

# In the Skills Lab: Where practice makes perfect

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## Severn Hospice does more than directly care for families in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Mid Wales living with an incurable illness.

We are a centre of excellence for palliative care, and we are proud to share our knowledge, experience, research, along with clinical placements for the next generation of Healthcare/Allied professionals.

The hospice’s education department identified a need for a skills lab, where staff and students could get hands on experience in a clinical setting within the palliative care and end-of-life care environment.



The lab would focus on skills-based learning which would enhance real-life application and provide feedback. Enabling staff and students to learn and develop their skills, in a non-judgemental and safe setting using simulation, and allow them to translate theory into practice. Participants leave sessions feeling empowered and confident and questions are encouraged to promote curiosity that leads to developing their critical thinking skills for a safe, skilled and efficient workforce.

The skills lab was developed in discussion with the director of care, followed by an in-depth written proposal outlining the case and need for an independent skills lab where trained educationists, with backgrounds in nursing would deliver clinical skills-based learning in areas such as phlebotomy and insertion of the NG tube.

Approval was granted and a light, bright space in the heart of the hospice was repurposed to be a ‘patient’s bedroom’. Materials, tools and equipment which would enhance the learning experience, were obtained including a multi-function male/female demonstration model, as well as board games in relation to tissue viability and safeguarding.

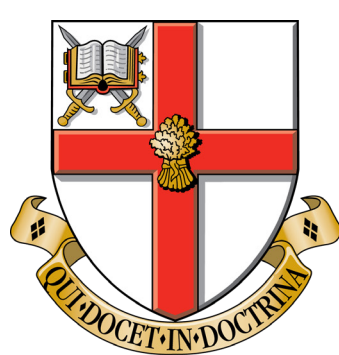
**Quotes from service users:**  
*“The skills lab at Severn Hospice is great. The idea provides a suitable environment for practising any procedures or skill, either individually or in small groups. While at the hospice I used the skills lab for catheter training. We had time to practice the technique and skill with suitable and up-to-date equipment.”*  
Student Nurse: Chester University

Applying theory to practice is not always easy to achieve for various reasons. Through utilising the skills lab, clinical staff, including students, can now practice in an environment that is both safe and non-judgemental, which is a vital part of learning and development. (Bugaj and Nikendei 2016)

A year on, what has the skills lab achieved?	
The skills lab should:	Outcome achieved
Replicate a patient bedroom	✓
Improve staff confidence	✓
Enrich clinical skills	✓
Allow clinical and students on placement to learn new skills by practicing and developing their knowledge all the time	✓

This year has been a learning experience for the education team and provided both clinical staff and students opportunities to learn and develop new skills. The department prides itself on providing a learning environment where the staff and students feel safe and supported in developing their practical skills within a simulated clinical environment.

Reference  
Buaj. T. J and Nikendei ‘Practical Clinical Training in Skills Labs: Theory and Practice.’ GMS J MedEdu. 33 (4): DOO63



University of  
Chester



Severn  
Hospice  
here and at home