

1 September

Response from the Royal College of Nursing Wales to the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee's inquiry into Selling Wales to the World

The Royal College of Nursing is grateful for the opportunity to respond to this inquiry. Whilst the terms of reference ask for consideration of a number of specific areas, our response will focus on a few overarching points relevant to the nursing profession, particularly in relation to how colleges and universities promote international studying in Wales.

- I. The Royal College of Nursing Wales has welcomed the Welsh Government's 'Train Work Live' recruitment campaign, which hopes to encourage more clinical and healthcare staff, including nurses, to train and work in Wales.
- II. We do not currently have a stable nursing workforce in Wales, and it is therefore hugely important to encourage prospective nursing students to study and work in Wales in order that our NHS is enabled to function efficiently and effectively, allowing patients to receive the highest standard of care possible.
- III. With the current deficit of nurses in Wales, it is also essential that Wales is able to recruit and retain nurses, not only from other parts of the UK but also from the EU and overseas. Furthermore, there is widespread agreement that the shortfall in nurses is a global issue experienced by countries around the world. In this sense, Wales is not only competing with the rest of the UK to recruit nurses, but also needs to sell itself globally as a good place for nurses to come and train and work and live.
- IV. Whilst all universities in Wales will have international departments and well established mechanisms for recruitment, from an employer perspective it would be of benefit for there to be an All-Wales coordinated approach to the recruitment of nurses from overseas, in order to ensure a consistency of approach and to ensure that appropriate planning is in place to prepare and accommodate prospective nurses coming to Wales. This could potentially be a role which the newly formed Health Education Improvement Wales would be well suited to having within its remit. The Committee may also want to consider looking at the Global Learners Programme, which has been an effective overseas nurse recruitment programme run in England, which may have scope to be introduced in Wales.
- V. Whilst recruitment of nurses from the EU and overseas must of course be in line with Home Office regulations, an existing barrier to recruitment is the levy which Health Boards and Care Homes have to pay when employing international nurses. This is in spite of nurses being on the Shortage Occupation list. Arguably, the levy acts as a financial disincentive to Health Boards and Care Homes recruiting international nurses, and for that reason the Committee may want to consider appealing to the UK Government for these levies to be dropped.

- VI. Perhaps of most importance to being able to 'Sell Wales to the World' when it comes to recruiting and retaining nurses from other parts of the world, is the promotion of tolerant, accepting societies and workplaces which welcome and accommodate people from different backgrounds and cultures. Only then will Wales be a truly attractive place to train, work and live.

About the Royal College of Nursing (RCN)

The RCN is the world's largest professional union of nurses, representing over 450,000 nurses, midwives, health visitors and nursing students, including over 25,000 members in Wales. The majority of RCN members work in the NHS with around a quarter working in the independent sector. The RCN works locally, nationally and internationally to promote standards of care and the interests of patients and nurses, and of nursing as a profession. The RCN is a UK-wide organisation, with its own National Boards for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The RCN is a major contributor to nursing practice, standards of care, and public policy as it affects health and nursing.

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies.