

Wales is taking the lead in empowering nurses and ensuring resources are there to care sensitively for patients – Vaughan Gething

Following a productive consultation period and collaboration with the Royal College of Nursing, new guidance will help the nursing workforce prepare for commencement of the Act in April 2018.

The Act places a duty on health boards and NHS Trusts to take steps to calculate and maintain nurse staffing levels in adult acute medical and surgical inpatient wards. It also contains a broader duty to consider how many nurses are necessary to provide the right level of care for patients sensitively in all settings.

Vaughan Gething said:

“Wales is the first country in Europe to legislate on nurse staffing levels and I’m proud of what we have achieved so far.

“The evidence unequivocally tells us that having the right number of registered nurses reduces patient mortality and improves patient outcomes.

“Ensuring patients have safe, high quality care was one of the main reasons why we supported the introduction of the Act. I’m very keen to see the health boards use this guidance to bring the legislation to life and affect positive change for the benefit of our patients in Wales.”

Chief Nursing Officer, Professor Jean White said:

“Nurses are the largest section of the health workforce and fulfil roles right across our health and social care services.

“It is essential that we have a nursing workforce that has the right skill set, in the right numbers with an appropriate skill-mix, deployed at the right time to meet patients’ needs.

“The Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 requires the NHS to ensure there are enough nurses to sensitively care for patients and we’re working hard to help get those numbers right. The publication of this statutory guidance – developed in partnership with the NHS and key partners like the RCN – is a big step towards making that a reality.”