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Ein cyf/Our ref: AC-as-02-4467
Welsh Health Telephone Network:
Direct Line/Llinell uniongychol: [REDACTED]

Adam Cairns
Chief Executive

Mr David Rees AC/AM
Chair Health and Social Care committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay

17 February 2015

Dear Mr Rees,

RE: Information request nurse staffing levels

Further to your request from Cardiff and Vale University Health to provide additional nurse staffing levels information in preparation for scrutiny as part of the Safe Nursing Staffing levels bill, I am pleased to provide in annexe 1 the following information

- Number of patients per registered nurse by day and by night
- Ratio of registered nurses to nursing support workers

The UHB is working towards the staffing principles set out by Welsh Government: All Wales Framework and Guiding Principles for Nurse Staffing in Acute Hospital wards (2012) and the Guidance issued in 2012. For ease of reference the key Nurse Staffing Principles are:

- Professional judgement will be used throughout the planning process
- Nursing establishments on acute wards should not normally fall below 1.1 wte/bed including a head-room of 26.9%
- For specialist areas and wards with tertiary services, professional standards, guidelines and national frameworks should be used to determine nurse staffing levels e.g. National Stroke Nurse Staffing Standards (2007), Quality Requirements for Adult Critical Care in Wales (2006) etc
- Numbers of patients per Registered Nurse should not exceed 7 by day.
- The skill mix of Registered Nurse to Nursing Support Worker in acute areas should generally be 60/40
- The Ward Sister/Charge Nurse should not be included in the numbers when calculating patients per Registered Nurse
- Ward activity and demand will be considered when establishing staffing levels as well as the number of beds, environment and ward lay-out

Each ward has been reviewed, and the UHB position in relation to the level of compliance with the Principles has been reported to the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales on a quarterly basis throughout 2013/2014 and to the UHB Quality and Safety committee in April 2014. The UHB does not have a single ratio establishment for all acute medical and surgical wards.

The staffing levels/ratios reflect:

- The nature type of ward
- Activity levels
- Ward environment

The principles are primarily for general surgery and medicine areas, and specialist areas have their range of other workforce nurse staffing tools. The following nationally recognised tools are used across NHS Wales:

- Critical Care: Quality Requirements for Adult Critical Care in Wales (2006)
- Stroke Care: National Stroke Nurse Staffing Standards (2007)
- Maternity Care: Birth Rate Plus
- Neonatal Care: British Association of Perinatal Medicine (Bapm 2011)

Compliance against these nurse staffing level standards is monitored closely through the various national clinical networks.

In addition to this, the Fundamentals of Care acuity and dependency tool has been used to audit ward activity and the dependency of patients. Data from the first audit undertaken in June 2014 has been analysed and will be included in the analysis of data from the second round of auditing. The data from both audits used to assist the UHB to determine nurse staffing levels based on the needs of patients and will be reported to the UHB Board in April 2015.

I hope you find the information useful and please do not hesitate contact me should you wish to discuss further.

Yours sincerely



Adam Cairns
Chief Executive

Annexe 1

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board January 2015	Surgery	Medicine
Number of wards	12	14
Number of patients per registered nurse by day (standard 1:7)	12 wards compliant	3 wards compliant
Number of patients per registered nurse by night (standard 1:11)	7 wards compliant	5 wards compliant
Ratio RN: nursing support workers (Standard 60:40)	9 wards compliant	9 wards compliant