NURSES USE ANNUAL LEAVE TO FULfil CPD REQUIREMENT

Exclusive RCNi survey reveals that staff have too little time to complete 35 hours

By Stephanie Jones-Berry and Jennifer Sprinks

HUNDREDS OF nurses must use their annual leave to keep up with essential training requirements, an RCNi investigation has revealed.

Since April, nurses renewing their registration must prove that they have completed at least 35 hours’ continuing professional development (CPD) over a three-year period as part of the Nursing and Midwifery Council’s (NMC) revalidation system.

RCNi surveyed nurses about their ability to access CPD and two thirds (65%) of the 2,909 respondents, including 495 older people’s nurses, said they are concerned about being able to fulfil the required hours.

More than two thirds (68%) of the respondents are employed in bands 5 and 6.

According to the survey, more than 650 respondents keep up with CPD while on holiday. Others admit to resorting to taking sick leave for the purpose.

More than one quarter have experienced resistance from their line managers when requesting time off for CPD activities, while 81% said they would like protected time for training.

Reasons given for falling behind with CPD include lack of time, backfill, funding and lack of enthusiasm among managers.

In-house training

Many older people’s nurses said they cannot get the required hours of CPD because they are needed on the wards or because training often gets cancelled.

One band 5 older people’s staff nurse, who is employed by an independent provider, said: ‘The company provide in‑house training, but due to workload you can access the computer only in your own time.’

Several older people’s nurses were told that workload and targets come ahead of training. One said: ‘I have to go in my own time and if payment is required, I have to pay and make sure I arrange cover.’

Others said that working night shifts causes them problems because training is offered only during the day.

The RCN said the findings prove that employers should do more to support staff. Unison head of nursing Gail Adams said that if employers cannot make time for training, the process is ‘doomed to fail’.

The NMC and NHS Employers said that employers have a responsibility to support their staff with CPD.

RCNi has launched a campaign calling on employers to support nurses by giving them protected time for training.

The #1hour2empower campaign urges employers to ensure that their nurses can complete the equivalent of one hour per month of CPD. This will help registrants achieve the minimum 35 hours of CPD for revalidation.

The Patients Association and Unite have already pledged their support.

Join the conversation on Twitter using #1hour2empower

Health board and charity to provide hospice at home

THE FIRST partnership between the charity Marie Curie and a Welsh health board is set to improve end of life care for people in south Wales.

The Cardiff and the Vale Marie Curie Hospice at Home service will provide healthcare assistants (HCAs) to work with district nurses and community teams from the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. The move will allow patients to receive end of life care in their own homes if this is what they wish. The HCAs will be supported by senior nurses from Marie Curie, which will oversee the service.

Further information is available at tinyurl.com/gwbe4pn

Expert on dementia becomes professor emeritus

A LEADING nurse expert on dementia has stepped down as director of the world-renowned Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling.

June Andrews, who joined the centre in 2005, has been appointed professor emeritus by the university. She will continue to undertake strategic work for the Dementia Services Development Trust, which founded the centre 27 years ago.

During her tenure, the centre has provided training in dementia care to thousands of healthcare staff.

Professor Andrews, who is a member of Nursing Older People’s editorial advisory board, said: ‘Working at the centre has been an amazing experience.’