



Press Release

25 September 2017

Latest Trends in District Nurse Student Numbers Announced

The Queen's Nursing Institute launched the 2015-16 Report on District Nurse Education at its annual conference on Monday.

The report indicates that the increase in District Nurse student numbers seen in recent years has slowed down. Given the numbers who retire from the service annually, the QNI is concerned that this will represent a major challenge to current and future recruitment efforts to District Nursing teams.

Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, the QNI's chief executive commented:

'We are very concerned by the long term trend of District Nurse student numbers and of the number of universities that are able to offer a viable District Nurse Specialist Practitioner Qualification. The value of the SPQ to nurses and to patient care has been demonstrated by the QNI's own independent research, commissioned by the Department of Health in 2015.

'As more and more highly complex care is delivered and managed in the community, the more important it is that highly skilled District Nurses are managing community teams – which are often large and have a high degree of skill mix. The QNI plans to commission further work to show how specialist practitioner training leads to high quality, patient-centred care and enables people to be safely and sensitively cared for at home rather than in hospital.'

Headline findings:

- There were 565 new entrants to the SPQ – District Nurse programme in 2015/16
- 517 District Nurse Specialist Practitioners qualified in 2016, compared to 479 in 2015 and 382 in 2014.
- 554 new students were enrolled in the academic year 2016/17
- 40 universities responded to the survey and of these, two did not run the programme and one did not intend to offer it in future.
- 82% of universities had mapped their programmes to the QNI/QNIS Voluntary Standards for District Nurse Education and Practice (2015)

The report is the fourth annual report the charity has published on District Nurse education. The report will be available online at: <https://www.qni.org.uk/explore-qni/policy-practice/district-nurse-education-reports/>

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- Figures from NHS Digital show that the number of District Nurses fell from 7716 in 2010 to 4400 in September 2016.

- Figures from Health Education England show the number of District Nurse student commissions in England fell from 502 in 2015/16 to 498 in 2016/17.