

# Extra nurse and midwife training places



Shona Robison

An estimated 2,600 extra nursing and midwifery training places will be created over the next four years as part of wide-ranging measures to support and strengthen NHS Scotland's workforce.

The National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan sets out how the Scottish Government will work with partners to secure sustainable NHS staffing alongside its programme of change in health and social care.

Other measures that will seek to increase the supply of nurses include extended 'return to practice' programmes, improved recruitment and retention, particularly in rural areas, and support to attract and retain staff.

These steps will be focused on priority areas including primary care, mental health, midwifery, maternal and child health and more remote areas, particularly the north of Scotland.

Additional medical student places are also being created, up to 100 over and above the extra 40 places from next September, contributing towards a more sustainable medical workforce.

Other commitments in the workforce plan include:

- establishment of a new National Workforce Planning group to oversee the recommendations.
- further work with health boards to strengthen the recruitment and retention of staff.
- improved national, regional and local planning to ensure staff resources are allocated effectively.

The NHS workforce plan sets out details of how the workforce will be changed to meet the needs of the changing health service, with more staff based in primary care and the community.

A follow-up plan will be published in the autumn, covering social care, with a third for primary care around the end of the year. A combined plan will be published in 2018.

Health Secretary Shona Robison said: "The NHS workforce is at record levels in Scotland, but it's clear that demand is going to continue to rise in the years ahead. Increasing staff numbers is part of the solution.

"The latest figures for recruitment rates into NHS training places will shortly be published, and I hope our efforts to improve the attractiveness of medical training in Scotland will lead to some further improvements in the overall picture.

"This first plan sets out how we intend to recruit, develop and retain the multidisciplinary and flexible workforce we need to continue to deliver high quality healthcare for the people of Scotland. Creating that sustainable workforce is a crucial part of supporting our Health and Social Care Delivery Plan, published in December.

"Nursing and midwifery is by far the largest staff group in the NHS. Our projections show we will need to increase numbers in future years, so I'm pleased to be able to make the commitment to deliver an estimated 2,600 additional nursing and midwifery training places by the end of this parliament.

"Along with our existing actions to increase the number of doctors, these steps are part of wide ranging measures to support and sustain our workforce. They will be delivered in tandem with work to shift the balance of care, and to ensure roles keep pace with changing needs. We will work closely with our partners in the coming months to finalise these plans."