

What is The Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 and how does it affect me?



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The Act became law in Wales in March 2016 and places a duty on Welsh health boards and trusts to ensure that nurses have enough time to care for patients. The first duty of the Act applies to any settings where nursing care is provided or commissioned. The second duty currently only applies to adult acute medical and surgical inpatient wards; however Welsh Ministers have powers within the Act to apply the duty to other settings when evidence-based workforce planning tools for those areas are established.

What is the purpose of the Act?

Health boards and trusts are required to ensure that they have the right number and skill mix of nursing staff deployed in the right place at the right time to care for patients sensitively.

The Act places key responsibilities on health boards and trusts, including making sure that nurse staffing levels within certain wards are calculated, maintained, regularly reviewed and are reported to Welsh Government.

What are the benefits of the Act?

The Act will safeguard and support a high quality of care for patients as well as give nurses a standard methodology to calculate nurse staffing levels that includes their professional judgement.

What does the nurse staffing level mean?

The nurse staffing level is the number of nursing staff, which includes nurses and healthcare support workers, required by a ward to enable them to have enough time to meet the individual needs of patients.

How is the nurse staffing level for a ward decided/calculated?

In Wales we use a number of tools to support the nurses' professional judgement and determine what the nurse staffing level should be. The level varies from ward to ward and depends on many factors including the number of patients and the level of nursing care they require, the safety and quality of the service and the nurses' professional judgement.

How will the staffing level for the ward be maintained?

The nurse in charge will plan a staffing roster and will liaise with the management team when there is a gap in the staffing level. On occasions, the planned roster may change based on the number of patients on the ward and the needs of patients. If there are gaps in the planned roster or additional nursing staff are needed staff from nurse bank or agency may be used if required to maintain the nurse staffing level.

How can I find out more information?

The Nurse Staffing Level for each adult acute medical and surgical ward is displayed on the ward. An information leaflet has been devised for patients. If you have any questions or comments regarding the staffing levels on this ward, please ask to speak with the Ward Sister or Charge Nurse.

NAME

CONTACT