Staff in the NHS 2005

An overview of staff numbers within the NHS in England 2005

This leaflet provides an overview of staffing in the NHS. It briefly covers:

- Types of NHS organisations
- How staff have been grouped together within this leaflet
- Trends in staff numbers within the NHS

The Information Centre collects the information included in this leaflet annually from NHS organisations.

More detailed information including bulletins covering a ten-year time series and detailed tables for 2005 are available on our website at: www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/nhsstaff

Note: For details of who is included in each category, see pages 4 & 5. (Excludes high street Dentists and Ophthalmic practitioners)

- Approximately 1.3 million people were employed in the NHS in England in September 2005 on a headcount basis. This represents an increase of 34,300 since 2004 and an average increase of over 38,000 per year since 1997.
- There were 679,157 professionally qualified clinical staff in the NHS, including 122,345 doctors, 404,161 qualified nursing, midwifery & health visiting staff (including practice nurses), 134,534 qualified scientific, therapeutic & technical (ST&T) staff and 18,117 qualified ambulance staff.
- There were a further 376,219 staff in support to clinical staff. These were in three key areas – 310,441 support to doctors & nursing staff, 55,715 scientific, therapeutic & technical support staff and 10,063 ambulance support staff.
- There were also 220,387 staff involved in NHS infrastructure support. This includes 105,565 staff in central functions, 75,431 staff in hotel, property & estates and 39,391 managers and senior managers.
- There were 89,190 GP practice staff, excluding practice nurses.
Organisations in the NHS

Staff work in a variety of organisations in the NHS.

Primary Care – usually the first point of contact for patients, via their local GP. Staff working in primary care includes GPs, nurses, health visitors, dentists, opticians and pharmacists.

- GPs – doctors working in a small practice or surgery to serve the health needs of the local area. GPs are on the frontline of the NHS.

- Primary Care Trusts – PCTs plan, commission and provide most health services for their local communities - a role previously carried out by health authorities. This includes ensuring there are enough GPs and other services including hospitals, dentists, opticians and pharmacies. They are responsible for getting health and social care systems working together to the benefit of patients.

- Pharmacists – organisations, usually on the high street, which provide medicines (may work in the NHS or private services).

- Dentists – doctors who provide specialist dental care (may work in the NHS and/or private service).

- Opticians – health professionals who test eyes and prescribe lenses to correct sight problems (may work in the NHS or private service).

- NHS walk-in-centres – offer fast access to health advice and treatment.

- NHS Direct – provides callers with fast and free 24-hour advice about personal health care.

Secondary Care – specialised treatment usually provided by hospitals.

- NHS Trusts – provide a wide range of services to meet patient needs. Trusts employ the majority of NHS staff, including health professionals (such as doctors, nurses and therapists) and the support staff essential to running the organisations (such as receptionists, porters and cleaners).

Performance Management

- Strategic Health Authorities – manage the delivery of local health services, develop health strategies and ensure that national health priorities are translated into local plans.

Staff Groups

Professionally Qualified Clinical Staff - consisting of all professional staff with direct patient care.

- All doctors – consists of all doctors and dentists working in hospital and the community and GPs (excluding retainers). The figures include all grades of hospital, community and public health doctor or dentist (consultant, registrars, senior house officers, house officer, staff grades, associate specialists, clinical assistants and hospital practitioners).

- Qualified nurses including practice nurses – consists of qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff, working in the hospital and community services and general practice. These nurses have at least first level registration. Includes nurse consultants, nurse managers and bank nurses.

- Qualified scientific, therapeutic & technical staff (ST&T) – qualified health professionals (includes consultant therapists, ST&T managers and healthcare scientists). These staff work alongside doctors, nurses and other health professionals and are categorised into the following two groups:

  - Qualified AHPs – qualified allied health professionals (AHPs) are the following staff: chiropodists/podiatrists, dietitians, occupational therapists, orthoptists, physiotherapists, radiographers and art/music/drama therapists. In primary care, AHPs work in teams with GPs, nurses and other professionals, such as social workers, to provide quick and effective care for patients without the need for them to go into hospital.

