

Continuous Professional Development

Get it Right - RIGHT SKILLS

updated 2009

Professional development and learning does not stop at registration, but is a career- long requirement for every nurse, which is essential for patient safety and clinical effectiveness. Yet many nurses and midwives in the NHS, in primary care and the independent sector find it very difficult to take time out from the clinical environment to develop their skills – or even to complete mandatory training.

In our Manifesto for the 2007 election the Royal College of Nursing called for the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that nurses are entitled to paid protected time for continuing professional development. Doctors are currently entitled to this and RCN Wales believes nurses should be too – it is patients that will benefit directly from enhanced skills and knowledge.

One of the ways in which the NHS has sought to address financial deficits has been to reduce the amount spent on training. It is important to note that health organisations or individual employers such as GPs must not only finance the place on the course but also backfill the post left temporarily empty.

The Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) binds together the Agenda for Change package. It is the Framework of Knowledge and Skills required in any single NHS post. It will be a tool for career development and also for role redefinition. It will therefore be very important to ensure that the required learning needs (including work-based learning) that are identified as a result of the KSF process are adequately funded.

The RCN Employment survey undertaken across the UK every two years is the most comprehensive source of workforce information on nursing in the UK. In 2005 1% of nurses surveyed indicated that they had not done any CPD, in 2007 this figure had increased to

12%, whilst in 2009, 8% say they have not done any CPD.

In 2005, nurses in Wales spent an average of 12 days per year on CPD activities. By 2007 the average number of days spent on CPD activities had fallen to 9 days and now in 2009 this has fallen again to 6 days. Despite the introduction of AfC the proportion of NHS nurses with training and development plans is only 42% in Wales. This is actually a lower proportion than in 2007 and significantly lower than both England and Scotland.

The 2007 survey also revealed concerning figures on mandatory training. Only 46% of nurses in Wales for example had received their mandatory training in infection control (UK 60%) and 45% for equipment training. All the figures for mandatory training are lower in Wales than is the case elsewhere in the UK. It is worth noting that in Wales nurses in NHS hospitals are much less likely to receive all forms of training than is the case among their equivalents elsewhere in the UK.

Practice nurses are less likely to receive all forms of training except cardio-pulmonary resuscitation training.

KEY POLICY ACTIONS

- The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure that nurses are entitled to paid protected time for continuing professional development.
- The Welsh Assembly Government should ensure that sufficient ring fenced funding is provide for continuous professional development for nursing.
- Training in mandatory areas should be prioritised.
- NHS staff should have a Personal Development Plan in line with the commitments of AfC.

