Bank and Agency Staff and Patient Safety: The Evidence

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19th January 2015
Why is safe staffing so important?
Right numbers = Safe patients, safe nurses

SAFE STAFFING

PATIENT SAFETY
• Lower mortality rates
• Lower hospital-acquired infection rates
  Fewer falls
• Lower failure to rescue rates
• Fewer medicine errors
• Better patient experience

NURSE SAFETY
• Lower stress levels
• Lower illness rates
• Lower absence rates
  • Better morale
• Improved retention rates
• Lower burnout rates

Kane et al (2007), Aiken et al (2014) ... and many more
Staffing levels, patient safety and nurse safety

Onerous workloads and chaotic environments: latent conditions creating possibility of errors

L. Aiken, Univ. of Pennsylvania
Workforce trends

- Nursing workforce cut from May 2010 until ‘Francis effect’
- NICE adult acute guideline responsible for further increases to overall workforce
- Dilution of the skill mix
- 2,295 fewer band 7s & 8s since May 2010
- Loss of senior nurses needed for leadership and mentoring future workforce

FTE Nursing workforce by band April 2010 - January 2015 (HSCIC)
Vacancies

- HSCIC data from *NHS Jobs* shows that from Sept-Nov 2014 there were **19,861 vacancies advertised**.

- NHS Employers and HEE found **10% nursing vacancy rate**. Monitor reported ambulance Trusts with rates as high as 24%.

- RCN commissioned work showed **A&E vacancy rates from 10-20%**.

- RCN show a **17% vacancy rate** in London with over **10,000 vacancies**.

The RCN call for vacancy data to be collected centrally and published regularly to assist with local and national workforce planning.
Agency spend

- RCN estimated NHS to spend £1bn on agency nurses in 14/15 - Safe staffing key driver

- Spending rose to £3.3bn in 14/15 on agency nurses and locum doctors

- Jeremy Hunt and NHSE commit to reducing agency costs

- Sept 2015 Monitor & TDA announce:
  - Annual ceilings for individual Trusts
  - Mandatory use of frameworks
  - Caps on individual rates
  - Opportunity for providers to apply for exemptions based on specific local needs
International recruitment

- Increased international recruitment since 2010
- Shift in recruiting more EU nurses
- Initial indications show difficulties retaining EU nurses - fluid labour market
- Impact of immigration changes on non-EU nurses
  - Income threshold of £35,000
  - 3,365 nurses currently in UK could be impact
  - Over £20 million may be lost in recruitment costs
  - Tier 2 visa caps met for first time in June 2015
  - RCN call for nurses to be on Shortage Occupation List
- Global shortage
  - Shortfall of 600,000 of nurses in EU by 2020
  - Shortfall of 800,000 nurses in US by 2020
  - Outflow of UK nurses - Obamacare?
Ageing workforce

- A larger proportion of the nursing workforce in England is older than it has ever been - this may lead to future shortages.
- Potential problems for workforce planning with employers unsure about when nurses will retire.
- In England in 2005, just over a third (37%) of the workforce was aged 45 or over, compared to 46% in 2013.
- In 2013, modelling by the CfWI predicted that retirement rates over the six years from 2010 to 2016 could stand at 78,675 nurses, but estimates range from 61,184 to 100,425.

## HEE 2016/17 commissions

### Nursing Commissions 2010 to 2016:

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<td>Adult</td>
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<td>Learning Difficulty</td>
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<td>599</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>638</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td>3253</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>3096</td>
<td>3143</td>
<td>3243</td>
<td>3343</td>
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<td><strong>Total Nursing Commissions</strong></td>
<td>19904</td>
<td>17827</td>
<td>17264</td>
<td>18009</td>
<td>19206</td>
<td>20410</td>
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### Yearly Increase

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<td><strong>Cumulative increase</strong></td>
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- **2016/17 commissions** by **331** to **20,741**
- Adult nursing by **257**
- Mental health by **100**
- Learning disabilities by **26**
Investigation into agency use

Drivers (survey results)
- 63% national shortage
- 40% safe staffing post Francis
- 33% unpredictable patient demand
- 23% local problems
- 21% staff sickness
- 21% need for 1 on 1 care

Recommendations
- Enhance pay and rewards
- Improve transparency around the bank use and rates
- Offer flexible working
- Promote AHPs

‘Just over half of respondents were unlikely or uncertain to meet capped rates for band 5 nurses’

(Health Service Journal December 2015)
What are the solutions?

- Incentivise bank
- Enhance pay
- Offer CPD
- Offer overtime
- Flexible working/shift patterns
- Increase student numbers
- Nursing to remain on the Shortage Occupation List
- Long-term workforce planning (5-10 yrs)
- Nurse leadership
Policy challenges to workforce planning

- NHS funding and productivity
- Five Year Forward View and the new models of care
- 7 day care – ‘weekend effect’
- Integration
  - Health and social care
  - Primary and secondary care
  - Mental and physical care
- Acute to community shift
- Parity of esteem
The RCN will be collating feedback from our members on their experiences of revalidation.

If you are due to revalidate next year, please get in touch:

policycontacts@rcn.org.uk