



## Press Release

11 January 2018

# NHS Winter Pressures and District Nursing Services

QNI Chief Executive, Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, comments as follows:

'The health service is facing exceptional pressure this winter and credit must be given to health and care staff around the country who are continuing to manage exceptionally high levels of demand. NHS trusts are reporting bed occupancy rates of over 90%, well above the recommended safe level of 85%. We know that many patients would prefer to be cared for in their own home rather than be admitted to hospital.

'District Nurses play a critical role in averting potential hospital admissions, facilitating a timely discharge process and helping patients and their carers to be as independent as possible. However, figures on the district nursing workforce are alarming. Between 2010 and 2016 the number of full-time equivalent qualified District Nurses in England fell by 46.4% and the number of available university District Nurse training places currently shows a downward trajectory, with up to 50% of courses facing closure in 2018.

'The government urgently needs to develop a clearer vision for future district nursing services and to provide additional resources to community services at a level sufficient to guarantee a fall in demand for hospital based services.'

– Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, Chief Executive

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