

Debate Pack

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NHS staffing levels

1	Background	3
	Calls for a long-term workforce plan	4
	NHS pay and calls for industrial action	5
1.1	NHS staffing commitments	5
	The Long Term Plan (2019)	5
	Interim NHS people plan (2019)	6
	We are the NHS: People plan for 2020/21	7
1.2	2019 manifesto commitments	9
1.3	Industrial action	11
2	Parliamentary material	14
2.1	Debates	14
2.2	Select committees	14
2.3	Commons Library	14
2.4	Parliamentary questions	14
3	News articles	18

4	Press releases	18
5	Further information	19

Summary

A debate on NHS staffing levels is taking place on Tuesday 22 November. The debate will be opened by Margaret Greenwood MP.

This debate pack provides background information on past NHS staff plans, NHS pay and recent debates around industrial action.

1

Background

A wide range of commentators and stakeholders have highlighted the significant workforce challenges facing the NHS. The Health and Social Care Committee have said the NHS and social care sectors “are facing the greatest workforce crisis in their history.”¹ The Care Quality Commission (CQC) [State of Care report](#) also highlighted that “the persistent understaffing across health and social care poses a serious risk to the safety and wellbeing of people who use services.”²

The Library briefing [NHS Key Statistics: England, November 2022](#) highlight there have been increases in the number of doctors and nurses working in the NHS. However, it also shows the total number of NHS vacancies in June 2022 was 132,139 – a vacancy rate of 9.7%. This is an increase from the previous year, when the number of vacancies was 98,827 and the rate was 7.6%.

The CQC’s State of Care report in October 2022 noted that vacancy rates in England vary across regions and sectors, with London having the highest rates over most of the past 4 years. In all regions, the mental health vacancy rate is higher than for acute healthcare services.³

With increased demand and growing waiting lists for hospital treatment the Nuffield Trust have highlighted an increasing gap between supply and demand for NHS staff, and notes the importance of long-term planning:

Workforce shortages were the single biggest challenge facing the NHS well before COVID-19. But the pandemic has driven increased demand for health care, growing waiting lists and a substantial elective care backlog, while impacting negatively on staff wellbeing and absence. This makes workforce planning all the more urgent, particularly in light of ongoing cost-of-living pressures, and in terms of patient safety and satisfaction.⁴

Nurses and GPs have been highlighted as among groups facing the most acute shortages. In a [March 2022 survey by NHS Providers](#), NHS leaders were asked which services or professions they were most concerned about in terms of workforce shortages. In the survey:

- Significant shortfalls in nursing staff, midwives and radiographers were mentioned most frequently.
- Shortages in psychiatry, community district nursing teams and ambulance call handlers were also frequently mentioned.

¹ Health and Social Care Committee, [Workforce: recruitment, training and retention in health and social care](#), 25 July 2022

² CQC State of Care 2021/22, [Workforce](#), 21 October 2022

³ See above

⁴ The Health Foundation, [NHS workforce projections 2022](#), July 2022

With workload pressures leading to stress, sickness absences⁵ and difficulties retaining staff, a number of reports have proposed mitigation measures, including NHS England's People Plan.⁶

The King's Fund have said closing the gap between supply and demand will require action to "to address wide ranging issues such as workforce planning, pay, training and staff wellbeing." They note it will also require consideration of immigration policy.⁷ NHS Providers have commented that "with vacancies at an all-time high across health and care services we must invest in expanding the amount of staff recruited within the UK alongside valued colleagues from abroad."⁸

The National Audit Office (NAO) state that having the right workforce in NHS provider organisations will be critical to successfully deliver the NHS elective recovery plan. They also note ongoing issues with pension tax arrangements for NHS staff, which are causing some NHS clinicians to be unwilling to work extra sessions because of the large marginal tax rate they would incur.⁹

Calls for a long-term workforce plan

The Health and Care Bill 2022, as introduced, included a duty on the Secretary of State to report at least every five years on the system for assessing and meeting workforce needs.