  - Other qualified ST&T – other qualified health professionals including clinical psychologists, healthcare scientists, pharmacists and speech & language therapists. These are other staff working in key professional roles.

- Qualified ambulance staff – ambulance paramedics, ambulance personnel and ambulance service managers, but does not include ambulance trainees.

Support to Clinical Staff - Staff working in direct support of clinical staff, often with direct patient care, who free up clinical staff and allow them more time to treat patients

- Support to doctors & nurses – nursing assistants/auxiliaries, nursery nurses, health care assistants and support staff in nursing areas. Also includes clerical & administrative staff and maintenance & works staff working specifically in clinical areas, for example medical secretaries and medical records officers. They also include all support workers and healthcare assistants in central functions, as these are mainly general porters involved in moving patients around the hospital.
• **Support to ST&T staff** – ST&T trainees and helper/assistants. Also includes healthcare assistants, support workers, clerical & administrative staff and maintenance & works staff specifically identified as supporting ST&T staff.

• **Support to ambulance staff** – trainee ambulance personnel as well as healthcare assistants, support workers, clerical & administrative staff and maintenance & works staff specifically identified as supporting the ambulance service.

**NHS Infrastructure Support** - Staff directly involved in the day-to-day running of the organisation and its infrastructure

• **Central functions** – includes clerical & administrative staff working in central functions. The group includes areas such as personnel, finance, IT, legal services, library services, health education and general management support services.

• **Hotel, property and estates** – includes clerical & administrative staff and maintenance and works staff working in areas such as laundry, catering, domestic services and gardens. This group includes caretakers and labourers.

• **Managers and senior managers** – staff with overall responsibility for budgets, manpower or assets, or accountable for a significant area of work. Senior managers include staff at executive level and those who report directly to the board. These staff are essential to the smooth running of hospitals, Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities. This excludes nursing, ST&T and ambulance managers in posts requiring specific clinical qualifications.

• **GP practice staff** – includes a variety of staff who work in practices. These include physiotherapists, occupational therapists, receptionists and practice managers. However, practice nurses are included as qualified nurses within professionally qualified clinical staff instead.

**Trends in staff numbers**

Since 1997, the number of HCHS doctors, including dentists, has increased by 2,974 a year on average to 90,630. The number of qualified nurses working in hospitals and the community has increased by 10,099 a year on average to 381,257. The number of qualified allied health professionals has increased by 2,008 a year on average to 61,082.

Since 1997, the number of staff supporting doctors & nursing has increased by 8,800 a year on average to 310,441. The number of support to ST&T staff has increased by 2,205 a year on average to 55,715. The ambulance support staff has increased by 538 a year on average to 10,063.
Since 1997, the number of staff in central functions has increased by 4,365 per year on average to 105,565 in 2005. The number of hotel, property and estates staff has decreased by an average 296 per year to 75,431 in 2005. This is mainly because more services have been contracted out. The number of managers and senior managers has increased by an average 2,152 per year to 39,391 in 2005.

Since 1997, the number of GPs (excluding retainers) has increased by 739 a year on average to 35,302. The number of dentists (excluding hospital and community) providing NHS services has increased by 520 a year on average to 20,890. The number of practice nurses has increased by 564 a year on average to 22,904. The number of other practice staff has increased by 942 a year on average to 89,190. Dentists and ophthalmic practitioners may work in the NHS and/or private services. As a result, these groups have not been included in the pie chart on Page 2, which refers specifically to NHS staff. Other groups also not included on Page 2 include community pharmacists and social services staff.

Note: all figures in this document are headcount (ie each person is counted as 1). Full time equivalent figures (ie counting a part-time worker as a smaller number) are available in bulletins and detailed tables.

Sources: The Information Centre

For further details about the statistics in this leaflet, visit our website at www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/nhsstaff

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