

A Sustainable Future: The RCN vision for community nursing in Scotland Outline and update, July 2009

Why create a new vision?

- Community nursing at a crossroads
 - 30% of community nursing workforce retiring in 10 years
 - Shifting the balance of care / demand for community health services increasing
 - Low morale in many areas
- Questions from RCN members, MSPs and journalists about the Review of Nursing in the Community (RONiC)
- Concern that RONiC model too narrow to provide holistic, patient-centred service – where is mental health and learning disability, for example?
- Potential workforce fragmentation, with different Boards taking different approaches
- New Government with new policy agenda and a different focus (economic growth; early years' intervention)
- RCN Scotland leading the way with a solution-focused approach to the future of community nursing in Scotland.

What did we do?

Our vision for the future of community nursing in Scotland is the result of extensive consultation and in-depth analysis of Government policies:

- Series of confidential scoping interviews in Spring 2008 to assess issues
- Analysis of community healthcare policy direction of new Government
- Meetings with MSPs
- 7 consultation events with members across Scotland
- 5 meetings with Forums / other member groups
- Joint event with QNIS
- Online consultation with members and wider stakeholders (e.g. GPs and patient groups) – nearly 700 responses

The RCN vision for community nursing in Scotland

On 1 April 2009 two documents were launched: *A Sustainable Future: The RCN vision for community nursing in Scotland* and *A Sustainable Future: Voices on the vision for community nursing in Scotland*. The key messages of the vision are:

- A sustainable and vibrant nursing profession, working with communities, is key to the future of Scottish healthcare delivery
- Change is needed within 5-7 years to deal with:
 - ageing nursing workforce
 - increased demands on reducing workforce through shifting the balance of care
 - ageing population with increasingly complex needs
 - increased focus on early years' interventions
- The RCN vision is solution focused approach to the future, building on existing work and suggesting new approaches

Key elements of the vision are:

- A national framework is required to ensure national currency of community nursing ethos and job profiles, but service design must allow local flexibility to meet local need

- We are not proposing a single model for delivery, as exists in *Visible, Accessible and Integrated Care*
- Community nursing evolving into two fields: one working with children, young people and families, the other focusing on adults and older adults. Multi-disciplinary community health teams should also retain this distinction to take account of the particular skills needed to work with distinct age groups
 - We are not advocating a 0-100 Level 6 nursing role or community health service
- Each community health team must have the necessary physical *and* mental health care abilities to deliver holistic healthcare to local communities
 - Our vision embraces all existing community nursing roles
- Community nursing must be re-invigorated as an exciting career choice by providing flexible post-graduate education programmes which are adequately funded and supported by backfill
 - Our career proposals cover the full scope of a nursing career and do not concentrate on a single level of nursing practice
- We believe there is some merit in exploring a new *staff* nurse role within a modernised community nursing career pathway
 - But we do not support replacing all senior or specialist practitioner roles with a generic role, such as the Community Health Nurse
- Strong community nurse leadership is needed to plan and manage change; leadership capacity must be expanded and re-invigorated
 - Our vision pays significant attention to the role of level 7 and 8 nurses in the community
- Health services must be planned and delivered with the needs of users, rather than providers, at their heart
 - Whilst the core of community nursing needs national currency, Boards and CHPs must be empowered to configure skill mix and location of teams with the engagement of local staff, patients and the public
- Nurses, and the wider health team, must be provided with the resources they need to allow them to provide effective services
 - Our vision focuses on the full needs of the team, from administrative support to adequate IT and funding.

Developments since the vision was published

- Many positive comments on our vision
- Support from cross-party MSPs
- Agreement between RCN, Unite and Unison that a new way forward is required for community nursing
- Meeting with the Cabinet Secretary, which has resulted in a new approach, which will “have the key aim of modernising community nursing services and to ensure the provision of high quality and effective care within a team based approach in Scotland”.
- New Modernising Community Nursing Board begins work in early autumn
- RCN will use our vision to influence future workforce development

Further information

For more information on RCN Scotland and community nursing, visit www.rcn.org.uk/community_nursing_scotland, email policyscotland@rcn.org.uk or call 0131 662 6176.