DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL CARE NURSES:

ENHANCED OR ADVANCED PRACTICE?

THE VOICES OF PRACTITIONERS AND EDUCATORS

Restorative Justice for All International Institute

4RJ ALL®

RJ4ALL PUBLICATIONS

Buckinghamshire Health & Social Care Academy

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE NEW UNIVERSITY
EST. 1891

RJ4All Publications

https://www.rj4allpublications.com/

contact@rj4allpublications.com | | www.rj4all.info

RJ4All Publications is an independent publisher specialising in social sciences and the publication of cutting-edge research on restorative justice, criminal justice, equality and human rights. RJ4All Publications is the publishing arm of the Restorative Justice for All (RJ4All) International Institute, and the publisher of the international, peer reviewed Youth Voice Journal (YVJ™) and the Internet Journal of Restorative Justice (IJIR®)

Restorative Justice for All (RJ4All) International Institute is an international Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) with a mission to advance community and social cohesion at the local, national and international levels. Through our programmes, we redistribute power within society using education and the values and practices of restorative justice.

First published in the UK in April 2024 by RJ4All Publications

© 2024 RJ4All

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of from RJ4All, or as expressly permitted by law or licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics rights organisation. You must not circulate this publication in any other form and you must impose the same condition on any acquirer.

Trademark notice: “Restorative Justice for All”, “Internet Journal of Restorative Justice”, “IJIR®”, the Youth Voice Journal, “YVJ™”, the RJ4All Logo, the IJRJ® Logo and the YVJ™ logo are all trademarks of Restorative Justice for All International Institute cic. All rights reserved. Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only in good faith and for identification purposes.

Database right RJ4All Publications (maker)

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

ISSN 978-1-80463-001-3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND, IMPETUS AND METHODOLOGY:

This e-book forms part of a larger programme led by Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Academy (BHSCA) in partnership with the RJ4All International Institute and Bucks New University (BNU). The programme aims to develop a framework for advanced or enhanced practice in nursing in social care settings. To this end, there is a need to understand the competencies required for enhanced and advanced nursing practice in social care, and to articulate the training that is currently on offer for nursing staff working in social care settings.

The overall programme hypothesis is that the evolving social care system requires the deployment of both enhanced and advanced nursing competencies and the creation of career grade opportunities; such competencies require further description and definition to demonstrate the benefits of employing enhanced and/or advanced social care nurses.

This study takes the first step in this larger programme and is based on a comprehensive review of the extant literature. The overall programme's research objectives are:

- To describe the current opportunities that exist for the employment of enhanced and advanced social care for nurses across a range of settings (e.g. in domiciliary care, for older persons and within intellectual disability services.
- To outline the competencies required for both enhanced and advanced social care nursing practitioners.
- To evidence how enhanced and advanced social care nursing practice could be integrated successfully into a career progressional pathway for social care nurses. If so, what would the career pathway look like?

The research of the overall programme is structured around three phases. Phase 1 involves comprehensive desk-based research to establish a baseline for subsequent investigations. Phase 1 is concluded within this study. Phase 2 is based on the key findings drawn from phase 1 and will be carried out through original fieldwork that combines qualitative research methods. These methods include in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus groups and an online questionnaire. Subsequently, phase 3 will triangulate the findings from the secondary and primary research by comparing results across phases and with key stakeholders from BHSCA and BNU.

The research of the overall programme is structured around three phases. Phase 1 involved comprehensive desk-based research to establish a necessary understanding of existing knowledge and the baseline for subsequent investigations. Phase 2, which is the current study, was based on the key findings drawn from phase 1 and was carried out through original fieldwork that combined qualitative research methods. These methods included in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Subsequently, phase 3 will triangulate the findings from the secondary and primary research by comparing results across phases and with key stakeholders from BHSCA and BNU.

