

Date: Thursday 27 June 2002

Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Staffing Targets for the NHS in Wales

Purpose

1. To provide the Health and Social Services Committee with details of the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to increasing staffing levels In the NHS in Wales and provide targets for these increases.

Recommendations

2. Health and Social Services Committee members are invited to note the staffing targets highlighted.

Introduction

3. The Plan for Wales 2001 presented by the First Minister in October 2001 identifies the commitment to increase staffing levels and the number of healthcare professionals in training, quantifying this by committing to increase the number of doctors in training by 65% and the number of nurses in training by 35% by 2003-2004.

4. The Committee was presented with the results of the 2001 Workforce Planning Data on 5 December 2001. It was agreed that staffing targets would be set once the information from Trusts and Health Authorities had been validated by Chief Executives and by the various professions in Wales.

Targets

5. The overall number of staff directly employed by the NHS in Wales has risen by 8,400 since 1997, an increase of over 12%.

6. Based on the services identification of future staffing requirements, the numbers of students training in the health care professions, and developments in the recruitment and retention of staff, the following

targets are set for Wales.

7. By 2010 the Welsh Assembly Government is committed to increasing the numbers of healthcare professionals working in the NHS in Wales by :-

700 Hospital Consultant and General Practitioners - (existing staff in post 3,390)

6,000 Nurses – (existing staff in post 35,521)

2,000 other Health Care Professionals – (existing staff in post 9,237).

8. These increases will be achieved through a co-ordinated national and local approach to future planning, education and training and recruitment and retention of staff. On the basis of the overall targets for Wales, individual targets will be set in due course for each Trust and Local Health Board.

9. The development of a national recruitment and retention strategy and action plan is underway and will be presented to the Committee in July. The utilisation of staff in the NHS will be explored through the examination of more efficient and effective methods of working, thereby increasing productivity.

10. The Committee was given details about the review of the workforce planning process in October 2001. This included the development of an overarching multi-professional steering group which is currently being established, and which will be chaired by the Director of the NHS in Wales. The Group will give national leadership and strategic direction on workforce development issues in line with Welsh Assembly Government priorities. It will also assess and validate the service's workforce needs through the workforce planning process and develop approaches that will enable these needs to be met. These approaches will need to include consideration of new types of workers ie skill mix and job design, innovative approaches to working and flexibility, including flexibility in education and training provision. The education and training Capacity Review will feed into these deliberations.

Increases in Education and Training Commissions

11. Already the targets to increase the numbers of doctors and nurses in training are on course to be achieved.

Doctors -

- Medical student intakes have increased from 190 students per year in 1998 to 290 from September 2001, an increase of 52%. Consideration is being given to increasing this number by a further 70 places per annum through a graduate scheme at Swansea. This will take the total cohort of medical students in Wales to 360 students per annum.
- There are currently 758 Specialist Registrar posts in Wales. In accordance with the NHS Plan for

Wales, this is due to increase by 60 by the end of 2003.

- There are 197 Pre-Registration House Officer posts with an extra 19 in 2002 rising to an increase of 47 by 2004.

Nurses -

- Training commissions for pre-registration nurse training places have increased from 904 per annum in 1999 to 1203 in 2001. This means that the total number of student nurse places has increased from 2,664 in 1999-2000 to 3,216 in 2001-2002.
- This means that an increase of 27% in training places has already been achieved. The full target of 35% is expected to be achieved this year.

Allied Health Professions –

- The number of training places for the Allied Health Professions has also been increased from 494 per annum in 1999-00 to 649 in 2001-02. By 2003-04 this will have been increased further to 681.

Conclusions

12. The staffing targets identified in this paper will build on the increases in staffing levels already achieved since 1997. The overall number of staff directly employed by the NHS in Wales has risen by 8,400 since then, an increase of over 12%.

13. Alongside the continuing increase in the numbers of health professionals working in the NHS there is a need to ensure that the workforce is being used effectively. The new Workforce Development Group will be the conduit for examining how the workforce and the roles of all healthcare staff can be developed to maximise the use of the extensive skills and talents already available in the NHS in Wales.

Financial Issues

14. The staffing targets in this paper cover an 8 year period. The cost implications for the first 3 years will be considered as part of the 2002 Budget Planning Round. Future costs implications will need to be built into future Budget Planning Rounds.

Assembly Compliance

15. The Assembly has delegated authority for NHS workforce issues under section 2 of the NHS Act 1977. The Assembly's functions under the NHS Act so far as delegated to the First Minister, are

delegated to the Minister for Health and Social Services. There are no issues of regularity and propriety.

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