

11 November 2021

Nurse Staffing Levels on 25 July and 12 September 2021

- 1. How many nursing staff were on duty in hospitals across the Belfast Trust in hospitals at 4pm on?**
 - a. 25th July 2021**
 - b. 12th September 2021**

- 2. Were these staffing levels above or below normal for Sunday across the Belfast Trust Hospitals?**
 - a. 25th July 2021**
 - b. 12th September 2021**

- 3. If the staffing levels were below normal for a Sunday across the Belfast Trust Hospitals, what was the average shortfall of nursing staff?**
 - a. 25th July 2021**
 - b. 12th September 2021**

Within the BHSCT we have approximately 200 wards across multiple Hospital sites. Each ward or department will have agreed staffing levels/nurse to bed ratio (NTBR) and an agreed skill mix depending on the speciality. This is in line with the Delivering Care Normative staffing levels, therefore it is not possible to extract the information requested to the questions posed for a point of time as requested. Staffing is reviewed on a daily basis and in line with patient acuity and service need, allowing for an element of professional judgement to care for our patients in a safe and compassionate way.

Our E-Roster system is unable to capture the information requested – there is no option to run a report from the system that will provide this data. Therefore the only option would be to extract this information ward by ward, manually, for 200 wards, for both dates. We estimate that compliance with this request for information would exceed the appropriate costs limit. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information. It is therefore exempt from release.

On the dates mentioned, there were specific departments under extreme pressure, I can confirm that all Rosters were reviewed across the Trust on both occasions to identify if we could redeploy staff. We would only be in a position to move staff to other departments if we could maintain safe staffing levels in their base ward. On both occasions we did not have any additional capacity to mobilise staff on site to support the additional demands. We maximised our utilisation of temporary workforce solutions ie. bank, agency overtime. Our wards and departments also contacted their own staff who were not on duty to check availability to work on these dates due to extreme pressure.

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4. How many nurses were absent, that would have been due to work at 4pm on those dates, due to illness (not related to Covid-19)?

- a. **25th July 2021** 431 Nursing and Midwifery Staff absent owing to non-Covid related sickness
- b. **12th September 2021** 473 Nursing and Midwifery Staff absent owing to non-Covid related sickness

- As above, our E-Roster system is unable to capture the information requested – there is no option to run a report from the system that will provide this data. This information has been taken solely from the HRPTS system and includes all NMC registered nurses Band's 5 to 7. The figures exclude those employed in a Bank/Locum/As and When capacity.

5. How many nurses were absent, that would have been due to work at 4pm on those dates, due to being Covid-19 PCR Positive?

- a. **25th July 2021** 21
- b. **12th September 2021** 13

- We do not hold information on PCR tests carried out outside of the BHSCCT
- These numbers are based on the number of nurses who were Covid-19 positive on the dates stated. It should be noted that we are unaware if these nurses were due on shift at 4pm that day

6. How many nurses were absent, that would have been due to work at 4pm on those dates, due to self-isolation as a close contact of a Covid-19 PCR Positive case?

- a. **25th July 2021** 14
- b. **12th September 2021** 0

- We only hold data on those individuals or their line managers who contact us to seek guidance about close contact with a Covid-19 positive case
- It should be noted that these figures are for nurses self-isolating on the dates stated however we would be unaware if these nurses were due on shift at 4pm on the dates indicated

7. How many nurses who normally work in hospitals in the Belfast Trust were on duty at the Odyssey and other vaccination centres around Belfast on those dates?

- a. **25th July 2021** None
- b. **12th September 2021** None

- The workforce in the RVH vaccination centre is separate and staff are not deployed from ward/inpatient areas (SSE was not staffed by BHSCCT)