Implementation of Recommendations of The Commission on Nursing

First Annual Progress Report of Monitoring Committee

2000
Introduction

1.1 The Report of the Commission on Nursing *A Blueprint for the Future* was launched on 16 September 1998. It contains a wide range of recommendations for the development of nursing and midwifery as a key profession within the health service.

1.2 The Commission was concerned to ensure that the nursing profession would be involved in the implementation of its recommendations. It therefore recommended the establishment of a Monitoring Committee under the aegis of the Department of Health and Children, comprising representatives of the Department, An Bord Altranais, the four nursing unions and service providers, to monitor progress in the implementation of its recommendations. The Commission also proposed that progress reports on the implementation of its recommendations be prepared annually for circulation among the profession.

1.3 As part of the settlement of the nurses' strike in October 1999, agreement was reached between the Department of Health and Children and the Nursing Alliance on a priority Action Plan for the implementation of core recommendations of the Commission on Nursing during 2000 and 2001. Included in the Action Plan was a commitment to establish the Monitoring Committee proposed by the Commission. The Monitoring Committee was duly established and held its inaugural meeting on 1 February 2000.

1.4 The focus of this first annual report is on the progress made during 2000 in implementing the recommendations contained in the priority Action Plan. However, the Monitoring Committee acknowledges that certain other key recommendations of the Commission were implemented in 1998/1999. A summary of these are included in this report in order to provide a comprehensive overview of all that has been achieved since the Commission's report was launched.

Monitoring Committee

Membership
2.1 The membership of the Monitoring Committee is as follows:

Bernard Carey (Chairperson) Department of Health and Children
Peta Taaffe Department of Health and Children
Susan Reilly Department of Health and Children
Teresa Cody Department of Health and Children
Eugene Donoghue An Bord Altranais
Gerard Barry Health Service Employers Agency
James Doran Health Service Employers Agency
Maureen Windle Northern Area Health Board
Tom Beegan South Eastern Health Board
Michael Lenihan National Maternity Hospital
Aidan Gleeson Cappagh Orthopaedic Hospital
Jim Gilmartin Cregg House
Lenore Mrkwicka Irish Nurses Organisation
David Hughes Irish Nurses Organisation
Eilish Hardiman Irish Nurses Organisation
Gerry Coone Psychiatric Nurses Association
Des Kavanagh Psychiatric Nurses Association
Kay Collins SIPTU
Fiona Edwards* SIPTU
Padraig Heverin* SIPTU
Kevin Callinan IMPACT

* SIPTU nominated Mr. Heverin as a replacement for Ms Edwards in October 2000

Meetings

2.2 The inaugural meeting of the Monitoring Committee took place on 1 February 2000. It met on four occasions during 2000.

Secretarial Support

2.3 The Monitoring Committee wishes to record its appreciation of the staff of the Nursing Policy Division of the Department of Health and Children for their assistance in servicing its meetings.

Recommendations Implemented Prior to 2000
3.1 The following recommendations of the Commission on Nursing were implemented in 1998/1999:-

* establishment of representative Nursing Education Forum to prepare strategy for implementation of pre-registration nursing degree programme;

* transfer of responsibility for management of Nursing Careers Centre to An Bord Altranais;

* provision of funding to An Bord Altranais and Schools of Nursing to promote nursing as a career;

* appointment of a steering group to oversee the Study of the Nursing and Midwifery Resource.

* Clinical Placement Co-ordinator and Practice Development Co-ordinator posts made permanent;

* provision of a dedicated budget to the Health Research Board for nursing and midwifery research;

* strengthening of nursing and midwifery policy function of Department of Health and Children through appointment of additional nursing and midwifery advisers on a contract basis;

* development of management development programmes for nursing and midwifery managers in consultation with the Office for Health Management;

* involvement of nurses in Clinicians in Management Initiative;

* establishment of National Council for Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery.

**Progress in Implementing Priority Action Plan**

4.1 The priority Action Plan agreed between the Department of Health and Children and the Nursing Alliance in October 1999 was incorporated into Labour Court Recommendation No. LCR 16330 dated 27th October 1999.

The Monitoring Committee is pleased to report that, during the year under review, significant progress was made in achieving a number of the targets set out in the Action Plan. An end-of-year status report on each of the 20 objectives is given below:

1 Monitoring Committee
This was established at the beginning of 2000 and meets on a quarterly basis.

2 National Council for Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery
This new independent body was established on 30 November 1999 by Statutory Instrument made under the Health (Corporate Bodies) Act 1961. The Council held its inaugural meeting on 17 January 2000.

