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# Workforce challenges

There are numerous challenges to be faced in managing the current nursing workforce and planning the make-up of the future workforce. Some, as the RCN has highlighted frequently in the past, are long-standing; others have come to light during the pandemic. All of them must be viewed collectively, considering the implications of the recovery period that lies ahead.

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## COVID-19 remobilisation and recovery

Recovery from the pandemic will take years. It is imperative in this period that not only are the harms caused to the nursing workforce during the pandemic repaired, but also that the fundamental issues of an under-resourced nursing workforce are tackled head on.

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2021 report, referred to having highlighted in previous reports that 'the NHS workforce has been under pressure for several years'. It also predicted that the significant backlog as a result of the pandemic will add to the existing pressure and operational challenges. Audit Scotland stated in the report: 'The number of people working for the NHS continues to increase, but the NHS continues to struggle to recruit people with the necessary skills. It is too soon to tell what the longer-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be on these trends.'

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Figure 3: NHS Scotland nursing  
support workers in post WTE  
2015-21

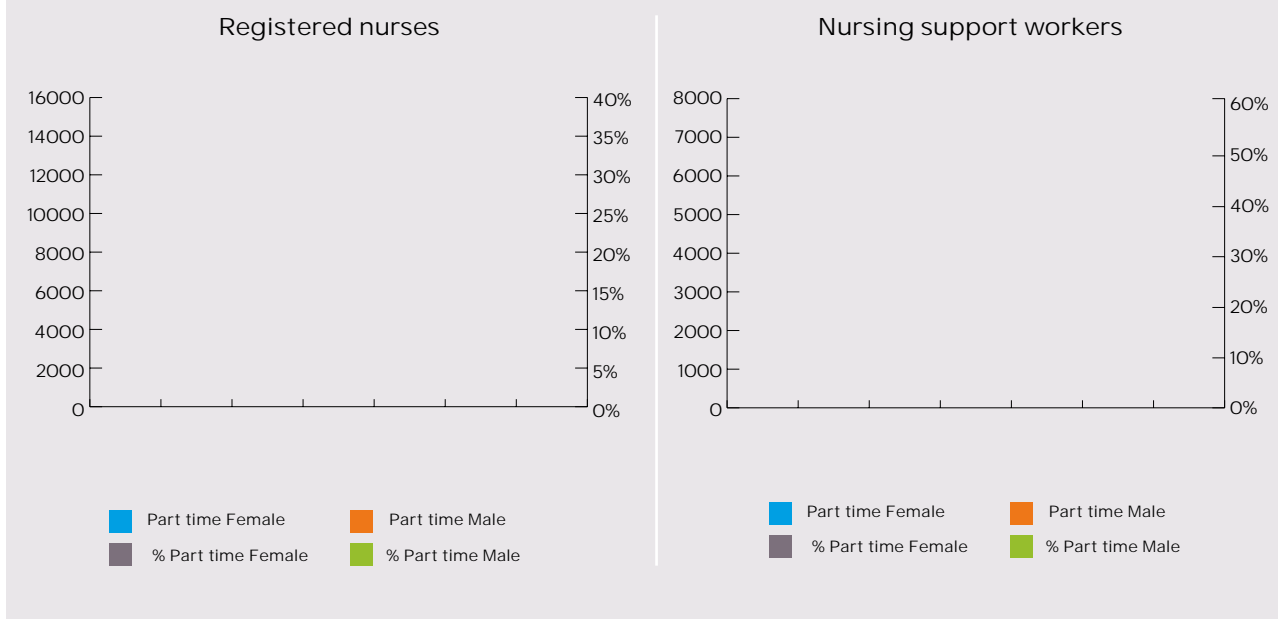
Figure 5: Nursing support workers by selected NHS Scotland work area 2016-21 (WTE)



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\* NHS Education for Scotland NHS Scotland Workforce Statistics Part-time working data suggests the gender breakdown of the NHS nursing and midwifery workforce to be 90% female and 10% male. 0.1% of NHS Scotland sta have a declared transgender status – identified status is not available by sta group.

