

# Nurse staffing fear

Sir, The suspension of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's vital work on safe nurse staffing levels is a damaging step back not only for nursing but for all who use the NHS and care about its future. Despite proven links between registered nurse staffing and patient outcomes, the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust failed to take account of the risks of low staffing levels, with tragic consequences. Sir Robert Francis's inquiry into that scandal specifically recommended that Nice produce guidance on safe staffing. In November 2013 the government announced that Nice would produce guidelines for a range of settings. Two of the planned nine have been completed.

The need for independent evidence-based guidance on safe staffing has never been greater. We urge the secretary of state to ask Nice to continue with this important work as planned.

BARONESS EMERTON; ELIZABETH ROBB, Florence Nightingale Foundation; KATHERINE MURPHY, Patients Association; GAIL ADAMS, Unison; DR PETER CARTER, Royal College of Nursing; GRAHAM SCOTT, editor, *Nursing Standard*; PROFESSOR DAME JESSICA CORNER, Council of Deans of Health

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