

Health and Social Services Committee

HSS(2)-08-05(p.1)

Date: Wednesday 22 June 2005

Venue: Committee Room 2, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Nursing Issues

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide members of the Health and Social Services Committee with background information on some of the key issues concerning nursing in Wales in response to their request to focus on nursing at the Committee meeting on 22 June.

Background

2. The overall picture regarding Nursing in Wales is positive. Interest in Nursing as a profession means that Universities in Wales are receiving high quality applications both directly and through the University Clearing House system. The age profile of students in training has changed significantly over the last few years and many are now entering as mature students, taking up a career for the first time or entering from other previous employment.

The Nursing profession has responded positively to the challenges of modernising the Health Service and expanding roles in response to the service requirements. There are numerous examples of nurse led initiatives such as Accident and Emergency Nurse Practitioners and triage services, nurse-led clinics in the community for specific chronic diseases like diabetes, asthma and hypertension and, of course, nurse prescribing. The approach taken in Wales to the development of Consultant Nurses for instance has drawn much positive interest from across the United Kingdom, and there are now more than 25 Consultant nurses and midwives working in such diverse areas as Domestic Abuse, Coronary Heart Disease, services for older people and sexual health services. Midwifery services in particular have been leading initiatives into supporting pathways for normal labour and choice in place for delivery and this July eight Welsh Midwives will be presenting papers at the International Conference of Midwives in Brisbane Australia.

Across the various fields of nursing, Wales has achieved more than its fair share of national awards. These range from a District Nurse who introduced simple pain relief for patients undergoing complex dressings in their own home, to a Prison Nurse who introduced Well-men Clinics and fitness programmes for long-term prisoners. This has put the spotlight firmly on nursing in Wales as leading edge. The success has been mirrored in the Welsh Schools of Nursing and Healthcare Science too, with Bangor being placed fourth in the UK in The Guardian league table of Universities. The University of Glamorgan was selected last year as the site for the NHS Genetics Education and Development Centre for nursing and Allied Health Professionals under a project funded by the Department of Health. This, together with a renewed focus on Research in the nursing professions is likely to attract high level researchers into Wales as well as opportunities for funding. The nursing research strategy, Realising the Potential through Research and development was launched in February 2004, is focused on ensuring that the nursing professions develop, produce and apply appropriate knowledge for the benefit of those that come in contact with the services in Wales. This includes research into recruitment and retention in the workforce, developing evidence-based practice guidelines and

integrated care pathways, effective interventions within the multi-professional context in areas such as mental health, cancer care, and children and young people.

3. Designed for Life, the new ten year Strategy for creating a world class Health and Social Care Service for Wales will require novel approaches to Workforce Planning and role redesign, refocusing on the most appropriate location for the delivery of care. Nursing intends to be at the forefront of these developments. Currently, work is being undertaken between the Office of the Chief Nursing Officer and the National Leadership and Innovations Agency on radical remodelling of the workforce and the impact on preparation, education and development of nurses to undertake new roles and support the needs of the health communities. As part of the remodeling of the workforce, the Office of the Chief Nursing Officer is working with consultants from Kings College London, in determining the skill mix and importantly, the appropriate location for the most highly skilled nurses along the continuum of care between Primary, Secondary and Tertiary services
The intention is to ensure that Wales benefits from a nursing workforce that is both fit for purpose and flexible for the future. This paper identifies some of the key challenges that members of the Health and Social Services Committee are already aware of, and the policies and actions in place to deal with them.

Recruitment and Retention

4. The National Assembly for Wales has invested significantly in the number of Education Commissions from the 5 Universities providing nurse education. Although Wales has led the way in the United Kingdom regarding establishing nursing as an All Graduate profession, it is also recognized that we need to be recruiting from a wider catchment population than A level school leavers. Consequently all of the Universities have developed innovative approaches in partnership with Further Education establishments to attract mature or second career students and enable some health care assistants to undertake their training at a pace that is suitable to them.

