Written evidence from NHS Improvement

Dear Dr Wollaston

Nursing Workforce Enquiry, 28 November evidence session

Thank you for your invitation to give evidence at the Health Select Committee’s enquiry into nursing workforce on 28 November 2017. I hope you found the session useful. I am writing to follow up on our discussion about the transfer of skills and knowledge between NHS organisations.

Feedback from Directors of Nursing on our clinical forum shows senior clinical leaders, myself included recognise that this is a significant issue across the NHS and a national solution should be explored. We are agreed that as staff move between organisations, the ability to carry skills and expertise to their new trust is essential. Not only is there an efficiency benefit, but it would also reduce the frustrations felt by registered nurses.

There are many skills nurses are trained to do that are not part of their core training such as cannulation, phlebotomy and ECGs. These tasks are the same in all organisations although there may be slight variations in the policy and equipment which could mean a period of familiarisation and assessment is necessary when moving to a new provider. NHS Improvement will work with Health Education England and NHS England to conduct a formal engagement with NHS services to identify a core skill set that could be transferable, this will enable a program of work to deliver change in practice.

As I explained in the session there are already some good examples of skills transfers being made easier including in London and in Essex. These programs have proved successful to date, although the true impact is yet to be determined as they are still early in their development. We will work with our colleagues in Health Education England to formally assess the current regional programs by September 2018, to ensure they are safe and effective and to establish learnings that could be rolled out more widely.

Further to this, we will continue to support NHS England’s work with the Social Partnership Forum to establish the potential scope of a ‘staff passport’. Together we will seek to develop a staff passport which will enable individuals to move around and work easily across multiple employers and professions.
We expect the staff passport to deliver professional, personal and place-based benefits. Information and evidence is currently being gathered by members of the Strategic Group of the Social Partnership Forum. They will drive any agreed national action around staff passports with the aim of de-risking service change, supporting staff and importantly, retaining talent.

I hope this information is helpful, do get in touch should you need anything further.

Yours sincerely

Ruth May

Executive Director of Nursing, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer for England and National Director of Infection Prevention & Control

NHS Improvement