

Nurses and midwives stretched to capacity



Student and new graduate officer **Dean Flanagan** rejects the idea that the nursing and midwifery professions have become less compassionate and caring

THE INMO is proud to be hosting the Annual General Meeting of the European Nursing Student Association (ENSA) in Dublin from October 21–25. The main goal of ENSA is to facilitate a network between nursing students in Europe and to discuss matters regarding quality in nursing education.

The main topics of this year's AGM will be the importance of men in nursing and 'ENSA – an organisation in the making'. There will also be opportunities for those in attendance to network.

There is no limit to how many delegates can travel from one country, but each country only has one vote. We will choose Ireland's delegate at the next Student Section meeting. Whoever travels to the event will have the opportunity to participate in exchanging experiences and get in touch with nursing students all across Europe.

Please do not hesitate to email me at deanflanigan@inmo.ie if you would like to express your interest in attending the AGM.

Compassionate nursing

I read an article the other day about NHS nursing staff. The main premise of the piece was that nursing staff had become less caring and compassionate in their role today and that nursing has lost its nurturing and professional side. I think the very same article could have been written in relation to Ireland.

In my opinion it is simple. Irish nurses, midwives and students are not less caring or less hardworking; they are simply stretched to capacity with unreasonable workloads and administrative tasks. It is never the intention of any nurse or midwife to appear uncaring, cold or unprofessional.

The HSE in Ireland wants more and more yet refuses to deliver in terms of staff ratios, pay and working conditions. Until nursing and midwifery ratios are recognised here we run the risk that the reputation of our professions will become tarnished and criticised.

So, what can staff and students do? Carry on in conditions that are unsafe for patients and staff? I think not. It is time to put a stop to the blame culture directed at nurses and midwives and direct it at those holding the purse strings in government.

The INMO has called on the Irish government to legislate for mandatory safe staffing ratios if we are to avoid tragedies like that which occurred in the Mid-Staffordshire Hospital, where there were up to 1,200 unnecessary deaths. Over the summer, the INMO will be outlining plans for a public campaign, aimed at winning community support for measures that will always put 'patients first'.

This campaign, which will not involve any form of industrial action, will seek to prioritise safety, standards and staffing,

with the full support of patients, families, clinicians and communities across the country. It is vital that student nurses and midwives become involved in this campaign so please keep a close eye on your email for further updates.

Labour Relations Commission

At the time of going to print the INMO was due to meet the Labour Relations Commission. Student members will be kept informed of any recommendations relating to student nurses and midwives' pay and conditions during the Internship placement.

Gaelic interview

Recently, Gráinne Miggins, a fourth-year from Dundalk IT, took part in a debate on *Cormac ag a Cúig* on Raidió na Gaeltachta. Topics covered during the programme included speaking with undergraduate students about the options they have after college, including emigration and internships. Gráinne participated in the programme in Irish and discussed the different opportunities available to students after college.

It was crucial for a student nurse or midwife to represent our members as the opportunities to do so are limited. If any student members of the INMO would like to take part in the free media training offered by the Organisation, please contact me or Ann Keating, the INMO media relations officer, by email at: annkeating@inmo.ie