This report takes the second step in this larger programme and is based on original fieldwork that was carried out between December 2023 – February 2024. This involved 13 in-depth, semi-structured interviews and 2 semi-structured focus groups. The first focus group (nurses/nursing background) had 6 participants while the second one (employers/training providers) consisted of 8 participants. The sample was identified during the phase 1 of the programme:

1. Frontline practitioners, namely registered nurses working in social care settings.

2. Employers in the social care sector.

3. Educational and training providers, offering programmes of advanced or enhanced level of practice.

Phase 2 of the programme built upon the concepts and themes recognised through the phase 1 literature review/desk research. The fieldwork complied with UK and international research ethics standards, and where necessary, research ethics approval was sought. Sensitive data are protected following UK Data Protection legislation and the EC GDPR

KEY FINDINGS FROM PHASE 2:

The key findings from the interviews and focus groups conducted in phase 2 of the research programme can be summarised as follows:

- **Disparity in investing in Social Care vs Acute Healthcare:** With no exception, everyone, including people from more acute healthcare settings, argued that social care has been "slipping through the cracks". They argued that its huge potential has gone amiss due to lack of attention paid to social care. Key stakeholders believe that there should not be any difference between the social care and healthcare sectors regarding the attention they receive, and the investments made to support patients. The priority should be on patient care with a person-centred approach. An important avenue to enhance the sector is by shifting the general population's opinion about the benefits and potential of social care.

- **Lack of Clarity in Defining Enhanced and Advanced Levels of Practice in Social Care Nursing:** Stakeholders identified a pervasive lack of clarity in defining and practically differentiating between enhanced and advanced levels of practice within social care nursing as well as in the specific needs and demands of social care practices at each level. This undisputable fact incommodes any progress either being related with regulation advancements or professional individual progression. This ambiguity stemmed from inconsistent job titles, divergent scopes of practice, and a lack of standardised terminology. Hence, investment in fostering clarity for both levels of practice is crucial for cultivating clear understanding of the diverse needs and demands within various tiers of social care practice. This will encourage regulatory bodies and employers to embrace substantial changes that can enhance the role of nurses in the social care sector.

- **Need for Regulatory Advancing Steps for Enhanced and Advanced Levels of Practice in Social Care Nursing:** Participants emphasised the importance of regulatory adaptations to support the introduction of enhanced and advanced levels of practice in social care nursing. While national regulatory bodies like the NMC were recognised for their active role, all participants stressed the need for social care inclusive regulatory changes, with some of them advocating for a new layer of regulation, separate from the acute health care sector and others preferring a more holistic regulatory approach regarding both health and social care institutions. Regardless of the chosen avenue, all agreed that it should be applicable to registered nurses' needs in social care settings, alongside robust local governance structures.

- **Positive Outcomes from the Use of Enhanced and Advanced Levels of Practice in Social Care Nursing:** Real-life examples, where nurses in social care used their advanced capabilities and skills, showcased the transformative impact of advanced and enhanced nursing practice on patient care outcomes. Advanced practitioners, including nurse prescribers were praised for their ability to drive positive change and promote health equity among vulnerable populations. On top of all the other benefits, the reduction of hospital admissions and the optimisation of service delivery in terms of both cost and clinical effectiveness was noted extensively.

- **Obstacles in Social Care:** Infrastructural Deficiencies and Educational Gaps in Nursing Practice: Participants emphasised substantial challenges arising from inadequate support in infrastructure from employers (including reconciliation of working and training life), accessibility constraints in the training pipeline due to limited avenues focused on social care, and financial burdens within social care settings. Specifically, the absence of social care placements in nursing educational curricula hampers the sector's potential and fails to inform undergraduate students about its opportunities. Furthermore, limited resources and fragmented infrastructure provided by both the State and employers present barriers to progress in nursing practice. All the constraints and challenges mentioned above are closely tied to what is termed as a lack of role modeling and inspiration in social care. This issue needs immediate attention and should be

addressed through an emphasis on educational provision.

- **Lack of Career Progression for Social Care Nurses:** A concluding finding of this research highlighted the current deficiency in clearly defined career pathways for social care nurses. Presently, these professionals struggle to envision a trajectory that aligns with their skills, potential, and contributions. The absence of explicit steps for advancement fails to recognise their hard work and the significance of their role in the healthcare system. Moreover, the issue is compounded by the lack of corresponding pay rises for their advancements, exacerbating the sense of undervaluation. Addressing this disparity is crucial to ensuring the fulfilment and retention of social care nurses while recognising the invaluable contributions they make to patient care, and the overall health system in the UK.