Several organisations called for the Bill to mandate the regular publication of independently verified projections of demand and supply of the health and social care workforce in England.¹⁰ A number of attempts were made in the Lords and the Commons to make amendments mandating the projection of workforce requirements but these were ultimately unsuccessful.¹¹

In July 2021, the [DHSC commissioned Health Education England](#) to review long-term trends for the health and regulated social care workforce and to update the existing long-term framework, '[Framework 15](#)'.

⁵ NHS Providers, [Anxiety, stress and depression cause one in five NHS staff absences](#), 27 October 2022

⁶ NHS England and Improvement and Health Education England, [We are the NHS: People plan for 2020/21](#), July 2020

⁷ King's Fund, [NHS Workforce](#), October 2020

⁸ NHS Providers, [Report exposes urgent need for more home-grown NHS staff](#), 18 October 2022

⁹ NAO, [Managing NHS backlogs and waiting times in England](#), 17 November 2022, para 3.20. For further background see the Library briefing [Public service pensions: Impact of pension tax rules on NHS consultants and GPs \(September 2022\)](#),

¹⁰ See Health and Social Care Committee, [Does the Government's White Paper deliver the reform needed by the health and social care sector?](#), 14 May 2021; Kings Fund, Health Foundation and Nuffield Trust, [NHS Bill must put a system in place to support better workforce planning](#), 14 April 2021

¹¹ See House of Commons Library, [Health and Care Act 2022: Final stages in Parliament](#), 4 November 2022, chapter 2

In January 2022, the DHSC commissioned NHS England to develop a long-term workforce plan to supplement the NHS People Plan.¹²

In the Government's [Autumn Statement 2022 on 17 November 2022](#), Chancellor Jeremy Hunt said the a comprehensive workforce plan will be published next year. He said the plan will “include independently-verified forecasts for the number of doctors, nurses and other professionals that will be needed in 5, 10 and 15 years’ time, taking full account of improvements in retention and productivity.”¹³

NHS pay and calls for industrial action

In July 2022 the UK Government announced it had accepted the recommendations from the NHS pay review bodies and had given over one million NHS staff – including nurses, paramedics and midwives a pay rise of at least £1,400. The Government has said this is the equivalent of around 4-5% pay rises for most nurses, with lowest earners receiving up to 9.3%. Eligible dentists and doctors will receive a 4.5% pay rise.¹⁴

The Government say these pay rises recognise the contribution of NHS staff while balancing the need to protect taxpayers, manage public spending and not drive-up inflation.¹⁵ However, in the context of increased costs of living a number of trade unions and groups representing NHS staff have announced plans to ballot over strike action. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is calling for a pay rise of 5% above RPI inflation as part of their [Fair Pay for Nursing](#) campaign. In November 2022 it announced the results of their strike ballot, with [members voting to strike at majority of NHS employers across the UK](#).

1.1

NHS staffing commitments

The Long Term Plan (2019)

In June 2018, then-Prime Minister Theresa May announced a new, [NHS Long Term Plan](#) that would see the NHS receive an average 3.4% a year real-terms increase in funding over the subsequent five years.¹⁶ In return, the NHS was asked to work with the Government to create a long-term plan for the service.

¹² PQ 17146 [on [NHS: Staff](#)], 20 June 2022

¹³ HM Treasury, [Autumn Statement 2022](#), 17 November 2022, p26

¹⁴ Gov.uk, [NHS staff to receive pay rise](#), 19 July 2022

¹⁵ DHSC, [NHS industrial action - media fact sheet](#), 9 November 2022

¹⁶ Department of Health and Social Care press release, [Prime Minister sets out 5-year NHS funding plan](#), 18 June 2018

The [NHS Long Term Plan](#) was published in January 2019 and included a chapter on tackling workforce pressures and supporting NHS staff.¹⁷ The Plan set out the following workforce actions:

