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Nurse morale at all-time low in England

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17th July, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Nurse morale at all-time low in England

Declining morale among English nurses has reached an all-time low. This is according to a survey in hospitals that paints a picture of a profession in crisis. A poll of 9,000 nurses discovered that most nurses in England felt overworked and undervalued, especially as their salaries were less than their counterparts in Wales and Scotland. Many nurses also said they were worried about their job security and 30 per cent said they would quit their jobs if they could. More worrying for the health service is the finding that over half of nurses said they were too busy to deliver the levels of care they feel patients deserve. Dr Peter Carter of the Royal College of Nursing said that nurses were not demanding "sky-high" increases but simply wanted the same as nurses elsewhere in the world.

England's 200,000 nurses will soon vote on whether or not to take industrial action and go on strike over pay. It could be the first ever time for English nurses to "down tools". A spokesperson said that nurses "will not act in any way that is detrimental to the well-being or interests of their patients". This makes an all-out strike unlikely, but may result in nurses refusing to work unpaid overtime. Other actions might see nurses insisting on taking all of their breaks allowed by law and turning down requests to change shifts at short notice. Dr Carter said he believed England's public fully support the nurses, saying: "Day in, day out, nurses are there for their patients - they will be heartened to know that they can count on the general public for support at this difficult time."

WARM-UPS

1. NURSES: Walk around the class and talk to other students about nurses and nursing. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

morale / all-time lows / hospitals / polls / being overworked / being undervalued / votes / industrial action / patients / overtime / shift work / difficult times

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. MORALE: In pairs / groups, talk about how these things affect your morale:

- your English level
- having a bad hair day
- exam results
- the weather
- friends
- food
- working conditions
- money

4. NURSING: Which of these professions are most important? Rank them with your partners. Change partners and share what you said and heard.

- a) nurses
- b) lawyers
- c) politicians
- d) soldiers
- e) scientists
- f) teachers

5. NURSE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'nurse'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. NURSING: Talk about these headlines and the stories behind them. Will / should they come true? Change partners and share what you said and heard.

- a) Nurses among highest paid workers
- b) All nurses now female
- c) Health service in crisis – nurses strike in second year
- d) All publicly employed nurses fired
- e) Nurses riot
- f) World nursing strike begins

7. I'M A NURSE: You are a nurse. Walk around the classroom and talk to the other 'nurses' about what your profession and daily working life. Change partners and share what you said and heard.

8. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think women are better nurses. Students B think men are better nurses. Change partners often. Share your findings.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Nurses in England have never felt so bad about their jobs. | T / F |
| b. Nine thousand English nurses feel overworked and undervalued. | T / F |
| c. English nurses are worried about the future of their jobs. | T / F |
| d. A major problem is the sky high salary increases nurses want. | T / F |
| e. Nurses in England have a history of going on strike. | T / F |
| f. English nurses will not strike if it affects the quality of patient care. | T / F |
| g. A lot of nurses do not take their full breaks at work. | T / F |
| h. The British public are furious that nurses might go on strike. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. declining | a. survey |
| 2. all-time low | b. depend on |
| 3. poll | c. merit |
| 4. counterparts | d. harmful |
| 5. deserve | e. stop working |
| 6. industrial action | f. peers |
| 7. down tools | g. happy |
| 8. detrimental | h. decreasing |
| 9. heartened | i. strike |
| 10. count on | j. rock bottom |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. morale among English nurses has | a. counterparts in Wales |
| 2. paints a picture of | b. or interests of their patients |
| 3. their salaries were less than their | c. "sky-high" increases |
| 4. deliver the levels of care they feel | d. industrial action |
| 5. nurses were not demanding | e. public for support |
| 6. vote on whether or not to take | f. a profession in crisis |
| 7. the first ever time for English nurses | g. reached an all-time low |
| 8. detrimental to the well-being | h. shifts at short notice |
| 9. turning down requests to change | i. patients deserve |
| 10. they can count on the general | j. to "down tools" |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Nurse morale at all-time low in England

Declining morale _____ English nurses has reached an all-time low. This is according to a survey in hospitals that _____ a picture of a profession in crisis. A poll of 9,000 nurses discovered that most nurses in England felt overworked and undervalued, _____ as their salaries were less than their _____ in Wales and Scotland. Many nurses also said they were worried about their job _____ and 30 per cent said they would quit their jobs if they _____. More worrying for the health service is the finding that over half of nurses said they were too busy to _____ the levels of care they feel patients deserve. Dr Peter Carter of the Royal College of Nursing said that nurses were not demanding "sky-high" increases but simply wanted the same as nurses _____ in the world.

counterparts

elsewhere

security

among

deliver

pain

could

especially

England's 200,000 nurses will soon vote on _____ or not to take industrial action and go on strike _____ pay. It could be the first ever time for English nurses to "down tools". A spokesperson said that nurses "will not _____ in any way that is detrimental to the well-being or interests of their patients". This makes an _____ strike unlikely, but may result in nurses refusing to work unpaid overtime. Other actions might see nurses insisting on taking all of their breaks _____ by law and turning down requests to change shifts at short _____. Dr Carter said he believed England's public fully support the nurses, saying: "Day in, day out, nurses are _____ for their patients - they will be heartened to know that they can _____ on the general public for support at this difficult time."

count

whether

allowed

act

notice

over

there

all-out

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Nurse morale at all-time low in England

Declining morale among English nurses has _____. This is according to a survey in hospitals that paints a picture of a profession in crisis. _____ discovered that most nurses in England felt overworked and undervalued, especially as their _____ counterparts in Wales and Scotland. Many nurses also said they were worried about their job security and 30 per cent said they would quit their jobs if they could. More _____ is the finding that over half of nurses said they were _____ of care they feel patients deserve. Dr Peter Carter of the Royal College of Nursing said that nurses were not demanding "sky-high" increases but simply wanted the same _____ world.

England's 200,000 nurses will soon vote _____ industrial action and go on strike over pay. It _____ for English nurses to "down tools". A spokesperson said that nurses "will not act in any way that is detrimental _____ of their patients". This makes an all-out strike unlikely, but may result in nurses refusing to work unpaid overtime. _____ insisting on taking all of their breaks allowed by law and turning _____ shifts at short notice. Dr Carter said he believed England's public fully support the nurses, saying: "Day in, day out, _____ patients - they will be heartened to know _____ general public for support at this difficult time."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'industrial' and 'action'.

industrial	action
-------------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• low• picture• especially• quit• busy• elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether or not• tools• interests• overtime• public• count
--	--

STUDENT NURSES SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about NURSES in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) Do you think nurses should go on strike?
- c) What do you think of nurses?
- d) Would you like to be a nurse?
- e) How are nurses treated in your country?
- f) Do you think it would be interesting to work in a hospital?
- g) What kind of person is needed to become a great nurse?
- h) How much should nurses get paid (compared with politicians, teachers and rock stars)?
- i) What is your image of English nurses?
- j) Do you think nursing offers a lot of job security?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Are you surprised nurses in England have never gone on strike before?
- c) Do you think nurses have a lot of power to get higher salaries?
- d) Are there a lot of strikes and industrial action in your country?
- e) What do you think of nurses having to work unpaid overtime?
- f) How long do you think people would support nurses who came out on strike?
- g) Britain spends a lot of money on weapons but will only give nurses a small pay increase. What do you think of this?
- h) Have you ever felt overworked and undervalued?
- i) What questions would you like to ask a nurse in England?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Nurse morale at all-time low in England

Declining morale (1) _____ English nurses has reached an all-time low. This is according to a survey in hospitals that paints a (2) _____ of a profession in crisis. A poll (3) _____ 9,000 nurses discovered that most nurses in England felt overworked and undervalued, especially as their salaries were less than their counterparts in Wales and Scotland. Many nurses also said they were worried about their job security and 30 per cent said they would (4) _____ their jobs if they could. More worrying for the health service is the finding that over half of nurses said they were too busy to (5) _____ the levels of care they feel patients deserve. Dr Peter Carter of the Royal College of Nursing said that nurses were not demanding "sky-high" increases but simply wanted the same as nurses (6) _____ in the world.

