THIS IS FRONT LINE MANAGEMENT

Running a care home involves juggling priorities, writes Bernie Mooney

I am the registered manager of Sanville Private Nursing Home in Coalisland, County Tyrone. My team and I care for 27 patients and we pride ourselves on delivering high-quality care in a peaceful, relaxed environment.

As the home manager, I am responsible for the standard of care and am aware that the way I lead, support and develop my team affects that directly.

My role is one of the most rewarding I have had. Each day is different as I juggle priorities, solve problems and deal with the unexpected.

Following the morning debrief, a catch-up and a walk around the home observing and speaking with patients and staff gives me reassurance and directs my priorities for the day.

Being a creature of habit and fairly organised, I prepare an action plan each day and this keeps me focused – although experience shows that I will rarely achieve all my goals.

As in many healthcare environments, events in a nursing home can be unpredictable and frequently more pressing matters override my well-intentioned plans.

Managing staff absenteeism, unexpected incidents, anxious relatives or patients, equipment failures or delayed deliveries will always be a priority.

Reacting to such issues with confidence and supporting my staff to do the same is part and parcel of my job.

Managing a nursing home is front line management in its purest sense. As well as co-ordinating many teams and departments, an important element of my job as a visible, accessible leader is to provide a listening ear for patients, staff, relatives, visiting GPs and clergy, among others.

Qualities of a nursing home manager

- Analytical problem solver.
- Assertive yet respectful.
- Good listener and communicator.
- Self motivated, efficient and thorough.
- Patient and compassionate.

Harm-free care The NHS Institute safer care team is hosting a webinar presentation on Tuesday November 20 from 4pm-5pm in supporting the journey to safer care by establishing reliable care processes. The webinar is aimed at all staff who are leading improvements to achieve harm-free care, and will be presented by Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust pharmacy director Justine Scanlon. The link can be forwarded to interested colleagues. tinyurl.com/WebinarHFC

Research congress An international nursing research congress will be held in Prague on July 22-26. The event is for nurse researchers, clinicians, educators, policymakers and research administrators. The congress is an opportunity for nurse researchers to learn about new technologies in research and explore international collaboration. The deadline for abstract submission is December 5. tinyurl.com/STTnursing-society

Raising safety concerns NHS Employers has launched the Speaking Up charter, a commitment by health regulators, unions and professional bodies to work in partnership and ensure staff feel supported when raising safety concerns. The purpose of the charter is to promote a cultural shift in the health service. NHS Employers says that leadership from national organisations is essential if staff are to report concerns with confidence. A total of 28 organisations have signed the charter; recognising their particular responsibilities in providing and regulating care, or in supporting their members. tinyurl.com/NHSE-charter
The RCN is offering nursing home managers the chance to receive tailored coaching. Dolores McCormick reports

Leading successful care homes

Every registered nursing home manager in Northern Ireland is being offered a free five-day leadership programme run by the RCN in the province.

The programme, called Leading for Care, is designed to develop the management skills of home managers. In particular, it recognises the relationship between effective leadership and improved patient outcomes.

Using the best available evidence in the context of the integrated health and social care system in Northern Ireland, the programme will also give participants the skills to transfer their new knowledge to their management practice.

Each participant will be asked to prepare an action plan to improve an area of practice in their nursing home.

“IT HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND MY ROLE AS MANAGER MORE CLEARLY”

Two months after completion of the programme, each participant will be invited to return for a leadership challenge day. Here, participants will manage day-to-day problems and a series of unplanned emergency situations.

The challenge day will allow consolidation of learning and provide a measure of how much the programme has improved the participant’s leadership capacity.

The RCN designed the programme after consulting widely with home managers and hospital and community specialists involved in referring clients. The college also hosted two focus groups with registered managers.

Many focus group participants expressed relief that a leadership programme tailored to their needs was being developed.

Networking opportunity

One manager said: ‘It will be a great opportunity for people with different experiences and from different backgrounds to discuss care in our sector. We hope to learn from each other.’

The first cohort started the programme in August and have given positive feedback, particularly in terms of how they propose to improve their practice.

One said: ‘Everyone is in the same position with the same difficulties. It helped me to understand my role as manager more clearly’

Dolores McCormick is senior professional development officer at RCN Northern Ireland

Nursing abroad

An opportunities overseas expo will be held by Working In at Manchester Central Hall on November 17 and 18. Employers from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United Arab Emirates and Singapore will be in the city to recruit nurses and other workers. Visitors will be able to discuss job opportunities with employers, attend job interviews and choose from a series of free seminars by licensed migration advisers and other experts.

www.workingin-events.com

Call for ambassadors

England’s chief nursing officer (CNO) Jane Cummings is inviting nursing students and newly qualified nurses and midwives to join her team as volunteers for the annual CNO conference on December 4 and 5 in Manchester. Around 50 volunteers are needed to be the ‘friendly face’ of the conference and to act as ambassadors for the nursing and midwifery vision in their local community or organisation. Volunteer roles include welcoming participants, running Twitter surgeries for nurse directors, tweeting from the event and acting as ambassadors for the CNO’s recently published strategy. tinyurl.com/volunteer-ambassadors

Involving patients

To support the government’s dictum ‘no decision without me’, the Health Foundation has launched a dedicated website to encourage nurses and other healthcare professionals adopt shared decision making as an integral part of patient care and teamwork. The resource brings together practical tools, best practice strategies, personal accounts and evidence.

www.shareddecisionmaking.health.org.uk