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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board

Senedd Post Legislation Scrutiny Response on behalf of the Nursing & Midwifery Nurse Staffing Assurance Group (Formerly Nurse Staffing Act (NSA) Steering Group, Swansea Bay University Health Board

The Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 provides nurses at all levels with a voice, the Health Boards group outlined above is therefore an advocate of the Act.

The Act allows engagement with all Health Board staff across all disciplines to understand and calculate the nursing establishments and rosters. The Health Boards corporate scrutiny involves Directors of Nursing, Finance, Workforce, and Digital Teams. The Act supports the ability to have evidence to articulate the staffing requirements from the triangulated approach.

Bi-annual re-calculations process

The bi-annual re-calculation process is currently carried out following January and June's acuity audits. However, the time required to scrutinise and discuss the templates with Directors of Nursing, Finance and Workforce and to gain agreement from Board often means that the Health Board has not had a chance to test any changes to rosters and establishments before the next round of re-calculations. With this in mind, there could be a consideration to move to an annual re-calculation, which would allow any previous changes to be measured and evaluated before the next cycle. With the provision that any changes to Section 25B wards would require additional re-calculations, outside of this time period, as is currently the case.

Reporting

Both the mandated November Board paper and the 'Once for Wales' agreed May Board paper can be quite repetitive. Both report the ward establishments, with the May Board paper including quality indicators and analysis of incidents. This information could be incorporated into one annual report, which would include all the information from both November and May's paper and shape the three yearly report to Welsh Government.

Data capture

Implementation of SafeCare has allowed for capture of data, which informs the Nurse Staffing levels, however the required enhancements to the SafeCare system for reporting are expected for testing in Summer 2023. This will allow for clearer reporting, with both Health Board/Trust and an All Wales picture. The inability to capture this data previously has been an issue, with hindsight it would have been prudent to have had these systems embedded into practice prior to 'the Act' coming onto force.

Quality Indicators

Unsure if some of the current Quality Indicators provide robust assurance such as Medication errors. Addition of moderate harm for falls and medication errors will increase the number of incidents recorded within Health Board reports. This has been highlighted at an All Wales level and further work is being taken forward to ensure a consistent approach, in line with 'the Act'.

Resource Requirements

It cannot be underestimated the significant resource that is needed to meet the requirements of 'the Act', both operationally and corporately.

The Act stipulates that all Section 25B wards on costs (to cover sickness, annual leave and study) are currently set at 26.9%, is there the opportunity to review these and ensure parity across all services?

Uni-professional legislation

With the move to consider the 'Team around the Person' this Act is uni-professional and currently would not fully fit with this model of multi-professional models of working. There is All Wales work being undertaken to assess the impact.

Section 25A less guidance

There is less guidance for section 25A areas, this could result in ambiguity and different approaches across Wales.

Finance

'The Act' has supported a clear mechanism to evidence the requirement to enhance establishments and therefore gain support from a financial perspective.