

Attracting more people into mental health and learning disability nursing

The Laying Foundations: Attitudes and access to mental health nurse education report, published by Nuffield Trust and commissioned by NHS Employers and the Mental Health Network, explores how employers can attract more people from a broad range of backgrounds to study mental health nursing.

The report highlights strategies to attract and access to mental health nursing education:

- **Promote realistic understanding.** Ensure a more accurate and realistic portrayal of the mental health nursing role, career options, work settings and the people mental health nurses care for.
- **Enhance societal status.** Invest in improving the societal status of mental health nursing and challenge stereotypes associated with the role.
- **Facilitate positive experience.** Provide access to positive personal experiences and exposure to mental health services and staff. This includes sharing best practice through education and work experience.

- **University engagement.** Encourage universities to actively promote the support and requirements for studying to become a mental health nurse.
- **Communication and accessibility.** Urgently improve communication regarding the cost-of-living grants across different settings and ensure there is a full range of routes into mental health nursing.

Since the original report, steps towards closing the gap between mental and physical health services have taken place, however many people still cannot access services or face long waits for treatment. Addressing workforce challenges in mental health services will be crucial to improving this situation. This follow up report, commissioned and supported by NHS Confederation's Mental Health Network, looks at the single largest profession within the mental health workforce: nurses. We start by outlining the scale of the mental health nursing workforce and highlight trends in recruitment and retention.

Further information

NHS England, in partnership with Plymouth Marjon University, has funded and created an innovative postgraduate programme to attract more people to pursue a career in learning disability nursing. Learn more about the ASPIRE programme, visit NHS England's website.