

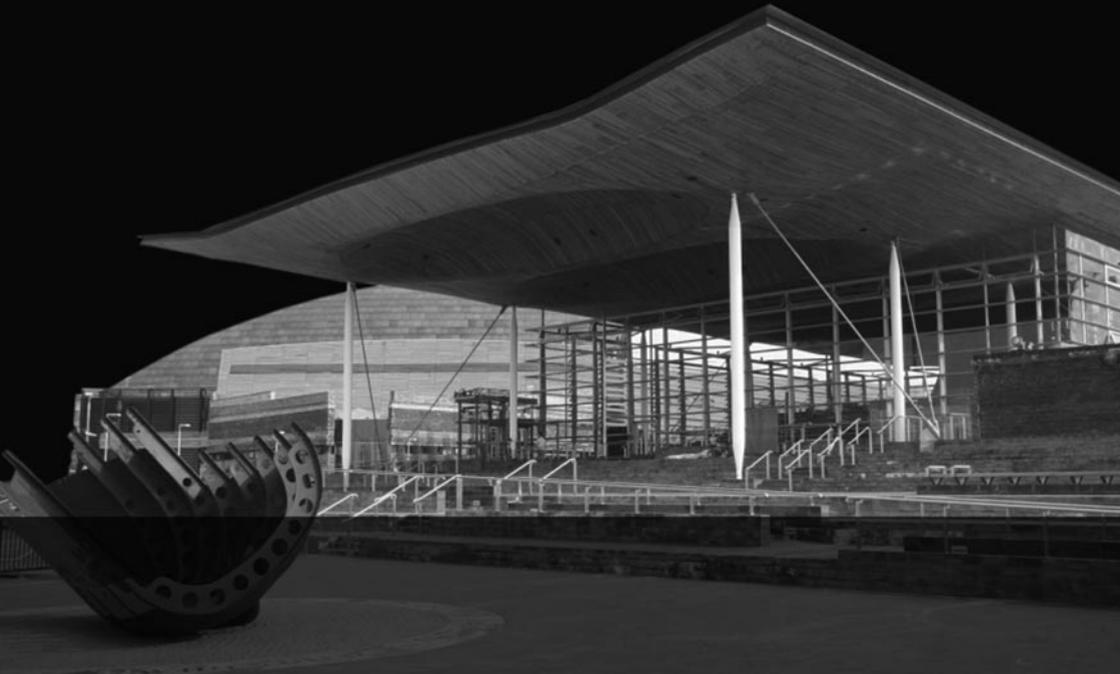
**BECAUSE
NURSES
DELIVER
MANIFESTO**



Time to *Care*



Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol
Cymru
Royal College of Nursing
Wales



Because Nurses Deliver



Time to *Care*
Amser i *Ofalu*



Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol
Cymru
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Wales

time to care 2016

Providing and managing health services means caring for people. Preventing, assessing, treating or managing an illness means caring. Pain relief and ensuring a patient is nourished and hydrated means caring. Nursing is caring. Caring for someone requires time, time to learn, time to listen and talk, time to assess, time to provide care, delegate or escalate, time to reflect and improve practice. It takes time to care.

Caring for people effectively means our society is a healthier and happier one. It means that less money is spent on treating sickness and more on keeping people well. It means that people are more able to work and care for others. Caring effectively means Wales will grow and prosper.

We hope politicians will take the time to read these briefings. The Royal College of Nursing has over 24,500 members in Wales and its own elected Welsh Board. Nurses, healthcare support workers, nursing students, midwives and health visitors make up our membership with a quarter in the independent sector.

These campaign priorities represent the views of these members. We have succeeded in identifying nursing innovation and policy ideas that can be addressed with the policy, legislative and funding options open to the next Welsh Government.

Now in 2016, it's Time To Care

We call for action by the next Welsh Government to:

- Ensure Safe Nurse Staffing levels
- Achieve Dignity and Quality in Personal Care
- Value Nurses

Gaynor Jones

Chair of the Welsh Board

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Time to Care
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[Ensure Safe Nurse Staffing Levels]

Nurses and health care support workers make up the largest group of NHS employees. They care for patients by the bedside 24 hours day and night. Because they are the largest group of staff it is tempting for finance managers to cut their numbers and try to save money. This is a direct and serious risk to patient's lives and wellbeing.

