

The Lord Willis of Knaresborough  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

30<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Dear Lord Willis,

We are writing to you in response to the **Shape of Caring Review**.

Whilst we support the need to constantly improve the education and training of nurses, we are concerned that the **recommendation to change children's nursing education from a 3 year full time programme to a 2 year generic and 1 year child health specific programme will have a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people**.

We do not feel that the recommendation reflects the current state of child health in the UK. As stressed in the RCPCH / NCB Report *Why Children Die* and the Chief Medical Officer's 2012 Annual Report 'Our Children Deserve Better', the UK currently has the worst all-cause mortality for children in Western Europe, poor outcomes for the management of long term conditions, and the highest rates of obesity. It is this situation that prompted Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Dr Dan Poulter MP to lead a system-wide pledge to improve the health of children and young people.

The government's Mandate to Health Education England includes a requirement to undertake a life-course approach to the planning of a sustainable children's healthcare workforce. Currently we are still a long way from achieving this, with many clinical staff across primary and secondary care having inadequate skills in the assessment and management of children, with gaps in staffing at all levels.

Almost a quarter of our population are under 19 years old, yet only around 5% (32,000 of our >640,000) of nurses are educated to look after children. **We urgently need to grow and develop the child health nursing workforce**. The proposals in the Shape of Caring review are in direct conflict with the requirement within the Mandate for HEE to produce a children's workforce '*trained through the eyes of patients*' and '*wrapped around the current and future needs of young patients and their families*'.

Child health nursing is a succinct age related field of practice requiring not only knowledge of development and the very specific physiological, psychological and emotional needs of children, but also an understanding of the safeguarding and sociological needs of children and their families. This specificity of knowledge and its application into practice in all contexts (such as community and acute settings) and across the paediatric life course (from neonates through to transition) **requires a three year child health nurse's pre registration educational programme**.

We recognise that there are key elements of pre-registration education that can be shared, such as leadership, research and management. The basic pre-registration child health knowledge and skills can then be developed into areas of child health specialist practice through post registration education as described in the report, for example in community care, public health (such as health visitors) and child and adolescent mental health to name a few.

We are seeking reassurance that child health nursing will **remain as a three year first level degree** with child health nurses fully prepared to promote healthy living and care for infants, children and young people in any setting, working across multiagency organisational boundaries and in true partnership with families.

We would welcome the opportunity for you to meet with us to discuss this in further detail.

Yours sincerely,



Francine Bates OBE  
Chief Executive  
Lullaby Trust



Simon Blake OBE  
Chief Executive  
Brook



Dr Hilary Cass OBE  
President  
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health



David Clarke  
Chair  
Senior Children's Nurses Forum, Wales



Caroline Davey  
Chief Executive  
Bliss



Colin Dyer  
Chief Executive  
WellChild



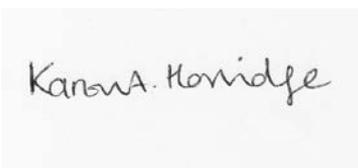
Rory Farrelly, President and Chair  
Association of British Paediatric Nurses



Anna Feuchtwang  
Chief Executive  
National Children's Bureau



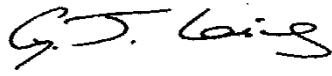
Barbara Gelb OBE  
Chief Executive  
Together for Short Lives



Dr Karen Horridge  
Chair  
British Academy of Childhood Disability



Valerie Jackson  
Chief Executive  
Action for Sick Children



Dr Gabrielle Laing  
Chair  
British Association for Community Child Health



Christine Lenehan OBE  
Co-Chair, Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum



Professor Ian Lewis  
Co-Chair Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum



John Simmonds OBE  
British Association for Adoption and Fostering



Audrey Simpson OBE  
Chief Executive, FPA

Sharon White OBE  
Professional Officer  
School and Public Health Nurses Association (SAPHNA)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ingrid Wolfe', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr Ingrid Wolfe  
Co-chair  
British Association for Child and Adolescent Public Health