

Myth vs Reality

MYTH: Nursing homes deliver palliative care, mainly.

REALITY: Active living is the objective of residents within nursing homes. Increasingly nursing homes are also accepting younger residents with chronic conditions, with 4% of all residents younger than 65. The mix of residents means that many live an active, fulfilling life, some have palliative care needs and others have acute and long-term care needs.

MYTH: Staff in nursing homes are all in the pre-retirement age group. I wouldn't fit in.

REALITY: Nursing homes employ a broad mix of staff, with an increasing number of nursing graduates choosing to enter the profession and work with and learn from experienced personnel already working within homes. Most also have an input from people in the local community and these can include local volunteers and transition year students.

MYTH: There isn't a broad mix of staff.

REALITY: On the contrary, nursing homes play host to a constantly-changing mix of professionals. It's one of the reasons they're so stimulating to work in. GP's visit nursing homes on an almost daily basis. The work of Occupational Therapists, Dieticians, Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists complements other forms of treatment such as aromatherapy, homeopathy and reflexology. The medical professionals engage with and consult the nursing home staff. Other professionals working within nursing home settings include Carers, Caterers, office and administrative staff and Caretakers.

MYTH: Nursing and caring for older people is physically and mentally exhausting.

REALITY: Advances in equipment have minimised physical demands. Support structures within nursing homes mean emotional needs are addressed, so that each staff member can truly engage with residents and establish long-lasting relationships that provide a true sense of value to their work and personal job satisfaction.

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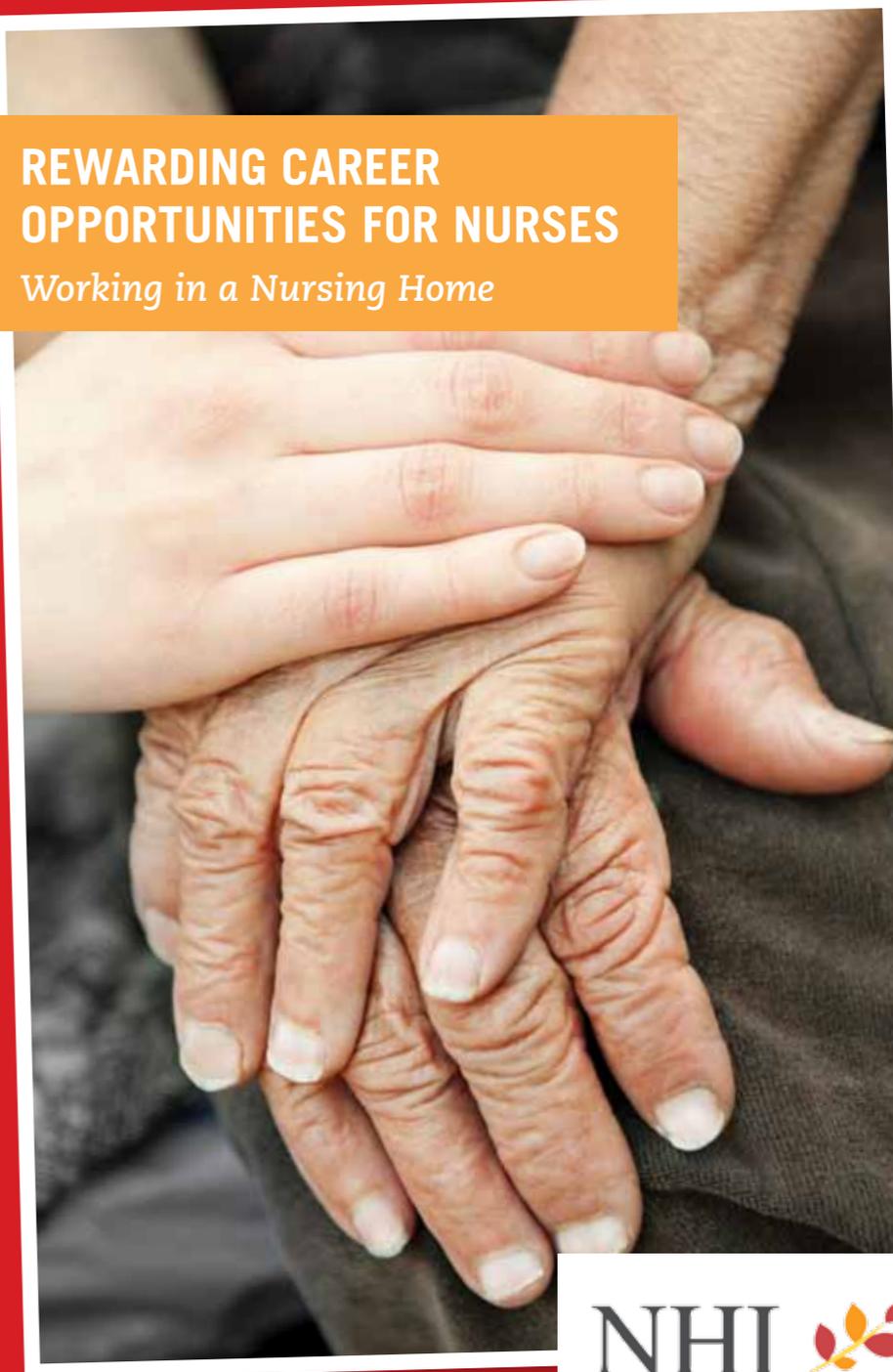
My father, John, was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in 2002. Initially Dad was very reluctant to accept a nursing home as the best solution to meet his needs. We were overwhelmed at how quickly Dad was won over by the **excellent staff and management** at The Park and our hearts continue to hold them dear.” Jerry Twomey speaks of the care provided to his father John at The Park Nursing Home, Castletroy, Limerick.

