

## Health Minister Edwin Poots this evening praised nurses for making a real difference across the Health Service.

Friday 7 June, 2013

The Minister was speaking at the annual Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year 2013 Awards ceremony. Paying tribute to all the nurses who were recognised at the event, the Minister said: "All of you are deserving of our admiration and recognition and are already winners within your profession."

Minister Poots acknowledged the unique contribution of all nurses within the health and social care system, in the context of the changing needs of an ageing population, increase in long term conditions and the challenge to support everyone to adopt healthier lifestyles.

The Minister continued: "There is a fundamental human need to be looked after with care and compassion by a competent professional and this remains a unique contribution of the nursing profession."

Turning to Transforming Your Care, the Minister said that plans to deliver care closer to home and prevent unnecessary hospital attendances and admission would depend particularly on the skills of specialists nurses, particularly those working in the community, working within initiatives such as 'virtual wards' and 'hospital at home'.

Highlighting the need for investment the Minister said: "Investment will be needed to do this and I have set aside over £1.5million specifically for workforce development and re-skilling right across health and social care to support the transition of care, in addition to other investment in workforce planning and service change. This is critical to ensure that we have the right people in the right place with the right skills, and we have a sustainable and safe health and social care services into the future."

Mr. Poots acknowledged that the coming months and years would bring a great pace of change and difficult choices and commended nursing for looking ahead and preparing to shape the future.

Concluding Mr. Poots said: "I encourage all of you to be proud of your profession and of the service you provide. You have a gift and this evening's event demonstrates your professionalism for the job. Look at the success that has been achieved here this evening, learn from it and replicate your success back in the workplace."

The Minister also took the opportunity to welcome the New Chief Nursing Officer, Charlotte Mc Ardle, to her post. He said: "Charlotte has a wealth of knowledge and experience and a clear vision of how to lead the nursing and midwifery workforce into the future."

Notes to editors:

1. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Awards is now in their 17th Year. The award ceremony was hosted by Tara Mills.
2. A full list of award winners is available from Lisa Holden, Media Officer, RCN, 07789691505,
3. Media queries about this press release to DHSSPS Press Office on 028 9052 0567, or out of hours contact the Duty Press Officer via pager number 076 9971 5440 and your call will be returned.

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