1. Publication of a workforce implementation plan and creation of a national workforce group to ensure delivery.
2. Increasing the supply of nurses, midwives and allied health professionals (AHPs). This includes an aim to reduce the nursing vacancy rate to 5% by 2028.
3. Growing the medical workforce by increasing medical school places from 6,000 to 7,500 per year and attracting more doctors to General Practice.
4. Setting out new national arrangements for recruiting overseas healthcare professionals and ensuring that staff from the European Economic Area are retained, and recruited, post-Brexit.
5. Improving staff retention by 2% by 2025 through improved career development opportunities, promoting flexibility and wellbeing, and renewing efforts to address harassment, violence, bullying and discrimination.
6. Enabling more productive working by maximising new technology, such as electronic rostering.
7. Improving leadership culture and recruitment through creation of a new 'NHS leadership code', expanding the NHS graduate management training scheme, and supporting senior clinicians to take on leadership roles.
8. Doubling the number of NHS volunteers over the next three years, including through backing the Helpforce programme with at least £2.3 million of NHS England funding.¹⁸

Interim NHS people plan (2019)

In June 2019, the [Interim NHS People Plan](#) was published. The Interim plan focuses on immediate actions to address workforce challenges, with the aim to publish a full five-year People Plan following the Government's next Spending Review.¹⁹

The plan is structured into six themed sections with actions for 2019/20 and actions to inform the full People Plan:

¹⁷ NHS England, [The NHS Long Term Plan](#), 7 January 2019, pp78-90

¹⁸ NHS England, [The NHS Long Term Plan](#), 7 January 2019, pp78-90

¹⁹ NHS England, [Interim NHS People Plan](#), 3 June 2019

1. Making the NHS the best place to work.
2. Improving the NHS' leadership and culture.
3. Addressing urgent workforce shortages in nursing.
4. Delivering 21st century care.
5. A new operating model for workforce.
6. Developing the full People Plan.²⁰

Particular attention was given to tackling nursing shortages, with the aim to grow the nursing workforce by over 40,000 by 2024.²¹

Actions set out to address the challenge include:

- Retaining more nurses through expansion of the Direct Support Programme, reducing student attrition and launching a return to practice campaign.
- Increasing the undergraduate supply by stimulating demand and expanding intake. Barriers to offering more university places will be addressed by increasing placement capacity in providers by 25% (5,000 placements) and reviewing acceptance rates.
- Increasing international recruitment by developing a new procurement framework and best practice toolkit, as well as working with the Department of Health and Social Care to streamline regulatory processes.
- Considering the following in the full People Plan: routes into the profession, support for students, action to address areas of nursing with the most shortages, increasing national and local investment in continuing professional development (CPD).²²

We are the NHS: People plan for 2020/21

Building on the Interim NHS people plan, [We are the NHS: People plan for 2020/21](#) was published in July 2020 and set out actions for transformation across the NHS in 2020/21.²³ The plan is organised around four pillars:

²⁰ As above

²¹ As above, p21

²² NHS England and NHS Improvement and Health Education England, [Interim NHS People Plan](#), 3 June 2019, pp20-31

²³ NHS England and Improvement and Health Education England, [We are the NHS: People plan for 2020/21](#), July 2020

Looking after our people

This chapter refers to the [NHS People Promise](#), which sets out what all employees should be able to say about the NHS by 2024:

- We are compassionate and inclusive
- We are recognised and rewarded
- We each have a voice that counts
- We are safe and healthy
- We are always learning
- We work flexibly
- We are a team.²⁴

This chapter also sets out priorities for the health and safety of the NHS workforce in 2020/21, including improving employee wellbeing and decreasing work-related stress and burnout and preventing bullying and harassment and violence against staff.

Belonging in the NHS

The People Plan says that as the largest employer of BAME people in the country, the NHS has a “responsibility to look after at-risk staff, prioritising physical and psychological safety.”²⁵

According to the Plan, staff should expect their employers to take the actions including Closing the ethnicity gap in rates of disciplinary action, following guidance set out in by NHS England in [A fair experience for all](#) (July 2019).

New ways of working and delivering care

This chapter discusses building on the new ways of working collaboratively and flexibly introduced in response to the pandemic. Actions for organisations and staff include offering [blended learning healthcare degrees](#) to widen access to training.

