

Paediatric Nursing Associations of Europe: Position statement on the Regulation of Paediatric Nurses in Europe

Children and adolescents (young people) have the right to be cared for by appropriately qualified and educated nursing staff. Children and their families/guardians have a right to know that the nurse who cares for their child is specifically educated and competent to do so i.e. one *who has successfully completed a recognised course of study and practice experience in the nursing care of infants, children and adolescents / young people*¹. This is to ensure that the primacy of the best interests of the child (Article 3, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) is protected and supported.

The International Council of Nurses says that the title of “Nurse” should be protected by law and countries should have a regulatory system that encompasses proper control and discipline of the profession and its members. PNAE believes that regulation should apply in the same way to the title “Paediatric nurse” which should be used only by those ‘legally authorised to practice the full scope of (paediatric) nursing’².

The purpose of regulation would be to establish and improve standards of paediatric nursing care (and education) in order to serve and protect children and young people³. Nursing regulatory bodies exist in many countries by law; regulation of paediatric nurses would require a legally constituted body that would:

- Maintain a register all qualified paediatric nurses so that employers and the public can identify those who are qualified to practice:
- Set standards and guidelines for paediatric nursing education, practice and conduct:
- Monitor standards and quality of paediatric nursing education; and
- Consider allegations of misconduct or unfitness to practise.

PNAE urges European governments to work towards ensuring improved standards of nursing care for children and adolescents (young people) through formal regulation and supporting education.

¹ PNAE definition of the Paediatric nurse

² ICN position statement Protection of the Title “Nurse” (www.icn.ch/pstitle99rev.htm)

³ Regulation of paediatric nurses is additional to ‘criminal background checks’ that are required to safeguard children in any care setting. It is necessary that details of any misconduct/malpractice and/or criminal activities/convictions are identified and explicitly conveyed.