NHSScotland Workforce
Quarter ending 31 March 2019
A National Statistics publication for Scotland
Publication date: 4 June 2019

About this release
This release by Information Services Division (ISD) provides a quarterly update, as at 31 March 2019, 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 March 2019:

- The 164,114 staff employed by NHSScotland represents an increase of 0.6% over the last year. The WTE, which adjusts for part time working, has risen by 0.7% to 140,881.2. While this signals a seventh consecutive year of annual growth for NHS Scotland, there is variation across the country with NHS Tayside, NHS Ayrshire & Arran and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde reporting a decrease in their workforce since 31 March 2018.

Profile of NHSScotland Workforce as at 31 March 2019

- Net turnover was 6.4% in 2018/19, a decrease from 6.6% in the previous year reflecting a reduction in the number of leavers. The total number of staff joining NHSScotland in the past year increased to 9,881.7 WTE, the highest observed in over ten years of available data.
• 7.8% (452.3 WTE) of medical and dental consultant posts were vacant. While the vacancy rate is slightly higher than the year previous (7.5%), the number of posts vacant for six months or more decreased slightly (245.0 WTE, down 8.9 WTE).

• 5.0% (3,143.7 WTE) of nursing and midwifery posts for qualified and support staff were vacant. This compares to 4.5% (2,814.3 WTE) for the previous year. Of these vacancies, 901.8 WTE were vacant for more than three months, a slight increase of 48.7 WTE on last year albeit this accounts for a lower proportion of total vacancies (28.7% down from 30.3%).

• NHSScotland spent £26.2 million on nursing and midwifery agency staff during the last financial year. This represents an increase of 10.9% in comparison to 2017/18. Total spend on bank staff increased by 6.5% to £161.9 million.

• The sickness absence rate for NHSScotland in 2018/19 was 5.39%, the same as the previous year. Set against a national standard of 4.0%, the sickness absence rate has fluctuated between a high of 5.55% in 2006/07 to a low of 4.63% in 2011/12 and therefore the standard has yet to be achieved at the national level.

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.

As of 1 December 2019, ownership and responsibility for collecting workforce data and producing national statistics will transfer from ISD to NHS Education for Scotland (NES), ahead of the creation of a new health body, Public Health Scotland (PHS). This publication is therefore the last annual report to be produced by ISD with one more quarterly release to follow.

Contact

Stuart Kerr
Principal Information Analyst
0131 275 6363
Email: nss.isdwfdinfo@nhs.net

Primal Chohan
Senior Information Analyst
0131 275 6861

Morag Macpherson
Senior Information Analyst
0131 275 6463

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 full report can be found on the publication web page. The next release of this publication will be 3 September 2019. As of 1 August 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.