About this release

This release from the Information Services Division (ISD) provides a quarterly update on the number of staff employed by NHSScotland and vacancy information for nursing and midwifery, allied health professions and consultants as at 31 December 2017. When describing the size of a particular staff group figures are presented either as headcount (actual numbers of staff) or whole time equivalent (WTE) which adjusts the headcount to take account of part time working.

Main Points

As at 31 December 2017:

- The 163,446 staff employed by NHSScotland represents an increase of 0.7% over the last year. Adjusting for part time working, the WTE has also risen by 0.7% to 140,261.9. There have been six consecutive years of growth - the annual rates of growth in WTE in each of the previous years were 1.0%, 1.9%, 1.8%, 0.6%, and 0.7%.

- The number of medical and dental consultants in post continues to increase. The WTE of those in post at this census was 5,213.8 which is 0.8% (43.5 WTE) higher than a year ago.

- 7.4% (415.5 WTE) of medical and dental consultant posts were vacant. This compares to 6.8% at 31 December 2016. Of these vacancies, 258.6 WTE were vacant for six months or more, an increase of 77.7 WTE from that recorded a year ago.
There were 60,037.9 WTE nursing and midwifery staff in post, representing an increase of 0.6% over the last year (328.8 WTE).

Nursing staff increased by 0.5% (289.7 WTE) to 57,052.3 WTE in the last year and midwifery staff increased by 1.6% (45.4 WTE) to 2,920.0 WTE. Qualified staff accounted for the majority of the increase in both cases.

2,540.4 WTE of nursing and midwifery posts were vacant. This represents an increase of 0.6% WTE in comparison to 31 December 2016 but the vacancy rate is unchanged at 4.1%. Of these vacancies, 852.9 WTE posts were vacant for more than three months, an increase of 116.4 WTE (15.8%) compared to a year ago.

Background

The NHSScotland workforce has a significant role to play in the delivery of quality services that meet the needs of patients, their families and the general public in a modern health service. Information on staff directly employed is sourced from each NHS Board’s human resources and payroll systems. These are dynamic, operational systems and data can change over time. ISD works with NHS Boards to improve data quality and previously published information may change from one publication to the next to reflect these improvements.

ISD recently undertook a consultation on proposed changes to modernise the presentation, improve the usability and enhance the accessibility of NHSScotland workforce statistics. As explained in the summary of key findings which outlines the next steps for implementation, this is the last release of a quarterly report. The first annual release of a detailed report on workforce national statistics is scheduled for 5 June 2018. Statistics will continue to be released quarterly, via a combination of new look dashboards and a reducing number of existing tables. These quarterly statistics will be supplemented by a summary of key points and open data files.

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Further Information

Find out more in the full report. The data from this publication is available to download from our web page along with a background information and glossary document.

For more information on workforce statistics see the workforce section of our website.

The next release of this publication will be 5 June 2018.

NHS Performs

A selection of information from this publication is included in NHS Performs. NHS Performs is a website that brings together a range of information on how hospitals and NHS Boards within NHSScotland are performing.

ISD and Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of ‘Official Statistics’. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Further information about our statistics.