Growing for the future

This chapter sets out actions for expanding and developing the NHS workforce, including:

- Focusing on service areas with workforce shortages and high demand, such as mental health and cancer

²⁴ NHS England, [Our NHS People Promise](#) (accessed 12 September 2019)

²⁵ As above, p24

- Continuing to fund advanced clinical practice training and developing training for clinical pharmacists
- Increasing local recruitment by offering more apprenticeships and recruiting additional roles through the [Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme](#)
- Increasing international recruitment by supporting local hubs, piloting new English language training for international nurses and promoting the [Health and Care Worker visa](#)
- Supporting staff to return to practice after an absence, including those who went back to work during the pandemic and wish to stay on
- Retaining those who already work in the NHS by offering varied roles, supporting those reaching retirement age and developing the [Looking After Our People – Retention Programme](#)
- Systems working with HEE and NHS England and NHS Improvement regional teams to develop workforce modelling and planning, including through use of the [HEE Star: Accelerating workforce redesign](#) model
- Prioritising use of bank staff over agency options and allowing movement across organisations.

1.2

2019 manifesto commitments

The [Conservative Party Manifesto 2019](#) pledged to deliver 50,000 more nurses,²⁶ 6,000 more doctors in general practice, 26,000 more primary care professionals, such as physiotherapists and pharmacists and 7,500 Nursing Associate apprentices.²⁷

Nurses

A DHSC press release, '[Government over halfway to delivering 50,000 more nurses by 2024](#)', in March 2022 reported the Government is on track to meet its target.²⁸ However, [analysis by King's Fund](#) in April 2022 said that looking beyond the headline data, recruitment is not having an impact on vacancies or the shortfall of nurses in the NHS. Regarding retention, the analysis said:

This trend is not explained by worsening retention rates, [data shows](#) that the proportion of nurses leaving the NHS remained steady throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, although a substantial group left or were re-deployed to other parts of the NHS when the pandemic began in March 2020. It is also anticipated that

²⁶ More detail on this commitment and how the Government plans to meet it can be found in DHSC, [50,000 Nurses Programme: delivery update](#), March 2022

²⁷ The Conservative Party, [Conservative Party Manifesto 2019](#), November 2019, p10

²⁸ DHSC, '[Government over halfway to delivering 50,000 more nurses by 2024](#)', March 2022

retention rates will begin to deteriorate over the coming months as [the impact of demand-driven pressures](#), exacerbated and intensified by Covid-19, takes its toll on staff wellbeing. Given this, we can infer that the problem is that demand for nurses is increasing more quickly than supply. The government is not getting enough nurses into the NHS, even though it is making good progress towards hitting its 50,000 target.²⁹

The final report of the Health and Social Care Committee's inquiry into [Workforce: recruitment, training and retention in health and social care](#) (July 2022) highlighted the recruitment target as "not having any meaningful impact on the true scale of nursing shortages" and urged the Government to introduce a new bursary scheme to fully cover tuition fees as well as a non-means tested grant and a means-tested bursary.³⁰

[Analysis by Nuffield Trust](#) in August 2022 found variation in the growth of the nursing workforce between regions and, despite an overall increase in nurses, said recruitment remained 3,900 below the level required to be on track. Moreover, the number of nurses working in learning disability services and general practice had decreased³¹

Nursing Associate apprentices

According to the Health and Social Care Committee's [Expert Panel: evaluation of Government's commitments in the area of the health and social care workforce in England](#) (July 2022), the Government did not meet its target to achieve 7,500 Nursing Associate apprenticeships by 2019. It then extended this target to March 2020 but this was missed again. The Government told the panel the target was met in 2021/22.³²

General Practitioners

The Nuffield Trust reported the number of health professionals (excluding GPs) was on track. However, "the number of fully qualified GPs has seen a net decrease. Even when including doctors in training, insufficient progress is being made so far to be on course to deliver 6,000 more doctors in general practice by 2024."³³

²⁹ The King's Fund, [Is the NHS on track to recruit 50,000 more nurses?](#), 25 April 2022

³⁰ Health and Social Care Committee, [Workforce: recruitment, training and retention in health and social care](#), 25 July 2022, para 40

³¹ Nuffield Trust, [Chart of the week: Varied progress being made on NHS staffing targets](#), August 2022

³² Health and Social Care Committee, [Expert Panel: evaluation of Government's commitments in the area of the health and social care workforce in England](#), 25 July 2022, p28

³³ As above

1.3

Industrial action

Royal College of Nursing (RCN)

In November 2022, the RCN announced the results of their strike ballot, with [members voting to strike at majority of NHS employers across the UK](#). The strike is expected to start before the end of the year and the mandate lasts for six months, to May 2023.