The Council has developed a generic definition of Clinical Nurse/Midwife Specialist which has been widely circulated to health agencies. The recognition process is ongoing and, as of 31 December 2000, the Council issued approvals in respect of 298 Clinical Nurse/Midwife posts and 156 Community Mental Health Nurse Posts.

The Council is finalising a generic definition of Advanced Nurse/Midwife Practitioner and the criteria to be met in order to be eligible for appointment to such a position.

3 Introduction of Clinical Career Pathway
4 Examination of Development of Clinical Nurse Specialist posts in Community Mental Handicap Nursing Services
5 Development of Community Psychiatric Nurse Specialist and Advanced Nurse Practitioner posts
The establishment of the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery is facilitating the progression of these three objectives.

6 Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units
By the end of 2000, the North Western, South Eastern and Western Health Boards had each appointed a Director of the new regional units, while the Eastern Regional Health Authority and the North Eastern Health Board had offered an appointment to the successful applicant. The Midland, Mid-Western and Southern Health Boards have re-advertised the posts.
It is a matter of concern to the Monitoring Committee that these new Units are not yet fully operational in all areas.

7 Pilot Direct Entry Midwifery Education Programme
A pilot three-year Diploma based pre-registration programme of midwifery education was introduced in June 2000 with a full intake of 20 students. The programme is operated by the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, and Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda, in association with Trinity College. The pilot programme will be evaluated following its completion.

8 Theoretical Content of Current Midwifery Education Programme
Funding was provided to the relevant maternity hospitals to facilitate a doubling of the theoretical component, from 13 to 26 weeks, during 2000.

9 Revised Public Health Nursing Strategy
An Assistant Director of Public Health Nursing has been appointed to the Department of Health and Children on a contract basis to assist in the preparation of the revised strategy statement.

10 Review of Sick Children’s Nursing Course
A representative working group was established to undertake a review of the content, duration and academic award of the present course. The working group has completed its review and its report is being printed.

11 Intake of Nursing Students
An additional 300 additional training places were created in 2000. A total of 1,500 places were available - 1,000 general nursing, 300 psychiatric nursing and 200 mental handicap nursing. There was a highly successful outcome to the 2000 competition with a number of schools of nursing oversubscribed.

Funding totalling £765,000 was made available to the Nursing Careers Centre and to the various schools of nursing for marketing campaigns.

An improved support package for nursing students was implemented during 2000.

12 Effective Utilisation of Professional Skills of Nurses and Midwives
13 Development of Systems to Determine Nursing Staffing levels
A representative working group has been established to progress the implementation of the two recommendations concerned.

A separate working party is being set up to establish standard criteria for the education and training of care assistants across the health services.
14 Clerical and IT Support for First Line Nursing and Midwifery Managers
During 2000, a total of £6.8million (£5.3m ongoing and £1.5m once-off) was allocated among health agencies for the provision of clerical and information technology support to first line nursing and midwifery managers.

15 Provision of Support Staff for PHNs in Caring for the Elderly
The implementation of this recommendation will be pursued in the context of the preparation of a revised strategy statement for Public Health Nursing.

16 Clerical and Information Technology Support for PHNs
During 2000, funding totalling £1.9million (£1m ongoing and £0.9m once-off) was allocated among the health boards for the provision of information technology and clerical support for Public Health Nurses.

17 Transfer of Student Nurse Application System to CAO
An Bord Altranais has completed arrangements for the transfer of the application system for places on the nursing registration diploma programmes to the CAO from 2001.

18 Devolution of Certain Posts from LAC to Health Boards
A draft protocol has been prepared for the operation of a devolved system of recruitment and selection by health boards of a specified list of posts, including nurse management posts, currently dealt with by the Local Appointments Commission. The draft protocol has not as yet been agreed by the alliance of health service unions.

The Department of Health and Children has written to health boards requesting them to review vacant nurse management posts and arrange for such posts to be filled on a substantive basis as quickly as possible.

19 Management Development for Clinical Nurse Managers
A training programme for Nurses in Middle Management and Clinical Nurse Managers 2 and 3 has been developed by the Nurse Empowerment Group, in consultation with the Office for Health Management. The new programme will be launched by the Minister for Health and Children on 31 January 2001.
20 Equity in Financial Support for Nurses/Midwives undertaking Education Courses

The following recruitment/retention initiatives under this heading were announced by the Minister for Health and Children during the year under review:

Payment of fees to nurses/midwives undertaking part-time nursing and certain other undergraduate degree courses.

Improved scheme of financial support for Student Public Health Nurses;

Enhanced financial support package for Student Midwives and Student Paediatric Nurses;

Payment of fees and enhanced salary to nurses/midwives undertaking specific courses in specialised areas of clinical practice;

Abolition of fees for "back-to-practice" courses and payment of salary to nurses/midwives undertaking such courses.