About this release

This release by Information Services Division (ISD) provides a quarterly update, as at 30 September 2018, on the number of staff directly employed by NHSScotland and the number of vacant posts that were for nursing and midwifery staff, allied health professions, or medical and dental consultants. 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

At 30 September 2018:

- The number of staff directly employed by NHSScotland was 162,945. The WTE of these staff has risen by 0.2% over the last year to 139,764.9. While there have been seven consecutive years of annual growth, the rate of overall growth has slowed. There is also variation across NHSScotland with six territorial Boards reporting a decrease in staff since September 2017.

- There were 5,357.5 WTE medical and dental consultants in post, representing an annual increase of 3.2% (167.8 WTE). The number of vacant consultant posts decreased by 8.7% (37.4 WTE) in the past year to 393.1 WTE, creating the lowest vacancy rate of 6.8% since December 2016. Of these vacancies, 258.1 WTE had been vacant for six months or more at the census point.
• The WTE of qualified nursing and midwifery staff in post was 43,267.5 representing a 15.7 WTE annual increase. Over the same period, eight territorial NHS Boards reported a reduction in qualified staff in post. Of nursing and midwifery posts requiring qualified staff, 5.3% (2,401.1 WTE) were vacant, compared to 4.8% (2,181.1 WTE) at 30 September 2017. 1.9% of posts (876.3 WTE) had been vacant for three months or more.

• During 2017/18 the student intake for nursing and midwifery increased by 6.3%, to 3,471. This is the highest student intake since 2010/11, contributing to a total number in undergraduate training of 10,645, the highest number reported since recording began in 2000.

• There were 670 Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) in post, equating to 611.4 WTE. First reported last year, the number in post has increased by 4.4%.

• There were 1,468.5 WTE paramedics in post, 5.6% (77.7 WTE) higher than recorded at the same census a year ago. The WTE of vacant paramedic posts was 45.1, a vacancy rate of 3.0% compared to 1.8% a year ago. Half of these posts had been vacant 3 months or more at the census point.

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.

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Further Information
The data from this publication are available to download from our data tables web page and dashboards web page along with a background information and glossary document. The latest annual report, published on 5 June 2018, is available on the publication web page. The next release of this publication will be 5 March 2019.

As of 1 Aug 2018, the employment model for Doctors in Training (DiT) has changed which, due to a change in data source, impacts on reporting and interpretation of latest statistics. See our website for further detail.

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.