Nurse training figures are as follows:-

Commissioning Numbers 2000/01 to 2004/05	
2000/01	2,897
2001/02	3,261
2002/03	3,499
2003/04	3,782
2004/05	3,770

The current number of nurses in training (based on April 05 returns) amounts to 3,657. Wales is showing significantly higher retention rate in students in training than the rest of the United Kingdom with an attrition rate of 3% per year compared with 8% across England.

Comparison between the number of student places commissioned in 2000 and the eventual employment uptake at the end of their 3 year training indicates that 85.5% of the newly qualified nurses took up posts in NHS Wales. 29 newly qualified nurses were recruited from other UK universities and 60 from overseas.

5. The National Assembly for Wales set a target figure of 6,000 more nurses in service by 2010. Although annual targets have not been set for the achievement of the 2010 staffing figure the steady increase in established posts shows that nursing is already two thirds of the way to achieving the 2010 target. The latest available Welsh Assembly Government statistics show that at 30th September 2004 there were the following numbers of qualified nurses, midwives and health visitors employed in NHS Wales

Qualified Nursing, Midwifery and HV staff in post at 30 September 2004		
NHS Trust	Number	Wte
Bro Morgannwg	2,317	1,973.3
Cardiff and Vale	3,801	3,252.2
Carmarthenshire	1,177	947.8
Ceredigion and Mid Wales	487	395.3
Conwy and Denbighshire	2,281	1,484.3
Gwent Healthcare	5,627	3,160.1
North East Wales	2,507	1,380.3
North Glamorgan	1,293	845.3
North West Wales	1,754	1,460.5
Pembrokeshire and Derwen	1,136	968.1
Pontypridd and Rhondda	2,107	1,143.2
Powys Local Health Board	755	516.8
Swansea	2,787	2,207.2
Velindre	150	113.5

All Wales Recruitment and Retention Strategy

6. Sustaining and developing services requires strong retention policies to be developed across Trusts. The All Wales Recruitment and Retention Strategy and Action Plan launched in December 2002 builds on local Strategies that have already been developed by Trusts and Local Health Boards. The Strategy, which was reviewed and updated in 2004, covers such initiatives as Family Friendly policies.

Return to Practice

7. An important source of recruitment of nursing staff are those staff who have left nursing for some time but who are interested in returning. The Assembly offers £1000 bursary and child care costs for nurses who require a period of time to be updated on current practices, new technology and other developments. The higher education institutions in Wales offer return to practice courses for these nurses. Currently Welsh Assembly Government is working with Universities and Trusts to monitor the uptake of posts from the return to practice cohorts.

8. The impact of successfully recruiting nurses into new roles and reconfigures services designed to respond to the pressures in demand has had an effect on both the basic ward establishments and the requirement for bank and agency utilisation. The vacancy factor across Wales is around 2.3% of the total establishment with the greatest pressures in North Glamorgan NHS Trust (6.8%) Gwent Healthcare Trust (5.7%) Powys Local Health Board (3.9%) and Cardiff and the Vale (3.1%) based on Welsh Assembly Government statistics September 2004. Individual Trusts are setting themselves challenging targets for both recruitment, retention and managing down avoidable bank and agency usage.

Bank and Agency

9. Banking Agency utilisation has attracted a lot of attention largely related to the high costs. It is unrealistic to expect that busy hospitals performing at close to capacity can entirely eliminate the use of casual staff to cover surges in activity in the service. What is important however is to ensure that all avoidable bookings of casual staff are managed rigorously and that the best financial arrangements are in place when the use of agency staff is inevitable. Welsh Assembly Government have been following with interest the progress made by NHS Professionals in England and have taken advantage of the lessons learned to establish the All Wales Agency Nurse Project.

The Welsh Assembly Government has put into place a series of initiatives that will help support Trusts in an effort to reduce Agency costs. These include actively managing sickness / absence in response to the National Audit Office report on Trusts in Wales, workload measurement systems to ensure that establishments reflect current requirements. These now form part of the validation for workforce plans. Nurses are also developing rostering skills supported by Welsh Assembly Government and Swansea NHS Trust is piloting a computerised self-rostering system. Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust, a previously high user of Agency staff, is building on the best practice demonstrated by Bristol, which will include setting testing targets for the reduction on Agency use.