Figure 6: Part time working, NHS nursing sta , WTE and percent, 2015-21



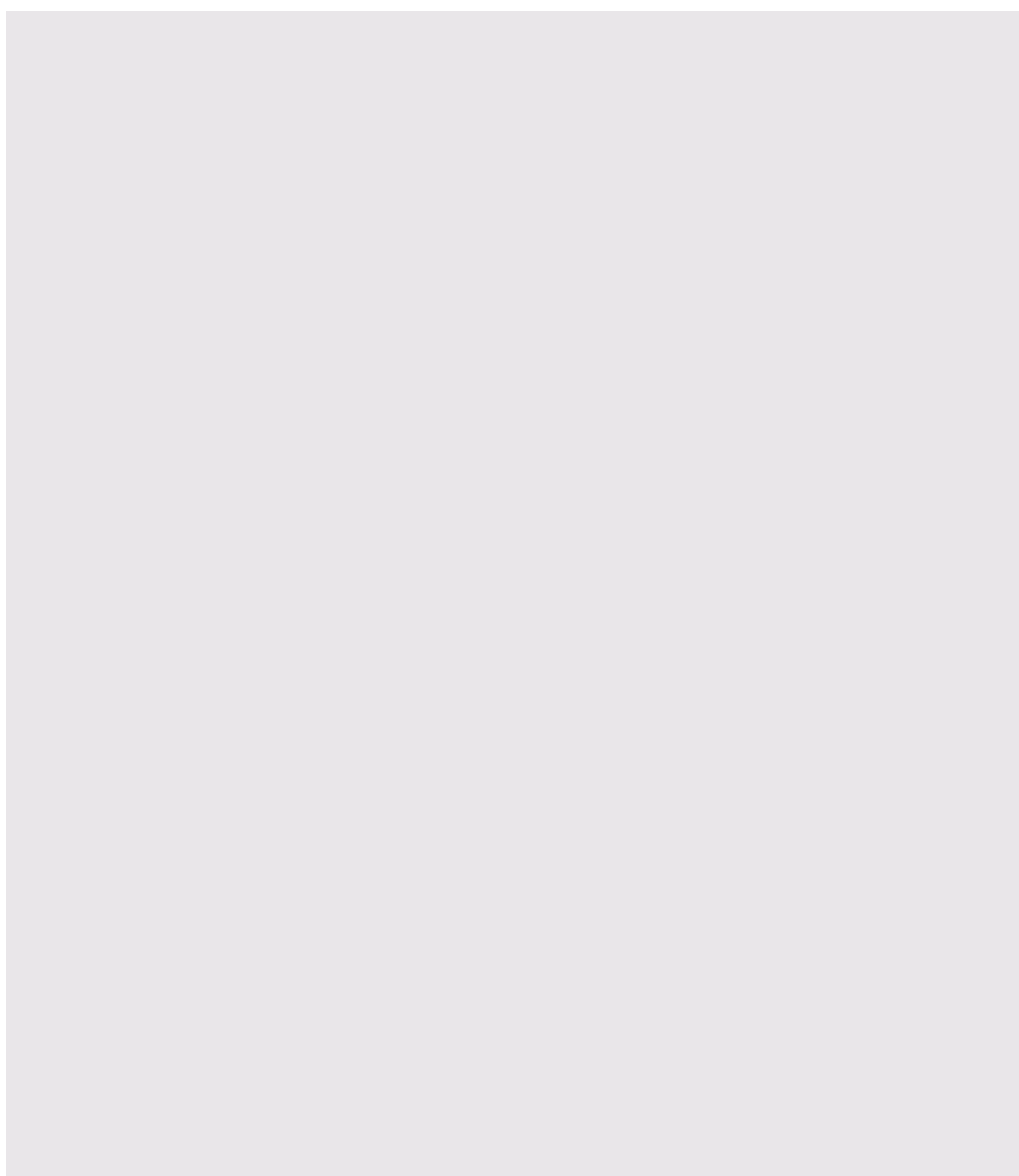
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### Mental health nursing

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 and high levels of nursing vacancies in  
 the mental health workforce, mental  
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### General practice nursing

Another area in the independent sector for which data is limited is general practice nursing.

