Recruitment and retention working for NHS Wales

New staffing figures show that recruitment and retention policies for the NHS in Wales are working Health Minister Jane Hutt said today when the latest staff in post and vacancy figures for the NHS were published.

The figures, for September 2003, show that directly employed NHS staff have increased by 2,500 to 62,644 and that NHS posts that have been vacant for three months or more has decreased by 22% to 1,041.

Jane Hutt said: "The figures being published today show that we are well on our way to reaching our target of 6,000 more nurses and 700 more hospital consultants and General Practitioners by 2010. Between 2002 and 2003 the number of nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff have increased by 1,191 to 26,697. This is a significant increase which is a real reflection of the extra investment that has gone into recruiting and training NHS staff.

"Our return to practice scheme has made a huge impact on attracting people back to the NHS. This has helped to increase the number of qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff by 748 to 19,514.

"Hospital consultants have also increased by 41 to 1,377. With the new consultant contract now being implemented I hope we can build on this increase and attract more consultant to Wales.

"The decrease of 22% in vacancies is also welcome news. Posts that have been vacant for three months or more now only account for 1.7% of all NHS posts in the NHS. Nursing, midwifery and health visiting alone has seen a decrease in vacancies from 709 to 441. There has been a slight increase in consultant vacancies but as more posts are created it is inevitable that vacancies may occur for a short time.

"Two years ago we published a recruitment and retention strategy for the NHS across Wales. This was the first time that an all-Wales plan had been put together for Wales and we are now starting to see the benefits of this. I am confident that as investment in training continues to increase the number of vacancies will continue to fall and we will have a NHS workforce that benefits not only the organisation, but the individual and most importantly the patient."

Notes:

- The latest ‘NHS Staff in Post' and ‘NHS Vacancy Rates' are published on the Welsh

- The staffing targets are to have 700 more consultants and GPs (525 consultants, 175 GPs), 6,000 more nurses and 2,000 more other health professionals to be achieved by 2010.

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