

Children and Young People Committee

Inquiry into Neonatal Care

Additional information from the Royal College of Nursing (Wales) on details of under capacity in level 1cots and details of the educational pathways to neonatal nursing

Further to the Committee's request for information on Level 1 cots we have consulted with our members working in this area and although it is felt that some development is needed (and referred to in the written evidence from Dr Mark Drayton) our members strongly feel that the urgent priority should be to increase capacity at Level 2 and Level 3.

The Committee also asked for details of the educational pathway to neonatal nursing.

A registered nurse will have completed a 3 year nursing degree in one of four areas (learning disability, adult, children and young people or mental health). This degree is 50% theory and 50% practice working full-time in the third year. Following successful completion of this degree and registration with the regulator (NMC) the nurse could apply for an Agenda for Change Band 5 nursing post in the NHS.

The majority of nurses in neonatal services today emerge from the Children and Young People's branch. It is worth noting that this year the Welsh Government have substantially reduced the number of university places available in children and young people's nursing, from over a hundred places across Wales last year to around 60 this year.

In Wales the University of Glamorgan offers two specialist neonatal courses. Each 20 credit module last 15 weeks with 1 day's attendance a week required. Each place costs £520. The courses offered are "specialist neonatal care" and "intensive neonatal care" with the former a prerequisite for the latter.

Outside Wales the course "advanced neonatal nurse practitioner" is also offered.

Around 10% of nurses undertaking post-registration study in neonatal care in Wales fund this themselves either in full or in part. An additional issue is that some nurses are required to take the time for the studies and teaching out of their own Annual Leave. We would certainly not see this as a desirable policy direction since neonatal skills nursing are so clearly identified as an area of need for the NHS in Wales.

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