

# Board of Directors Meeting

September 2014

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## Monthly Report of Nursing and Midwifery Staffing Levels August 2014

**Status:** A Paper for Information

**History:**

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## Board of Directors Meeting

September 2014

A paper prepared and presented by Eileen Sills CBE, Chief Nurse and Director of Patient Experience

### Monthly Report of Nursing & Midwifery Staffing Levels August 2014

#### Executive Summary

##### Purpose:

- Regular monthly report on nursing and midwifery and Health Visitors staffing levels.

##### Key Points:

#### **1.0 General points:**

- **Planned versus actual nursing hours for August was 0.4% above planned.**
- In total there were 23 areas where staffing fell below planned. Of particular note is Children's acute.

**Evelina London Children's Hospital** wards have over the past 3 months shown a shortfall in the actual versus planned nursing hours. This variance is due to two main factors: **(1)** Data reporting, how the 'planned' hours are calculated **(2)** Staffing vacancies affecting 'actual' available nursing hours.

At no point were our services not safely staffed within Evelina London Children's Hospital where a lower 'actual' than 'planned' nursing hours was reported.

1. **The 'planned' staffing hours** are currently not adjusted for seasonal trends. The last three months within Evelina London Children's hospital has seen a lower than average patient dependency needs and bed utilisation over the summer months. This has required a lower level of actual nursing hours to safely staff the inpatient services.

This seasonal variation is most significant in paediatric intensive care where patients required lower levels of staffing than the planned nursing hours either due to unoccupied beds or lower patient dependency needs.

Seasonally adjusted 'planned nursing hours' will be recorded for future months reports that aligns more closely with the 'actual nursing hours' required to deliver safe effective patient care. This methodology aligns with NHS England's guidance on reporting staffing hours.

2. **Staff Vacancies:** There is a number of nursing staff vacancies across all inpatient wards which has had some impact on the 'actual nursing hours' There continues to be some difficulty in covering vacancies with suitably qualified temporary staff whilst recruitment campaigns have been in progress. However, following a very successful recruitment exercise earlier this year, nearly 60 newly qualified nurses will start over the next few months which will significantly alleviate this issue.
- In the meantime, we monitor staffing levels continuously throughout the 24 hours and move staff between areas accordingly to match the patient dependency and occupancy needs of each area.

### **Other Areas:**

- Once again this month's data shows an increase in actual versus planned hours across the medical and elderly care wards. This is due to the use of 'specials' to support our patients who have additional care needs. To address this gap the Trust has increased its trained nurse numbers across six wards to ensure there is an extra trained nurse on at night duty, changing the nurse to patient ratio from 1:9 to 1:7. The impact of this will be monitored closely.
- Our escalation procedures are continuing to be used and this month we had 64 red flags raised which were all responded to and the red flags de-escalated.
- Acuity and dependency in the Trust remains high and during August we had 206 acuity alerts which led to further reviews of staffing for that shift and changes where necessary.
- Recruitment remains positive, we have 341 wte in the pipeline ready to start and at the time of writing this report, this includes a combination of both internal and external candidates to the organisation. This puts us in a positive position where we now have the lowest number of vacancies for years. However, given the dynamic nature of our workforce, we will need to continue to work exceptionally hard to keep this position and reduce it further.
- District nursing recruitment campaigns remain an area of focussed attention where there are high level of vacancies, however imaginative recruitment programmes have attracted 25 nurses from acute areas into the community. Of these 25 nurses 15 are commencing a transition course for nurses new to community in October 2014. This is an innovative programme to ensure nurses who transfer to community nursing gain the skills required of a community nurse in a supportive educational environment.
- Health visiting – we currently have 119.5 health visitors and by March 2015 we are expected to increase this number to 175.3 wte. At present we are on target to achieve this.
- Nice guidance has now been published and we are running workshops to train our staff in using the tool in preparation for November's staffing reviews. In addition we will be giving our patients information about how to raise a concern about staffing as part of the workforce pack.

## **Implications:**

- The Trust is continuing to develop its sophistication in collecting and using data to inform daily and further planning of the workforce. The knowledge and skills of the staff are growing considerably. It cannot be underestimated the effort and time required to do this correctly. Although we have been very successful in our recent recruitment campaigns, there is no room for complacency at all.

## **Recommendations:**

- The Board of Directors is asked to note the information contained in this summary report and the actions we have in place and the excellent progress we have made.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Planned vs. Actual nursing hours Trust collated - August 2014

Appendix 2 – Trust collated public view summary – August 2014

Appendix 3 – Non-inpatient monthly staffing report collated – August 2014