

Recruiter calls for aggressive attack on NHS staffing strategy following think-tank findings

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Following the publication of a report (<https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/closing-the-gap>) from leading think-tanks The King's Fund, Nuffield Trust and Health Foundation - which finds that NHS workforce shortages are having a direct impact on patient care and staff experience - specialist recruiter, Healthier Recruitment (<http://www.healthierrecruitment.co.uk/>), has warned that the health service must aggressively attack its workforce issues or risk failing the patients it serves.

Current figures suggest that more than 30,000 extra nurses and almost 3,000 GPs are currently needed. However, the paper warns that this will rise to nearly 70,000 nurses and more than 7,000 GPs within five years if sufficient action isn't taken.

Michael Johnson-Ellis, Managing Director at Healthier Recruitment, comments:

"We wholeheartedly agree with the report's findings that staffing is a 'make-or-break issue' for the NHS and that urgent action is needed now: there is no question that access to talent is a significant barrier to the future sustainability of the health service. However, headlines that proclaim that the NHS has 'no chance' of training enough staff to meet future demand are misleading and unhelpful.

"Recommendations outlined in the paper, such as the introduction of cost-of-living grants for student nurses, are sensible suggestions. But in the meantime, it is crucial that Trusts concentrate efforts on actions that will have an immediate impact on workforce productivity.

"We specifically support the recommendation that NHS England must make the NHS a 'better place to work and build a career' and also echo advice that workforce planning is key to success.

"With nearly a third of qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff expected to retire in the next 10 years, and the proportion of GPs who have taken voluntary early retirement doubling since 2011, boosting retention is our first line of defence against a future skills crisis. Overreliance on temporary workforces continues to have a negative impact on both the experiences of substantiate staff and continuity of care – and this is something which must be addressed aggressively.

"Through proactively working to improve employee engagement, seeking permanent employees rather than relying on agency staff and deploying existing workforces in a more efficient way, Trusts can work to mitigate against the crisis situation that this report forecasts."

- Ends

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