Demand for pre-registration nursing placements is rising nationally, yet clinical placement capacity within community and health settings remains insufficient to meet this demand. To address this challenge, I completed a dissertation as part of my MSc study exploring the question: “How can placement capacity be expanded for pre-registration adult nursing students within community settings?” Findings from this extended literature review identified coaching-based education models as the most practical and sustainable approach to increasing clinical learning capacity while enhancing learner experience and patient safety.

The UK’s first coaching approach, Collaborative Learning in Practice (CLiP), was piloted in 2021 and findings included improved learning culture, increased placement capacity, strengthened peer-supported development, which led to adoption of coaching models across a number of NHS trusts. Building on these principles, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has developed its own coaching framework, BH CARES (Berkshire Healthcare Coaching & Assisted

Reflective Education for Students), with plans to pilot the model on a physical health ward at Wokingham Hospital in collaboration with UWL. BH CARES shifts learning from a traditional 1:1 supervision model to a coaching-led, team-supported approach, where groups of students collaboratively plan, deliver and reflect on patient care under the oversight of registered professionals. Students are empowered to take responsibility for decision-making, distribute workload, and support peers, while supervisors guide rather than direct. The pilot design includes planned check-ins, reflective touchpoints, and shared assessment mechanisms to ensure safety, professional development, and achievement of learning outcomes.

The model aligns directly with the NMC SSSA framework and the implementation of the Safe Learning Environment Charter (SLEC), enhancing learner wellbeing, leadership, supervision quality, communication skills and peer support. Anticipated benefits include more confident and practice-ready graduates, greater supervisory sustainability for staff, improved multidisciplinary learning culture and increased student placement capacity across the Trust.

Through this pilot, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust aims to demonstrate that coaching-based learning systems such as BH CARES provide a scalable solution to the national placement capacity challenge, strengthening both workforce development and student experience. Following the pilot, the model is planned for implementation within mental health learning environments