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Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Our ref: MB/EH/0484/10
Your ref:

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Darren Millar AM
Chair, Health, Well-being and Local
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National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay

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Dear Darren

**Re: Plenary debate 23 June 2010 Health and Well Being Local Government
Committees Report into Stroke**

During the plenary debate 23 June, I agreed to write to you to provide clarity about the NHS Annual Operating Framework 2010, in relation to targets for Workforce redesign, and to respond to questions about workforce planning.

1. AOF target

The Annual Operating Framework has been further refined and clarified, as follows;

'All organisations must demonstrate changes to skill mix across ALL grades and bands which maximise the use of flexibilities available under the provisions of A4C and medical contracts. This skill mix change must ensure that staff are only deployed in roles and in a band which require their level of skill, knowledge and experience.

This skill mix change must reflect growth in staff in Bands 1-4 of 3%, per annum, between 2010-2013.

Progress will be assessed through:

- a) Baseline analysis of the full time equivalent and basic pay by A4C band and grade for medical staff, in the 12 month period to 1 April 2010. This will be repeated in the 12 month period to 31 March 2011.
- b) the number of medical staff positions and
- c) Analysis of average basic pay per employee, which will be expected to have reduced by 1% between 1st April 2010 and 31st March 2011. This figure will need to be adjusted to take account of pay awards and incremental drift.

This target is clearly not seeking to primarily reduce posts at band 5 and above and no instruction has been given to "*take posts out of the system*".

The Annual Operating Framework target aims to increase the number of support staff to ensure that skilled health professionals can best utilise their expertise. It is intended to support NHS organisations in developing a workforce that is fit for the demands of modern health care and provides safe care to all patients.

You will note that the AOF targets refers to a rebalance of the skill mix above band 5 which will provide career opportunities for our specialist professionals to develop their skills at advanced levels.

2. Workforce Planning

Processes for workforce planning are now integrated with service and financial plans and therefore should adequately reflect the workforce requirements which would incorporate their provision for stroke services.

Workforce planning numbers for new professionals including Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists are submitted to me on an annual basis. I have continued to increase the student numbers over the past few years, in order to meet future service requirements.

For 2010, I have agreed to commission 43 Speech and Language Therapy places; 104 Occupational Therapy, and 90 Physiotherapy places as a direct response to the NHS in meeting the needs of patients including stroke services.

Continuing, specialist and post graduate education is the responsibility of the employing organisation. However, as I have stated in my response to the Committee's Report I will be considering the UK Framework on Education to promote implementation in Wales.

I agree with members views on the importance of training to maintain high quality care services.

