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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



#MHdeservesbetter campaign group

By email: MHDeservesBetter@hotmail.com

16 May 2023

Dear colleagues

Joint response to ‘mental health deserves better’

Thank you for your open letter on 21 February highlighting your concerns about the NMC Future Nurse standards and the impact they are having on mental health nursing.

As the NMC and the four UK Chief Nursing Officers, we have considered your letter and set out our joint response below. We would also like to put on the record our organisational and personal commitment to all fields of nursing, including adult, children, learning disabilities and mental health as set out in the standards.

We're sorry it has taken this long for us to respond but we wanted to co-ordinate our response and that has unfortunately taken a little while. We are aware representatives of your group have met with NMC colleagues and we value the opportunity for this ongoing dialogue, thank you.

Development and implementation of the Future Nurse standards

We recognise the value and contribution of registered nurses in mental health to the delivery of person-centred holistic nursing care to support people in some of the most vulnerable circumstances in society. It is for this reason that the NMC standards are constructed on a foundation of evidence and professional consensus to enable learning to be aligned and contextualised across all fields of nursing.

It is important to recognise that the Future Nurse standards were published in 2018 following nearly three years of development in collaboration with stakeholders including partners, professionals (including professionals from all four fields of nursing), and people who use health and care services; this development work also encompassed a full public consultation. From this professional and public engagement, it was clear that the standards should be holistic and person-centred, assuring a strong foundation that ensures the mental, physical, psychological, social and cultural needs of all the people we care for are met, whilst also ensuring nurses are prepared for their specific field of nursing practice. Explicitly, page 6 of Future Nurse: Standards of proficiency for registered nurses (May 2018) includes in the description of how the proficiencies have been structured: *The outcome statements for each platform have been designed to apply across all four fields of nursing practice (adult, children, learning disabilities, mental health) and all care settings. This is because registered nurses must be able to meet the person-centred, holistic care needs of the people they encounter in their practice who may be at any stage of life and who may have a range of mental, physical,*

cognitive or behavioural health challenges. They must also be able to demonstrate a greater depth of knowledge and the additional more advanced skills required to meet the specific care needs of people in their chosen fields of nursing practice.

All NMC standards of proficiency are outcome focussed. Approved Education Institutions (AEIs) are responsible for the development and delivery of nursing curricula, in collaboration with practice learning partners (PLPs), and with the support of a wider group of stakeholders including local NHS trusts / health boards and those who use health and care services. This not only enables creativity and innovation within curricula, but also ensures curricula meet local and regional requirements. As part of this process AEIs and their practice partners are empowered to contextualise learning to address the needs of all fields of nursing, for people across the lifespan and all care settings.

Reflecting on the impact of the standards

As a group, we welcome all feedback and reflections on the standards, and the NMC will continue to engage with MHNAUK on the impact the implementation of the standards is having. In the meantime, we would encourage mental health academic staff to continue to collaborate and share best practice in curriculum development and delivery to meet NMC standards within and across the AEI sector, and with their practice partners. AEIs may seek views on the delivery and effectiveness of their co-produced curricula in meeting field specific requirements from stakeholders, including students and people who use health and care services locally, which the NMC would welcome hearing.

This year the first group of students who completed education programmes approved under the Future Nurse standards joined the register. It is important to acknowledge that these students were educated and trained during a global pandemic, where pre-registration education was adapted at pace to meet the demands of the times. For this reason, we feel it is too soon to reach any definitive conclusions on the impact of these standards. However, we are collectively committed to hearing the views of stakeholders on the standards and how they are implemented, and we are actively planning to engage further with stakeholders to evaluate their impact. The NMC will keep MHNAUK informed on the timeline for this once agreed.

It is essential to monitor and review the standards on a regular basis to better understand their impact and the experience of students undertaking pre-registration programmes. In response to the concerns raised in your letter, the NMC will work with their Quality Assurance team to further ensure, through monitoring and the AEI annual self-report mechanism, that AEIs are implementing the standards appropriately in the context of mental health nursing.

Our commitment to all fields of nursing

We are committed to supporting safe, effective and kind nursing care in all settings, and to improve people's mental health and wellbeing. We will continue to engage and listen to the evidence, and to all stakeholders, to ensure this vision is realised. We will continue to evaluate, review and consult on standards to promote and uphold the

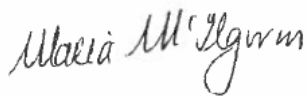
highest professional standards in nursing, to protect the public and inspire confidence in the professions.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with you to achieve this.

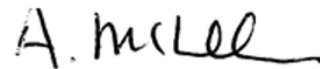
Yours sincerely



Dame Ruth May, Chief
Nursing Officer, England



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