



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

press release

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RQIA Highlights Impact of Nursing Shortages on Health and Social Care Services

Statement from RQIA

“In recent months, through our programme of inspections at hospitals, mental health and learning disability wards and nursing homes across Northern Ireland, RQIA has identified concerns relating to the impact of nursing shortages.

Over the past year, three small nursing homes have closed due to the registered provider’s inability to recruit and retain registered nurses, resulting in the loss of 65 nursing home places beds in the Southern and Northern trust areas. RQIA considers that other small independent services are facing similar issues, which have the potential to lead to further closures.

RQIA has also noted a reliance on agency nursing staff to fill gaps in nursing duty rotas, resulting in permanent staff spending time supporting agency staff who may be unfamiliar with the service. This impacts on the continuity of care for patients, who are reporting that they have observed nurses working under pressure. While we observe that care is generally being delivered, we have noted gaps in paperwork recording this care.

Under legislation, RQIA has a duty to keep the Department of Health informed about any issue affecting the provision of services. As a result of our concerns, RQIA has notified the Department of Health of the impact of the shortage of nurses on the provision of health and social care services across Northern Ireland.”

ENDS

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