Celebrating 70 years of Nursing and Midwifery in NHS Scotland

The Future

Legislation was introduced in Scotland in 2014 which will see the integration of health and social care over the coming decades.

2017
Fiona McQueen, Chief Nursing Officer for Scotland launches “Nursing 2030 Vision”, a national strategy for nursing in Scotland going forward.

2017
The Best Start will see one midwife following a woman through pregnancy to birth and postnatal care in Scotland.

2017
Royal College of Nursing introduces Credentialing to recognise nurses working at an Advanced Practice Level with Prescribing Qualifications.

2018
Royal College of Nursing advocate “Every nurse an e-Nurse” to improve the uptake of technology by nurses in the NHS in the future.

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In the beginning – 1940s

In 1946, the NHS Act was approved by parliament under a Labour government to establish the National Health Service and provide free healthcare to all who needed it, funded through central taxation.

There was a shortage of 48,000 nurses in the UK in 1948 but by 1952 estimates are 245,000 whole time equivalent nurses were employed in the NHS.

State enrolled nurses were formally recognised during the 1940’s and received two years’ hospital training instead of three.

The Nurses Act 1949 established a framework outlining the important role of nursing within the NHS.

“It is the policy of the Government to relieve nurses of all work not requiring nursing skill.” - Baron Shepherd, House of Lords Chief Whip (1949)

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1950s

Airlifts of Scottish tuberculosis (TB) patients to Switzerland. Rising levels of TB and a chronic shortage of beds and nurses lead to a special scheme for Scottish patients to be treated in Swiss sanatoria in 1951.

“Patients who are fit to live in the community….should not be in large mental institutions.”
- Percy Commission (1957)

First mass vaccination programme in 1958. There were 8,000 polio and 70,000 diphtheria cases yearly before vaccinations were offered to all children under the age of 15.

In 1952 patients started to be charged for prescriptions, costing one shilling (5p) each. This fee was abolished in Scotland in 2011 but the cost in England is now £8.80.

“Co-operation between general practitioners and health visitors….is lacking in many cases at the moment…” – Arthur Blenkinsop MP (1956)

1953

Report by the Standing Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee on the Job Analysis of the Work of Nurses in Hospital Wards prepared by the Nuffield Provincial Hospital Trust

Male nurses join the main nursing register in 1951.

A large influx of Caribbean people entered into British nurse training.

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1960s

The Platt Report to reform nursing education published by the Royal College of Nursing in 1964

1961
Thalidomide prescribed for morning sickness found to cause limb deformities in children.

1964
400 cases of typhoid were diagnosed in Aberdeen but no fatalities. Outbreak traced to tinned corned beef which was contaminated.

A Hospital Plan (1962) - development of district general hospitals

“This plan ....will provide for patients... an environment which will challenge comparison with that available anywhere in the world” – Enoch Powell, Minister for Health (1962)

1967
Abortion Act was passed which legalised abortions up to 28 weeks’ gestation for all women.

Salmon Report – 1967
Recommends nursing staff structure & nurses involvement in hospital management paving the way for the profession to have managerial status.

Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services

“A community based and family oriented service, which will be available to all” – Seebahm Report (1969)

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4. YouTube videos about nursing in the 1960s https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tpe1XOiqOI&list https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RXCxZ0zJnU

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1970s

The first major reorganisation of NHS Scotland took place in 1972 to ensure a more efficient and fully integrated health service.

1973

Chief Scientist Office (CSO) was set up in the Health Department at the Scottish Office to support research in NHS Scotland.

1974

Glasgow Coma Scale was created which is still used worldwide to assess a patient’s level of consciousness.

Briggs Report - 1971

• Recommended nursing education could only be learnt properly in clinical settings
• Suggested two-tier training course with two grades of nursing
• Proposed a new statutory body to control nursing & midwifery -> laying the foundations for the first regulator the UKCC.

1974

Halsbury Committee on pay and conditions of nurses and midwives awards pay increases of up to 40% after industrial action & a march on Downing St by nurses.

“The recommendation will certainly simplify pay structure” – British Medical Journal

1974

Formal provision of free contraceptive advice and family planning services to all, irrespective of age or marital status.

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1980s

Despite improvements in UK health relating to 32 years of NHS care provision, The Black Report (1980) highlights that these improvements have not been consistently attained between wealthy and poor. These health inequalities are attributed to social and economic factors.

1980
Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
The world’s first clinical MRI scanner opens at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

1983
UKCC for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting is launched and commences a live register for nurses and midwives. Four branches of nursing are established: Mental Health, Children, Learning Disability and Adult.

1983
The Griffiths’ Report introduced General Management to the NHS removing financial control from clinicians.

1982
The first case of AIDS is diagnosed within Scotland. The sharing of needles among drug users proves a major source of HIV infection. As many as 52% of drug users in Edinburgh were infected.

1983
“...If Florence Nightingale were carrying her lamp through the corridors of the NHS today she would almost certainly be searching for the people in charge...” - Roy Griffiths comment after an NHS Management Inquiry in 1983

1986
Project 2000 sets out plans for a move to Diploma Level Nurse and Midwifery Education based in colleges and Universities. This move was criticised by many nurses and midwives who could not see the relevance of academic education for clinical practice.

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1990s

Launched in 1991, the 1989 Government White Paper “Working for Patients” introduced radical changes by introducing fund holding GPs, distinct boundaries between purchasing and providing services and a culture of competition through the establishment of NHS Trusts.

1996

Nurse and Midwifery Education moves from NHS Lothian to Edinburgh Napier University. The Faculty of Health Studies is created following a merger with Lothian College of Health Studies and the Scottish Borders College of Nursing.

1993

Department of Health “Changing Childbirth” emphasises the importance of choice for women and the role of midwives as primary caregivers supporting women through uncomplicated pregnancy & childbirth.

1992

“Health of the Nation” Government White Paper targeting: Cancers Coronary Heart Disease HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health Mental Health and Accidents Important strategy often credited with changing the NHS focus from illness to health.

October 1991

John Major, the Conservative Prime Minister, launches “The Patient’s Charter” ensuring the NHS is more accountable to its users through the four pillars: Quality Standards Choice Values

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2000s

The Nursing and Midwifery Council supersedes the UKCC and NHS Education for Scotland (NES) was established in 2002.

2002
Nurses are able to prescribe medication.

2004
Royal College of Nursing members vote for degree only education for nurses.

2004
Agenda for Change introduces a new national grading and pay system for nurses, midwives and other health professionals in the NHS.

2006
383,000 nurses and midwives were employed by the NHS, a 24% increase over 1997 levels.

2008
Nursing research was among the subjects with the most highly rated research in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

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2010 – present

Updated standards for pre-registration nursing and midwifery education are published by the NMC in May 2018

2011

“We want to ensure that adult health and social care services are firmly integrated around the needs of individuals, their carers and other family members” – Nicola Sturgeon, 2011

2011
Edinburgh Napier University opens its new £60m state-of-the-art Sighthill Campus to educate future nurses and midwives.

2016
UK votes to leave the European Union. Fears Brexit could contribute to a nursing shortage.

“Nurses are the largest single profession within the health service....Degree level education will provide new nurses with the decision-making skills they need to make high-level judgements in the transformed NHS” – Ann Keen, Health Minister, 2013

2016
50,015 registered nurses employed in NHS Scotland. 9,939 average total number of nurses in training each year since 2007.

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