

## UK-13

### **Ensuring that the care of older people is of the highest standard and is delivered by skilled and caring nurses**

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Robert Francis QC (2013) stated that the special requirements of caring for older people needed to be recognised and advocated strong nursing leadership to engender a culture of caring for older patients with complex needs.

Health Education England (HEE) has been working with partners to directly address these identified needs. A key strand has been the creation of specialised training for nurses caring for older people, the first national project of its kind.

To explore the skills required, regional and national stakeholder events were used to compile evidence from a range of experts in older person's nursing, these included service users, health practitioners and therapists, commissioners and academics.

The outcome was that it was agreed that a National Career Framework was required to ensure that nurses caring for older people with complex needs received education and training tailored to support the role they performed. The framework highlights that training does not end at the point of nurse registration, but that it is a career-long process of up-skilling and re-skilling.

HEE has worked with Northumbria University to identify the skills and knowledge that are required by all nurses and by those caring predominately with older people.

In addition, HEE has commissioned an Older Person's Nurse Fellowship Programme (OPNFP) at King's College London. This higher specialist nurse training programme provides training for nurses working in front line senior positions in older people's services.

The OPNFP is creating a cadre of nurse leaders who are recognised experts in the care of older people, and who have the influence and initiative to drive improvements in the quality of care.

To date, 24 Fellows from the acute, mental health and community sectors, from across the country, are undertaking the programme. Initial indications are that not only are they enhancing their knowledge and skills in the care of older people but that they are developing leadership skills and resilience and are actively implementing changes to improve the care of older people.

Engagement with stakeholders has been key to the methodology; in this way the challenge of overcoming mistakes of the past has yielded strategic solutions to ensure high quality care in the future. Importantly, the field of nursing older patients is gaining the specialist recognition that it deserves.