

FOI 3103

1th June 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

1. Generic policy for workforce planning for Nursing and Allied Health Professionals, inclusive of social care staff

Response:

Workforce planning is primarily based on the Six Step Methodology which is a structured approach used in healthcare, to ensure the right workforce with the right skills. It involves defining a plan, mapping service changes, identifying workforce requirements, assessing workforce availability, planning for workforce development, and implementing, monitoring, and refreshing the plan.

Please see attachment 1.

Additionally, the "Delivering Care" policy framework in Northern Ireland, which outlines nurse staffing levels, was published on March 31, 2014, and is the result of a commission undertaken by the PHA Director of Nursing from the DHSSPS Chief Nursing Officer.

The Northern Ireland Public Health Agency (PHA) was the main organisation involved in delivering this policy framework, with approval from the Minister of Health. It aims to support the provision of high-quality care which is safe and effective in hospital and community settings, through the development of a framework to determine staffing ranges for the nursing and midwifery workforce in a range of major specialities. The following areas were finalised and approved:

[Normative staffing Ranges Section 1 Revised Final Mar 14](#)

[Normative staffing Ranges Section 2 Revised Final March 2014](#)

[Delivering Care Phase 3 District Nursing](#)

[Delivering Care Phase 4 Health Visiting](#)

[Delivering Care Phase 5 Mental Health](#)

Other phases of this work were progressed but have not been endorsed.

There has been a refresh of "Delivering Care" policy framework which is currently being reviewed by the Chief Nursing Officer, DoH.

There is no specific policy for workforce planning for Allied Health Professionals. However, several workforce reviews have been completed for Allied Health Professional groups:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/workforce-planning-workforce-review-reports>

There is no specific policy for workforce planning for social care. However, in December 2024 the Health Minister launched 'The Social Care Workforce Strategy 2025-2035'. The strategy details how the Health & Social Care system will attract, grow, retain and develop the social care workforce. See link: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-12/doh-social-care-strategy2025-2035.pdf>

2. The policy on special/additional resources for 1 to 1 observation of patients– which covers for both acute hospital settings, community hospital settings and care home environment – for example a client who lives with advanced cognitive disorder, high risk of falls and needs 1 to 1 staff as per assessed need 24 hours daily – the policy for application, funding etc for same – if there is separate policies for acute & community – then please provide all policies for all environments/settings. (I have attached examples to demonstrate same)

Response:

Please see Attachment 2 – Acute mental health.

Acknowledging the critical role of ECO in patient safety and experience and valuing our workforce we are committed to supporting staff to provide high quality patient care whilst responding to changing service and budgetary requirements.

Within Acute Hospital inpatient wards and Non-Acute Hospital wards patients who may require Enhanced Care are assessed using the ECO (Enhanced Care Observation) tool.

ECO provides a framework for early intervention and engagement strategies and provides a tiered approach to Enhanced Care. ECO levels are recorded at one hour intervals and reviewed at the end of each shift to ensure that patients receive ECO for the least amount of time, within the least restrictive environment which promotes patient safety.

Please see attachment 3 – ECO Booklet Nov 2024

Please see attachment 4 – Enhanced Care Handbook

There is no Policy for application of Funding, however a draft Standard Operating Procedure is in place which includes a scrutiny process for requesting ECO shifts which are considered by Lead Nurse and approved by HOS.

Please see attachment 5 – Scrutiny Request Form for ECO

Adult Community Services Response:

For SHSCT Community Services we are currently developing the Community SHSCT guidance in relation to Additional Care, which will incorporate 1:1 / Specialist Care in Independent Sector Care Homes.

3. Is there any leaflets in respect of this as well for 1 to 1 observation of patients?

Response:

Please see Attachment 2 – Acute mental health

Please see attachment 6 – ECO SHSCT Patient Information Leaflet

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