



Welsh Affairs Committee

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From the Chair of the Committee

Hayley Thomas
Chief Executive
Powys Teaching Health Board
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2 April 2024

Dear Hayley,

The Welsh Affairs Committee is holding an inquiry into the [Impact of population change in Wales](#). Migration to Wales from other parts of the UK and internationally is an important part of population change in Wales, and we would like to understand the role of international migration in Wales's workforce. We are therefore reaching out to sector bodies and organisations to invite evidence about their perspectives.

We are particularly interested to learn more about the following:

- To what extent does international migration fill skills gaps in the Powys Teaching Health Board in Wales? We welcome any case studies you would like to share.
- Is the current immigration system, including the Skilled Worker visa, Health and Care Worker visa and Seasonal Worker visa, fit for purpose for both employers and prospective employees in Wales?
- What impact will announced changes to the immigration system, including the move to the Immigration Salary List and an increase in the general salary threshold for the Skilled Worker visa, have on employers and recruitment in Wales?
- Should there be a made-for-Wales immigration pathway to enable businesses in Wales to more effectively recruit people from outside the UK, which addresses Wales-specific skills gaps and reflects median salaries in Wales?
- What is the role of international migration in the Powys Teaching Health Board in Wales in future?
- How has Brexit impacted the recruitment of EU citizens to work in the Powys Teaching Health Board in Wales?
- Is Wales effectively promoting its opportunities overseas, to attract people coming from outside the UK to Wales as a place to live and work?

The Committee would be grateful if responses to the questions above could be provided by **Friday 19th April**.



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Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Stephen Crabb MP

Carl Cooper, Cadeirydd / Chair
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GIG
CYMRU
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WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd
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Rt Hon Stephen Crabb MP
Chair
Welsh Affairs Committee
House of Commons
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19th April 2024

Dear Rt Hon Stephen Crabb MP

Re: Welsh Affairs Committee inquiry into the Impact of population change in Wales.

Thank you for your letter dated 2nd April 2024. Please find below a response to the set of questions that were enclosed.

- To what extent does international migration fill skills gaps in the Powys Teaching Health Board in Wales? We welcome any case studies you would like to share.
In recent years, PTHB has been recruiting Internationally Educated Nurses (IEN's) from overseas to help support the current workforce gaps. To date, 4 cohorts have joined PTHB with a further 2-3 cohorts planned for 2024-25. In addition to this, PTHB are currently supporting the onboarding of internationally recruited Psychiatric Doctors to support vacancies in Mental Health Services. Looking forward, PTHB are keen to join an All-Wales pilot planned for later this year, looking to recruit internationally educated registered mental health nurses.
- Is the current immigration system, including the Skilled Worker visa, Health and Care Worker visa and Seasonal Worker visa, fit for purpose for both employers and prospective employees in Wales?
To date, a higher proportion of visa sponsorship within the health board relates to health and care workers with only a small number of skilled worker visas being requested for sponsorship. The health board are able to utilise the sponsorship process for applicants who are applying for visas accordingly. At times, the process can cause slight delays, particularly in peak periods when approvals can take longer than the standard timeframe. The overall evaluation is that the process does seem fit for purpose.

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- What impact will announced changes to the immigration system, including the move to the Immigration Salary List and an increase in the general salary threshold for the Skilled Worker visa, have on employers and recruitment in Wales?

The Health Board do not actively seek to recruit to roles under a skilled worker visa therefore, it is anticipated that these changes will not have a significant impact on the health board's ability to recruit and fill vacancies. However, it is acknowledged that there may be wider impacts across the health and care sector, particularly given the recent changes which impact upon care workers as it is now more difficult to sponsor lower banded non-Health and Care Visa employees for example employees in IT or Workforce etc. as these will not have any exemption to the increase in general salary. However, the majority of sponsorships PTHB assign are to those under the Health and Care Visa which mostly is unchanged.

The biggest change under a Health and Care Visa are to those under Biomedical Scientist SOC code. The salary threshold has risen for Biomedical Scientists, despite them being under the Health and Care Visa and would currently be paid too low to meet the threshold.

It is worth stating that these changes will not impact any employee's that are already on a Skilled Worker CoS (current employer or not), as they are exempt from the increase in salary threshold. Due to the fact this data is held externally and via a number of different providers/sectors, it is challenging to accurately predict this impact.

- Should there be a made-for-Wales immigration pathway to enable businesses in Wales to more effectively recruit people from outside the UK, which addresses Wales-specific skills gaps and reflects median salaries in Wales?

Consideration to opportunities for a national approach would be welcomed. The majority of sponsorships PTHB assigns, come under the Health and Care visa, which is based on Agenda for Change salary rates rather than a general threshold. However, there are many positions in PTHB that are not on the Health and Care Visa list, which would need to meet the increased general threshold. Therefore, there is a case to suggest that there should be a NHS pathway to encompass the positions that UKVI do not class as Health and Care, but were activity recruited and required in NHS Wales.

- What is the role of international migration in the Powys Teaching Health Board in Wales in future?

International recruitment will continue to be a recruitment pipeline for PTHB in the future, particularly focussed on certain hard to fill clinical roles i.e. Psychiatric Doctors, Registered Nurses.

- How has Brexit impacted the recruitment of EU citizens to work in the Powys Teaching Health Board in Wales?
The health board have not actively sought campaigns to recruit EU citizens. Therefore, data on the impact of this change is unavailable, however it is likely to have made things harder for recruitment of EU citizens.
- Is Wales effectively promoting its opportunities overseas, to attract people coming from outside the UK to Wales as a place to live and work?
The health board have actively participated in national recruitment campaigns overseas to promote opportunities within Wales and the Health Board. PTHB has seen a number of successful appointments, and we will continue to participate in such exercises as a valued recruitment pipeline for PTHB in the future; particularly focussed on certain hard to fill clinical roles i.e. Psychiatric Doctors, Registered Nurses. Through national campaigns, our approach and recent success would suggest we have effectively promoted opportunities.

Yours sincerely



Hayley Thomas
Chief Executive Officer