- A new law to safeguard patients by ensuring safe nurse staffing levels on acute medical wards
- No cut to the number of whole-time-equivalent registered nurses working in the NHS in Wales.
- Publish information showing the number of patients being cared for in the community and the number of nurses and health care support workers employed in the community.

A study of UK wards by Prof Anne-Marie Rafferty found that mortality increased by 26% on wards with lower nurse staffing levels. In California where a similar law was introduced 30 day mortality rates fell by 10-13%

Poor nurse staffing in hospital wards results in an increase in infection rates, patient falls, poor nourishment and hydration, the incidence of pressure sores, lack of communication and mistakes administering medication.

Laws change the behaviour of organisations and human beings by creating new standards of acceptability.

There are clear legal standards for staffing levels in many areas of employment (such as aviation, freight and childcare) where unsafe staffing is a danger to the public. Wales has also introduced clear rules on staffing levels in facilities such as kennels to ensure animal welfare.

The Royal College of Nursing believes that a law is required to require Health Boards publicly demonstrate they are providing safe levels of nursing care on acute medical wards.

Safe levels of nursing in the community are also needed and this legal duty should be extended to all areas of nursing care. As a first step we believe that Health Boards should publish information on the numbers of nurses and patients being cared for in the community.

There can be no higher priority for the next Welsh Government than protecting the lives and wellbeing of patients by ensuring they receive safe nursing care.

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Achieve Dignity and Quality in Personal Care

Ensuring dignity and quality in the personal care delivered to people at home is tremendously important for our members.

People may be receiving community care from a NHS managed community nursing team. Others, particularly older people, may be receiving personal care from a local authority (usually from an agency commissioned by the local authority) to provide help with bathing, feeding, continence needs or daily living.

Community nursing care is delivered by teams of community nurses and healthcare support workers. The RCN is calling for the Welsh Government to ensure that Health Boards publish more information about how many patients teams are caring for and the skill mix within the team.

The numbers of qualified district nurses in Wales are falling sharply. Some of this is due to changes to a more flexible modular approach to education which means nurses can train over a number of years, partly this is because new skills and knowledge are needed in the community (e.g. far more children are being cared for at home). However the Welsh Government needs to address the urgent need for more qualified senior generalist community nurse/District Nurses.

Whether a NHS community nursing team or an agency of care workers providing personal care, it is important that the team has senior experienced and qualified members who can provide supervision and oversight. The team needs to have

the time to safely and sensitively care for the patients assigned to it. Members of the team need continuous professional development.

- The NHS and local authorities who manage or commission care to people at home should ensure the nurses, health care support workers and care workers who deliver this care have access to continuous professional development and clinical supervision
- Care at home should not be given an inappropriate time limit e.g. 15 minutes. Giving care is a holistic process, people differ and change and the time taken to accomplish different activities does too. Communication is important.
- The Welsh Government should increase the number of fully-qualified district nurses.

Employers of those who provide care at home must ensure the employees have sufficient time for appropriate breaks, travel and are paid fairly. Caring is a responsible and deeply important job.

Most importantly of all, care at home should not be given too short a time limit for the provision of care. Giving care is a holistic process, people differ and change and the time taken to accomplish different activities does too. Good communication (in Welsh and English) can be the most important aspect of the care provided.

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Valuing Nurses

We all need nurses, midwives and health care support workers. Isn't it time they were fairly paid?

The RCN supports the UK Pay Review Body which takes evidence from employers and trade unions and recommends a pay rise it thinks is fair and sustainable. In recent years the governments of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have all made different decisions about whether or not to honour that recommendation. The RCN believes that nurses should be paid fairly and consistently across the UK.

Action Points

- Fair Pay
- Protection from Violence
- Access to Continuous Professional Development

In April 2015
Nurses in
Wales
employed by
the NHS
received a
1% pay rise.
In May 2016

Assembly Members will receive an 18.5% pay rise. Is this fair? Sometimes nurses are required to work extra hours by their employer. We believe it's important and only fair that nurses are offered payment for these extra hours.

