

Written Answers from the Department of Health and Social Care

The Department of Health and Social Care has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (117394):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help recruit more permanent staff to the NHS and reduce dependence on Agency staff. (117394)

Tabled on: 06 January 2023

Answer:

Will Quince:

This Government is growing the National Health Service workforce. There are now over 42,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) more staff working in NHS provider trusts and commissioning bodies than October 2021, including almost 4,700 more doctors and over 10,500 more nurses. We are working hard to deliver 50,000 nurses by the end of March 2024 and we are well on the way towards achieving this aim with over 36,000 more nurses working in the NHS now compared with September 2019.

The Government has funded 1,500 more medical school places each year for domestic students in England, a 25% increase over three years. This expansion was completed in September 2020 and has delivered five new medical schools in England. There are currently record numbers of medical students in training.

The Department of Health and Social Care has also commissioned NHS England to develop a long-term workforce plan. The plan will look at the mix and number of staff required across all parts of the country and will set out the actions and reforms that will be needed to reduce supply gaps and improve retention. A temporary workforce market allows the NHS to meet demand fluctuations without the need to increase capacity above that which would be required on a sustained basis. Staff can be drawn from internal staff banks or external agencies.

Measures were introduced in 2015 to control agency spending and include price caps, limiting the amount a trust can pay to an agency for temporary staff, the mandatory use of approved frameworks for procurement, and the requirement for all trusts to stay within the specified Annual Expenditure Ceilings for agency staff. The agency rules outlined were effective in reducing spending on agency staffing by a third between 2015/16 and 2020/21.

The answer was submitted on 12 Jan 2023 at 11:10.