

Nursing workforce is the lifeblood of the NHS in Wales – Vaughan Gething

Speaking at the All Wales Nurse Staffing Conference, Vaughan Gething thanked nurses across Wales for their hard work and commitment to the NHS and stressed the importance of ensuring Wales has a nursing workforce fit to meet the needs of patients both now and in the future.

During the speech, the Health Secretary spoke about the importance of having the right numbers of nurses with the right skills and knowledge. He spoke about the importance of the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act and announced in readiness for commencement of the Act in April 2018, the Welsh Government will be publishing the required Statutory Guidance in the next six weeks.

Vaughan Gething said:

“Wales is the first country in Europe to legislate on nurse staffing levels. We took the lead, empowering nurses and ensuring the resources are in place to care sensitively for patients. I’m delighted the guidance, developed with and for the nursing workforce, will be published in the coming weeks.”

Speaking on the one per cent pay cap on public sector workers, the Health Secretary told the conference:

“The number of nurses working in NHS Wales continues to increase year on year. There are more nurses working here in our NHS than ever before; something to be celebrated,

“We do however recognise there are challenges around the recruitment of nurses in primary and secondary care – that’s why we developed our successful This is Wales: Train Work Live campaign to attract more staff here for the future.

“Pay and the public sector pay cap is an issue for those already in the profession and those considering a career in nursing. We have called, repeatedly, on the UK Government to end the cap on public sector pay and give workers across the UK a much-deserved pay rise.

“Any lifting of the cap must be funded by the UK Government, doing so ourselves would mean £50 million coming out of the budget for NHS Wales alone. This would threaten thousands of public sector jobs and impact on the services we value and rely on. I know NHS staff do not want a pay rise on the back of redundancies in local government and other public services.

“I have written to the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt

on two occasions calling for an end to the cap; he has not given me the courtesy of a response thus far."