PHASE 2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:

1. Clarity in defining, delineating and standardising both Enhanced and Advanced Levels of Practice: Key stakeholders in social care nursing, including regulators, employers, and recruiters, should collaborate to establish standardised terminologies, clear definitions, and distinctions between enhanced and advanced levels of practice. This entails standardising job titles, role expectations, scopes of practice, and terminology, crucial for supporting professional progression and regulatory advancements in the sector.

2. Better Attention, Mentality-shift and Investment in Social Care: Social care policymakers and healthcare authorities should address the disparity in attention and investment between social care and acute healthcare by allocating resources in a manner that reflects the sector's importance and promoting public recognition of its vital role in healthcare delivery.

3. The need for regulatory Adaptations for Enhanced and Advanced Practice: National regulatory bodies, including the NMC, and local units should adapt regulations to accommodate both enhanced and advanced levels of practice, especially in social care. This may involve creating separate regulations for social care or adjusting current frameworks to encompass both acute health and social care institutions. Prioritising the needs of registered nurses in social care and establishing robust local governance structures should be key considerations in regulatory adjustments.

4. Strategic Utilisation of Current Positive Examples: Acute healthcare institutions and relevant stakeholders, including educational institutions, should promote both enhanced and advanced nursing practice in social care settings. Real-life examples highlight the transformative impact of advanced capabilities on patient care outcomes, including reduced hospital admissions and optimized service delivery.

5. Addressing Infrastructural Deficiencies and Educational Gaps: Employers, regulators, and policymakers must address infrastructural deficiencies and educational gaps in nursing practice within social care settings. This entails providing support for nurses to build capacity and acquire new skills while working, improving access to training pipelines, and integrating social care placements into nursing curricula. Emphasis should be placed on enhancing educational provision to inspire and support future generations of social care nurses.

6. Creating Clear Career Pathways and Recognition: Healthcare institutions and regulatory bodies should collaborate to establish clear career pathways for social care nurses, defining explicit steps for advancement and ensuring corresponding pay rises. Addressing these issues can enhance the fulfilment and retention of social care nurses, benefiting patient care and the UK healthcare system.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

Background, impetus and methodology: 3

Key findings from phase 2 4

Phase 2 recommendations for strategic interventions 5

ABBREVIATIONS 7

INTRODUCTION 8

I. Background and rationale of the project 8

II. Project hypothesis and overall research objectives 8

III. Purpose and structure of this report 8

PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH LIMITATIONS 10

I. Programme research structure 10

II. II. Study methodological details 10

III. Geographical scope 11

IV. Unit of analysis 11

V. Sampling frame 11

VI. Limitations of the research 11

PHASE 2 OVERARCHING FINDINGS 12

I. A comparative thematic analysis of the extant literature 12

Lack of attention and investment in social care 12

Lack of clear understanding of the division between enhanced and advanced nursing in social care settings 12

Regulation should be more inclusive and specific regarding social care 13

Educational pathways particularly for social care settings are limited 14

Addressing funding issues and infrastructure challenges in social care 15

Positive outcomes from the use of enhanced and advanced practice nursing in social care 16

II. Focus groups' key findings 17

Fostering clarity in the distinction between enhanced and advanced levels of practice in social care nursing is essential 17

Regulatory frameworks are not inclusive enough for advanced and enhanced practice in social care nursing 18

Real-life examples from the use of enhanced and advanced levels of practice in social care nursing illustrate their transformative power in the field 19

Addressing infrastructure, training and funding challenges within social care nursing is necessary 19

Career progression and professional development are identified as areas of improvement 20

