

NHS SAFE STAFFING REPORTING: May 2014

BACKGROUND

Nationally, the number of nurses on the wards has been *in the spotlight* in recent years. At Frimley Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, the Director of Nursing and the Director of Operations commenced a safe staffing review programme in March 2013. The initial review highlighted concerns from ward staff that the number of patients requiring high levels due to the complexity of their conditions had increased and therefore staffing levels on the late and night shift should be reviewed. As a result the Board approved the following principles to ensure that the Trust has a minimum of 2 trained nurses on duty in all ward areas, twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. During the day, ward trained nurse to patient ratios are: 1:8, and 1:10 at night. Note: these ratios do not include caring staff such as care assistants or health care assistants. These staff deliver care to patients under the supervision of a trained nurse.

Following significant additional investment to improve nursing establishment, the Trust conducted an aggressive recruitment campaign. By September 2013, the Trust was able to increase the number of nursing staff on late and night shifts.

By May 2014, compliance has improved still further, achieved through sustained recruitment, retention and enhanced training and development strategies. A monthly ward staff compliance report is presented to the Board.

The Trust recognises that compliance with the planned number of hours per shift is a first step in providing assurance to our patients, families and carers. However, it is also important to say that safe staffing is about much more than this. Our staff are highly motivated and trained professionals, who have patient safety at the heart of everything that they do. The Trust has a comprehensive training programme for nursing staff when they join the Trust. As staff develop their skills, they are supported with targeted training programmes such as the specialist qualifications, the Ward Leadership Programme and Care Staff Apprenticeships. We believe that investing in our staff ensures that our patients receive the best possible care.

COMPLIANCE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Compliance with the number of planned nursing hours:

- As part of normal ward staffing management, staff are deployed (moved) from wards where the numbers of patients are lower to areas of greater need. This movement is reflected in some ward areas having a lower planned to actual level of compliance.
- The increased number of patients with complex needs has meant that staffing levels in some areas has exceeded the minimum planned hours to ensure patient safety and experience is maintained.

The national Staffing: Nursing, Midwifery and Care Staff Report displays an error message in several of the compliance boxes (#DIV/0!). This is because the national reporting template cannot provide a compliance percentage where there are no planned hours.