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Health minister talks to Northumbria students

Staff and students at Northumbria University, Newcastle talked to the Health Minister, the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP today as part of NHS #Fab Change Week - a week-long campaign aimed at promoting continuous improvement within the NHS.

The discussion was organised by a former Northumbria midwifery student, Jane Dowthwaite, who is now an ambassador for the campaign. Beginning

in 2011, originally as a day, the NHS Fab Change event is organised by NHS staff and has grown year on year.

The Health Secretary spoke to the University's health care staff and students over the internet at an event, held at Northumbria's Coach Lane Campus, as part of a week-long tour across the country by the #NHS Fab Change UK team. Northumbria is the only university the team are visiting.

Roy Lilley, a former NHS Trust chair, independent health policy analyst, writer and broadcaster also spoke at the event along with midwifery students at the University, who highlighted how students could make positive changes to the NHS during their studies and placements.

Roy said: "We are delighted the Secretary of State made time to join us 'electronically' with a message to send us on our way! Fab Change Week is the focus of the year for all of us who understand that sharing best practice and listening to the front line are the foundations of moving the NHS forward as it faces the challenges of the future."

Suzanne Crozier, Lead Midwife for Education at Northumbria University, has helped organise the event. She said: "We have a global reputation for delivering excellence in health care education, particularly in midwifery and nursing. We also have a long history of embedding service improvement into the professional curriculum ensuring our graduates see continuous improvement as a normal part of their role.

"To be the only University visited as part of the NHS Fab Change Week tour is fantastic and a real honour. Listening and talking to Roy and the Health Secretary has been a great and rare opportunity for our students and staff, and they have thoroughly enjoyed it. It also demonstrates what a crucial role they and the education sector have in delivering a first class NHS. "

Jane Dowthwaite said: "I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Northumbria and see change as a real enabler to improving the NHS and patient care. NHS #Fab Change Week has just grown and grown. I am delighted to say that I am now an ambassador for the campaign and I was determined to bring the NHS Fab Change Week tour to Northumbria, where I know there is excellent theory and practice, and change is encouraged. Education plays such a key role in driving change so its important students are given a voice."

As part of NHS Fab Change Week NHS, staff are encouraged to pledge an idea or a promise, that they themselves will do over the next year to help improve the NHS. Health care staff and students at Northumbria took part, making their pledges too.

Catherine Wilson, a final year midwifery student from Belfast took part in the event. She spoke about her experience with the Fab Academy, organisers of the event, after she attended a study day to look at hierarchy in the NHS and how it can impact on change. She said: "Attending the study

day was a fantastic opportunity, where we were encouraged to give our views and put what we'd learned at University into practice. I came away feeling incredibly positive, especially about the impact we can have and how important our voice is. It's important that anyone in the NHS can influence change and if that starts early, prior to being employed in the NHS then all the better."

She continued: "Today has been a great celebration of change and I've made my own personal pledge too. It's been interesting to listen to the Health Secretary today and I hope that he will use his position to support students as they begin their careers in the NHS."

Emma Graham, a final year midwifery student from Darlington said: "I attended the Fab Academy event with Catherine and it really inspired me to become involved with NHS Fab Change Week. The workshop had people from all over the country attending, but Catherine and I were the only students there. The biggest message that I got from the event was that it doesn't matter who you are, anybody could lead change. As part of our course, we are constantly being critical and analysing situations and I think we are in a good place to be able to identify change. I think as students we have brilliant access to resources and up to date knowledge, so we are constantly looking at the way things can be done as our knowledge is fresh."

Emma added: "I think the event has been inspirational and it's been a successful afternoon hearing everybody's pledges. It was interesting to hear Jeremy Hunt's thoughts on service improvement in the NHS too."



For more information about NHS Fab Change click [here](#).

To watch the Fab Change Week FaceTime conversation with Secretary of State for Health Seremy Hunt click [here](#).

For more information on nursing, midwifery and health courses at Northumbria University, visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/nursing

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