

All Wales Nurse Staffing Programme



A nurse's professional judgement and the clinical decisions they make on a daily basis are invaluable when allocating resources effectively and efficiently, reducing risk and promoting positive outcomes for patients.

NHS Wales is the first country in Europe to legislate on Nurse Staffing Levels placing a duty upon health boards/trusts in Wales to deploy the right number and skill mix of nursing staff to meet the needs of patients. Appropriate nurse staffing levels will improve working conditions for staff, improve retention, recruitment and improve the delivery of effective care to patients.



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Health Education and
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Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act

The Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act is a law in Wales which places a legal duty on the health boards/NHS trusts to have regard for the provision of appropriate nurse staffing levels and ensure that they are providing sufficient nurses to allow the nurses time to care for patients sensitively. Under the Act, this duty extends to anywhere NHS Wales provides, or commissions a third party to provide nurses.

Under the second duty of the Act each health board in Wales has a duty to calculate, maintain and report nurse staffing levels on every adult acute medical and surgical ward, and paediatric inpatient wards.

The All Wales Nurse Staffing Programme

As NHS Wales has a legal duty to respond to the implementation of the Act, each health board must ensure they are able to provide assurance to the public, their Board and Welsh Government that health boards are meeting the requirements of the Act.

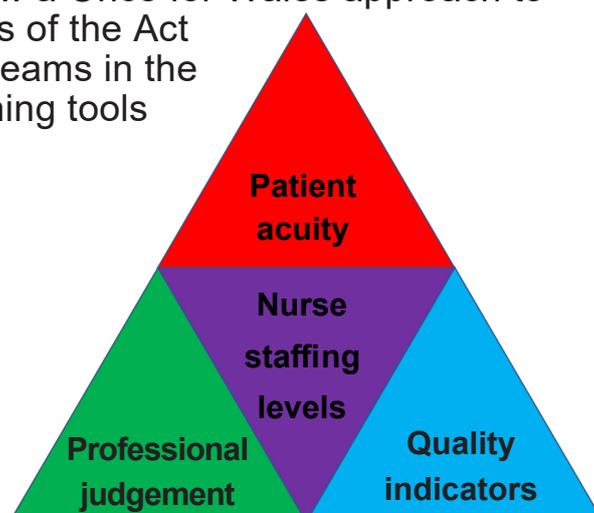
The purpose of the All Wales Nurse Staffing Programme is to deliver an evidence based method to support the effective deployment of nursing staff. Organisations across NHS Wales are working together, using a common framework of tools and techniques that follow a triangulated method to inform the effective deployment of nursing staff.

The All Wales Nursing Staffing Group, with representatives from all NHS Wales organisations, is the delivery group for the overarching programme. The group provides operational coordination for the work streams and support, guidance and direction to NHS Wales to ensure they follow a Once for Wales approach as they meet the requirements of the Act. The group supports the design and delivery of a national programme of work that will enable NHS Wales organisations to develop evidence workforce planning tools to calculate the right number and skill mix of nursing staff required to provide effective care for patients within their area of speciality.



Purpose of the programme

- Support and guide health boards to follow a Once for Wales approach to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act
- Provide guidance to the suite of work streams in the development of national workforce planning tools
- Support the ongoing development of the agreed triangulation process:
 - ◇ National patient acuity tool
 - ◇ Identify and test key quality indicators pertaining to each area of speciality
 - ◇ Develop a robust method of capturing professional judgement and evidence decision making
- Support the publication of the national guidance for operational teams including national templates to ensure consistency
- Provide suite of supportive mechanisms, information and training materials
- Determine metrics and process for reporting consistently across Wales
- Deliver a national communication and engagement strategy.



Suite of work streams

Led by the Chief Nursing Officer and Directors of Nursing from across NHS Wales, working groups have been set up to develop, test, evaluate and refine evidence-based workforce planning tools for each area of speciality, in preparation for extension of the Act to another speciality area.

Adult Acute
Medical &
Surgical
Inpatient

Paediatric
Inpatient

Mental Health
Inpatient

Health
Visiting

District
Nursing

Reporting
under the Act
(from April
2018)

Reporting
under the Act
(from Oct
2021)

Workstreams in development

Each of these work streams has a work stream lead and working group with senior representatives from each health board/trust. The work streams are sponsored by, and report to the Directors of Nursing and Chief Nursing Officer. Whilst these work streams are at different stages, each continues to make significant progress and achievements. The role of each work stream is to devise an evidence based approach to determine appropriate staffing levels within their area of speciality. The approach must be evidenced in the Welsh context and follow a common model of triangulation, which centres on three critical sources of knowledge: patient acuity, quality indicators and professional Judgement.



The next steps:

- to create and implement evidence based acuity tools, as part of a triangulated approach, within each of the identified areas
- Health Boards to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act providing assurance to the Board, public and Welsh Government
- develop and implement information technology to enable nurses to collate, review and utilise live data to inform local decision making
- ensure health boards are prepared for the extension of the second duty of the Act to another area and support local implementation
- continue to promote staff engagement and deliver the programmes' Publication and Communication Strategy
- raise the profile of the work undertaken by the programme through local, national and international events to ensure wider stakeholder engagement
- align the work to national programmes of work and workforce strategies.

Further information



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