

Press Release

16 March 2016

New figures on District Nursing students released

The Queen's Nursing Institute has today announced the publication of its most recent survey of the District Nurse education, showing the number of District Nurse students undertaking specialist practice programmes across the United Kingdom in 2015.

The report is the third annual such study carried out by the community nursing charity and covers the period 2014-15. Key points include:

- There were 566 new entrants to the Specialist Practitioner – District Nurse programme in 2014/15
- There were 479 District Nurse Specialist Practitioners due to qualify in summer 2015, compared to 382 in 2014
- There are 647 new students predicted for the intake in the academic year 2015/16
- The new QNI/QNIS Voluntary Standards for District Nurse Education and Practice are being incorporated into the Specialist Practitioner programmes.

Dr Crystal Oldman, QNI chief executive commented:

'The QNI welcomes the estimated 25% increase in the number of District Nurse students due to qualify in the period researched. However, the extent to which numbers of new entrants are increasing year on year appears to be tailing off, from a 32.6% rise in 2014/15 compared to 14.3% growth predicted for 2015/16. In addition, in their proposals for 2016/17, Health Education England has reduced the number of commissions for specialist District Nurse programmes by 0.8% compared to 2015/16.

'The QNI finds this move alarming, particularly given the recent policy focus across the UK on delivering more care in the community. The QNI is concerned that the newly qualified District Nurses will not be of sufficient number to meet the increased demand or to replace those due to retire. Additionally, there remains a critical need to develop a robust workforce plan for District Nurses.

'In 2014 the QNI published a report, commissioned by NHS England, on good practice in caseload allocation and workforce planning within the District Nursing service, and the NICE evidence review of safe staffing for adult nursing care in community settings followed in 2015. This will inform the work by NHS Improvement on safe staffing in the community this year, which will help determine the number of new nurses required to enable more care to be delivered closer to or in the home.

'The QNI's recent study of the value of the District Nurse Specialist Practitioner has underlined the complex and highly skilled nature of the District Nurse role, which brings together expert clinical, management and leadership skills to co-ordinate the delivery of care to people in their homes and local community. It is clear that the policy objective of more care being delivered closer to or in the home will not be fully realised without the expertise and leadership of the District Nurse specialist practitioner in the community. The

QNI will continue to campaign for the right nurse with the right skills to lead and manage the teams of professionals who co-ordinate and deliver expert care in people's homes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.'

Click here to view the report: http://www.qni.org.uk/campaigns/district_nurse_education_report

Media Contacts:

Matthew Bradby, matthew.bradby@qni.org.uk

Marketing and Communications Manager

020 7549 1407

07985 169471