



# Mental Health Nurse Academics UK

*Promoting and advancing UK Mental Health Nursing education, research, policy and practice*

## **Press Release – MHNAUK Response to Shape of Caring Review**

Mental Health Nurse Academics UK (MHNAUK) welcomes the Shape of Caring Review recently published by Heath Education England. The recommendations are ambitious but reflect the scope of the task ahead. The premise underpinning the document is positive in that it refers to existing good practice and the need to celebrate this. However caution is required with regards to a number of recommendations, which must be supported by full engagement of key stakeholders including MHNAUK.

We are particularly pleased to see co-production, parity of esteem, public health and person centred, values based nursing as central to the proposals should they be suitably resourced but have concerns about risks associated with some key areas. Flexible entry routes will need careful planning and monitoring and a subtext in the report indicating a move to a more generalist nurse and the potential demise of mental health nursing is of great concern. Our past experience of calls for generic elements has almost always (and often wrongly), been interpreted by those in power as meaning more adult nursing. Parity of esteem across a two-year common core will require significant input and drive from mental health nurse educators.

There needs to be a clear and robust evidence base to define the problem that any change to nurse education is meant to address. This must take account of existing learning from previous attempts at common foundation elements in nursing and the damaging effect of these on nursing skills and care in specialist areas of practice.

The report highlights the importance of mentorship and preceptorship yet Lord Willis expressed disappointment that the comments he made on mentorship in the Willis Commission 2012 had not been acted upon. We feel that this should ring alarm bells regarding the challenges of suggesting such a greater reliance from services which are already over stretched and under resourced. For this to happen a major culture shift is required particularly in clinical environments against the backdrop of the perennial problem of placement allocation and resource.

We look forward to much greater involvement in future discussions on mental health nursing education and training.

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13<sup>th</sup> March 2015