

Open Report on behalf of Executive Director for Environment and Economy

Report to:	Economic Scrutiny Committee
Date:	21 July 2015
Subject:	Improving employment and skills in the Nursing Sector

Summary:

This report identifies ways that Economic Development can contribute to tackling vacancies in the health and care sector. Helen Smith from Health Education East Midlands will attend to provide specialist advice from a health point of view to the Economic Scrutiny Committee.

Actions Required:

The Economic Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on the five strands of work that are being pursued, and to provide advice to officers so that they can prioritise these.

1. Background

LCC recognises the importance of having strong healthcare provision for its residents. In addition, the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has identified the Health and Care sector as one of our most important growth sectors, with the potential to boost the economy and provide employment across all skills levels.

The recent forecast by Warwick Institute for Employment Research predicts that by 2022 the sector could need to fill 30,000 jobs in our area. It also predicts that the workforce will need to be more highly skilled than they are at the moment to take on the opportunities that become available in the future.

One of the barriers to growth is the availability of trained or skilled staff and a number of sectors face national (and international) shortages. We have already planned well for 'growing our own' workforce in some sectors, e.g. engineering.

Given the predicted growth of the Health and Care sector, and the recruitment challenges it is already facing, it is important that we consider the future medical workforce.

A National Challenge

Members will be aware that there is currently a shortage of nursing staff. There are 70 nursing vacancies in Boston Hospital alone and the recruitment team at United Lincolnshire Hospital Trust has recently attended at UK recruitment fair in Birmingham to attract medical staff to the county. They also held a Lincolnshire event to attract trained nurses who are no longer working, back into the profession.

The shortage of medical staff is not just a local challenge though, it a national one, and many trusts are trying to recruit from outside their areas too. Some are trying innovative ideas.

Nottingham has over 145 nursing vacancies across their hospitals. As part of their response they have developed a 7-day training course for young nurses to provide extra practical skills, something that new recruits say they need. Some of their newest recruits say this extra training is the reason they chose to come to Nottingham. Bristol Trust has developed their own 'nursing bank' to attract nurses who want to work flexibly, and part time, across their Trust. This has worked well.

There are calls nationally for all Trusts to offer nurses more flexible working arrangements. Flexible and part time arrangements are often one of the reasons that trained nurses choose to work through an Agency, rather than be directly employed by a hospital.

Professions that are listed on the Official Shortage Occupation List (SOL), allowing organisations to recruit from outside of the EU, include: Medical and clinical radiographers, psychiatrists, emergency and specialist doctors and nuclear medicine practitioners. GPs and nurses are not.

Current Situation

The commissioning of nursing training is the responsibility of Health Education England, a national body which has regional outposts and a local committee called the Local Education and Training Committee (LETC).

Economic Development has a small part to play. However, our ability to work across sectors, advocate the private sector, attract funding, and influence government provision all mean that we can add something beneficial to the work that needs to be done to address this skills shortage.

We have been speaking to a range of partners and stakeholder across both the health and care sector to better understand the situation. It seems that there is duplication and dilution of effort from all organisations involved.

It is important for all employers – hospital and care home alike - to articulate what skills and jobs they need for the future and begin to plan for that now. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that nurses and other skilled staff may start to choose to work in hospitals rather than care homes.

Apprenticeships and 'Growing our Own'

The Government has begun to work with NHS employers to discuss the development of a high level nursing Apprenticeship so that local areas can start to 'grow their own' nurses. There is an advantage to this because the numbers of local training places available for nursing are insufficient to meet demand. Senior councillors wrote to the Secretary of State for Health under the previous government suggesting this is piloted in Lincolnshire, and it may be appropriate to follow this letter up under the new government.

We know that there are Lincolnshire people who apply to study a nursing degree and are not offered a place locally. They are not able to take up the places they are offered as an alternative due to family commitments that mean they cannot become a student in another region.

Outside of nursing and medical practices, other Apprenticeship training routes are available with new frameworks being developed.

Tackling Current Vacancies – options that could be pursued from an economic development perspective

Following a discussion with local contacts within the Armed Forces, there is a possibility of developing a model to match opportunities and resource from within the Armed Forces, to support health and care sector. This could be part of a wider resettlement programme or a specific brokerage model that matches specialisms and gaps.

We can also help through the Employment and Skills Board by bringing training providers together to collaborate with employers on developing new Apprenticeship frameworks to meet the specific needs. There is no reason why this should not be in the NHS and care profession (NB. The Army is the biggest provider of apprenticeships in the country).

Planning for the Future

We are already working to better inform young people about the types of jobs available with the Health and Care sector, through the Employment and Skills Board (ESB) and with Sector Skills Council, Skills for Care. For example the ESB recently commissioned a Careers Event, run by Boston College, to highlight the skills required in the sector. There is provision in the European Social Fund (ESF) programme that we steer to do this.

We have already prepared well for the national shortage of engineers by supporting the new School of Engineering at the University of Lincoln and the new University Technical College. The majority of our support concerned employer engagement, funding management, and liaison with government departments. We could do this with any concept of a medical school that is proposed for Lincolnshire.

2. Conclusion

The majority of workforce development activity for the healthcare sector will be led by NHS. However, Economic Development can play an important role as has been set out above.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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