Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Action Plan
2019-2021

Our improvement journey – Better together!
Foreword

This Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Action Plan has been developed in response to the Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy: Delivering for our People (DoH 2018) and Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together (DoH, 2017). This Workforce Action Plan is for all our nurses, midwives and our non-registered nursing workforce. Our nursing and midwifery workforce deliver safe high-quality compassionate care and are crucial to the service we provide to our patients and service users. We acknowledge the transformation required to meet the needs of a 21st century population and are committed to ensuring a workforce that can meet the challenges of the future.

Our nursing and midwifery workforce do an incredible job every day. We must recognise, however, that in too many areas, our staff are overstretched and often find it difficult to cope with increased demand. These pressures undoubtedly impact on morale, retention and our ability to consistently deliver high quality, safe and compassionate care. We need to work together to retain and optimise our nursing and midwifery workforce to enable them to give of their best for all our patients and service users.

We are committed to investing in our nursing and midwifery workforce. We want to be an employer of choice, to retain the best talent and facilitate our staff to develop skills and expertise in their preferred career pathways, whilst maintaining the provision of personalised compassionate care. Our nursing and midwifery staff must be supported and facilitated to embrace the challenges and opportunities placed on their practice by growing demands and changing service needs, with a corresponding increase in workforce knowledge skill and expertise.

This Nursing and Midwifery Action Plan seeks to address these challenges and offer solutions regarding attraction, recruitment, retention and utilisation of the nursing and midwifery workforce within the organisation. It has been developed through engagement with a wide range of staff and includes several actions which will be implemented and embedded within the organisation as part of our improvement journey.

We recognise that this is a dynamic action plan and going forward it will be reviewed to reflect the ongoing challenges our nursing and midwifery staff will face in the future.
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Context

Nurses and midwives are critical to health service delivery, accounting for 37% of the SHSCT workforce (SHSCT 2019). The NI Executive has endorsed the need to transform how we design and deliver health and social care services to meet the increasing demands and changing context of care delivery. *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together* sets out the direction for transformation and how services can deliver better outcomes for our population. It identifies 18 key actions, one of which is to:

*Develop a Workforce Action Plan covering all aspects of the HSC workforce, including retention and recruitment; opportunities for introducing new job roles; and upskilling initiatives.*

It is therefore timely that we develop our own Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Action Plan which aligns with the HSC Workforce Strategy (DoH, 2018). We want to create working environments where our staff enjoy being at work, feel proud of the care they deliver and have opportunities to progress in their careers at all levels. This will only be achieved by making the Trust a great place to work where staff feel valued and part of a team. As evidence suggests, staff engagement is directly linked to better patient experiences and outcomes. We need to provide opportunities to develop our staff in an environment which allows for more specialisation, whilst maintaining core services and personalised compassionate care.

Where necessary, we will consider ways of delivering care more effectively through the development of new roles and skills.

It has also become clear that due to the global shortages of nursing and midwifery staff it is simply not possible to fill all vacant nursing and midwifery posts. This in turn has put additional pressure on our staff and has seen our service become increasingly reliant on short term solutions such as bank and agency options.

The increasing pressure on services has contributed to difficulties in attracting and retaining experienced nursing and midwifery staff and the vacancy rate continues to grow. Clearly, this is unsustainable and workforce planning should not simply be an exercise to ensure that existing rotas are filled, it must be a vehicle for supporting the implementation of a new and sustainable model of care. It must take account of increasing demand because of demographic trends, be informed by robust and accurate workforce information and analysis, and map to the new configuration of services in secondary care and the increased focus on primary/community care.

Our aim is to develop and embed an organisational culture which optimises recruitment, retention and utilisation of the nursing and midwifery workforce, to deliver safe high-quality compassionate person-centred care, which keeps up with the fast pace of innovation and health and social care developments.

#teamSHSCT
Our Community

The Southern Trust provides integrated hospital, community and primary care services to a population of 380,312 people living across Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Dungannon, South Tyrone, Newry and Mourne.