England's 200,000 nurses will soon vote on (7) _____ or not to take industrial action and go on strike over pay. It could be the first ever time for English nurses to "(8) _____ tools". A spokesperson said that nurses "will not act in any way that is detrimental to the well-being or interests of their patients". This makes an all-out strike unlikely, but may result (9) _____ nurses refusing to work unpaid overtime. Other actions might see nurses insisting on taking all of their breaks allowed by law and turning (10) _____ requests to change shifts at short notice. Dr Carter said he believed England's public (11) _____ support the nurses, saying: "Day in, day (12) _____, nurses are there for their patients - they will be heartened to know that they can count on the general public for support at this difficult time."

1. (a) among (b) between (c) all (d) in
2. (a) drawing (b) picture (c) sketch (d) doodle
3. (a) up (b) by (c) with (d) of
4. (a) quits (b) quiet (c) quit (d) quite
5. (a) delivered (b) delivers (c) delivery (d) deliver
6. (a) elsewhere (b) around (c) throughout (d) over
7. (a) if (b) whether (c) weather (d) do
8. (a) destroy (b) make (c) down (d) up
9. (a) by (b) of (c) in (d) on
10. (a) down (b) up (c) over (d) under
11. (a) whole (b) feel (c) full (d) fully
12. (a) on (b) out (c) week (d) month

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about nursing and what nurses do day in, day out. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. NURSES: Make a poster showing how different nursing around the world is. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about the effects of nurses going on strike for a long time. Include imaginary interviews with nurses, the government, patients and the general public.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the British Prime Minister. Ask him three questions about what he thinks of nurses and their salary. Give him three suggestions about how to make nurses feel valued. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. T d. F e. F f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. declining | a. decreasing |
| 2. all-time low | b. rock bottom |
| 3. poll | c. survey |
| 4. counterparts | d. peers |
| 5. deserve | e. merit |
| 6. industrial action | f. strike |
| 7. down tools | g. stop working |
| 8. detrimental | h. harmful |
| 9. heartened | i. happy |
| 10. count on | j. depend on |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. morale among English nurses has | a. reached an all-time low |
| 2. paints a picture of | b. a profession in crisis |
| 3. their salaries were less than their | c. counterparts in Wales |
| 4. deliver the levels of care they feel | d. patients deserve |
| 5. nurses were not demanding | e. "sky-high" increases |
| 6. vote on whether or not to take | f. industrial action |
| 7. the first ever time for English nurses | g. to "down tools" |
| 8. detrimental to the well-being | h. or interests of their patients |
| 9. turning down requests to change | i. shifts at short notice |
| 10. they can count on the general | j. public for support |

GAP FILL:

Nurse morale at all-time low in England

Declining morale **among** English nurses has reached an all-time low. This is according to a survey in hospitals that **paints** a picture of a profession in crisis. A poll of 9,000 nurses discovered that most nurses in England felt overworked and undervalued, **especially** as their salaries were less than their **counterparts** in Wales and Scotland. Many nurses also said they were worried about their job **security** and 30 per cent said they would quit their jobs if they **could**. More worrying for the health service is the finding that over half of nurses said they were too busy to **deliver** the levels of care they feel patients deserve. Dr Peter Carter of the Royal College of Nursing said that nurses were not demanding "sky-high" increases but simply wanted the same as nurses **elsewhere** in the world.

England's 200,000 nurses will soon vote on **whether** or not to take industrial action and go on strike **over** pay. It could be the first ever time for English nurses to "down tools". A spokesperson said that nurses "will not **act** in any way that is detrimental to the well-being or interests of their patients". This makes an **all-out** strike unlikely, but may result in nurses refusing to work unpaid overtime. Other actions might see nurses insisting on taking all of their breaks **allowed** by law and turning down requests to change shifts at short **notice**. Dr Carter said he believed England's public fully support the nurses, saying: "Day in, day out, nurses are **there** for their patients - they will be heartened to know that they can **count** on the general public for support at this difficult time."

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - a 2 - b 3 - d 4 - c 5 - d 6 - a 7 - b 8 - c 9 - c 10 - a 11 - d 12 - b