

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY L.M.C. DOUBLET OF ST. SAVIOUR  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 24th FEBRUARY 2015**

**Question**

Will the Minister advise:

- (a) if there is there a shortage of trained nurses in the Island;
- (b) what statistics the department has around the use of agency nurses;
- (c) how much this costs compared to having permanently employed nurses;
- (d) what, if anything, is being done to train nurses locally?

**Answer**

**a) if there is there a shortage of trained nurses in the Island;**

There will always be a need to recruit nurses particularly with specialist skills and experience from elsewhere due to staff turnover, retirement of nursing staff and development of services.

Within Health and Social Services the number of vacancies for trained nurses has started to reduce, with 28 vacancies currently in the General Hospital representing 3.7% of the registered nurse workforce and 13 in Community and Social Services representing 1.3% of the registered workforce.

The Health and Social Services Department, in common with other jurisdictions, is currently experiencing a shortage of trained nurses within the Division of Theatres and Anaesthesia who have skills in anaesthetics, scrub and /or recovery, as well as experiencing challenges in recruiting high calibre and experienced trained nurses to work within the residential units for Older Adults with Complex Care Needs.

In terms of trained nurses in other Island organisations, HSSD doesn't hold workforce data for the private and voluntary sector, however the Chief Nurse is regular contact with employers and is not aware of any specific issues at this time.

**(b) what statistics the department has around the use of agency nurses;**

The department collects detailed data on a weekly basis regarding the use of agency nurses who are used for a variety of reasons where there is no alternative.

The Department records both the number of agency nurses deployed at any time and the costs associated with those agency nurses.

There are currently five agency nurses are covering vacancies across the Division of Theatres and Anaesthesia and a further two covering roles in the Older Adults Complex Care service.

**(c) how much this costs compared to having permanently employed nurses;**

The cost of employing an agency nurse is approximately 1.7 times the cost of employing a permanent member of staff.

The increased costs are due to the agency hourly rates along with travel and accommodation charges. Agency nursing staff are only used when other alternative staffing options have been exhausted, minimising the financial cost to the service.

**(d) what, if anything, is being done to train nurses locally?**

The Department has been running nurse training for at least ten years. The programmes currently available are, in the main, in partnership with the University of Chester.

The degree level programme for pre – registration Adult Nursing is open to islanders on an annual basis and the three year programme is run on island. The interest in this programme has been significant and has attracted local people who would not have been able to pursue a career in nursing had they had to leave Jersey to train. Annual intakes are between 10–15 at present. Intake numbers are based on the expected retirements, turnover and skill mix changes. We currently have circa 45 students in training (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years)

In addition to the above programme the department is now also able to offer training in Midwifery; there are currently three pre-registration midwifery students on the programme. Because of the size of the cohort these students undertake their taught element of the programme in Chester at the university and their practice placements on island. We are also able to offer small numbers of Paediatric Nurse training and Mental Health Nurse training, all of which is structured as the midwifery programme.

It is recognised that there will be local students who want to train outside of Jersey. Those students are offered a point of contact with the Department and encouraged to join the nurse bank as a healthcare assistant whilst they are students. This has proved successful in attracting Jersey students back to the island on completion of their programme, as they have the opportunity when they return in the university holidays to do some temporary work on the bank which familiarises them with the Department.

There have been occasions when trained nurses have either had a career change or a career break, for these nurses we have offered a “Return to Practice “programme. This programme offers nurses an opportunity to return to the profession and 13 nurses undertook the programme and many are now in posts across the island.

It is important that nurses who are already qualified undertake continuous professional development. This is a requirement of the professional regulator (Nursing and Midwifery Council) It is also important to nurses themselves that they have opportunities to continue to develop their knowledge and skills and this has improved recruitment and retention. The department runs a range of programmes which meet the needs of the nursing staff and the organisation. Offering education in a range of practical and analytical programmes from diploma to Masters level.

Succession planning for specialist nursing posts at higher grades is also being undertaken with development opportunities being provided for staff nurses. The promotion of staff nurses into some of these posts will provide the vacancies for the newly qualified staff later in the year.