The area is largely rural, with a number of busy towns and picturesque villages. For individuals and families alike, a fantastic lifestyle is on offer here, with high-quality affordable housing, some of the best schools in Northern Ireland, excellent sport, cultural and recreational activities, great shopping and good public transport.
Our Organisation

We are committed to the development of our Nursing and Midwifery workforce and have excellent examples of how our nursing and midwifery workforce are facilitated to develop professionally and meet the needs of our patients in a complex, rapidly changing environment.

The Challenges

We face several nursing and midwifery workforce challenges.

Increasing Demand

We are working in a complex, rapidly changing environment with increasing demands placed upon our nursing and midwifery workforce. This will continue as we have a growing population, with an increased number of older people and people living longer with complex long-term conditions.

We have the second largest resident population compared to other Trusts in Northern Ireland at 365,712 (20% of population).

- **18.9% growth in population between 2000 and 2013, NI average of 8.7%**
- **Largest increase in births since 2001 at 17%, compared to NI average of 10%**
- **Highest projected growth in the over 65 population between 2012 and 2037 of 95%**

We must be responsive and adapt to this increasing demand. We need to provide assurance that we have an adequate number of nursing and midwifery staff who have the knowledge, skills and expertise to deliver safe high-quality care in a range of settings.

We are fully committed to support our staff to undertake new and advanced nursing and midwifery roles to enable staff development and in response to new service initiatives.
Transformation Agenda

Several strategic drivers are focused on the delivery of the Department of Health’s modernisation and reform agenda. There will be opportunities for our staff to enhance existing roles and develop new roles in the areas of public health and early intervention to help improve the lives of our local population. However, it is fundamental that we have adequate staff to continue to deliver core services. For the transformation agenda to be fully implemented consideration must be given to appropriate investment into nursing and midwifery education, training and development, new and extended roles, additional funding resources and the appropriate use of skill mix.

SHSCT are currently developing 84 of our health care staff to train as a registered nurse through the Open University Programme!

I am proud to work for the Southern Trust and have had great opportunities to progress my career from starting as a Band 2 Domiciliary Care Worker, through my Open University registered nurse training, secondment to the Community Nursing Pathway and securing a District Sister’s post.

Lyndsey, District Nursing Sister, Portadown ICT

In 2018-19, 32 Nursing Assistants have completed a Level 2 RQF qualification and will progress to RCF Level 3

We have welcomed 45 International Nurses into the Trust

In 2018-19 we have supported 150 nurses and midwives to undertake post registered education at our local universities

Each year 5 of our Maternity Support Workers complete the regional Level 3 RQF diploma
Recruitment and retention of our workforce

We have currently a workforce of 5,262 (December 2018) registered and non–registered nursing and midwifery staff. The challenge for us is to retain this group of highly skilled staff to deliver our services. We also need to attract a more diverse workforce, particularly males into the profession.

However in the context of a national shortage in these professions, we need to able to attract, recruit and retain staff to meet the needs of the SHSCT population and support the transformation agenda in all service areas including:

- Mental health
- Midwifery
- Care of Older Person
- Theatres
- Medicine
- Surgery
- District Nursing
- Paediatrics
- Community
- Learning Disability.

Pay

We recognise there are gaps between nurses’ pay in Northern Ireland compared with the rest of the UK. Whilst we recognise that addressing pay is not the sole solution to retention, it is clear from our staff that this creates additional challenges in recruiting staff and retaining a core workforce.
Our Goal

Our goal is to be an employer of choice and a great place to work. We want our staff to feel valued and recognised in all aspects of their work. We want to attract the best qualified nursing and midwifery staff, and support them in providing safe, high quality, compassionate person-centred care, which is at the heart of the nursing and midwifery profession.

We want a workforce that can adapt to the ever-changing environment and therefore will continue to provide the appropriate training, education and career opportunities to meet the needs of our population. We want to support our nursing and midwifery staff to become our nurse and midwifery leaders of the future.

