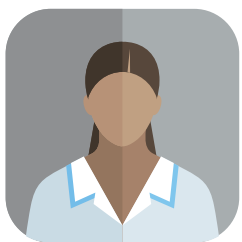
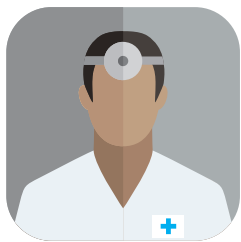
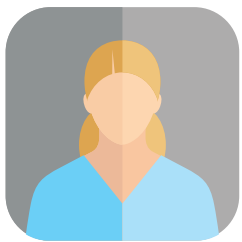
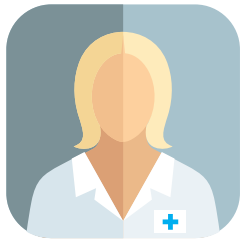
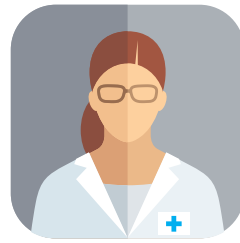


Nurse Staffing for Safe and Effective Care

RCN POSITION STATEMENT



Having the right number of registered nurses and nursing support staff with the right knowledge, skills and experience in the right place at the right time is critical to the delivery of safe and effective care for patients and clients. The planning and delivery of nurse staffing for safe and effective care is necessarily complex due to the constantly changing circumstances and associated complexity and acuity of individual patients and clients.

The NHS and the wider UK health and care system are under immense pressure coping with unprecedented demand and diminishing resources. People are living longer, and with multiple chronic physical and mental health conditions. The contribution of registered nurses in assessing needs, planning and providing holistic patient centered care is crucial in responding appropriately to these pressures.

Every registered nurse has an obligation in accordance with the NMC Code to “put the interests of people using or needing nursing or midwifery services first. You make their care and safety your main concern and make sure that their dignity is preserved and their needs are recognised, assessed, and responded to. You make sure that those receiving care are treated with respect, that their rights are upheld and that any discriminatory attitudes and behaviours towards those receiving care are challenged”

In addition registered nurses are required in accordance with the NMC Code to “make sure that patient and public safety is protected. You work within the limits of your competence, exercising your professional “duty of candour” and raising concerns immediately whenever you come across situations that put patients or public safety at risk. You take necessary action to deal with any concerns where appropriate.”

The NMC and the Royal College of Nursing have published guidance for registered nurses to support them to raise concerns in accordance with the requirements of “The Code”

The Royal College of Nursing supports the development of nursing support staff and recognises the contribution that they make to the care of patients. We do not support role substitution where registered nurses are substituted with nursing support staff. The evidence is clear that to ensure patient safety, sufficient numbers of registered nurses are required.

Decision making in relation to nurse staffing must be informed by legislation, NMC requirements, national regional and local policy, research evidence, professional guidance, patient numbers, complexity and acuity, the care environment and professional judgement.

Providers of health and social care services must ensure that they have the right numbers of registered nurses with the right knowledge, skills and experience, in the right place, at the right time to provide safe and effective nursing care to patients.

Responsibility for the provision of safe and effective staffing lies with the boards of provider organizations who must have governance arrangements in place that are sufficiently robust to provide assurance that nurse staffing is adequate to provide safe and effective care for patients and clients.

Executive Directors of Nursing are responsible and accountable for the professional advice that they provide to boards of organisations. Boards of organisations are responsible and accountable for any actions they may or may not take as a result of that advice.

Non-nursing duties currently being undertaken by registered nurses must be reviewed.

Administrative support for nurses should be increased to relieve registered nurses of administrative tasks and free up time to provide nursing care.

Technological support for nurses and nursing should be enhanced to release time to care.

In addition employers must understand the impact of the working environment and workplace policies on staff health and wellbeing and should ensure that staff health and wellbeing and more flexible working is given the highest priority in an attempt to reduce sickness absence and improve staff retention.

Nurses pay terms and conditions must be reviewed as a matter of urgency to ensure that they are in accordance with Agenda for Change in relation to AfC Band, pay for hours worked, overtime payments, recruitment and retention premium.

These measures may help to improve recruitment and retention of nurses and may help address nurses leaving the register as reported by the NMC.