NHSScotland Workforce

Quarter ending 31 December 2018

A National Statistics publication for Scotland

Publication date: 5 March 2019

About this release

This release by Information Services Division (ISD) provides a quarterly update, as at 31 December 2018, on the number of staff directly employed by NHSScotland and the number of vacant posts there 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 31 December 2018:

- The number of staff directly employed by NHSScotland was 163,848, up 0.2% over the last year. The WTE of these staff has risen by 0.3% over the last year to 140,710.2. While there have been seven consecutive years of annual growth, the rate of overall growth has slowed. There is also variation across NHSScotland with 10 of the 22 Boards reporting a decrease in staff since December 2017.

- The NHSScotland workforce is getting older; the median age of the national workforce has increased from 43 to 46 over the last 10 years. The proportion of staff aged 50 and over has increased from 28.6% to 38.5%. The staff groups with the largest proportion of staff aged 50 and over are Support Services (59%) and Personal & Social Care (49.7%).

Notes:

1. Workforce data was published annually until September 2010 and then quarterly from March 2011 onwards therefore a direct 10 year comparison is not possible.
There were 5,374.8 WTE medical and dental consultants in post, representing an annual increase of 3.1% (161.1 WTE). There were 7.2% (415.5 WTE) consultant posts vacant, compared to 7.4% (417.6 WTE) at 31 December 2018. Of these vacancies, 254.8 WTE were vacant for six months or more as at 31 December 2018, compared to 260.6 WTE the year before.

The WTE of qualified nursing and midwifery staff in post was 44,248.5 representing a 114.1 WTE (0.3%) annual increase. Over the same period, six territorial NHS Boards reported a reduction in qualified staff in post. Of nursing and midwifery posts requiring qualified staff, 5.1% (2,395.7 WTE) were vacant, compared to 4.3% (1,970.5 WTE) at 31 December 2017. 1.4% of posts (635.9 WTE) had been vacant for three months or more as at 31 December 2018.

There were 1,783 Health Visitors in post, equating to 1,554.7 WTE. Compared to last year, the number of staff in post has increased by 7%.

There were 9,976 WTE qualified allied health professions staff in post as at 31 December 2018, representing an annual increase of 1.9% (185.8 WTE). The number of vacant posts for qualified allied health professions is 513.4 WTE (4.9%), up from 371.7 WTE (3.7%) at 31 December 2017.

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 4 June 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.