The RCN aims to secure a pay rise of 5% above RPI inflation as part of their [Fair Pay for Nursing](#) campaign.

Responding in an authored article, Health and Social Care Secretary, Steve Barclay, said “[industrial action is in nobody’s best interest](#).”³⁴ He pointed to the “proportionate, balanced pay increase” agreed by independent experts previously in the year and said the RCN’s demands are “neither reasonable nor affordable.”

Unison

The public service union, Unison, are also [balloting all members directly employed by an NHS employer in England](#), including nurses, cleaners, porters and paramedics. People working for a private contractor, including most GP and agency staff, will not be able to vote.

Unison is calling for strike action to improve pay for NHS workers. It says the current pay award is too little in the face of the rising cost of living and is doing nothing to attract more staff into the NHS.³⁵ The ballot will close on 25th November 2022.

Royal College of Midwives (RCM)

The RCM are [balloting their members on industrial action](#) over pay in England and Wales. The RCM says “[the] pay award is unacceptable, it is a pay cut in real terms and just won’t cut it as RCM members struggle to cope with the rising cost of living and a retention crisis in maternity services.”³⁶

The ballot in England and Wales closes on 12th December 2022. RCM members in [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) have already voted to take industrial action, up to and including strike action.

Unite

Unite, a healthcare union representing 100,000 workers across the NHS, are [asking members across England and Wales to vote on industrial action](#) in a

³⁴ DHSC, ‘[Steve Barclay: nurses going on strike is in nobody’s best interest](#)’, 12 November 2022

³⁵ Unison, ‘[Why Vote Yes? — Vote Yes for the NHS](#)’ (accessed 16 November 2022)

³⁶ Royal College of Midwives, ‘[England and Wales - NHS pay award and next steps](#)’ (accessed 16 November 2022)

series of rolling ballots. The ballot for ambulance staff is currently open and closes on 30th November 2022. The rolling ballots will finish before Christmas.

GMB Union

GMB Union held a consultative ballot between 30th August and 27th September 2022. An [industrial action ballot for ambulance workers](#) across 11 trusts in England and Wales will take place between 24th October to 29th November 2022, with strike action potentially happening before Christmas.

GMB members in [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) have already voted for industrial action, which could also start before Christmas.

British Medical Association (BMA) Junior Doctors Committee

Members of the BMA Junior Doctors Committee have [voted in favour of a ballot](#) to take place in January 2023. It comes after junior doctors' demand for pay restoration to 2008/9 levels was not met and they were not included in the 4.5% uplift for other NHS workers.³⁷

The British Dental Association (BDA) is undertaking an [indicative survey of hospital dental trainees](#) to gauge interest in industrial action, potentially leading to a ballot. The survey ends on 4th December 2022.

British Dietetics Association (BDA)

The BDA carried out a [consultative ballot of members in England and Wales](#) after their Trade Union executive Committee made the decision to recommend members reject the current funding award “on the basis that it does not meet the current financial needs of staff and that it will not address the current staffing crisis.”³⁸ The ballot closed on 9th September 2022.

In Scotland, a [formal industrial action ballot](#) is taking place until 23rd November 2022.

The Society of Radiographers (SoR)

SoR members in England and Wales [overwhelmingly rejected the current pay award](#) in a consultation survey. However, the turnout was not high enough to proceed to a formal ballot for industrial action.

In November, SoR members in [Scotland](#) voted in favour of industrial action over pay. In Northern Ireland a pay consultation survey is underway until 21st November 2022.

³⁷ British Medical Association, '[Junior doctors plan ballot for industrial action in early January](#)', 3 October 2022

³⁸ British Dietetics Association, '[NHS England and NHS Wales Pay 2022](#)',

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)

The CSP is [balloting members in England and Wales](#) on industrial action from 7th November to 12th December 2022. In Scotland the ballot has closed.

Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA)

PDA Union members working in the NHS in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland [rejected the NHS pay award](#). 58% of those respondents said they would support taking industrial action if members of other unions were also planning to act. The PDA has said the next steps will depend on the decisions of other NHS trade unions.³⁹

³⁹ Pharmacists' Defence Association, '[PDA Union members working in the NHS in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland reject the NHS pay award](#)', 13 August 2022

2 Parliamentary material

2.1 Debates

[Public Sector Pay: Proposed Strike Action](#)

Tuesday 1 November 2022 | Proceeding contributions | House of Commons | 721 cc320-1WH

[Nursing: Staffing](#)

16 Jun 2022 | Proceeding contributions | House of Lords | 822 cc1735-6

2.2 Select committees

House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee report, [Expert panel: evaluation of the Government's commitments in the area of the health and social care workforce in England. Health and Social Care Committee third special report](#), 19 July 2022

House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee report, [Government Response to the Second Report of the Health and Social Care Committee, Session 2021-22, on Workforce Burnout and Resilience in the NHS and Social Care](#), 15 February 2022

House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee report, [Workforce burnout and resilience in the NHS and social care. Health and Social Care Committee second report](#), 18 May 2021

2.3 Commons Library

Commons Library briefing paper, [NHS Key Statistics: England, November 2022](#), 16 November 2022

2.4 Parliamentary questions

[Nurses: Resignations](#)

16 Nov 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Lords | HL3112

Asked by: Baroness Merron

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies Factors associated with staff

retention in the NHS acute sector, published on 23 August, which found a disparity in the ages at which men and women leave the nursing profession.

Answered by: Lord Markham | Department of Health and Social Care
The Institute for Fiscal Studies report was commissioned by the Department and NHS England was involved in its development. As the report found, retention is a complex matter influenced by multiple factors, including trust leadership and organisational culture, staff experience in the workplace and economic opportunities in the local area. We welcome the report's findings, including the relationship between age, gender and experience of staff and decisions to remain in the workforce.

The findings will inform NHS England's work to strengthen retention in the National Health Service, which seeks to understand why staff leave and provide targeted interventions to support staff to stay. Each trust is required to have retention action plans in place which will target support where needed locally. In July 2022, NHS England asked each NHS organisation to prioritise the delivery of actions on nursing and midwifery retention, which includes enhanced support for those joining the NHS, menopause support and improved advice and guidance for those later in their career with flexible working and pensions.

NHS: Pay

15 Nov 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 80932

Asked by: Fleur Anderson

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the Government has made of the impact of NHS real terms pay cuts on levels of NHS workforce retention in the last 12 years.

Answered by: Will Quince | Department of Health and Social Care

Pay increases in the public sector, including for staff working in the National Health Service, are determined through the independent Pay Review Body process. In reaching its recommendations, the Pay Review Bodies consider factors such as retention, motivation, affordability and inflation.

Since 2010, the stability index, which measures the percentage of staff employed within the Hospital and Community Health Service (HCHS) at the beginning of the period and who remain employed in the HCHS at the end of the period, has remained stable between 89.7% and 87.4%. The NHS Retention Programme seeks to understand why staff leave in order to target interventions to support staff to stay whilst keeping them well. All NHS trusts have tailored retention programmes focusing on career development and training pathways to retain staff.

NHS: Staff

09 Nov 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 69654

Asked by: Seema Malhotra

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if she will make NHS Workforce Statistics in England available by (a) body system and (b) clinical function.

Answered by: Will Quince | Department of Health and Social Care
NHS Digital publishes monthly workforce statistics for staff working in hospital trusts and integrated care boards in England. Each quarter this information is provided for staff by the main area of work and primary job role, which includes a guide to staff working in a range of clinical functions. The monthly data also reports information on doctors by medical speciality. This information is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-workforce-statistics>(opens in a new tab)

NHS Blood and Transplant: Staff

07 November 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 80944

Asked by: Navendu Mishra

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of staffing levels in NHS Blood and Transplant.

Answered by: Neil O'Brien

The budget headcount for NHS Blood and Transplant is 5,322.62 working time equivalent (WTE) in 2022/23. At the end of October 2022, there were 5,233.84 WTE staff in post and 88.78 WTE vacant posts. NHS Blood and Transplant is increasing its resourcing and plans to recruit and train a further 77.5 WTE by the end of 2022.

