

Report for Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee, 20 July 2016 from The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust

a) Who is responsible for workforce planning nationally and locally?

Health Education England has a key role in workforce planning undertaken in partnership with regional and local organisations. Regional workforce planning groups, in our case the Norfolk and Suffolk Workforce Partnership, develop local strategies. Our local workforce group is chaired by a Non-Executive Board director.

b) To what extent is the supply of trained nurses sufficient to fill vacant posts in the Suffolk Health and Care system?

From an Ipswich Hospital perspective, we would suggest that we have more nurse vacancies than nurses applying and available for posts, especially in specialist areas where there is a recognised national shortage.

c) What reasons have been identified for this?

One viewpoint is that not enough student nurse training places have been commissioned, so we have a deficit in the numbers of newly qualified staff joining nursing. Another perspective is our geographical location which may not be as attractive as a big city for newly qualified nurses.

d) Are the recruitment and retention issues for nursing consistent across all sectors of the Suffolk Health and Care system?

Broadly similar.

e) How do these issues compare to the situation in other parts of the Country?

We understand that this is a national issue.

f) What attracts people into nursing and why do they leave the profession?

Very wide range of influencing factors about why people come into nursing including wanting to make a difference to the lives of others, compassion for others, for many it is a vocation, not a job. Others have personal experience of coming or being cared for and / or have friends or colleagues who are nurses. Reasons for leaving are also very varied including family and carer commitments, ill health and fatigue.

g) How is nurse education and training funded?

Currently centrally through Health Education England with capped student numbers. This will change to a bursary approach from September 2017 which will remove the cap and limit.

h) What is being done to address issues with recruitment and retention of nurses in Suffolk in the short term?

Much is being done, including international recruitment, innovative new roles such as assistant practitioners, career progression opportunities, financial incentives, flexible working patterns.

i) What will be done to address issues of recruitment and retention of nursing staff in Suffolk in the medium to long term; and;

In addition to the above a great deal of partnership working is ongoing with UCS and HEE to design and commission alternative roles (eg associate nurse, physician associate) and to promote Suffolk as a great place to live and work.

j) What can be done to ensure that Suffolk is an attractive place for nursing staff to train and establish a career?

Even stronger collaboration with UCS and continuation of commitment to offer every student nurse trained locally a guaranteed job in the hospital and extending this further to consider the possibility of implementing individual bursaries.