

Community Nursing

Get it Right - RIGHT NUMBERS

updated 2009

The Welsh Assembly Government has outlined its desire to see a shift in the focus of the NHS away from acute care to community care. The Royal College of Nursing welcomes wholeheartedly the development and publication by the Welsh Assembly Government of the Community Nursing Strategy. However what is required now is investment and strategic attention to ensure the implementation of this strategy.

A great deal more work needs to be done to enhance community services in Wales. For example the community nursing service is not currently planned on a 24 hour basis across Wales and is available for differing periods of time in different localities. From 2007 there has been a decline in Wales in the number of district nurses and health visitors by 15%. The Royal College of Nursing is aware of situations across Wales where nurses and increasingly healthcare support workers are being placed under extreme pressure to deliver community services.

RCN Wales was delighted when the Welsh Assembly Government announced in March 2007 an increase of 39.3% in the number of funded places for post-registration community nurse training. However there is currently no guarantee that Local Health Boards will send nurses on these courses or that the NHS will increase the number of community nursing posts available.

Community Nurses should be valued highly for the specialised skills they provide. They care for a huge range of patients from paediatric to care of the elderly. They look after patients that are acutely ill, patients with chronic disease and are responsible for the palliative care of many patients.



KEY POLICY ACTIONS

- The Welsh Assembly Government should implement the Community Nursing Strategy.
- Funding for community health services should be ring-fenced and the performance of Local Health Boards in providing community health services should be closely monitored.
- The number of whole-time equivalent district nurses across Wales must rise and the ratio of registered community nurses to healthcare support workers remain appropriate.
- The number of community nursing training places commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government must be maintained.
- There should be investment in suitable electronic devices for community nurses to allow for appropriate access to patients records and safety.