

For immediate release

06 November 2014

National NHS Pharmacy Staffing Establishment and Vacancy Survey 2014

- *'NHS service providers' include former PCT provider activity, including social enterprises and Community Interest Companies. 'Commissioning organisations' include CCGs, CSUs, NHS England regional and Area Teams, and some LA/HWB activity.*
- *This press release highlights data from **England only**. Data for Northern Ireland and Wales are available separately. Scotland opted not to take part in the 2014 survey.*
- *Vacancy rates indicate vacancies on 31 May 2014; 3-month vacancies are also reported in the full report.*

The national NHS Pharmacy Staffing Establishment and Vacancy Survey, now funded by Health Education England (HEE), has been carried out for the last time. Pharmacy is the only healthcare profession which conducts its own survey and it is recognised that the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) should be the vehicle through which workforce data is collected to inform planning. HEE, local LETBs and pharmacy workforce leads are facilitating an exercise to ensure that staff data on ESR are correct.

Results from the May 2014 NHS Pharmacy Staffing Establishment and Vacancy Survey show that in **NHS service providers and commissioning organisations** in England, the trend of an **increase** in pharmacist posts by ~3% per annum over recent years, has continued with an increase of 3.9% from 2013 to 2104, to a total of 7,932 FTE on 31st May 2014.

Pharmacy technician posts also continue to rise, but less sharply, with a 1.6% increase from 2013 to 2014, to a total of 6,849 FTE on 31st May 2014.

This trend reflects the valuable contribution of the pharmacy workforce to the medicines optimisation agenda, both ensuring safe and effective use of medicines and optimising use of scarce NHS resources. The anticipated drop in posts due to NHS financial pressures was not seen.

In **NHS service providers** in England, pharmacist posts have seen increases at Band 6 (41 FTE, 3.2% increase) and Band 7 (192 FTE, 10.1% increase); and pharmacy technician posts have seen increases at Band 4 (10 FTE, 0.7% increase) and Band 5 (108 FTE, 3.5% increase). For both registered pharmacist and registered pharmacy technicians, it is important to note that the band above the newly-qualified band has a considerably higher number of posts (2,092 FTE Band 7 pharmacists and 1,344 FTE Band 6 pharmacists; 3,220 FTE Band 5 pharmacy technicians and 1,520 FTE Band 4 pharmacy technicians), highlighting the importance of considering both bands in detail to inform workforce planning activity.

Vacancy rates for junior pharmacists in **NHS service providers** in England decreased at Band 6 from 24.4% in 2009 to 10.6% in 2013 and rose again to 11.4% in 2014, with a 3-month vacancy rates at 6.1% in 2014. Band 7 pharmacist vacant posts decreased from 19.0% in 2009 to 9.0% in 2013, but increased again to 12.5% in 2014, with a 3-month vacancy rate at 8.1% in 2014. The 2014 vacancy rate for all qualified pharmacy technicians is 6.7% and junior pharmacy technicians at Band 4 is 8.4% in 2014.

These results are based on a 100% response rate from all NHS service providers and commissioning organisations across England.

HEE has also commissioned a community pharmacy workforce survey. When the community pharmacy workforce survey is considered alongside the results of this survey, this will enable a valuable, holistic view of the pharmacy workforce involved in commissioning and delivering NHS pharmacy services for the first time.

Susan Sanders, survey facilitator on behalf of the NHS Pharmacy Education and Development Committee said “The results of the 2014 annual survey provide a useful picture of the pharmacy workforce employed within NHS service providers and commissioning organisations, and trend data for comparison with previous years.

As this is the last year that this survey takes place, it is important that NHS organisations ensure that ESR records correctly reflect the pharmacy workforce in place, to appropriately inform future pharmacy workforce planning decisions. Once this is achieved, the information alongside the community pharmacy workforce data will continue to enable us to have a holistic view of the pharmacy workforce involved in commissioning and delivering NHS pharmacy services.

It is important to ensure that we train the future pharmacy workforce to sustain their recognised input in delivering on patient safety and medicines optimisation initiatives in this post-Francis era.

I would like to thank all of the respondents for completing the survey”.

The report of the National NHS Pharmacy Staffing Establishment and Vacancy Survey 2014 is now available on the NHS Pharmacy Education and Development Committee’s website at <http://www.nhspedc.nhs.uk/surveys.htm> .

Acknowledgement

The NHS Pharmacy Education and Development Committee thanks Health Education England for providing the resources to make the survey possible.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

NHS Pharmacy Staffing Establishment and Vacancy Survey

The NHS Pharmacy Staffing Establishment and Vacancy Survey is carried out by the NHS Pharmacy Education and Development Committee (NHS PEDC) in response to demands from various sources for accurate data on the current state of the NHS workforce and recruitment and retention in NHS pharmacy. The data collected help to inform workforce strategy, planning and development by various organisations and shape recruitment and retention initiatives and training plans.

For the sixth time, this year a 100% response rate was achieved from all known NHS service providers and commissioning organisations surveyed.

Caution must be exercised when comparing 2014 data with 2013 data, particularly in commissioning organisations where some staff groups have been captured which were not captured in previous surveys, and NHS transition was being implemented in 2013. Equally, comparisons between apparently ‘similar’ trusts must be carried with caution as a full understanding of pharmacy services provided is necessary for meaningful interpretation of the data.

About the NHS Pharmacy Education and Development Committee

The NHS Pharmacy Education and Development Committee is a national network of pharmacy colleagues leading on NHS pharmacy workforce development. See <http://www.nhspedc.nhs.uk/surveys.htm> for previous reports.

Facilitator of the National NHS Pharmacy Staffing Establishment and Vacancy Survey 2014

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