

Developing the Healthcare Workforce, a consultation linked to the white paper *Liberating the NHS*, sets out new arrangements for the commissioning and funding of healthcare professional education and training.

The complex proposals are likely to have a huge impact on the existing and future NHS workforce.

The consultation asks how healthcare professionals will be educated and their education funded to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to meet future care demands. It proposes that the two main players – the universities and local NHS organisations – should work closely together to develop an expert workforce.

The policy context of this consultation is important. Following the Browne review of higher education in England, universities will see big cuts in teaching funding and the introduction of higher tuition fees for future students.

While nursing, midwifery and allied health professional students are currently protected from tuition fees, universities are still preparing for cuts of around



Bright new future

Education funding proposals signal big changes ahead, write Sue Bernhauser and Matthew Hamilton

14 per cent in commissioned student places for non-medical education programmes, even though 180,000 nurses are due to retire in the next decade.

The £5 billion NHS central budget for education and training is managed by strategic health

authorities (SHAs), which develop workforce plans in association with local service providers.

The abolition of SHAs from 2012 means there will be a gap between workforce planning and the funding and commissioning of education and training.

Greater consistency for advanced practitioners

A Department of Health statement sets a benchmark for educators, employers and practitioners, says Jenny Aston

Nurses working at the advanced nursing practice (ANP) level have welcomed the Department of Health's position statement on advanced level nursing.

The statement, which contains four core themes and 28 practice elements, sets benchmarks that:

- ▶ Universally recognise ANPs' skills and practice.
- ▶ Recognise an ANP education standard.
- ▶ Help employers ensure that

ANPs achieve, maintain and demonstrate the necessary level of practice.

- ▶ Enable ANPs to map the standard against job descriptions and justify requests for professional development.
- ▶ Help the Nursing and Midwifery Council to determine an appropriate form of regulation.
- ▶ Help employers standardise role titles in their organisation

and to consider how best to manage patients' expectations of ANPs.

As all-graduate nurse training is imminent, it is appropriate that the document sets the advanced education standard at master's level or equivalent. ANPs should not find the requisite training too difficult to achieve.

To reflect this requirement, the statement will stimulate a revision of the widely accepted RCN ANP competencies. Universities will then review their RCN-accredited curricula.

NOTICE BOARD

Research register



PROSPERO

International prospective register of systematic reviews

The UK government has launched an international register, Prospero, to improve the transparency of health research. This is the first online facility to register systematic reviews for research about health and social care from around the world. It is designed to avoid duplication of research and to guard against selective reporting of research. The register is free and open to the public. www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO

Rehabilitation The Naidex homecare, disability and rehabilitation event will take place on April 5-7 at the NEC Birmingham. For nurses and other rehabilitation specialists, the show's main features are a product exhibition, continuing professional development seminars and a chance to meet key people. Admission is free, but visitors are advised to register in advance. www.naidex.co.uk



Award The Association for Perioperative Practice is offering theatre nurses and support staff the chance to apply for a £1,000 cash award to invest in their future development. The Ethicon Nurse and Practitioner Educational Trust Fund is an educational bursary for training that meets the winner's development objectives. The fund is intended to enhance the standard of patient care by perioperative practitioners and can be used to support a wide range of training. www.afpp.org.uk

Children's nursing The school of nursing and midwifery at Queen's University, Belfast, is inviting applications from paediatric nurses for Claire's Award for Children's Nursing. This is a one-off award to support a small research project, preferably in paediatric intensive care, to aid both the individual's career and the development of paediatric nursing research. The value of the award is £10,000 and the closing date for applications is April 4. c.a.crawford@qub.ac.uk

Sharps injury A free pack designed to help healthcare organisations plan a compliance strategy with the new European directive on sharps injury prevention is available from medical devices company Becton Dickinson. The directive requires employers and safety representatives to work together to identify and reduce risks, introduce training and provide safe equipment. Compliance with the directive will be mandatory by May 2013. The pack is available from safety@bd.europe.com

The consultation proposes to fill the gap with a new national multiprofessional advisory body, Healthcare Education England (HEE), which will be responsible for national oversight in association with local healthcare provider skills networks.

Opportunities

These networks would be responsible for planning and developing the local workforce, allocating funding for education and training and taking on the deanery or post-graduate functions for medical education.

Future central funding will be given only for undergraduate education and training, while postgraduate education will be funded by healthcare providers. The Council of Deans of Health believes that these changes present opportunities and risks for the nursing professions.

HEE is a welcome creation, providing that it is a genuinely multiprofessional body. It might result in more creative use of resources, more interprofessional learning and, more importantly, a clearer understanding of whole workforce pressures as the nature of care changes.

At present, postgraduate medical education funding and workforce planning are managed separately. The planned move towards a multiprofessional system must be accompanied by incentives to make it a reality.

Central funding is available for medical placements, yet non-medical professions receive no comparable support.

Equally, the government must clarify how HEE can influence medium to long-term workforce plans if education commissioning is taken forward by local skills networks.

These networks should work closely with universities to shape local workforce planning and there should be clarity on the number of networks and their membership to ensure nursing and other professional representation – an issue that the nursing professions must stress as these proposals take shape **NS**

Sue Bernhauser is chair of the Council of Deans of Health and dean of human and health sciences at the University of Huddersfield, and Matthew Hamilton is director of policy at the Council of Deans of Health

Heather Griffith, lecturer and practitioner at Bournemouth University, says: 'There has been wide variation in ANP programmes, but now nurse educators have an advanced practice standard, endorsed by the government, on which to base their curriculum.'

For the document to have its full impact, it needs to be supported by a regulatory framework.

In the meantime, organisations such as the Care Quality Commission health watchdog could require all ANPs to demonstrate the 28 elements in their job descriptions and nurses,

NURSING STANDARD

employers and education institutions can now use the national standard. **NS**

Jenny Aston is former chair of the RCN nurse practitioner association

RESOURCE FILE

Association of Advanced Nursing Practice Educators
www.aanpe.org
Department of Health (2010)
Advanced Level Nursing: a position statement
<http://tinyurl.com/APstandard>
Royal College of Nursing (2010)
Advanced nurse practitioners
<http://tinyurl.com/accreditationrcn>