

Children and Young People Committee

CYP(4)-05-12 paper 3

Neonatal Care in Wales

Evidence from Neonatal Nurses Association

January 2012

The Neonatal Nurses Association is a professional organisation founded in 1977. The mission statement of the NNA is to establish and promote good standards of neonatal care for the benefits of the babies their families and the nurses involved in their care.

Staffing issues and recruitment problems.

The Neonatal Nurses Association supports BAPM minimum standard for the care of sick and preterm babies and has endorsed Bliss 1to1 campaign. There is a national shortage of skilled neonatal nurses and highlighting this area of nursing as a career pathway is vital.

Targeting pre-registered nurses and encouraging them into the neonatal area as a career choice. Also providing the funding and time for post registration education, to enable staff to become qualified in speciality, this would then provide a high measurable standard of care. This could be developed along a career pathway so staff felt valued and supported in their roles in this highly stressed area of nursing. Access to study leave and relevant courses provide valuable networking and support opportunities and the exchange of ideas within the neonatal community.

Community Services.

A safe and effective transition to community care is essential as there is an increased demand on social as well as medical/nursing needs in neonatal care. Multidisciplinary discharge planning and neonatal outreach teams should be available to all. The neonatal community team provides an important role in the transition from hospital to community for these vulnerable babies and their families especially if there are complex medical / nursing needs.

Transfer of Babies

The introduction of C.H.A.N.T.S in 2011 provides a safe and effective transport team for Welsh babies, enabling babies to receive quality care in an appropriate setting. With the introduction of the transport team 12 hour service (8 till 8) and referral system parents and staff can have a better communication regarding transfer times and hospital destination.

Support for parents

Support for parents can vary from unit to unit. Ideally all units should offer accommodation for parents with appropriate facilities, quiet rooms where parents can have updates on their babies away from the activity of the ward area. Also a dedicated counselling service for bereaved families to help them through the traumatic events of a baby's death and support them in any further investigations e.g. post mortem.

Education

Neonatal care is a highly skilled area of nursing and is constantly evolving, advances in technology and demands from a larger population place great demands on the service. Maintaining the appropriate number of staff per shift is vital in providing a quality service and a high standard of care. The Neonatal Nurses Association is committed to promoting good standards of neonatal care and research based practice. Education via university based courses appropriate to neonates and ward based clinical teaching along a neonatal pathway as well as study days would aim to provide a workforce that is qualified in speciality.

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