Integrated Care Systems: Staff

05 Sep 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 40853

Asked by: Maskell, Rachael

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that NHS integrated care systems are sufficiently staffed.

Answered by: Maria Caulfield | Department of Health and Social Care
NHS England is responsible for the operational oversight of the transition from clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to integrated care board (ICB) structures from 1 July 2022. While staffing levels are the responsibility of individual ICBs, former CCG staff below Board level were transferred directly into ICBs on 1 July, in line with NHS England's employment commitment.

At Board level, the Health and Care Act 2022 requires the constitution of an ICB to provide for a chair, a chief executive and at least three other members as the legislative minimum requirement. ICBs have the discretion to appoint any further members to the board. Local areas can, by agreement, appoint individuals with the necessary experience and expertise to fulfil its functions effectively.

NHS: Staff

25 Jul 2022 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 35021

Asked by: Michelle Donelan

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is taking steps to (a) recruit more NHS staff, (b) ensure that requests of medical staff to work overnight shifts are reasonable and (c) reduce appointment backlogs.

Answered by: Maria Caulfield | Department of Health and Social Care
Local National Health Service trusts have responsibility for ensuring appropriate staffing levels and recruiting the number of health professionals required to meet local service need. We have committed to recruiting NHS staff and investing in the workforce. As of April 2022, there were more than 9,600 additional nurses and 4,000 doctors working in NHS trusts and clinical commissioning groups. We are currently on schedule to meet the commitment for a further 50,000 nurses. We have established a programme to improve retention and support return to practice, invest in and diversify the training pipeline and ethically recruit internationally.

Eligible new and continuing nursing students on pre-registration courses at English universities will also receive an additional grant of £5,000 for each year of their course. Further funding of up to £3,000 is available for costs such as childcare or to encourage recruitment in specific specialisms. The NHS has also established a People Recovery Task Force to provide assurance on the safety and wellbeing of staff. However, it is the responsibility of individual employers to ensure that requests for medical staff to work overnight are reasonable.

Through the 'Delivery plan for tackling the COVID-19 backlog of elective care', we have allocated more than £8 billion from 2022/23 to 2024/25 to address waiting times in elective services. This is in addition to the £2 billion Elective Recovery Fund and £700 million Targeted Investment Fund made available to systems in 2021/22.

3

News articles

[NHS trusts bracing for 'winter onslaught' amid severe workforce concerns](#)

15 November 2022

Nursing in practice

[Sunak omits target of 6,000 more GPs from brief for health secretary](#)

14 November 2022

The Guardian

[More than 137,000 NHS blood donation appointments cancelled in the last year due to staff shortages](#)

24 October 2022

Independent

[NHS vacancies in England at 'staggering' new high as almost 10% of posts empty](#)

1 September 2022

Guardian

[NHS in England facing worst staffing crisis in history, MPs warn](#)

25 July 2022

BBC

[Staffing crisis deepens in NHS England with 110,000 posts unfilled](#)

3 March 2022

Guardian

4

Press releases

[RCSLT leads coalition calling for investment in the specialist workforce](#)

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

3 November 2022

[Royal College of Nursing responds to NHS England's recruitment drive to employ more nurses](#)

Royal College of Nursing

24 October 2022

[Royal College of Physicians sets out urgent workforce solutions to keep the NHS running](#)

Royal College of Physicians

13 October 2022

5

Further information

[Managing NHS backlogs and waiting times in England](#)

National Audit Office

17 November 2022

[NHS workforce statistics](#)

NHS Digital

27 October 2022

[A long term plan to tackle the staffing crisis in general practice is long overdue](#)

The Health Foundation

20 October 2022

[The NHS workforce in numbers](#)

Nuffield Trust

12 October 2022

[Placed at a premium? The use of recruitment and retention pay supplements to address staffing shortfalls](#)

Nuffield Trust

1 June 2022

[Is the NHS on track to recruit 50,000 more nurses? Hitting the target but missing the point](#)

King's Fund

25 April 2022

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