vocational style of learning that also included a lot of practical elements. 10% of students were still undecided on their immediate plans and had applied for both college courses and apprenticeships, again within the Social Care arena. Many of the trainees were torn between wanting to learn whilst at work and having the comfort of being in a college environment which felt more familiar given they had only recently left school.



Following completion of the Medilink Traineeship Programme, the trainees were asked if they were still interested in pursuing a career within the field.

Q.7 85% of the trainees stated that they were still interested to work within the healthcare sector with 15% saying they were thinking about other lines of work. The questionnaire asked which job roles they were considering. These career areas included nursing, medical physics, physiologist, care work, medical engineering and forensics. The wide variety of career options the trainees had mentioned is encouraging and has made them aware of professions that come away from the normal considerations, such as nursing and being a doctor. The responses are still heavily focused on NHS based careers but some of the trainees have thought about careers that are transferrable to the medical industry outside of the NHS.



Q.8 This was a free text question designed to gather useful critical observations and information for any future programmes. The comments received are detailed in Appendix B.

Recommendations for future programmes

In reviewing the feedback and evaluation from all of the groups involved in the Medilink Traineeship Programme, there are some key learning points that can be drawn and that should form a series of recommendations for the construction and structure of any further initiatives:

- The overall numbers of trainees on programme at any one time should be directly geared to the number of

participants in terms of SME's and Trusts/Departments. This is in relation to feedback from both sets of employers, that larger numbers proved very difficult for both an SME and a large NHS Trust. Smaller groups, limited to perhaps ten per cohort, would fit well based on the feedback received.

- Within the obvious constraints of a Trust, trainees having access and the ability to see more areas of the hospital as part of their placement. Both the trainees and the NHS Trust mentioned this issue as an area for improvement and this should be considered for future programmes.
- The feedback from trainees on how prepared they felt for work and for decisions regarding their future careers was very positive and, therefore, to satisfy the core objectives of a Traineeship or pre apprenticeship programme, the overall programme length was considered appropriate and should not change.
- Although the programme has successfully raised the trainees awareness of career options there was not a large number of trainees interested in applying for apprenticeship vacancies. This may be as a result of them having other ideas already or could be directly related to the lack of vacancies available for the trainees to move into.
- Although the Medilink Traineeship programme successfully raised the trainees awareness of Life Science careers options, the programme, nevertheless, operated in isolation with no specific and identified additional 'routes' to the sector for the trainees to follow. This, naturally, led to trainees considering 'only' pre-existing opportunities for their futures; sixth form or college courses etc. The programme would have been significantly

enhanced were it to be delivered as a 'pre apprenticeship programme', linked in to actual apprenticeship programmes and opportunities that exist within the sector; across both industry and local NHS Trusts.

Conclusion

Incorporating placement within the NHS along with the Industry placement was the fundamental driving factor behind the Medilink Traineeship Programme under the Science Industry Partnership. When creating and ultimately rolling out the programme, all of the parties involved in the delivery and all of the related stakeholders exposed to the programmes parameters through consultation, without exception, understood immediately and without the need for any further explanation, how a Life Science skills-based initiative structured in such a way could benefit all of the parties involved and could be the blue-print for future sector-related activity.

In successfully creating and delivering such a barrier-breaking initiative, Medilink considers it has both proved the concept and paved the way for the development of new and additional Life Science based skills programmes that can bring together and develop the shared dependencies within the infrastructure of a uniquely placed sector in terms of knowledge, experience and skills.

Appendix B:

Traineeship evaluation (student)

Question 1

Rating overall organisation of Traineeship

1 (poor)	2 (fair)	3 (good)	4 (very good)	5 (excellent)
	1	2	10	7

Question 2

How useful was the classroom based activities?

1 (poor)	2 (fair)	3 (good)	4 (very good)	5 (excellent)
	1	9	9	1

Question 3

How useful did you find the NHS placement?

1 (poor)	2 (fair)	3 (good)	4 (very good)	5 (excellent)
1	2	2	7	8

Question 4

How useful did you find the industry placement?

1 (poor)	2 (fair)	3 (good)	4 (very good)	5 (excellent)
		4	6	10

Question 5

Overall do you feel the Traineeship has helped prepare you for work?

1 (poor)	2 (fair)	3 (good)	4 (very good)	5 (excellent)
		1	11	8

Question 6

What are you doing next?

Sixth Form	College	Possible Apprenticeship	Other	
14	6	2		2 students stated college & apprenticeship

Question 7

After completing the Traineeship are you still interested in a Life Science Career?

Yes	No
17	3

Question 8

Comments for improvement

- More work experience
 - More practical work
 - NHS work placement was not the best, could have done more although it was eye opening
 - I wouldn't change anything. The whole programme has been amazing and an absolute pleasure to be part of, in particular the industry based programme
 - Better organised NHS placement and more clinical experience at the industry placement
 - Have the ability to go to different wards every 3-4 days
 - More interesting placements and more things to do if you are under 18
 - More time in an Ophthalmic clinic and setting tasks to do without taking up the whole day, plus more visitors talking to us in the classroom
 - Shorten the time spent in the classroom and have wards suited to what we want to do in the future
 - When working in the NHS it was not planned, I didn't do much
 - Less written work as I felt it dragged on and what we got given in 4 weeks could have been completed in half the time
 - I would like to make the classroom shorter and the hospital longer because I feel like I personally could have gained more experience
 - I think the classroom based sessions should be more useful by elaborating on the work we were doing and why we did them
 - A bit more flexibility in the hospital work such as changing wards everyday
 - More exciting things to do in the hospital if you are under 18
 - I would spend less time in the classroom
 - It was a great programme
- 