Agency Nurse Project

10. An Agency Nurse NHS Wales Project Board was established in December 2004 and led by the Chief Executive of Ceredigion NHS Trust. The Director of the RCN and Head of Health Wales Unison are members of the project board. The projects remit is to develop a tender that will reflect the need for an All Wales contract which will have fixed prices, which the agencies must meet. Considerable progress is being made.

Progress to Date:

11. A sub group has been set up to develop the service specification for the contract. The group comprises of senior nursing and bank manager representatives as well as representatives from the RCN, Unison and Nursing and Healthcare Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales. The service specification is scheduled to be finalised at the next meeting scheduled for June 17th 2005. The specification will then go out for consultation before being presented at the Project Board meeting.

Work on the financial costings model is ongoing with the lead being taken by financial representatives of Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust in association with Welsh Health Supplies (WHS). It is anticipated that the financial costing model will be rolled out to Trusts in July for testing. A task and finish group is to be established to run a series of meetings with key suppliers in order to discuss some of the key components of the eventual contract. Communications on the project is being reviewed and it is expected that the WHS intranet site will be used to update NHS colleagues across Wales on progress of the project. In addition, the WHS internet site will be used to host a Frequently Asked Questions section for potential bidders and other interested parties. The next meeting of the Project Board is scheduled for 13th September and it is expected by then that the work of the respective sub-groups/task and finish groups will be completed and that the project will be at the point of being able to issue the formal EU advertisement.

Overseas Recruitment

12. The number of nurses in training in Wales has increased considerably and as short-term measure whilst these increased numbers of nurses are in training NHS Wales has been recruiting nurses from overseas countries. It is important to realise that there are ethical issues relating to overseas recruitment and NHS Wales follows the best practice as set out in a Memorandum Of Understanding agreed on behalf of the entire United Kingdom with approved countries such as the Philippines, India and Spain. Individual Trusts have recruited directly from these countries for the past 4 years with great success. The presence of Filipino Nurses in particular have made a significant contribution to the Health Services in Wales. Close relationships have been established between the ambassador for the Philippines, Welsh Assembly Government and the University of Wales to ensure that these nurses gain maximum benefit from their time in Wales.

International Recruitment Database Project

13. Not all international nurses are recruited following visits to the donor country. Many nurses arrive in Wales independently or as refugee/asylum seekers. In order to process inquiries from such potential nursing staff the International Recruitment Database Project was established.

The International Recruitment Database Project (IRDP) was initiated on 9th August 2004. The IRDP became active in September 2004 with in-coming inquiries from internationally qualified nurses seeking adaptation logged onto the database and managed by the system. Simultaneously, the application pack was developed in consultation with nurse recruiters across NHS Wales. It is intended that eventually the system could effectively manage inquiries from all international healthcare professionals seeking adaptation and employment in Wales. To date:

- 2081 nurses logged onto the system (initial inquiries)
- 925 have returned application packs and are entered onto the system; approx 520 waiting for entry to the system i.e. 69 of initial responses to inquiries made have been followed through by applicants
- 407 active candidates - meet necessary criteria and are awaiting assessment/interview of these 407, 76% originate from India, 5% from Philippines, 13% from African countries (Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe), the remaining 6% of inquiries originate from: Bulgaria, China, Iran, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Romania, Sri Lanka.
- 335 candidates currently resident in UK; 30% of candidates from African countries are currently resident in UK.
- 95 successfully recruited onto adaptation programme to date;

Future scheduled recruitment activities include Swansea (Ophthalmology & ENT), Cardiff (Cardiac) and Ceredigion (Med, Surg, A&E, ITU).

