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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Hywel Dda  
University Health Board

Ein cyf/Our ref: CEO.1359  
Gofynnwch am/Please ask for: Corporate Information Officer  
Rhif Ffôn /Telephone: 01267 239892  
Dyddiad/Date: 16 August 2019

Swyddfeydd Corfforaethol, Adeilad Ystwyth  
Hafan Derwen, Parc Dewi Sant, Heol Ffynnon Job  
Caerfyrddin, Sir Gaerfyrddin, SA31 3BB

Corporate Offices, Ystwyth Building  
Hafan Derwen, St Davids Park, Job's Well Road,  
Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire, SA31 3BB

Nick Ramsay AM  
Chair  
Public Accounts Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

E-mail to- [SeneddPAC@Assembly.Wales](mailto:SeneddPAC@Assembly.Wales)

Dear Chair

**Re: Public Accounts Committee 8 July 2019**

I regret that I was unable to attend the Public Accounts Committee on 8 July 2019, and look forward to an opportunity to attend the Committee again in the future. I have viewed the proceedings with interest, and I wanted to take the opportunity to write to the Committee to respond to the remaining questions, which were not fully addressed on the day.

The questions which remained unanswered are addressed below:

***The Director of Finance agreed to send details of the total expenditure on overtime for permanent staff in contrast to the reduction of costs on agency staff.***

Overtime costs were £4.4m in 2018/19 and £4.2m in 2017/18; the increase is predominately in relation to Registered Nursing staff. However, there was also an increase over the same period in Registered Nursing agency costs as the Health Board has used such staff in order to maintain safe services across our sites. Medical and Dental staff are not paid 'overtime'; this cohort would instead be paid for additional sessions. It is not practically possible to separately identify the cost of additional sessions for additional time versus other reasons for payments of additional sessions, such as additional responsibility.

Over this period, however, there has been a reduction in Medical Agency expenditure, primarily driven by the introduction of the price caps following the Welsh Health Circular (WHC/2017/042) issued in October 2017. The average monthly expenditure on Medical Agency between April 2017 and October 2017 was £0.9m; the average monthly expenditure between November 2017 and March 2018 was £0.5m and for 2018/19 £0.4m.

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Cadeirydd Dros Dro / Interim Chair  
**Mrs Judith Hardisty**  
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive  
**Mr Steve Moore**

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Hywel Dda yw enw gweithredol Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol Prifysgol Hywel Dda  
Hywel Dda University Health Board is the operational name of Hywel Dda University Local Health Board

Mae Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Hywel Dda yn amgylchedd di-fwg Hywel Dda University Health Board operates a smoke free environment

***You have reported that you spent £18.9 million last year hiring agency staff to cover vacancies – 92% of your total agency spend. Do you know how many vacant medical and nursing posts were covered by agency staff last year, and the grades or specialities of these posts?***

Unfortunately, it is not possible to identify how many posts have been used to cover vacancies across the Health Board.

In the first instance, the use of agency staff may not be to just cover vacancies; but it can be to support the delivery of additional activity in planned care to reduce waiting times, or to backfill medical staff who are required to undertake other training, development or other duties.

Likewise, vacancies are not only covered through agency spend, the service considers alternative options before committing to premium agency costs as follows:

- the vacancy is not covered if the service can operate with fewer staff on a short term basis;
- the vacancy is sometimes covered by existing medical staff doing additional sessions to their core sessions;
- the vacancy is covered by part time staff doing extra up to 37.5 hours;
- the vacancy is covered by staff doing overtime

***How many nursing and medical posts are currently vacant?***

As at 30 June 2019, the Health Board had 193.62 vacancies in Medical and Dental staff; and 428.48 vacancies in Nursing and Midwifery staff.

***How much money would your Health Board save if you were able to employ permanent staff to fill these vacant posts?***

Not all vacancies will be filled with premium cost staff; some vacancies are not covered at all because resource is deployed to the greatest area of need and some may be covered at plain time bank rate.

Taking Nursing and Midwifery, and Medical and Dental in turn:

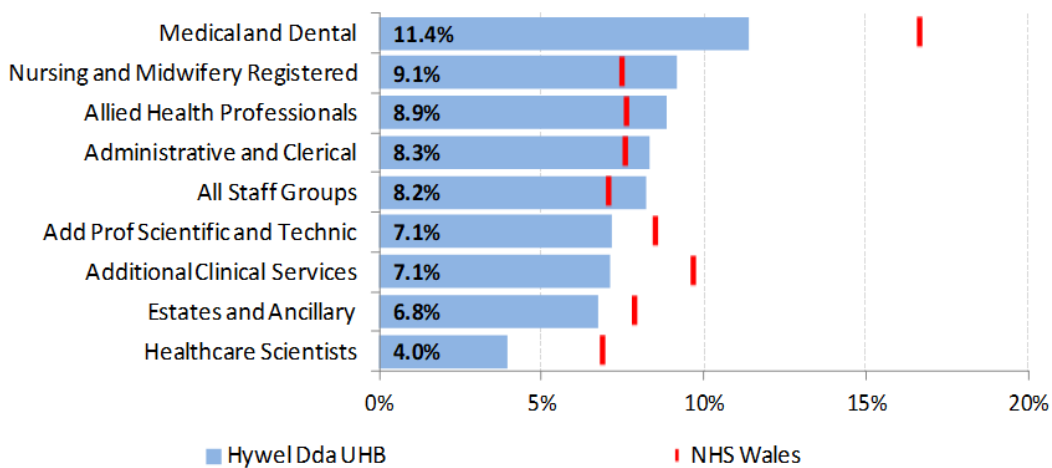
- Nursing and Midwifery: the Agency premium cost in June 2019 was approximately £4.7m, however the level of funded unfilled vacancies offset the potential impact by £4m, meaning that the in-month cost pressure was £0.6m. The premium in 2018/19 has been estimated to be £4.8m.
- Medical and Dental: due to the data limitations, the best approximation would be the 2018/19 premium estimate of £1-2m.

