Training to prioritise older people’s care

Health Education England told that programmes for NHS staff should be in place by September 2014

By Sally Gillen

Additional training will be offered to nurses caring for older people who have complex needs as part of a government drive to improve outcomes for those with long-term conditions.

The Department of Health has told Health Education England (HEE), the new body responsible for staff training in the NHS, that programmes should be in place by September 2014.

The government says all NHS staff should complete an awareness programme before caring for dementia patients. And the HEE has been ordered to review the content of pre-registration courses so that every student is suitably prepared to work with older people.

Karen Elcock, head of pre-registration nursing programmes at Birmingham City University’s School of Health, said: ‘A number of factors make community placements difficult, including the fact that many mental health and alcohol services are no longer NHS employers, having been sold off to private organisations.’

She added that universities would find it easier to persuade GPs, care homes and other providers to offer placements if the HEE paid them a fee.

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Ms Elcock said her university was working with the London Deanery on a project involving five general practices that have agreed to take on students.

RCN primary and community care adviser Rebecca Cheatle welcomed the plans for an awareness programme.

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RCN primary and community care adviser Rebecca Cheatle welcomed the plans for additional post-registration training in older people’s care.

She added that all pre-registration students should undertake community placements to ensure they are prepared properly for all care settings.

Nurse educators say providing quality placements in primary care is a huge challenge.

Inspirating ideas sought for dementia challenge prize

NURSE SPECIALISTS using innovative ways of integrating dementia care into other services can bid for a share of £150,000 and the chance to see their approach emulated around the NHS.

The NHS Innovation Challenge Prizes are open to inspiraitonal approaches to joined-up dementia care. RCN dementia lead Rachel Thompson said: ‘It would be wonderful if specialist dementia nurses were playing a key role in these applications.’

The award is a joint initiative between the Department of Health and Janssen Healthcare Innovation. The closing date for applications is September 4.

Go to www.nhschallengeprizes.org

A play that bridges art and science

DEMENTIA CARE is the subject of a play created as a result of collaboration between health researchers and a playwright.

Inside Out of Mind is based on months of participant observation of healthcare assistants in dementia wards by researchers from the University of Nottingham’s Institute of Mental Health. Writer Tanya Myers used their field notes to develop the play.

Billed as ‘medical magical realism’, the play explores ward life from the perspective of patients, staff and visitors. It covers themes such as identity, loss, relationships, power and death.

The play premiered at Lakeside public arts centre in Nottingham last month. tinyurl.com/mwj53lq