The number of Incoming inquiries per day via email - 5, telephone call - 5, internet - 5, post - 2. (Total approx. 17 per day)

Eighty-one nurses have been accepted for adaptation programmes across three NHS Wales trusts. (In due course, an evaluation of the progression of these nurses, through adaptation to subsequent take-up of employment, will be available.) The cost, to employers, of recruiting these nurses via the IRDP has been minimal. To have trained this number of nurses, as undergraduates, in UK would have cost the NHS approximately £1 215 000 (at an estimated cost of £15k per nurse).

Agenda for Change

14. Agenda for Change is a major amendment to the pay and terms and conditions of employment of all directly employed NHS staff, with the exception of doctors, dentists and board level senior managers. It will introduce improved pay based on job evaluation and harmonised terms and conditions of employment including improved holiday entitlement. Progress to date is as follows:-

Job Matching

15. Over 7000 jobs have been put through the matching process in Wales, which represents about 29% of the number of job descriptions predicted by NHS organisations. Results are being monitored on a weekly basis using the Computer System (CAJE) and data are now being generated on a Trust by Trust basis to monitor the percentage of jobs matched.

Job analysis and local evaluation

16. Approximately 10% of jobs are failing to match a national profile and will need to go forward for local evaluation. This figure varies widely between organisations, from 2% to 18% depending on the jobs profile. This figure is likely to rise to reflect jobs, which do not have a national profile. A number of trusts have commenced the Job Analysis process, but none has carried out any local evaluations as yet. As` this is a more time consuming process, those organisations with a high level of non matches will need to progress this quickly if they are to complete the process in a timely manner. The JE subgroup has recommended that hybrid evaluation should be offered in situations where this is appropriate and a paper clarifying the process and simplifying its recording is being developed.

Training

17. Job Evaluation trainers are completing the accreditation process and the majority have now achieved their accreditation, with the remaining 10-12 being required to submit their application by the end of June. Once accredited, trainers will be able to cascade training for trainers within their organisations. It is pleasing to note that a number of matchers and analyst/evaluators are also applying for accreditation although this is voluntary. The Agenda for Change pay bands and Job matching to date is attached as Annex A

Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) Sub Group Report - e-KSF

18. The 3 e-ksf training courses were effective in increasing awareness and use of the e-ksf tool. Across Wales those trained were extremely positive about the benefits to organisations in adopting the tool, to help facilitate the implementation of KSF now, in producing the post outlines, but also its future benefits in co-ordinating Personal Development Reviews, and Personal Development Plans, across the organisation. The Wales Implementation Group will run 2 training events for the e-ksf Administrators in July. An interactive training package is also being tested to support role out of the e-ksf training.