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS 22

Role clarity 22

Regulatory adaptations 22

The transformative impact 22

Need for a holistic shift towards a more inclusive and supportive social care 22

Concluding remarks 23

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS 24

REFERENCES 26

ANNEX I: ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM 27

ABBREVIATIONS

ACP - Advanced Clinical Practice

APN - Advanced Practice Nurses

BHSCA - Buckinghamshire Health and Social Care Academy

BNU - Buckinghamshire New University

GP - General Practitioner

HEE - Health Education England

NHS - National Health Service

NMC - Nursing and Midwifery Council

RN – Registered Nurse

SPQ - Standards of Proficiency for Community Nursing Specialty Practice

INTRODUCTION

I Background and rationale of the project

This study takes the second step of a three phased programme aimed at investigating the development of a framework for advanced and/or enhanced practice for nurses in social care settings. As stated in the first report of this study, a compelling development is imperative due to the evolving health and social care landscape as well as population needs, necessitating a nuanced grasp of advanced and enhanced nursing competencies. As the complexities of health conditions intensify and the scope of care expands, the call for a more sophisticated framework for advanced and/or enhanced practice has become a rather heated topic. While both the health and social care sectors warrant attention, the social care sector, which remains the focus of this study, appears to be of heightened concern, given its historical under-support and pervasive misconceptions regarding the nature of professions within it.

Building upon the findings of the initial phase of desk research and the knowledge collected from there, which provided valuable insights into the landscape of social care nursing practice, this report synthesises the outcomes of phase two, comprising 13 in-depth interviews with associated professionals in the field, followed by two focus groups. Both interviews and focus groups were attended by frontline practitioners with nursing background, employers in the field as well as professionals representing the educational angle of our study.

II Project hypothesis and overall research objectives

We posit that the evolving social care system demands the deployment of both enhanced and advanced nursing capabilities, necessitating a robust career progression framework for registered nurses (RNs). It is envisaged that the outcomes of this research will contribute to the refinement of social care nurses' practices by painting a clearer picture of the current opportunities across diverse settings such as domiciliary care, older persons care, and intellectual disability services. On top of that it will facilitate the outline of capabilities required for practitioners engaged in enhanced and advanced level. Eventually, the project should serve as a compass for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and regulatory bodies to respond to workforce development needs of social care employers, supporting the process of integrating enhanced/advanced social care nursing practices seamlessly into a progressive career pathway.

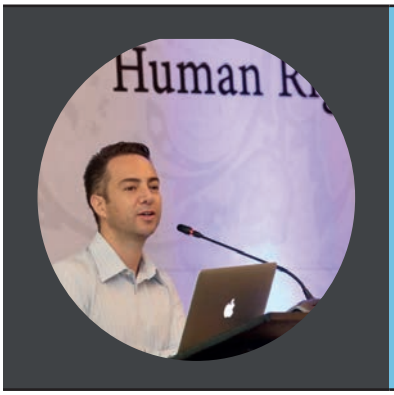
III Purpose and structure of this report

This study picked up on the findings of the initial desk research talking us through the demands and benefits associated with each level of practice for social care nurses, as well as the workforce and professional development needs within the social care sector. Phase two of this research project involved conducting 13 one-on-one interviews with professionals representing various facets of social care nursing, serving as a precursor to subsequent focus groups. These interviews provided a nuanced exploration of sector challenges and opportunities, as well as expectations. Subsequently, 14 participants were segmented into two focus groups (6 and 8 in each group): one comprising nurses and professionals with nursing backgrounds, and the other including employers and training providers. This approach facilitated targeted discussions, allowing stakeholders to delve deeply into issues relevant to their roles.

This interim report integrates insights gleaned from both interviews and focus groups, offering a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted dimensions shaping the future of social care nursing. It aims to elucidate key themes, challenges, and opportunities coming from real life examples and settings identified by stakeholders, with a focus on advancing nursing practice within the sector. The following sections of this report encompass a comprehensive examination of the project methodology, limitations, and overarching findings derived from phase 2. Beginning with an analysis of both interview and focus group results, the report delves into key themes, challenges, and opportunities identified by stakeholders, with a particular emphasis on advancing nursing practice within the social care sector. Subsequently, a critical reflection section evaluates the synthesis of the findings from the 13 interviews and 2 focus groups, paving the way for strategic interventions. Recommendations are provided to address gaps and enhance understanding regarding both enhanced and advanced

levels of practice in social care nursing. By synthesising insights from diverse stakeholders, this interim report aims to inform collaborative efforts geared towards empowering nurses to effectively address the evolving needs of diverse patient populations and communities within the social care sector.

