

MEDIA RELEASE

Date 08 August 2017
For immediate release

First Devon General Practice Nurse Workforce Strategy Launched to Tackle Staff Shortages

A new strategy aimed at increasing capacity and capability within primary care nursing has been launched today (08 August 2017). The [‘Devon General Practice Nurse Workforce Strategy’](#) was created after it was found that there is a shortage of general practice nurses in Devon.

The nursing profession faces various challenges, which include the recruitment and retention of nurses, barriers to the integration of teams, and difficulties in accessing further professional development and a defined career pathway. Areas which require development are strengthening leadership and professional networks.

The Queen’s Nursing Institute [‘General Practice Nursing in the 21st Century: A Time for Opportunity’](#) report, published in 2016, gathered information from over 3400 nurses working in general practice in 2015. The conclusion was that *‘There is much that needs to change to both plan for the next generation of nurses and to support those who make up the current workforce in primary care.’*

The strategy provides a robust process to implement national recommendations and outlines a vision for primary care nursing in Devon. It identifies twenty-five recommendations, along with specific implementation projects, which focus on addressing the current workforce challenges. Some of which include, supporting newly qualified nurses to enter primary care as a profession to improve recruitment, developing mentor Hub and Spokes to increase the number of clinical placements in general practice, and investing in Practice Educators and appraisers in order to realise the potential of the existing workforce.

The strategy was jointly created by General Practice Nurses (GPNs) from Northern, Eastern and Western (NEW) Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and South Devon and Torbay (SD&T) CCG, with support from the South West Academic Health Science Network (SW AHSN).

Sarah Hall, Primary Care Nurse Lead, South Devon and Torbay CCG said:

“Throughout Devon there is a shortage of GP nurses, with many more about to retire in the next three years. This strategy is our response to raise the profile of practice nursing and address some of the historical issues which have prevented nurses from taking on this role. Our aim is to increase the numbers of nurses and healthcare assistants working in primary care across Devon with strengthened leadership, career progression and supported by high-quality education.”

General Practice Nurses (GPNs) make up a significant workforce within the health service, with an estimated 600 nurses working across the Devon Sustainability and Transformation



Partnership (STP) footprint. They provide a unique contribution to the care, treatment and outcomes for services users and their families.

Laura Wheeler, Director of Improvement, SW AHSN said: “The SW AHSN, Devon Sustainability Transformation Partnership (STP), NEW Devon CCG, South Devon and Torbay CCG and Devon Community Education Provider Network (CEPN) all recognise that GPNs are fundamental to providing high-quality patient-centred care and have a crucial role in ensuring general practice maintains its reputation as a place of choice for service users. We’re really excited to launch this strategy and look forward to seeing the recommendations implemented in Devon.”

Lorna Collingwood-Burke, Chief Nursing Officer for SD&T CCG and NEW Devon CCG said: “Planning for the future and ensuring that we have enough nurses in primary care in the longer term is a priority for us. Practice nurses’ skills and experience are a key component to delivering care and are vital to system working. I am really pleased that partnership working has led to the development of a strategy to address the practice nurse challenges we face in Devon.”

Vanessa Crossey, Head of Nursing and Quality, NEW Devon CCG added: “The proposed recommendations and implementation projects in the strategy create a clear framework that support and develop the primary care workforce within the local context.”

The Devon General Practice Nurse Workforce Strategy is available to view on Devon CEPN website under the News section – click [here](#).

For more information or if you have any questions about the strategy, please contact info@swahsn.com

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Word total 652

About SW AHSN

The South West Academic Health Science Network (SW AHSN) is dedicated to improving healthcare and driving innovation acceleration across the region. We are part of a national network of 15 AHSNs that have been set up across England by the NHS England to identify, adopt and disseminate innovative healthcare.

We are a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) and the company and Board have the overarching aims of improving health and creating wealth in the region.

For more information visit: www.swahsn.com email: info@swahsn.com phone: 01392 247903.

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South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group

South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group is the formal NHS body responsible for buying and developing services for local patients, and it represents all of the local GP practices.



South Devon and Torbay
Clinical Commissioning Group



**Northern, Eastern and
Western Devon**
Clinical Commissioning Group

South West
Academic Health
Science Network



Devon Community Education Provider Network (CEPN)

Devon CEPN is an organisation commissioned by Health Education England. The aim of Devon CEPN is to support the delivery of a workforce capable of meeting the needs of the local population's health and improve clinical outcomes. This will be achieved through the recruitment of new staff into primary care: the retention of existing staff through support and up skilling and development of new roles within the health community.