District nurses voice staffing concerns

By Nick Lipley

DISTRICT NURSE training and staffing levels are among concerns raised by the Queen’s Nursing Institute (QNI) after an online survey of more than 1,000 practitioners.

According to the survey results, the job title ‘district nurse’ is used by more than 85% of employers, in many cases regardless of whether or not staff hold the specialist practitioner qualification.

And almost 60% of respondents thought that their teams have insufficient staff to meet the growing needs of patients. The findings have been published in a QNI report, 2020 Vision – Five Years On: Reassessing the Future of District Nursing.

The institute decided to update its 2009 document, 2020 Vision, to reflect the changes in the NHS in the past five years.

QNI chief executive Crystal Oldman said: ‘District nurses deliver ever more complex care in an ever more challenging working environment. The service requires nurses with increasingly specialist skills, leading a team that delivers care to people of all ages, often with needs and levels of acuity that have previously been seen only in hospitals.

‘Our survey highlights some worrying trends. It also indicates that district nurses are responding with incredible professionalism.’

The QNI recommends that:

Employers and commissioners value and embrace ‘district nurse’ as a modern job title, because it is recognised and understood by patients and professionals, and inspires confidence and respect.

Investment in the district nursing specialist practitioner qualification (SPQ) is renewed, and a national educational standard for education and practice is established to support the SPQ.

A strategic workforce planning tool for district nursing is developed, to maximise the potential of the existing workforce and enable planned growth.

Appropriate information technology to support patient care receives greater investment.

Queen’s Nursing Institute poll finds ‘a challenging environment’ as care becomes increasingly complex

Health Education England unveils its 2014-29 framework

PATIENTS OF the future will require more care delivered closer to home by a more integrated and flexible workforce, according to Health Education England (HEE).

A strategic framework for 2014-29, published last month by the HEE, suggests that approaches to education and training need to change to cater for a larger population with more older people living for longer.

Framework 15 was launched at the NHS Confederation annual conference in Liverpool by HEE chief executive Ian Cumming. Professor Cumming said: ‘Framework 15 is all about that future patient, understanding who they are and the healthcare needs they will have.

‘We will need more integrated, flexible care delivered closer to people’s homes and we need to ensure that we are educating and training the workforce to be able to deliver that model of care.’

NHS Employers chief executive Dean Royles said: ‘This is a patient-centred and comprehensive plan to develop a workforce that’s able to deliver care in a changing world.

‘We particularly support its emphasis on the leading role of employers, not just healthcare professionals, in planning future roles. The commitment to supporting the development of the existing workforce is equally important.’

For copies of Framework 15, go to tinyurl.com/nmnrjdj

Correction

In Nursing Management’s April issue, the article titled ‘Creating more time in the day for patient care’ stated that a Lean Healthcare Award was won by Ashford and St Peter’s Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Kent, for a project involving Jefferson Tabalina. In fact, the trust is in Surrey and the project involved Jefferson Tabalina. We apologise for the errors.