

QNI launches campaign to protect patients in their own homes



The Queen's
Nursing Institute

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The Queen's Nursing Institute is launching a new campaign, called 'Right Nurse, Right Skills', which aims to ensure that patients get the right care in the hidden setting of their own homes.

1 in 4 people over the age of 75 need a district nurse's care, rising to 1 in 2 people aged over 85. District nurses alone visit more than 2.6 million people a year, and the need for skilled home nursing is rising as the population ages, more people live with long term conditions, and people are discharged home earlier from hospital. Yet the number of trained district nurses has been falling for more than a decade, to fewer than 10,000 in England. At the same time, the number of health care assistants – trained to do specific tasks but who are not nurses – has more than doubled.

Baroness Sally Greengross, Chief Executive of ILC (International Longevity Centre) who supports the campaign said, "The need for skilled home nursing is rising fast as the population ages and people are discharged home earlier from hospital. The care they are given must be given by the right nurse with the right skills, which is why I am delighted to support the QNI in its vital campaign. I would encourage everyone who cares about the quality of nursing that they and their loved ones will receive at home when they need it, to support this campaign".

Many health charities are supporting the campaign including The Stroke Association, whose spokesperson Nikki Hill says, 'Over 300,000 people in England alone live with moderate to severe disability as a result of a stroke and with an ageing population this figure looks set to rise year on year. Skilled home nursing is vital to enable people to live in their own homes and remain active and independent and The Stroke Association is pleased to support QNI in its campaign.'

'Right Nurse, Right Skills' is not about promoting a particular district nursing course, or protesting about health care assistants. The QNI wants employers of nurses – increasingly diverse groups including NHS, independent and voluntary organisations – to ensure that they employ (and train) sufficient skilled community specialists in their community teams to give patients the safe, high quality care they need.

Working in patients' homes is a privilege, and the patients there are some of the most vulnerable in society. We are concerned that their care may suffer if the nurses or assistants who visit them are too inexperienced or unprepared.

The real danger is that this decline in care will be invisible as it happens behind closed doors. So we are campaigning to raise awareness of the need for the right nurse with the right skills to provide nursing in the home.

For more information or to support the campaign, please go to www.qni.org.uk.

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Notes to editors

1. The Queen's Nursing Institute is a registered charity, number 213128, and is dedicated to improving nursing care in the community by supporting community nurses.