

Press Release

25 September 2018

New Standards for Community Children's Nurses Launched

The Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI) and Queen's Nursing Institute Scotland (QNIS) have published new Standards for Community Children's Nurse Education and Practice. The new voluntary Standards will be launched at the QNI Conference in London on 25th September.

The QNI and QNIS worked together with leading experts to develop the new voluntary standards, to support Community Children's Nurse (CCN) education and practice in all four countries of the UK. The standards make explicit the practice expectations of Community Children's Nurses on completing a Specialist Practice Qualification (SPQ).

The Community Children's Nurse (CCN) role is highly complex and requires skills in negotiating, coaching, teaching and supporting the families and carers of babies, children and young people whilst collaborating with a range of other agencies and services. Working in partnership, they enable children and young people with health needs to remain safely in the community and transition to adult services in due course.

The CCN standards project is the third in series and follows on from voluntary standards for District Nurses (2015) and voluntary standards for Senior General Practice Nurses (2017). The project advisory group included representation from the four UK countries reflecting perspectives from education commissioners, service and education providers, third sector providers, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, clinical commissioners and the Royal College of Nursing.

Mary Saunders, the QNI's Project Manager commented: 'CCN services are a small but a vitally important resource for the growing number of children and young people needing expert nursing care in the community. The QNI and QNIS hope to raise the profile of CCN services and the preparation of nurses to work in CCN teams to ensure the highest quality of care for children, young people and their families. There is a clear policy shift in all UK countries to community based, integrated health and social care and an enhanced focus on admission avoidance, early discharge and greater support for children and young people with complex needs.'

QNI Scotland Chief Executive Prof Clare Cable, commented: 'Community children's nurses are so important to families who have a baby, child or teenager who has particular health challenges. They work in partnership with families, alongside colleagues from health, education and social care. As we plan our workforce of the future we need to ensure that families who need support can be cared for by those with the right nursing expertise and that's why we have worked together to publish these standards for community children's nurses now.'

The QNI/QNIS Standards for Community Children's Nurse Education and Practice do not prescribe the academic level, structure of the SPQ course or its length. However, the standards are intended to build on and enhance the NMC Standards of Specialist Practice and clearly articulate the requirements of Community Children's Nurses leading teams in community settings.

During 2018, the NMC announced new standards for pre-registration nurse training and the outcome of the review of Specialist Practice standards is expected in early 2019. It is hoped that these new standards, drawing on the views of CCN clinicians and educators, will provide the basis for future educational development to support Community Children's Nursing teams.

To help inform the development of the new CCN Standards, in 2017 the QNI carried out a survey of 348 nurses working in community children's nursing services. This report, 'Community Children's Nursing in the 21st century – developing and strengthening CCN services' has now been published by the QNI.

Headline findings of the QNI report

- 73% of Community Children's Nurse (CCN) teams have at least one member with a relevant Specialist Practitioner Qualification
- Most Community Children's Nurses have worked in the specialty for a relatively short time – 33% for less than five years and a further 25% for less than ten years.
- 82% of respondents had a formal mentorship role and 97% of CCN teams offer pre-registration nursing student placements.
- Over 70% of respondents did not expect to retire from the profession for 10 years. However 29% of those who responded expected to retire within the next five years.
- 47.5% - almost half – of respondents indicated that their teams had to refuse referrals at certain times, due to capacity issues.
- 35% of CCNs indicated that they used annual leave entitlement in order to undertake professional development opportunities.

QNI Chief Executive Dr Crystal Oldman commented:

'Community Children's Nurses have a growing importance for the NHS, to deliver high quality healthcare to children and young people with long term conditions, life-limiting illnesses and disabilities closer to or in the home. They are able to reduce the reliance on hospital services, which may be less appropriate and which may put a larger physical and emotional burden on children and their families.

'Predictions from nurses working in this field are that demand for their services is growing and will continue to grow, due to an increasing population and a growing number of young people living for longer with serious health conditions that require intensive and ongoing support.

'There are widespread concerns around the capacity of the CCN teams to meet this growing demand. However, the findings of the survey demonstrate the enormous commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of Community Children's Nurses and the difference they are able to make for children, families and carers. There is significant evidence for the need and the desire for further education and development in the specialism, via the Specialist Practice Qualification.'

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Printed copies of the new CCN Standards are available from the QNI and QNIS.

The CCN Report, Community Children's Nursing in the 21st century – developing and strengthening CCN services, will be available on the QNI's website on 25th September.

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