Violent attacks on NHS staff are a crime. Responsibility for pursuing this crime should rest with the employer. Prosecution rates should be monitored as an indicator of progress. Training for

managers in responding to attacks on staff is needed alongside support for staff who have been attacked. There needs to be fast tracking to treatment for those with either a physical or psychological injury following an incident. Healthcare staff working in the community need effective lone worker polices and alert systems.

Finally access to continuous professional development (CPD) is an important way of improving care and demonstrating the work and skills of staff are valued and worth nurturing. CPD is required for revalidation and for nurses to continue to be registered.

In 2011 25% of our members had received no CPD from their employer. In 2013 this figure rose to 43%. Indeed many LHBs have placed a moratorium on nursing staff being allowed to undertake any training. This is affecting all areas.

Welsh nurses are less likely to have received so called 'mandatory training' (e.g. equipment training, moving and handling, infection control) than in any other UK country. 9.7% in 2013 had received no such training at all (compared with the UK figure of 5.6%). This is concerning as it is directly related to the quality of care that patients experience. We believe that the Welsh Government should monitor nursing access to CPD in key areas.

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Protect Health Spending

The budget of the Welsh Government is set by the UK Government. If the UK Government continues to cut public spending heavily then the Welsh Government faces some very difficult choices. The 2015-16 Welsh Budget for example was around 10% lower in real terms than it was in 2010-11.

Whilst spending on health in Scotland and England has been protected, spending on health in Wales has not. The 2014 Nuffield Trust report on NHS finance in Wales has estimated that the 2015/16 NHS budget was 3.6% lower in real terms than it was in 2010/11 and there will be a funding gap of £2.5 billion for the NHS in Wales by 2025/26.

The Royal College of Nursing believes the time has come to protect public spending on health in Wales. Services must be safely delivered and they must be offered equitably throughout Wales. Any further cuts to health spending will jeopardise this goal.

It is true that funding by itself is not sufficient. Services must be focused in maintaining people's health (such as health visiting, practice nurses and occupational health nurses) rather than treating illness. The Royal College of Nursing endorses the **Prudent Healthcare** approach of reducing inappropriate variation using evidence based practices consistently and transparently and "*only do what only you can do*" – that is performing at the

appropriate level for your clinical expertise rather than beneath it. Healthcare in Wales needs to be transformed and a certain amount of investment is needed to achieve this.

NHS finance in Wales has estimated that the 2015/16 NHS budget was 3.6% lower in real terms than it was in 2010/11

There are high levels of poverty and economic inactivity in Wales. Higher levels of ill health also weaken Welsh society. Nurses in Wales are far more likely to be the main breadwinner in the family than in other parts of the UK. Yet despite the greater need present in Wales it has been clearly established that the Barnett formula provides less funding to Wales than if Wales were funded by the UK Government in the same way as comparable functions in England.

In the next few years tax and borrowing powers will transfer to the Welsh Government. The Royal College of Nursing will be advising on how these opportunities can benefit healthcare.

Nursing is about caring for people. Nurses and healthcare support workers are educated, trained, employed through funding – and this means that funding for healthcare will remain a powerful issue for nursing to care about.

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Improve Mental Health Services

One in 4 adults experiences mental health problems or illness at some point during their lifetime, while one in 6 of us will experience symptoms at any one time. The RCN welcomes the Welsh Government's commitment to ring-fencing funding for mental health services in 2015-16 and believes this approach should continue.

RCN Wales believes that the pre-16 education curriculum should include the teaching of strategies to develop emotional resilience.

The people of Wales require access to high quality psychological services (such as cognitive behavioural therapy or mindfulness) for mild to moderate anxiety or depression. These should be available in primary care without an excessive waiting list. These services have a proven evidence base and can help people return to and maintain an active life. Psychological interventions should also be available to those with serious mental illnesses as stated in NICE guidelines

The Royal College of Nursing calls for a clear workforce development and education strategy for mental health nursing in Wales that will meet the future mental health needs of children or adults. There needs to be sustainable funding for post registration education. Specialist education is needed in fields such as eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, cognitive behavioural therapy, family work, and personality disorder.

