Liverpool lecturer appeals for support to restore Nightingale’s memorial

A nurse lecturer has launched a campaign for a statue of Florence Nightingale in Liverpool to be renovated in time for the centenary of her death in 2010.

Edge Hill College senior lecturer Chris Jones said the statue (above), which stands outside the original home of the Queen’s Nursing Institute at Nightingale House, has been badly damaged over the years. Nightingale House is now a hotel.

Despite enquiries, he has not been able to find out who is responsible for its upkeep. Last week he appealed for information on local radio. He is also seeking pictures of the statue before it was damaged so that any restoration would be faithful to the original.

The statue depicts Ms Nightingale with her lamp tending soldiers during the Crimean War and carries an inscription praising her strength of heart in caring for the wounded.

Lack of leadership silences district nursing’s voice

A lack of professional leadership has left the district nursing workforce without an effective voice in policy making and planning, according to the Queen’s Nursing Institute (QNI).

For its report Vision and Values: A Call for Action on Community Nursing, the QNI interviewed district nurses across the UK. It found many are critical of nursing organisations for an absence of vision or national leadership at a time when their workload is increasing and their numbers are dwindling.

Early patient discharge from hospital has led to district nurses caring for people who are increasingly aged, more acutely ill and less mobile, and have more complex needs than ever before.

As a result, nurses are being forced to work harder, or as one nurse said: ‘The patients emerge quicker and sicker, so we have to work faster and slicker.’

Many nurses reported staff shortages and said their services are running on goodwill alone. They feel they are not adequately rewarded for their efforts and that Agenda for Change has not met their expectations, with some experiencing a pay cut in real terms.

Many district nurses said the new GP contract is skewing their role in an attempt to earn points — and income — for the practices they are attached to.

‘It is as if GPs have been given new spectacles — suddenly we are appreciated. But we change our roles and they reap the benefits,’ one district nurse said.

Despite this, seven out of ten patients rated the advice they received as fairly good or better.

The report calls on the government to research the increased role of nurses in out-of-hours services. Although training can increase costs in the short term, boosting the skill mix may be cheaper over time, it says.

NHS Direct staff refer ‘excessively’

NHS Direct nurses are ‘greatly risk averse’ and refer excessive numbers of calls to emergency services or GPs, according to a major new report on out-of-hours care from the National Audit Office (NAO).

The government’s spending watchdog also found that just over a third of all patient callbacks from out-of-hours providers failed to meet government time targets.

These state clinical assessments should start within 20 minutes of an urgent call being answered and within 60 minutes for all other calls.

The NAO found that only 65 per cent of patients were called back within an hour.

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