

## Item 8: Nursing workforce in Kent and Medway

By: Kay Goldsmith, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5 October 2023

Subject: Nursing workforce in Kent and Medway

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Summary: This report invites the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the information provided by NHS Kent and Medway.

It provides background information which may prove useful to Members.

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### 1) Introduction

- a) At their meeting of 30 November 2022, the Committee received a paper on the recruitment of nurses in the county. This falls under HOSC's remit to review and scrutinise matters relating to the operation of local health services.
- b) Members requested an update to this paper, which is attached to this covering report.

### 2) Previous visits to HOSC

- a) At the meeting on 30 November 2022, the following issues were discussed.
- b) The following actions were being taken across the Kent and Medway system:
  - i) Working with Christchurch University to ensure students stayed in the county after qualifying.
  - ii) Working across the system to provide staff with greater opportunities.
  - iii) Focusing on retention of staff. Ensuring staff had access to support and opportunities to develop skills.
  - iv) Keeping international recruits.
- c) A strategic estates review, to commence in the new year, would help address challenges such as a lack of affordable housing for new recruits.
- d) The Kent and Medway vacancy rate was 15% compared to neighbours with 13-14%.
- e) The ICB were exploring ways of making career progression more collaborative and streamlined across the county.
- f) There were constraints in nursing placements, but the hope was for these to increase by 15% in the next two years.

### 3) Useful data

- a) The following data is from NHS Digital.

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- i) In June 2022, there were 8,764 individuals employed as nurses and health visitors across Kent and Medway. The equivalent FTE figure was 7,978.<sup>1</sup>
- ii) In May 2023, there were 9,445 individuals employed as nurses and health visitors across Kent and Medway. The FTE figure was 8,654.<sup>2</sup>
- iii) The number of vacancies (FTE) for registered nurses working in acute settings in the South East region was 3,752 as at May 2023. This was a decrease on the year before (4,059).<sup>3</sup>

### 4) Recommendation

RECOMMENDED that the Committee consider and note the report.

### Background Documents

Kent County Council (2022) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (30/11/22)*', <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=9048&Ver=4>

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<sup>1</sup> NHS Digital (29 Sept 2022), NHS Workforce Statistics - June 2022, Table 1

<sup>2</sup> NHS Digital (24 Aug 2023), NHS Workforce Statistics – May 2023, Table 3

<sup>3</sup> NHS Digital (24 Aug 2023), NHS Vacancy Statistics England, April 2015 - June 2023, Experimental Statistics