Residential and inpatient services also need investment. The pressure on a limited number of places can mean that children and young people are inappropriately placed either in adult areas or sometimes out of Wales all together. Living areas are sometimes inappropriately mixed gender resulting in strategies for dealing with sexual harassment or assault being flawed or unable to be implemented.

The 2015 spot check on older people's mental health wards highlighted areas that required national improvement.

- Ensuring older people have access to daily activities on wards;
- Staff need to feel they can raise concerns easily; have effective training and understand the necessary legal safeguards;
- The need for improvements to ward environments, in particular ensuring simple maintenance tasks and repairs are undertaken promptly;
- Flexible visiting hours should be encouraged on wards.

Finally, unscheduled care services (such as drop-in centres, or A&E departments) should all be designed to have the facilities and expertise to engage with people in a mental health crisis. All local health boards should have well developed multi agency crisis plans and protocols to enable people to access services outside of "office hours".

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Access to Primary Care

The Royal College of Nursing believes that accessible primary health care is vital, both to improving the health of the public and ensuring the effective operation of secondary care services (including emergency care).

Although GP's surgeries remain at the heart of our primary care system other professions and teams, such as school nurses, pharmacists and occupational health nurses contribute enormously. Within the GP surgery it is often the practice nurse, supported by the healthcare support worker that will see, advise and treat people appropriately.

Practice Nurses (most often employed by General Practitioners) undertake a range of assessments and interventions, immunisation and vaccination, the management of long-term conditions and cervical cytology.

Nurses undertake a further two years of learning to become Nurse Practitioners and then can be responsible for nurse led clinics, minor illness, triage, supplementary or independent prescribing.

Nurses who can independently prescribe can speed up patient care considerably and also strengthen the clinical accountability for prescription.

The Welsh Government also needs to ensure that the new workforce in primary care educates practitioners who are confident in delivering care in the Welsh language.

Specialist nurses and nurse consultants lead diagnostic clinics with the ability to admit directly to hospitals.

Although GP's surgeries remain at the heart of our primary care system other professions and teams, such as school nurses, pharmacists and occupational health nurses contribute enormously.

In order to deliver accessible primary care across Wales and maintain the principles of prudent healthcare we need to make sure that the nursing workforce is educated, skilled and ready to deliver care. Nurses employed by GPs often find it difficult to access continuous professional development and we would urge steps to be taken to rectify this.

The Welsh Government should, together with the Health Boards, ensure that Advanced Nurse Practitioner posts are created across Wales to strengthen the primary care team.

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Reduce Alcohol & Drug Misuse

In the 2014 Wales Health Survey 40 per cent of all adults reported drinking above the recommended guidelines on at least one day in the past week, including 24 per cent who reported binge drinking (drinking more than twice the daily guidelines).

The Welsh Government has recently launched the Draft Public Health (Minimum Price for Alcohol) Bill which the RCN fully endorses. RCN Wales also believes the Welsh Government should reduce available licensing hours, and regulate printed advertising material. The RCN would support the Welsh Government in working with pubs, bars and restaurants to ensure lower percentage alcohol beers and wines are clearly available.

Pre-registration nurse education needs to reflect the prevalence of alcohol misuse in our society and provide guidance on effective health interventions with patients. The RCN also supports the creation of alcohol specialist nurses, particularly in A&E departments. Research has shown the posts to be clinically effective (reducing misuse) and cost-effective (e.g. saving bed days). The RCN is supportive of the steps set out in the Government's strategy *Working Together to Reduce Harm: The Substance Misuse Strategy for Wales 2008-2018*.

It is important that the successful initiatives underlying this approach are maintained e.g. the Bursary Scheme which provides funding for those working in drug and alcohol services to access training and further education opportunities.

The school nursing service has a crucial role in educating and providing advice and support on substance misuse to children and young people. It is important their expertise is fully realised by Health Boards, police and local authorities. For example we welcome moves to coordinate the school nursing service with Further and Higher education and or workplace initiatives that are targeting young people.

