

SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVES DEBATE: NHS SCOTLAND STAFFING CRISIS

Royal College of Nursing

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is the trade union for nursing staff, with members in the NHS, independent and third sectors. RCN Scotland promotes patient and nursing interests by campaigning on issues that affect members, shaping national health policies, representing members on practice and employment issues and providing members with learning and development opportunities. With around 40,000 members in Scotland, the RCN is the voice of nursing.

Background

Rising
which
huge a

More
care n
servic
nursin

Witho

boards
simply

stakeholders, including politicians and health and care professionals, must be willing to put vested interests to one side and work together for a common cause to ensure our NHS is sustainable for the future.

Building 24/7 primary care

Nurses are already a hugely important part of primary care teams, delivering services in both in-hours and out-of-hours settings.

General practice nursing

In general practice, nurses support patients with ongoing care out of hospital as well playing a key role in core public health activities and

Health board budget pressures

Health boards are being asked to make savings to balance the books. This is not sustainable. If we are going to meet the growing demand on our health service we have to do things differently, without putting patient care at risk.

If we want health and social care services fit for the future, we cannot continue to deliver services in the same way. Difficult decisions will have to be made by about how and where money is invested.

In a demand-led service, we need to look at new models of care, to enable people particularly the growing population of older people to be supported to stay at home and self-manage their own care. Radical change is needed and all

Investment is now also required in community and district nursing to support the transformation of services, particularly for older people who are living longer with much more complex health needs. Only by investing in this nursing workforce will services be sustainable and responsive round the clock.

Advanced nurse practitioners

Advanced nurse practitioners (ANPs) are highly qualified nurses, with the expertise, knowledge and experience to make complex decisions about care. In the community they work hand-in-hand with GPs, other nurses, paramedics and allied health professionals, like physiotherapists.

ANPs operate as senior clinical decision makers, improving sustainability by ensuring that patients receive swift access to the right care. They free up medical colleagues to focus on those areas in which they are best placed to contribute to the team. ANPs also ensure that primary care services are sustainable and responsive round the clock.

ANPs are essential for the health of the population within the community.

For ANPs to be effective, national education and training is essential to ensure that they have the competences and skills needed to deliver high quality care.

We endorse the Chief Nursing Officer's views reflected in the Out of Hours Review report, that there must be a clear training route for ANPs.

Vacancies

While the number of nursing and midwifery staff in post has gone up slightly over the last year, ISD figures show that the increase in staff is not keeping pace with demand: the vacancy rate at June 2016 was 4.2%, an increase from 3.7% over the year and, even more worrying, almost 600 posts had been vacant for three months or more.

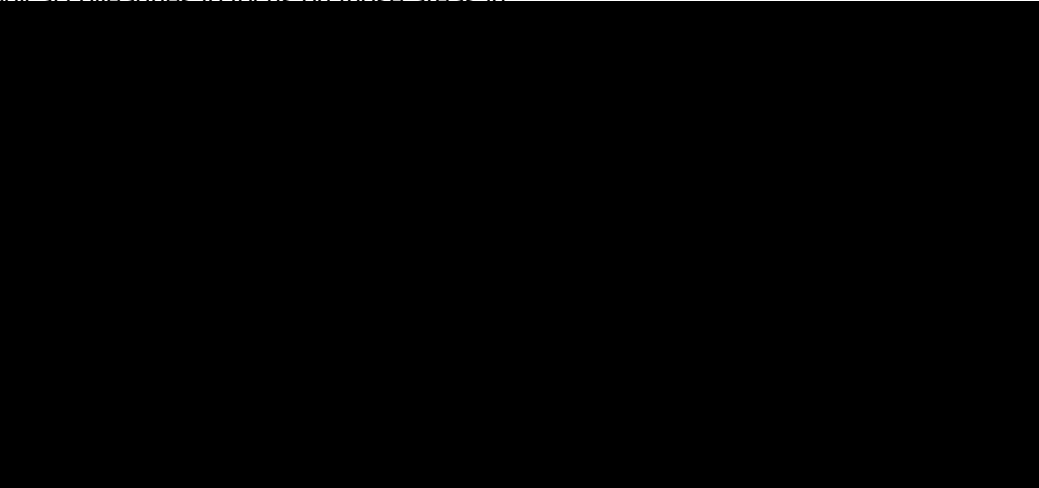
An increase in bank and agency staff is an expensive temporary fix, does not address staffing shortages and is not sustainable in the long term.

While we acknowledge that work is being done nationally to make changes, the way in which services are delivered needs to change urgently. Health boards can only do so much within their current budgets.

Conclusion

Health services are creaking at the seams. Scotland must look at different ways of delivering services to ensure that people get the care and support they need and new ways of measuring success. Investment in nursing and other staff to enable this to happen is key. This will ensure that the NHS is put on a sustainable footing for the future whilst also meeting the 2020 vision.

Against the backdrop of funding decisions by health boards based on making savings, increased demand for services and a health reform agenda, there is no single workforce plan supported by clear data to build on for the future.



ing the
ary
s, will
2690.07