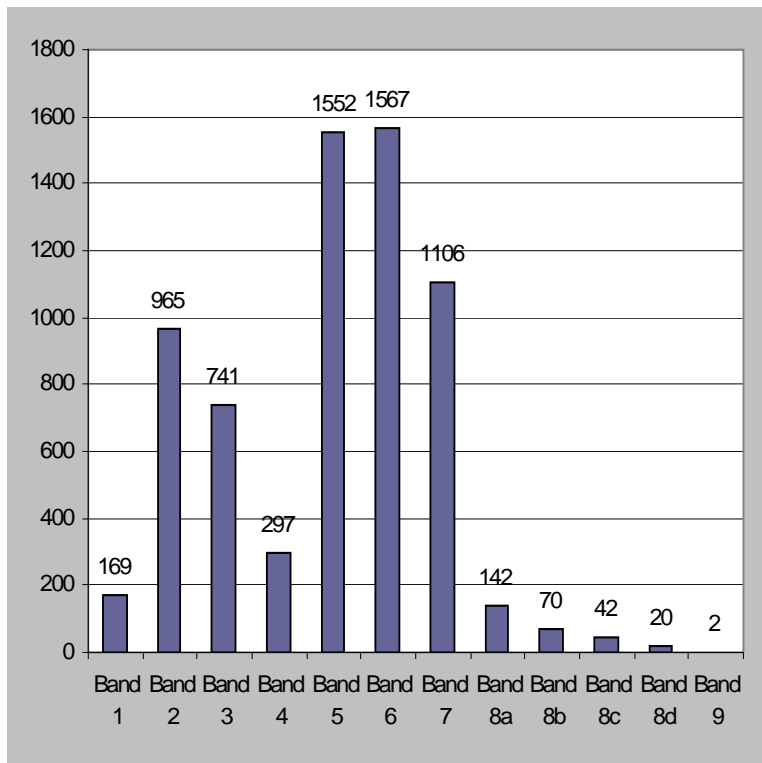
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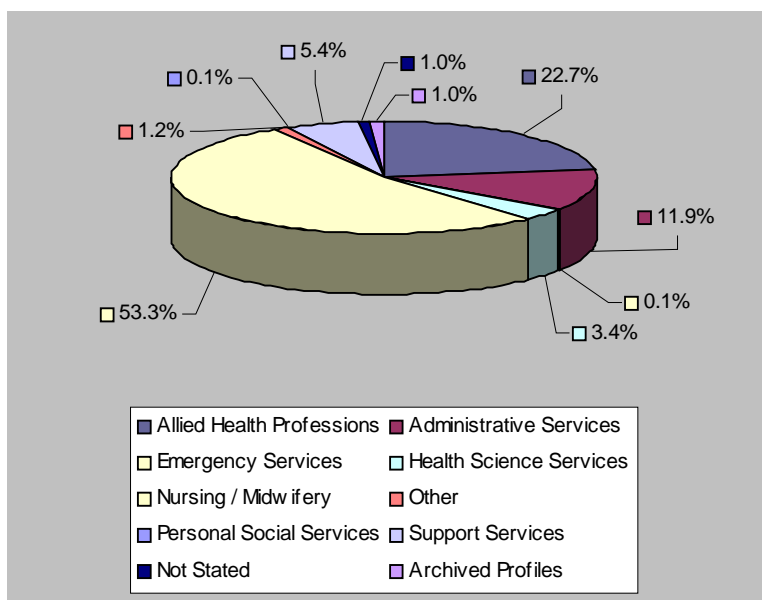
Wales - CAJE Job Matching Data - 6 June 2005

Annex A

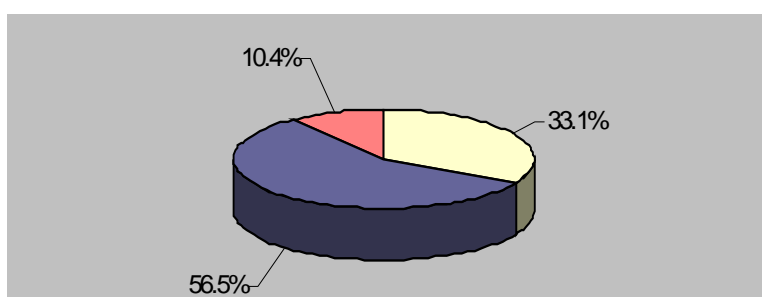
By Band		
	Number	Percent
Band 1	169	2.5%
Band 2	965	14.5%
Band 3	741	11.1%
Band 4	297	4.5%
Band 5	1552	23.3%
Band 6	1567	23.5%
Band 7	1106	16.6%
Band 8a	142	2.1%
Band 8b	70	1.0%
Band 8c	42	0.6%
Band 8d	20	0.3%
Band 9	2	0.0%
All Wales	6673	100.0%



By Job Family (matched)		
	Number	Percent
Allied Health Professions	1516	22.7%
Administrative Services	791	11.9%
Emergency Services	4	0.1%
Health Science Services	227	3.4%
Nursing / Midwifery	3555	53.3%
Other	78	1.2%
Personal Social Services	6	0.1%
Support Services	358	5.4%
Not Stated	69	1.0%
Archived Profiles	69	1.0%
All Wales	6673	100.0%



By Result		
	Number	Percent
Profile Match	2465	33.1%



Band Match	4208	56.5%
No Match	772	10.4%
All Wales	7445	100.0%