NURSES STAND FOR ELECTION AS THE THREE MAIN PARTIES PUBLISH THEIR LONG-AWAITED MANIFESTOS

Nurses vie for seats

TWO LABOUR Party candidates are vying to become the first qualified nurse to be elected to parliament.

Of all the nurses standing across the political spectrum, Ann Keen, Brentford & Isleworth and Laura Mofat, Crawley, have the smallest majorities to overturn and both are confident of success. No nurse is contesting a safe seat for his or her party.

Ms Keen is the general secretary of the Community and District Nurses Association. She has been a Labour Party member for 32 years and stood for Brentford & Isleworth in the last two elections.

She is campaigning for a national nurses' pay framework and for nurses to have a voice in parliament for the first time.

Ms Mofat is a staff nurse at Crawley Hospital. Her constituency is a key marginal - to win the seat she needs a swing to the left of 2,000. She also stood in the last election.

'We are getting some good feedback. Hospitals and the health service are very much at the top of my agenda,' she said.

Three nurses are standing in the election for the Conservative Party and six for the Liberal Democrats.

Main parties promise recruitment drive

ALL THREE main political parties have promised to employ more nurses, improve standards and cut NHS bureaucracy, in their election manifestos.

The Conservative manifesto says 'good nursing is the bedrock of the NHS' and claims a 70 per cent increase in real terms in nurses' pay since the party came to power.

It promises to increase the number of nurses with specialist qualifications in paediatric intensive care, emergency care and cancer care. It has given a commitment to extend nurse prescribing for community nurses nationwide, and that more hospitals will be built under the private finance initiative.

The Labour manifesto claims that if the Conservatives remain in power 'there may not be an NHS in five years' time'. Labour claims the internal market has led to 20,000 extra managers and 50,000 fewer nurses.

It promises to remove the internal market, while admitting there can be no return to the previous top-down system of management. It promises to have three- and five-year contracts and to create a new Patient's Charter.

By Jack Shamash

Nurses have a vital role to skin services

AN ALL PARTY group of MPs has called for the fall in numbers of dermatology nurses to be reversed.

The report by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Skin recommends that 'significantly more use could be made of nurses in skin services'. Nurses have a vital role to play in dermatology, the report adds, and are willing to learn and apply new skills.

Julia Mountain said an example of a simple, effective way to tackle disease was the DOTS initiative against TB.

The initiative, which involves observing patients to ensure they take their complete course of drugs, was typified as 'a nurse type of idea', Ms Mountain said. 'Rather than looking to hi-tech developments, often the simplest ideas can be the most effective,' she said.

Practicality beats hi-tech ideas

PRACTICAL IDEAS rather than hi-tech solutions may offer the best hope against threatened epidemics of infectious diseases in Europe, the RCN's international officer has said.

Speaking after the launch this week of a World Health Organization campaign to control the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and other emerging infectious diseases,