Healthcare providers in general practice nursing are responsible for providing a high quality of care to patients. This includes assessing and managing a wide range of health problems, providing advice and support, and coordinating care with other healthcare professionals. The role of general practice nurses is essential in ensuring that patients receive the best possible care in their local community.

**The Act places a duty on NHS and social care providers to make sure that, at all times, there are suitably qualified and competent staff working in the right numbers to ensure safe and effective care.**

## Staffing for safe and effective care

The reasons for passing the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 more than two years ago have been made even clearer by the COVID-19 crisis, and implementation of the Act is urgently needed to address the workforce challenges in the NHS and in care homes.

The Act sets out a duty on NHS and social care providers to ensure that there are enough suitably qualified and competent staff working in the right numbers to ensure safe and effective care. This includes ensuring that staff are properly trained, supervised, and supported. The Act also sets out a duty on the Scottish Government to ensure that there are enough staff working in the right numbers to ensure safe and effective care.

The Act also sets out a duty on NHS and social care providers to ensure that staff are properly trained, supervised, and supported. This includes ensuring that staff are properly trained, supervised, and supported. The Act also sets out a duty on the Scottish Government to ensure that there are enough staff working in the right numbers to ensure safe and effective care.

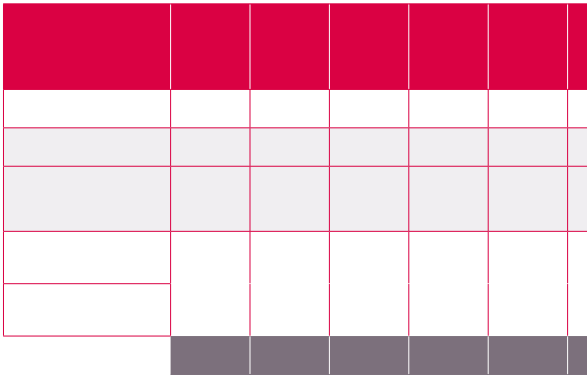
The Act also sets out a duty on NHS and social care providers to ensure that staff are properly trained, supervised, and supported. This includes ensuring that staff are properly trained, supervised, and supported. The Act also sets out a duty on the Scottish Government to ensure that there are enough staff working in the right numbers to ensure safe and effective care.



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Figure 9: Trends in nursing student intakes 2007-08 to 2020-21

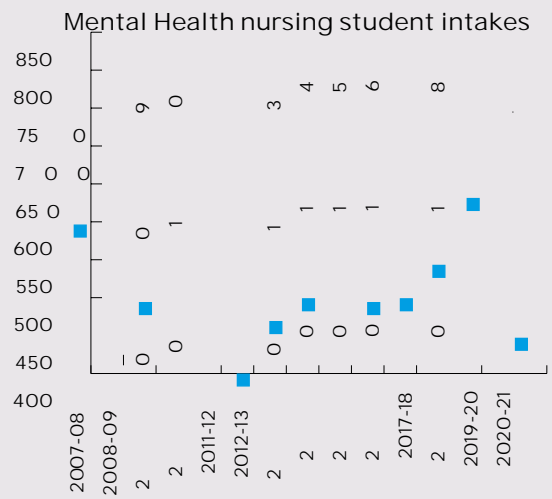
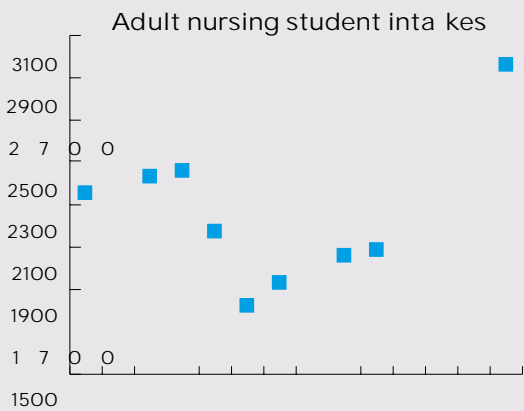


