

Why Are Nurses Against a Nursing Council? A Pandora's Box You Won't Be Able to Shut



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Dear readers,

I hope this little article finds you well.

It has been three months since I last shared my thoughts with you. As you can imagine, a lot has happened in this time, in my professional and private lives (well, that's life!), but there is one particular story I would like to share with you all today.

Last week, I had a very interesting exchange on social media—one that I have never had before and probably will never have again.

The second German nursing council in Nordrhein Westfalen (the biggest county) is active on Instagram. Naturally, I follow them because I am still very interested in what my old Heimat (Germany) is doing. I also like to see what political nursing activities people are engaging in. The healthcare professionals from this county have my greatest support. They were the first county to implement their nursing council in Rheinland Pfalz.

Whether or not to have a nursing council has been an ongoing discussion in German-speaking countries for decades. People in other European countries, most of which have a nursing council or strong nurses' associations, often don't understand countries that do not register their nurses. To be honest, we watch and shake our heads.

Anyway, going back to my chat on Instagram last week, I commented and congratulated the president of the council and her team for their important work. I received a positive response from other nurses who thought what I said about the nursing council in Britain was really interesting. Thanks for that, dear colleagues. BUT... guess what? There was also a negative response from other people. I tried to be rational and professional. I tried to describe why our profession needs a council, why we need to be registered, and why we must fulfil a code of conduct. I explained why society needs the protection of a council to ensure high standards of nursing, which we all need to follow. Of course, most nurses already understand the answers to these questions, but I continued to engage with people on social media, ask questions and provide answers intermittently over the next three days.

Yes, dear readers, I spent three days of my busy life explaining and trying to convince people why a council is a MUST for the nursing profession. In short, if you want to bring about changes in nursing, you need a council. You need a nursing union or nursing association that will fight for you and will be able to sit at the highest tables with politicians and lawmakers. Only then will you finally get the laws that will enhance your working lives and empower you all as nurses! As members of the council, as nurses, you will have a VOICE!

How simple is that?

My answers were accepted. However, there was always a 'but...'

In the comments, people presented different statistics to me, and I read a crazy number of arguments that were simply not evidence-based. When I read these challenging comments from my fellow nurses, a question started to form in my mind. The big question was, "WHY?". Why did I begin this conversation with nurses who don't want to understand the need for a nursing council or perhaps cannot understand it?

Why Staff Nurse Torgler? Why?

The chats became quite... well, how shall I put it, daunting? Yes, *daunting* is the best word to express my feelings here. Over the years, I have encountered many nurses who are skeptical about changes to nursing in their countries. I always try to explain that Great Britain has come a long way with its political activity. It took decades to bring about acceptance and then implement changes to rules and laws for nursing. In the end, we got where we wanted to - being professional and autonomous.

However, the communication on social media was on a different level from anything I have experienced before. I don't plan to experience it again, but I can tell you that . Lesson learned: Do not try to open Pandora's box. Once you open it, you won't be able to shut it!

I will continue to support my politically involved colleagues in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland who fight to achieve their councils, unions, professional standards, and beliefs about nursing. As they work and battle relentlessly to stand up for professionalism and nurses' rights, I must and will support them.

So, dear readers, the conclusion to this story is that I shall never again spend several days on social media trying to explain that there is light at the end of the tunnel for the nurses who have switched on their nursing council torches!

Many thanks for your time.

NURSES UNITED!

Sabine

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