

Immediate release

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New website launched to support family-focussed healthcare in UK & Ireland

Covid-19 has seen more families caring for loved ones with acute illnesses and now Sheffield Hallam University has co-designed a new website dedicated to supporting the role of family-focussed healthcare in the UK and Ireland.

Family nursing, midwifery and community care focuses on promoting health and wellbeing by supporting families to develop their own resources to become resilient, adaptable and cope with health related life challenges. This can, for example, range from midwives helping new expectant couples to make the transition to parenthood, through to nurses, health visitors and public health nurses supporting families who are providing end-of-life care or caring for loved ones with acute illnesses or long term conditions such as dementia, asthma, and long-Covid.

Representatives from the International Family Nursing Association's (IFNA) UK & Ireland Chapter, which includes academics from Sheffield Hallam's College of Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences and Dublin City University have today (25 Nov) launched the free website, ifnaukandireland.org for healthcare practitioners and families to share and learn about best practice when it comes to supporting families.

It is hoped the website will lead to more collaborative work being carried out in this area which in turn will inform and influence Government guidelines in the UK and Ireland around the importance of family nursing as part of the care pathway.

Co-lead of the IFNA UK & Ireland Chapter, Professor Veronica Swallow, an expert in child and family nursing and healthcare at Sheffield Hallam and President Elect of the International Family Nursing Association, said: "In the UK, there is no formal recognition of the importance of families in healthcare, and the care they experience when supporting a loved one through illness or at other times of healthcare support need, is highly variable.

"Nurses, midwives, health visitors and public health nurses vary widely in their views about the importance of families in healthcare provision, and this is despite the evidence which shows that actively intervening to support families results in a better experience and improved outcomes for patients, clients and family members.

“In the midst of a global pandemic in which more and more families are having to care for loved ones with long term health conditions, it is now more important than ever that we explore the more active role that all healthcare practitioners can and often do take in considering and caring for families to improve health outcomes. This website has been designed to bring family nursing to the forefront and allow for a more consistent level of care and support for families in line with other parts of the world.”

Professor Veronica Lambert, co-lead of the IFNA UK and Ireland Chapter and professor of children and family nursing at Dublin City University, said: “The launch of this website marks an important milestone for the IFNA UK-Ireland Chapter, the first local chapter of IFNA established in 2017, to actively advance practice, policy, research and education towards relational and family systems approaches to care.

“Implementing family-focused nursing, midwifery and community public health interventions are critical to healthcare reform and to family health and healing outcomes.

“The website offers an opportunity for nurses, midwives, public health nurses, patients/clients, caregivers, family members, academics, and researchers to join a growing community to establish a discourse around family-focused care and influence family nursing in Ireland and the UK.”

Membership of the Chapter and access to the website are free of charge. All healthcare practitioners, patients, clients and those caring for a loved one are encouraged [to register](#).

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Notes to Editor

About Sheffield Hallam University

Sheffield Hallam University's vision is to become the world's leading applied university, transforming lives and creating opportunities for people from all backgrounds.

Named University of the Year for Teaching Quality in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2020, Sheffield Hallam is one of the UK's largest higher education providers, with over 30,500 students. The University offers a comprehensive range of courses and is one of the leading providers of health and teacher training.

The application of knowledge is at the heart of everything we do, through our students' learning and experience, business partnerships and innovative research addressing real world challenges.

The University is committed to the Sheffield City Region, providing leadership to drive improvements in social mobility, health and the economy.

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