MUCH NEEDS TO BE DONE TO FORGE ALLIANCES AT GRASS ROOTS

Kevin Corbett and Jenny Finch (reflections, April 13) are right to call for stronger nursing alliances between primary care and community nurses.

If we are to succeed in delivering the NHS Five Year Forward View, there is an urgent need to ensure synergy between the two groups is realised in tangible outcomes for patients receiving community-based care.

As GP federations and local care networks develop across the nation, the opportunities are there for this type of ‘radical’ innovation. But there is much to be done to forge the nursing alliances at grass roots level.

A vision that sees general practice nurses, district nurses and specialist nurses in the acute sector working together would certainly help deliver enhanced care closer to home.

Support and encouragement for this kind of innovation is required from not only higher education but also community provider trusts and, importantly, GPs.

Ami David, principal consultant, Quest for Community Health

EDUCATION IS NEEDED TO ENSURE HIGH QUALITY, FUNDAMENTAL CARE

Nursing Standard (editorial April 13) refers to a comment about nursing associates by Health Education England’s nurse director Lisa Bayliss-Pratt at a conference in Australia. She is quoted as saying that if we don’t upskill our support workforce then graduate nurses may end up ‘getting dragged down doing fundamental care’.

I have huge respect for Lisa and I understand the comment may not have come across as intended. However language is important. The phrase ‘basic nursing care’ is often used, but there is no such thing. Care is fundamental and is at the heart of nursing, so there is no question of any nurse being ‘dragged down’ doing fundamental care.

We need a highly educated nursing workforce and if it is to be complemented by other grades, the leaders of nursing must ensure that this is not at the expense of well-educated nurses. My fear is Lisa’s comment may give encouragement to those who believe nurses do not need the level of education that will be required in the future.

One of the most effective ways to enhance patient care would be the implementation of the Cavendish review into healthcare assistants and support workers, thus ensuring that this vital component of the workforce has the education needed to ensure high quality, fundamental care.

Peter Carter OBE, independent management consultant

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY ON MAY 5 TO SEND GOVERNMENT A CLEAR MESSAGE

It is worrying that there is little discussion about the upcoming local elections because this would be a golden opportunity to send the government a clear message.

May 5 should be writ large on every nurse’s calendar. All nurses, without exception, need to vote for candidates who support the NHS and nurses. Nurses who do not will be complicit in the dismantling of our beloved NHS as well as for poor and unsafe practice.

They will be responsible for harming patients, because they did not raise their voices, as doctors have done (and continue to do).

Zeba Arif, retired nurse, current patient

ON WHETHER NURSES CAN REPLACE DOCTORS ON OUT-OF-HOURS CARE

■ If nurses can do a doctor’s job, why does it take seven years to train to be a doctor and three to be a nurse? Would nurses have the same authority and assertion? Would the public, especially the older generation, accept a nurse out of hours for issues previously dealt with by doctors?

Stephen Taylor

TWEETS OF THE WEEK

Paperless NHS by 2020 feasible. But challenges: IT improving but need 8-9 passwords a day & numerous login delays

@LizatDH

Paperless feasible with staff training. One issue holding it back is poor IT knowledge. New systems are rolled out without upskilling

@GGByrne

We do pet therapy at work. From my perspective, it does have a therapeutic effect on the patients

@kirstyzoiep

Effective discharge planning begins on admission and involves the patient and their significant others every step of the way

@debraejackson

Essential that specialist nurses shout about how they add value, says Jane Cummings NHS CNO. I couldn’t agree more

@S_L_Gray

As a dementia friend champion I never use the word suffer, but as a carer, I and my family do

@SiobhanGregory1

A true leader does not seek to climb the ladder, instead they hold the ladder steady while others climb it

@Bartontd

NHS is under threat! The fight must go on! It’s #timetotalkjeremy

@thebestjoan

Follow Nursing Standard @NurseStandard and join the NScomment chat on Thursdays at 12.30pm