**Could you describe any particular barriers that your Health Board faces when recruiting new doctors and nurses? Do you understand how your rates of recruitment and retention compare with other Health Boards in Wales?**

The Health Board faces significant challenges in recruiting staff. The challenges we face are as a result of our rurality, the lack of applicants, the intensity of on-call rotas in our relatively small hospital sites, and the fact that the Health Board is not a large teaching organisation.

The graph below illustrates the turnover rate for a 12 month period to January 2019 by staff group.

**12 month Turnover rate for Hywel Dda UHB (Mar-19) and NHS Wales (Jan-19)**



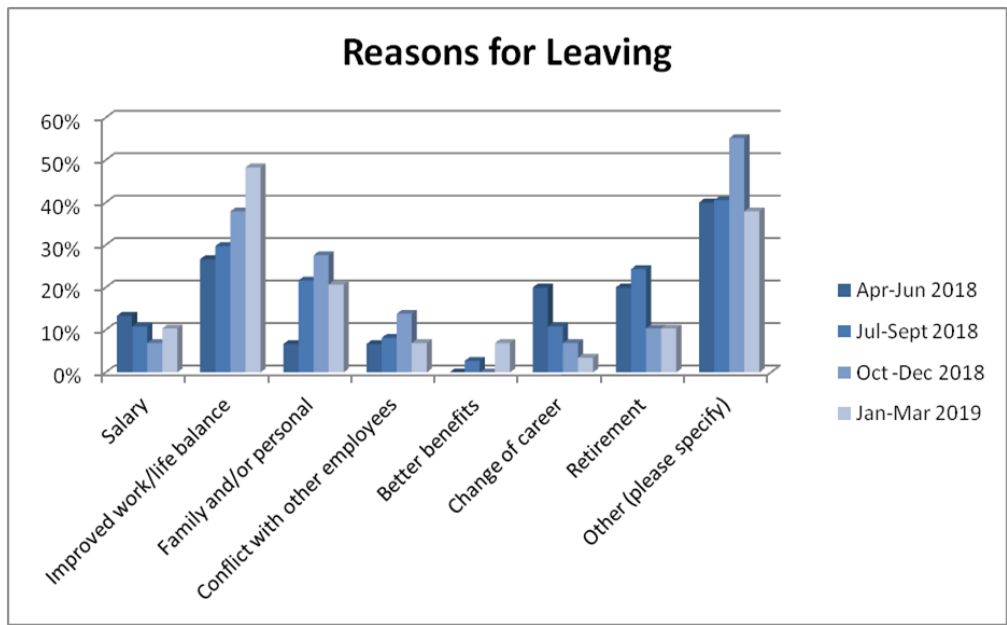
The percentage of total number of leavers from organisations in a 12 month period by staff group, excluding doctors and dentists in training. This is calculated as the headcount leaving the organisation within a 12 month period/average total headcount employed.

Turnover for NHS Wales only includes people who have left NHS Wales. Therefore, staff movement between organisations within Wales is excluded. In some cases NHS Wales' turnover will be lower than all organisations for this reason.

The turnover for staff groups in Hywel Dda is higher than NHS Wales for the Nursing and Midwifery Registered, Allied Health Professionals and Administrative and Clerical staff groups. Nursing and Midwifery Registered is 9.1% compared with NHS Wales 7.5%. Allied Health Professionals is 8.9% compared with NHS Wales 7.6%. Turnover for all staff groups is 8.2%; NHS Wales is 7.1%.

The Health Board is not aware of All-Wales statistics in relation to recruitment. As at the end of June 2019, the Health Board were actively recruiting 388.5 WTE across all staff groups. This does not include the vacancies that are currently going through the recruitment approval process.

The Health Board undertake exit interviews wherever possible, allowing an opportunity for both managers and the organisation to gain valuable insight into any key issues to support improvement and development of our patient services and employee experience. The graph below illustrates the reasons for leaving:



I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to you following the Committee meeting.

Should you have any further queries on the information included, I would be delighted to provide further detail.

Yours sincerely

**Steve Moore**  
**Chief Executive**