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Gerontology nursing, for too long, has been undervalued by nurses themselves. I work in a sector where I have autonomy, where my professional opinion is actively sought and listened to. **I make a difference to residents' lives every day.** My professional development within this sector has been, to date, a Higher Diploma in Gerontology and more recently a Registered Nurse Prescriber. It's a great sector to work in!” Yvonne Carpenter, Assistant Director of Nursing, Pointe Boise Nursing Home, Galway.



REWARDING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR NURSES
Working in a Nursing Home



Talk to your local NHI Member about career opportunities

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Nursing homes have a special place in Irish healthcare.

They're a home from home for residents.

They offer challenging and rewarding career opportunities for Staff Nurses, Clinical Nurse Managers, Directors of Nursing and other healthcare staff.

Because of the independent nature of nursing homes, staff often have more autonomy than if they worked in an acute setting. Engaging with residents every day leads to long-standing relationships that provide immense job value and satisfaction. Staff in nursing homes are extremely loyal, providing care for residents over many years and continually furthering their education within the speciality of gerontology and in nursing care in general.

Nursing Homes Ireland has provided this leaflet to make you aware of the very rewarding careers nursing homes have to offer. If you're a healthcare professional thinking about working in a nursing home, make your decision based on **realities**, not myths!



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While the cheque pays my mortgage, I don't consider my position as just a job; it is much more than that to me. I see how little extra things – a smile, a hand held, a softly spoken word, a little bit of encouragement – can give a resident or family member a feeling of **support and security** that helps them through their day and I go home feeling happy and fulfilled.” Gerard Griffin, Winner of the NHI Nursing Home Carer of the Year Award 2010, Orwell House Nursing Home Care Assistant

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Working in a nursing home is both **challenging and fulfilling**. I am in the position of caring for older persons from diverse backgrounds with complex needs. I have autonomy to use my nursing skills and competencies to help the older person to reach their potential holistically in daily life, at the same time build therapeutic relationships with the resident and their families.” Rena O'Hara, Ryevale Nursing Home, Winner NHI Care Awards 2010 Nurse of the Year.

Myth vs Reality

MYTH: A nursing home is not a stimulating environment for a health professional to work in.

REALITY: The care delivered in nursing homes can be complex. Nursing staff offer skilled procedures in the nursing home to prevent residents having to travel to hospital, with all the attendant trauma, risk and inconvenience hospital visits entail.

You might find yourself dealing with:

- blood and blood product transfusions
- continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) for sleep apnoea
- sub cutaneous fluids
- intravenous antibiotics
- infusion pumps
- percutaneous endoscopic gastronomy tubes
- catheterisation.

MYTH: There are no opportunities for continuous professional development in nursing homes.

REALITY: All nursing home staff have an induction programme and an annual appraisal/review to identify training needs. Nursing homes regard staff training and continuous professional development as a priority, and are required to do so by regulation. Our members provide a service within a highly regulated area and constantly seek to improve it. Career progression is often faster than other healthcare settings due to the specialist nature of the work involved and the availability of senior positions in the industry. The current legislation for the position of person in charge (Director of Nursing) permits staff with three years' experience in care of the older person to hold this post. Education centres are increasingly common within nursing homes, providing courses all year round to provide for continuous professional development.

MYTH: I would have no career pathway available to me in the private and voluntary nursing home sector.

REALITY: Major recent advances in the private and voluntary nursing home sector have opened up new career opportunities, including Practice Development, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Specialist, and other posts.

MYTH: Private and voluntary nursing homes have lower pay than public sector jobs.

REALITY: In fact, private and voluntary nursing homes are employers of choice who offer similar pay rates to public service healthcare careers. The national average salary for staff nurses, as per the NHI Annual Survey, is in line with the Department of Health consolidated nurse salary scales.

MYTH: I will lose all my skills and competencies working in a nursing home.

REALITY: No, you won't. You'll be dealing with highly complex care needs and therefore will need high levels of skill. Staff within nursing homes are continually improving their skills and expanding their roles to meet emerging demands like nurse prescribing, male catheterisation, venepuncture and cannulation. In addition, staff are often more autonomous than those in acute settings due to the independent nature of the nursing home environment.