

RCN Children and Young People's Field of Practice Staffing on Acute General Children's Wards: Position Statement

The following statements are a summary of the recommendations relating to staffing levels on an acute (general) children's ward set out in *Defining Staffing Levels for Children and Young People's Services* (2003).

- Baseline of registered nurses to children under 2 years of age is 1:3
- For other age ranges the minimum ratio children and young people:
 - during the day is 1:4
 - during the night is 1:5
- The nursing establishment should allow for a shift supervisor who will co-ordinate the operational and clinical management of the ward alongside care delivery to a small case load.
- An allowance of 25% should be built into the budget for annual leave and sickness.
- Nurses caring for children and young people should be cared for by staff who have the right knowledge base, expertise and skills to meet their needs (Department of Health 2003).
- Each children's ward/department's establishment should include one whole time equivalent (WTE) Band 7 (or equivalent) post to provide clinical leadership, supported by a minimum of 2 WTE Band 6 (or equivalent).
- Health care assistants educated to S/NVQ 3 with additional specific skill and competency training can provide support to registered nurses as part of the nursing team.
- Ratio of registered nurses to non-registered nurse will depend on the clinical care requirements of the children and young people with a 70/30 split as a minimum. In some cases the ratio of registered nurses will need to be higher to meet local need.
- Nurses undertaking paediatric nurse practitioners or paediatric nurse specialist roles should have completed an externally validated, knowledge, skill and competency based programme (RCN 2000).
- The number of students within a clinical setting should not exceed the number cited within the clinical placement's educational audit.

References

Department of Health (2003) Getting the Right Start: National Service Framework for Children. Standards of Hospital Services, The Stationery Office, London.

Royal College of Nursing (2000) *A framework for Developing Practice in Paediatric Oncology Nursing*, Royal College of Nursing, London.

Royal College of Nursing (2003) *Defining Staffing Levels for Children and Young People's Services*, Royal College of Nursing, London.