

August 2014

NHS Workforce and Performance Statistics

There are some mixed messages in the latest batch of NHS Scotland [statistics](#).

The workforce [statistics](#) show that the total number of NHS Scotland staff in post increased last year with 135,881 whole time equivalent (WTE) and 159,058 headcount on 3 June 2014. The annual increase in staff of 1.9% WTE is mainly due to increases in nursing and midwifery (1,309.6 WTE), administrative services (345.5 WTE), medical (286.2 WTE) and allied health professions (226.4 WTE).

Welcome though this year's increase is, it's worth remembering that the highpoint for NHS staff in Scotland was September 2010 when the WTE was 135,964. When the council staff transferred into NHS Highland is taken into account, we are still around 1000 staff down since the financial crash. Administrative services have taken the biggest hit over that period.

In addition, the total number of vacancies remains high. Consultants 346.7 WTE, a rate of 6.9%; Nursing and midwifery 1,865.3 WTE, a rate of 3.1%; Allied health professions 481.2 WTE, a rate of 4.1%. The Health Secretary argues that this is a mixture of hard to fill specialists and increasing staff numbers. Others suspect that some health boards are balancing their books by deliberately not filling vacancies.

The [statistics](#) on waiting times and bed blocking highlight significant regional variations. Grampian, Lothian and Forth Valley missed a target to treat the majority of people within 18 weeks. Only two health boards managed to treat most patients in A&E departments within four hours. Five health boards missed an interim target to treat 19 out of 20 patients within that time frame. Only five of the 14 health boards have achieved the 26 week waiting time for treating children and young people who need care for mental health problems.

175 patients remained in hospital six weeks after being fit enough to be discharged. The main reason given was the lack of a place in a care home. The target is that no patient should be delayed in hospital for more than four weeks and that will fall to two weeks by April next year. 518 patients are waiting more than two weeks at present. In total, nearly 900 patients are in hospital when they have been assessed as ready for discharge - the equivalent of Scotland's largest hospital. All these [numbers](#) have increased over the last year and there are significant regional differences. This will be a key challenge for the new integration boards.

The reports give an overall picture of trends in Scotland, but branches can follow the links to drill down for workforce and vacancy data in their own health board areas.

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