New report aims to make General Practice Nursing a top career destination

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Improving training available in GP practice settings and raising the profile of the role is key to helping to retain and expand the General Practice Nursing (GPN) workforce says a new report published today by Health Education England.

The General Practice nursing workforce development plan ?Recognise, Rethink, Reform,? explores the challenges facing the GPN workforce and puts forward a range of recommendations to support and develop the workforce for the future and to help nurses make effective career choices.

Dr Peter Lane FRCGP, chair of the general practice workforce group said:

The highly-skilled general practice nursing workforce of today provides an essential high standard of care to their local populations and are invaluable members of primary care teams. As a GP and employer of General Practice Nurses (GPNs), I was delighted to be asked to lead this important piece of work and use my experience and knowledge to help tackle some of the challenges faced.

This report offers some clear guidance and steps that can be taken to improve GPN recruitment and retention, and encourage nurses to return to the profession by setting out how best to respond to the current and anticipated workforce challenges at both strategic and local levels. We call for engagement from all stakeholders including those involved in Sustainability and Transformation Plans, (STPs) and would look to the developing HEE training hubs to have a critical role in implementation.

I would like to place on record my grateful thanks to the committed team that has helped with this plan including Health Education England, NHS England, the Queen?s Nursing Institute, the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the Royal College of Nursing.
We need to make general practice nursing a top career destination and a shining example of how to respond to the population’s health needs in the 21st century.

Key report recommendations include:

- improving training capacity for the general practice nurse workforce by providing access to accredited training to equip them for each level of their role;
- raising the profile of general practice nursing, to increase the uptake of the role as a first-destination career;
- developing GPN educator roles to cover all CCG areas, including the promotion of mentor training for all GPNs to retain the knowledge and expertise of existing GPNs; and
- the development of a sustainable and easily accessible ‘how-to?’ toolkit and web based resource to support the implementation of general practice nursing workforce initiatives.
- a nationwide standardised general practice nursing ‘return to practice?’ education programme which includes a general practice placement, mentorship and appropriate support to meet the NMC requirements for ‘return to practice?’.

Professor Lisa Bayliss-Pratt, Director of Nursing & Deputy Director of Education and Quality, Health Education England said:

We welcome this report and the challenges it sets us. Now is the time for joined up thinking, support and collaboration from stakeholders to individual practices, to work through the current challenges.

It is important to recognise the pivotal role that general practice nurses play in delivering care to patients up and down the country and the need to make sure that we have the numbers we need for the future.

There is already some great work happening locally such as training hubs that enable nurses to develop their skills in specialist areas and progress their careers within general practice. We want to make sure that this type of best practice is shared.

I would like to thank Dr Peter Lane, the task and finish group members and everyone who contributed to this plan. The challenge now is to take things forward.

Professor Jane Cummings, Chief Nursing Officer for England said:

General Practice Nurses have a vital role in driving change to meet the needs of people in their communities as evidenced in this report. As we move to 2020 and beyond we have a great opportunity to demonstrate their current and future contribution in delivering effective change. Their important role will be reflected in my CNO Summit next week and I look forward to working with them and GP colleagues to ensure the potential of the workforce is fully supported and realised.

The document looked at four key areas:

- entry into general practice ? raising the profile as a first career choice and increasing the availability of training placements for students;
- establishing the role of the GP Nurse ? ensuring appropriate training and support is available for new GPNs to;
- enhancing the role with professional development and career progression; and
- expanding the healthcare support workforce with standardised training and career paths.


Links
[5] https://www.hee.nhs.uk/about