Source: NHS Education for Scotland NHS Scotland Workforce Statistics 2015-16 to 2019-20 – children’s and learning disabilities nursing, adult and mental health nursing dual award, and child and me

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Figure 10: Trends in adult nursing and mental health nursing student intakes



Source: NHS Education for Scotland NHS Scotland Workforce Statistics

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Figure 12: Gap between NHS Scotland registered nurse establishment and staff in post, 2015-21

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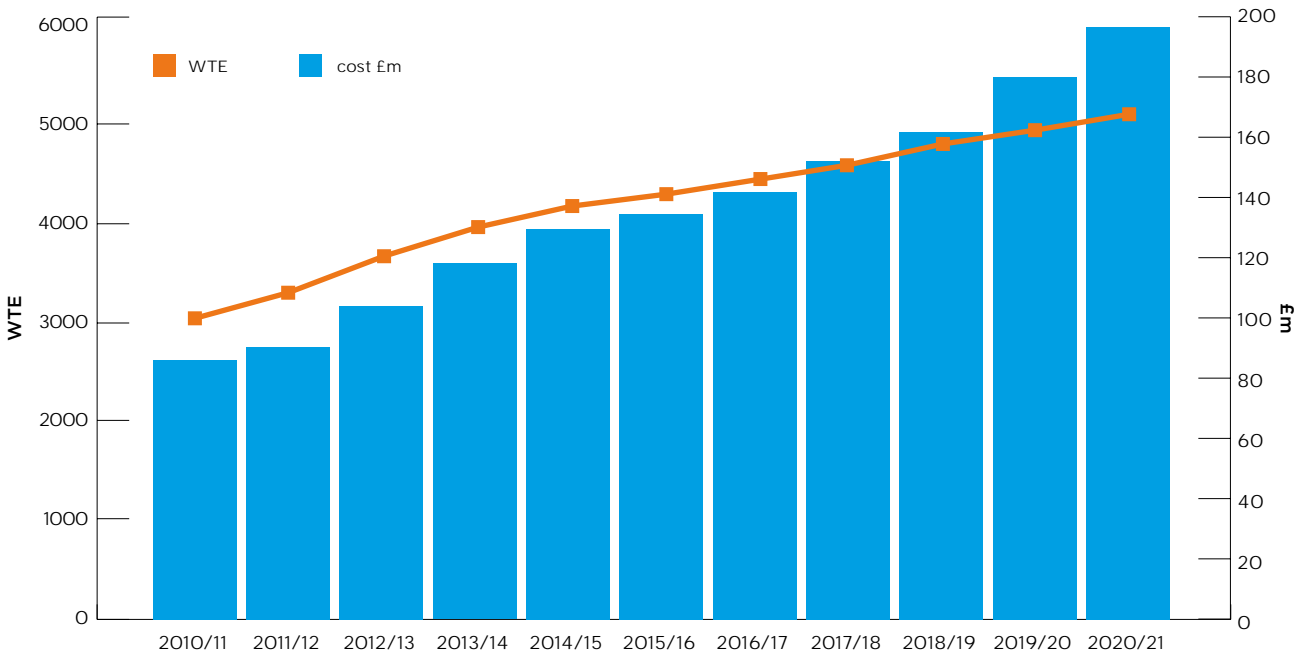
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 Zf'g'cf]hfa`g`ddYa Yb]fngU` b[""

Figure 15: NHS bank cost and WTE each year, trend 2010-11 to 2020-21



Source: NHS Education for Scotland NHS Scotland Workforce Statistics

\* Care left undone or missed care has been defined as patient care that is significantly delayed or omitted either in part or completely (Kalisch and Williams, 2009).





Figure 17: NHS Scotland:

**RCN Legal Disclaimer**

This publication contains information, advice and guidance to help members of the RCN. It is intended for use within the UK but readers are advised that practices may vary in other countries.

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Griffiths P, Maruotti A, Recio Saucedo A et al

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