ANNEX I:
ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM

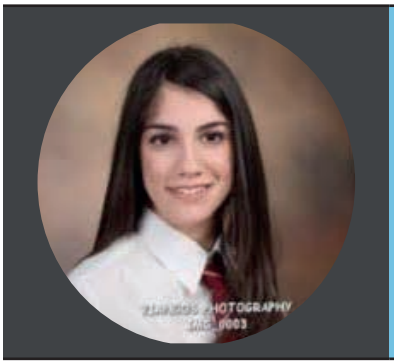


Dr. Theo Gavrielides

Professor and expert in health equalities and human rights, harm prevention and criminal law, restorative justice, violent radicalisation and youth policy. Barrister and recipient of **The Liberty of the Old Metropolitan Borough of Bermondsey Civic Award 2021**. Founder and Director of the **Restorative Justice for All International Institute.** Founder of **The IARS International Institute**. Editor-in-Chief of the peer reviewed **International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare**, **Youth Voice Journal** and the **Internet Journal of Restorative Justice**. Founder of **RJ4All Publications** and **RJ4All Sports**. Pioneer of user-led research methods, and advisor to the European Commission, and governments. He has published extensively in peer reviewed journals, and edited monographs, edited collections and special journal issues.

Sofia Sideridou

Senior social sciences researcher and a qualified lawyer. Currently working as a Research Assistant for Professor Theo Gavrielides. Previously, she was a Youth Ambassador for the Right to Peace for Greece and a legal researcher for Centre For African Justice, Peace and Human Rights. She has a Master of Laws (LLM) from Maastricht University and Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She has worked on multiple Erasmus+ research projects and is training to be a restorative justice practitioner.



Marianna Iosif

Enthusiastic and motivated Biomedical Sciences graduate from the University of Sussex and a current Postgraduate student at the University of Sussex studying Genetic manipulation and Molecular cell biology. Marianna is open to work in entry - level roles such as: Laboratory assistant, Medical/Scientific writer etc. in order to apply the broad knowledge of her undergraduate and postgraduate degree offered. She is particularly interested in genetics and any form of molecular biology. She is also really interested in cancer research. Key skills include: Cell culture techniques, Immunofluorescence staining/Fluorescent microscopy, Gel Electrophoresis, Western Blotting, Simplifying and communicating complex scientific concepts, Critical Writing, Communication.

THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SERIES

CATALOGUE

This is the second ebook in a series of three publications that form part of a larger programme that was conducted in October 2023 – April 2024. The programme aimed to develop a framework for advanced or enhanced practice in nursing in social care settings in the United Kingdom. To this end, there is a need to understand the competencies required for enhanced and advanced nursing practice in social care, and to articulate the training that is currently on offer for nursing staff working in social care settings. The overall programme hypothesis is that the evolving social care system requires the deployment of both enhanced and advanced nursing competencies and the creation of career grade opportunities; such competencies require further description and definition to demonstrate the benefits of employing enhanced and/or advanced social care nurses. The research of the overall programme is structured around three phases. Phase 1 involved comprehensive desk-based research to establish a baseline for subsequent investigations. Phase 2 is concluded with this ebook, which is based on original fieldwork that was carried out between December 2023 – February 2024. This involved 13 in-depth, semi-structured interviews and 2 semi-structured focus groups. The first focus group (nurses/nursing background) had 6 participants while the second one (employers/training providers) consisted of 8 participants.

@RJ4ALL

RJ4ALL

@RJ4ALL

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FOR ALL (RJ4ALL) INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

RJ4ALL INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
30 PLOUGH WAY LONDON SE16 2LJ
+44(0)7708758600 | +44 7502 201799
WWW.RJ4ALL.ORG

£0.99 GBP RRP.

9 781804 630006

RJ4ALL PUBLICATIONS