The delivery of our Workforce Action Plan will require commitment from everyone who works in the Trust. Creating a culture of collective leadership will allow us to build strong, supportive teams and equip and empower our staff at all levels to deliver safe, continuously improving, high quality compassionate care.
The Change Needed

We need to strengthen our focus regarding attracting, recruiting, retaining and utilising our nursing and midwifery staff.

Our aims:

To promote a nursing and midwifery career in SHSCT, as attractive and fulfilling

We will:

- Be innovative and proactive in our approach to recruitment.
- Work in partnership with schools and colleges to promote careers in nursing and midwifery.
- Market our Trust as an employer of choice with clear career pathways and a supportive learning environment.

To retain our skilled and experienced nursing and midwifery staff

We will:

- Support continuous professional development and facilitate progression through structured career pathways providing appropriate education and training.
- Prioritise the health and wellbeing of our staff embedding a compassionate culture.
- Support our staff to provide strong professional leadership by providing developmental opportunities and support to enable the consistent provision of safe, high-quality care.

To optimise the efficient use of our nursing and midwifery workforce

We will:

- Make better use of systems and workforce information to meet the demands of the service as well as meet the needs of our staff.
- Be innovative in the creation of new nursing and midwifery roles.

I started working with the Trust on the Rotational Programme, giving me the opportunity to try different specialist areas before deciding on my preference. I encourage all newly registered nurses to join this programme, you will learn so much from the many excellent colleagues you will meet along the way.

Judith, Staff Nurse, Cardiac Catheterisation Lab
## Our Actions

### To promote a nursing and midwifery career in SHSCT as attractive and fulfilling

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<tr>
<th>What are we going to do?</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and implement an annual programme of engagement with local schools and colleges (early contact), including maximising outreach opportunities.</td>
<td>March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure our nursing and midwifery students have the best placement experience with us and develop a framework outlining ways to engage with all nursing and midwifery students regarding potential careers in the Trust.</td>
<td>April 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and embed annual recruitment plans and recruitment processes.</td>
<td>September 2020</td>
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### To retain our skilled and experienced nursing and midwifery staff

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<th>What are we going to do?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Review and enhance our induction, rotation and preceptorship programmes.</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a Trust Nursing and Midwifery Career Framework that outlines career pathways, including education, learning and development opportunities for all bands of nursing and midwifery staff.</td>
<td>March 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review procedures for internal transfers and pilot a new approach.</td>
<td>September 2020</td>
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<td>Develop and embed a process to capture feedback from staff on their experiences of working in the organisation.</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a nursing and midwifery voice on the Staff Health and Wellbeing Work Streams and identify opportunities for staff to engage in initiatives to enhance their health and wellbeing at work.</td>
<td>August 2019</td>
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<td>Embed robust processes to encourage and facilitate staff to avail of a range of flexible job opportunities within the organisation at all stages of their career.</td>
<td>September 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a recognition strategy to identify ways in which the Trust can acknowledge the achievements of our nursing and midwifery staff.</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Embed a culture of collective leadership which will allow us to build strong, supportive teams and equip and empower our staff at all levels to deliver safe, continuously improving, high quality compassionate care.</td>
<td>March 2021</td>
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### To optimise the efficient use of our nursing and midwifery workforce

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<tr>
<td>To embed all elements of the staff rostering system to provide assurances regarding the effective utilisation of our nursing and midwifery staff</td>
<td>March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>To optimise the use of skill mix in order that we have the right number of staff, in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills.</td>
<td>December 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>To create a Trust wide nursing and midwifery workforce data set to analyse workforce data in order to identify work force trends.</td>
<td>March 2020</td>
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Our Next Steps

Our Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Action Plan outlines the beginning of our improvement journey over the next two years on how we will recruit, retain and utilise our nursing and midwifery workforce.

As an organisation we are committed to the successful implementation of our action plan. We are actively progressing key actions through three work streams and will regularly monitor the effectiveness of our plan against a range of key performance indicators.

We will continually strive to be an employer of choice which supports and develops all our staff to ensure they consistently deliver high quality, safe and compassionate care.