Trust appoints 30 matrons to provide hands-on care

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust reduces paperwork so staff can focus on clinical practice

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AN NHS trust’s pioneering drive to recruit senior nurse leaders has led to the appointment of 30 band 8 clinical matrons.

Between them, the matrons will cover every hospital ward in Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (HHFT).

They will spend 80% of their time providing hands-on care, demonstrating advanced clinical practice to their teams and working with consultants.

The trust’s chief nurse Donna Green said: ‘We are a clinically run organisation and can see huge benefits in having nurses engaged at a high level. By valuing clinical expertise and having senior people at ward level, we will improve the quality of care.’

Band 7 ward sisters’ roles will be redefined to emphasise education and training, while clerical staff will provide administrative support.

‘Across the NHS, ward sisters and matrons have lost their way a bit,’ said Ms Green. ‘They have become more involved in administration and clinical skills have been lost.

One of the newly appointed clinical matrons, Alison McGinnes, was clinical service lead for long-term conditions at HHFT, but will now be based on a 26-bed older people’s ward. She used to spend 80% of her time on administration and 20% on clinical duties, but will now spend most of her time on clinical tasks.

Clinical leaders

Ms McGinnes said she was apprehensive but excited about what the next six months will bring: ‘There will be a lot of good things but many challenges along the way because we are doing something pioneering.’

Having a clinical matron on every ward will benefit patients, said Ms McGinnes. ‘Matrons are strong clinical leaders who can make things better for patients and families. We are showing that you can progress to the pinnacle of your career and remain clinical, which is an opportunity not always available to nurses,’ she added.

The matrons have begun a month-long induction to refresh their clinical skills and prepare for their new role. The success of the appointments will be measured by factors such as qualitative feedback and staff turnover.

The HHFT recruitment drive comes as an investigation by Nursing Management’s sister title Nursing Standard has revealed that more than one quarter of NHS trusts in England have cut senior nursing posts.

A freedom of information request revealed that, in the past five years, 30 of 114 trusts (26.3%) cut the number of nursing posts at band 7 or 8, with a loss of 541 full-time equivalent posts. Twelve trusts (10.5%) reduced their number of clinical nurse specialists between 2011 and 2015.

RCN head of policy Howard Catton said the loss of band 7s and 8s ‘represents a vital loss of skill, experience and expertise, which we know is critical to patient safety and quality’.

A Department of Health spokesperson said it has invested £40 million to create ‘the nursing leaders of the future’ and another £5 million to get experienced nurses who have left the profession back in the workforce.

NHS England wants all GP referrals to be electronic by 2018

ALL PATIENT referrals for hospital appointments should be made electronically by 2018, says NHS England. The oversight body has allocated £55 million to reward GPs and hospitals to stop referrals by second-class post.

The money will come from a ‘quality premium’ fund that care commissioning groups can access by hitting NHS quality targets.

Currently, only 50% of patients are referred electronically, but NHS England wants this proportion to rise to 60% by September 2016, 80% by 2017 and 100% by 2018.

Free video from RCNi explains the revalidation process

RCNi HAS created a free video explaining everything you need to know about revalidation, the new process all UK nurses and midwives must follow to maintain their registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council, and which came into effect at the start of this month.

The video has been watched by more than 12,000 people since its launch in early March.

Watch the video at: www.rcni.com/revalidation-video