

Project 2000 in Scotland

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As 'Scottish Rep.' on the NISG Committee, it falls to me to adopt the frequent role of reminding those 'south of the Border' not only that nursing and librarianship exist here, but also that we have a head start in providing services suitable for the higher education environment of Project 2000. In this article I hope to update you on the current position in Scotland and to highlight some of the progress made and concerns raised in our moves toward Project 2000 implementation.

The current position

Combined colleges of nursing & midwifery, formed from the various hospital training schools, have existed in Scotland for at least a decade. There has not been the need for the extensive merging of establishments that has taken place in England, but we have not escaped entirely. Of the 12 health board areas in Scotland, only Greater Glasgow now has more than one College, although the 4 Glasgow Colleges are developing links and rationalising courses. While inevitably causing disruption and uncertainty, mergers have left some colleges in very strong positions; Lothian College, for example, with about 1800 students, is not only larger than the neighbouring, degree-offering, Queen Margaret College, but is now one of the largest nursing & midwifery colleges in the country.

Professional librarians have been appointed in all colleges since the late 1970s, most now have Assistant Li-

brarians, and all have at least a part-time Library Assistant. Gradings, while still inadequate to reflect the nature of posts or to retain staff, are generally better than in England and Wales: since 1986 all nursing college librarians have been on the SAA grade (now grade 5), and many library assistants have been upgraded to grade 3. The Scottish National Board, by its establishment of an Annual Standing Conference for Librarians since 1985, its funding of libraries through college budgets, and its support in many other ways, has helped to upgrade the staffing, stock and accommodation of many libraries, and to produce a very cohesive group of librarians.

Project 2000 ... In 1992

Scotland has gone for the 'big bang' approach with Project 2000 being introduced throughout in autumn 1992. Some colleges are also introducing direct entry midwifery courses. It is still uncertain whether courses will be validated by the CNAA, universities or other higher education institutions; linkages are, however, likely to be limited to validation and related matters. As course teaching will be carried out in the colleges, an adequate level of library facilities will have to be provided on site, thus avoiding some of the access problems being encountered down south.

Project 2000 Working Group

At the Standing Conference in 1990, it was agreed that a Project 2000 Work-

ing Group should be set up to facilitate colleagues in the transition to Project 2000 by producing guidelines and standards, advising the NBS on standards and resources required, and providing information on areas of concern such as funding, staffing, services, accommodation and user education. To date the group has published two newsletters, organised a study day¹ and begun work on a checklist of minimum standards, using the latest COFHE Guidelines² as a marker. A second edition of 'Libraries in Scottish Colleges of Nursing & Midwifery'³ and a survey to be completed by the next conference in May will complete the picture of current trends and help the presentation of the group's case to the National Board.

Funding: While most libraries have received fairly generous funding to date for basic courses, all colleges are finding the need for increased funding for updating and expanding stock, computerisation, and staffing. Some college libraries have already received money through either the National Board or their health boards for such developments. Funding for post-basic students and trained staff remains non-existent in most areas.

Staffing: While staffing and grading levels may be better than in England, they are still inadequate for the demands that will be placed on library facilities and staff. In Scotland the issue of gradings is being pursued on two fronts: a document outlining our case, and signed by all the professional librarians, was sent to the National Board, who favourably received proposals for placing librarians on academic related grades, but have to persuade the Scottish Home and

Health Department and individual health boards that this would be appropriate; many librarians are using the opportunity of a national system of grading assessment being introduced for senior management posts to pursue individual claims - to date this has led to the upgrading of one multi-disciplinary librarian to level 6.

Services: Many libraries are already trying to expand their stocks (particularly in the social and behavioural sciences and in education books for tutors), the automation of catalogues and journal indexing is gathering momentum, and CDROM has become a new crowd puller for some of the larger libraries.

Accommodation: While some colleges moved to new premises in the last decade, there are still several with woefully inadequate library accommodation, with study spaces and staff working space at a particular premium. Unfortunately, it is likely to take more than the introduction of Project 2000 to change this position radically.

User education: For many librarians, user education and the input of library staff to curriculum development and delivery remains one of their greatest concerns. As in England, the level of involvement varies from those who have been told 'wait for your bit' to those who are part of a select core group of senior staff responsible for Project 2000 planning. Some have been asked to prepare reading lists for submissions, others to join Common Foundation and Branch Working Groups as full members, and almost all have been given the responsibility for developing the information skills component of courses. The job of con-

vincing tutorial staff that the 'research based, self-motivated practitioner' does not emerge without training in specific skills remains an uphill struggle, but most librarians are seizing the opportunity to review their current information retrieval input and to present well thought out, educationally credible proposals. At the same time, there is a growing feeling that, in preparing and presenting courses, we would benefit from some form of training in teaching skills.

The opportunity of change

Like most colleagues down south, Scottish librarians are finding that the planning for and prospect of Project 2000 are placing tremendous stress on their time, energies and resources. The current low gradings (in comparison with nurse tutors and library colleagues in higher education) do not

help staff morale and retention. Nevertheless, Project 2000 is giving librarians an opportunity, which in the main they are receiving gratefully, to reassess current provision and course input and to make cases both locally and nationally for standards of library provision that will meet the needs of nursing and midwifery students in the years to come. And then, of course, there will be PREPP

References

1. 'PAVE the way', National Board for Scotland, Edinburgh, 21 Feb 1991. [Report in future issue of NIS Newsletter]
2. Library Association, Colleges of Further & Higher Education Group (1990) Guidelines for college and polytechnic libraries. 4th ed. London: Library Association.
3. Gillespie S, White J & Jaffray M (in press) Libraries in Scottish Colleges of Nursing & Midwifery: a review. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: National Board for Scotland.

Library services on pilot Project 2000 courses

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I am studying for an MA in Information and Library Management at Newcastle Polytechnic. I am undertaking an examination of the library services available to student nurses on pilot Project 2000 courses and should be grateful for comments from librarians who have not already received more detailed questionnaires.

1. How long has your library been catering for nursing related subjects? Have any specific changes been made for project 2000?
2. Please give brief details of additional funding received as a result

of the new courses to help you acquire new stock to cover new subject areas, widen services and employ and train extra staff.

3. To what extent have you worked with nursing tutors a) to select new publications required? b) to plan a user education programme for nurses?
4. Are you satisfied with the services you provide? If not what factors are preventing you from improving the services? Any other comments you wish to make will be useful.