The RCN is strongly supportive of the excellent work of the national Tier 4 working group which have produced the 'Residential Rehabilitation Framework' for Wales which seeks to ensure that Welsh substance misusers receive quality residential treatment and support. We look forward to the publication of standard Tier 4 outcomes for Wales. Keeping the ring-fenced funding available for residential rehabilitation and inpatient detoxification placements is vital.

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Increase Physical Activity

Physical activity is an important way of keeping fit and healthy. It improves mental wellbeing and can also be a way of socialising. The 2014 Wales Health Survey showed that around a third of adults reported not being physically active on any day in the previous week. Only a third reported activity of 30 minutes on at least 5 days a week. Activity rates are significantly lower for women. Activity rates have also not improved significantly for a decade.

However there is some good news for young people! The School Sport Survey showed the numbers of young people taking part in sport or physical activity three or more times a week has risen from 27% in 2011 to 40% in 2013.

We feel there are important ways in which the Welsh Government and local authorities can encourage and improve the uptake of physical activity.

Planning and the environment: Simply walking is a great way to keep active, so ensuring pedestrian routes are planned into new developments and pavements and well maintained and kept clear in the winter is important alongside safer routes and special lanes for cyclists. Good lighting and handrails on steep routes are useful. Clean and accessible public toilets keep the outdoors a place we can all enjoy.

National Exercise Referral Scheme: keep funding this! This scheme standardises exercise referral opportunities across all Health Boards in Wales. The Scheme targets clients who have a chronic disease or are at risk of developing chronic disease

and has proven a great success in raising activity rates.

Encouraging Women: Women have lower physical activity rates than men and are less likely to participate in sport. The limited research available indicates that women prefer taking part in non-competitive and varied activities provided at times that suit daily schedules. The Welsh Government should fund initiatives aimed at increasing women's participation and also fund further research in this area to provide evidence of successful initiatives. Leaving school, working long hours, caring or retirement can be factors where social groups change and physical activity falls off.

Supportive national schemes like Lets Walk Cymru and the Wales Pedometer Challenge are great for getting groups and individuals up and about.

Access to low cost swimming facilities and well maintained woodland trails are invaluable in encouraging active family leisure activities at weekends.

Schemes that support older people's activity (getting together for golf or a low impact dance class) can also be helpful in combating social isolation. In rural areas it will be important for the local authority and Welsh Government to ensure that activities that do not require a leisure centre or gym are supported.

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Better Sexual Health Services

Good sexual health is part of a healthy and fulfilling life. Sexual health services provide information and advice related to healthy sexuality, contraception, treatment of sexually transmitted infection and termination of pregnancy. Nurses and other healthcare professionals based in these services help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections, as well as work to safeguard against and identify issues of sexual exploitation.

Our members are particularly concerned that sexual health services in Mid & West Wales are strengthened

These services are essential in ensuring good sexual health for the whole population but too often receive a low priority when Government considers public health.

There are a number of health professions involved in providing information and advice including practice nurses, health visitors and school nurses which compliments the contribution made by nurses working as sexual health nurses.

Accessing sexual health services is not only about the geographical availability, it includes ensuring people can access the right type of service at the right time. Young people may be particularly likely to need a location accessible by public transport for example, confidentiality may be a concern. Some professionals can be

mobile, working in a school for example whilst others may need a well-equipped clinic. Access to long-term contraception methods can be variable particularly in primary care. Equitable access to abortion services, particularly in North Wales, is also needed.

Funding along with the access to education, training and clinical supervision for professionals providing services should be secured and sustained.

The RCN believes that education in relation to making safe and informed choices about health and wellbeing should be improved for the young. Sexual health is part of a broad curriculum to enable young people to develop personal responsibility for their own health. This forms part of the prudent healthcare agenda. There should be a statutory requirement for schools to deliver sexual health education via professionals specifically educated and trained to do so. Resources should be bilingual in relation to education and service provision throughout Wales.

It is clear from our recent survey that our members believe there needs to be a higher profile for this important public health topic. The RCN believes the Welsh Government should publish a Sexual Health Strategy setting out its development plans, guidance and priorities for the Local Health Boards.

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