

Research specification

HOS/15/053 – The labour market for nurses in the UK and its relationship to the demand for, and supply of, foreign-born nurses in the NHS

Business demand

1. On 15 October 2015 the Home Secretary temporarily added nurses from outside the EEA to the Shortage Occupation List under Tier 2 of the immigration system, pending a full review by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), due to report in February 2016.
2. This temporary and exceptional measure was taken in the face of increasing concern around a nationwide shortage of nurses, a situation that has been exacerbated in recent months by the visa allocation for the number of economic migrants from outside the EEA being reached (the Tier 2 General cap). Consequently many visa applications for nurses have been rejected. Up to this point, although nurses were not included on the SOL (which gives priority entry to the UK), it had been possible to bring non-EEA born nurses into the UK under the Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT) route, again under Tier 2 of the immigration system. Furthermore, NHS Trusts are already facing the challenges of higher minimum staffing ratios following the Francis Review, as well as measures to curb expenditure on agency nurses.
3. Since 2013 over 5,800 nurses from outside the EEA have been recruited in the UK: this includes both in-country and out-of-country visa applications. We estimate that 2,800 of these have been recruited by the NHS and related public sector health organisations. Most of the remaining 3,000 were recruited into the social care sector.
4. However, using Home Office management information data, it is clear that different NHS Trusts recruit non-EEA nurses to a vastly differing degree; a few have recruited over 200 each, while the vast majority of NHS Trusts who did recruit via this source only took 5 or fewer non-EEA nurses.
5. These data suggest differential usage of, and ultimately reliance on, nurses from outside of the EEA to tackle the apparent overall nursing shortage. Therefore the aim of this research project is to understand better at the NHS Trust level the driving forces behind the supply of, and the demand for, nurses overall, as well as for foreign-born nurses both from within and outside the EEA.
6. In the immediate term the findings from this work will contribute to the evidence base used by the MAC in its current review to determine the case for including nurses on the SOL. In addition to this the research will ideally provide a better picture of the overall nursing recruitment issues faced by the NHS and as such help direct future recruitment policy.

Synopsis

7. The project will involve **three broad tasks**:
 - A comprehensive literature review of the NHS nursing labour market in the UK
 - using available administrative and survey data (including visa data from Home Office, which will be provided through the MAC), a quantitative/econometric analysis of some of the other variables that might impact on the determinants of nursing labour supply and demand
 - qualitative research of a small number of NHS Trusts to understand better the issues they are facing in terms of relative shortage of nurses.
8. The report is expected to conclude with an assessment of the potential implications for nursing recruitment policy and identify the role foreign-born nurses in helping to deliver future staffing needs.
9. Research questions that should be addressed by this project are provided below.

Research questions

10. The questions that this research project will address are set out below:
 - How has the UK nursing labour market evolved in recent years? What has been the usage of foreign-born nurses by NHS Trusts in recent years?
 - To what extent does this usage differ between EEA-born and non-EEA born nurses?
 - What is driving the recruitment of foreign-born nurses in the NHS? Why are some trusts heavy users of foreign nurses and others (including neighbouring ones) not? Are there any factors that can predict which trusts use foreign nurses extensively?
 - Why is there a shortfall in supply of UK-born nurses? How have workforce planning and nurse training provision impacted on this? How well does the healthcare sector retain its trained nurses and what policies are effective in doing so?
 - What are the implications for domestic nurse training and recruitment policy? Are there any costs and risks associated with an oversupply of nurses?

Proposed approach

11. Tenderers are invited to propose in detail the specific approach that will be used to address the research questions. However, the final output should include:
- An introduction that explains the purpose of the research;
 - A literature review of the research and issues facing the nursing labour market in the UK;
 - A section that presents the results of a quantitative analysis examining the factors impacting on the demand for and the supply of nurses;
 - A section that presents the findings of qualitative research seeking to address the research questions outlined above; and
 - A section that considers the potential implications for policy and assesses the potential need for recruitment of foreign born nurses over the next five years

Deliverables

12. The main outputs from the research will be:
- a scoping paper that provides an introduction to the project and reviews existing literature and sets out the approach to be undertaken for the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the project (milestone one below);
 - a preliminary report including the finalised literature review and initial results from the quantitative and qualitative research on the factors impacting on nursing labour supply/demand (milestone two below); and
 - a final report that discusses the results of the analysis in detail and frames the results in commentary and interpretation.
13. Members of the MAC secretariat will meet regularly with the contractor to receive briefings on the project. The contractor may also be asked to present early findings to MAC members, the MAC secretariat, or to other researchers at a workshop hosted by the MAC.
14. The results of the study will be published on the MAC website. The MAC promotes wide dissemination of research and will encourage organisations to disseminate findings further.

Proposed timetable

15. The research is expected to begin in mid-November 2015 and to be completed by the end February 2016. However, in order to feed into the

evidence base for the MAC's review of nurses for SOL, preliminary results from the project will be required by mid-January 2016. The intention is to publish this research via the MAC web site at the same time as the MAC review of nurses (estimated for early March 2016). This timetable may be subject to change:

Activity	Approximate end
Deadline for receipt of tenders	Noon Friday 6th November 2015
Contract awarded by	Friday 13th November 2015
Date for kick-off meeting with contractor	w/c 16th November 2015
Research milestone 1	w/c 14th December 2015
Research milestone 2	w/c 18th January 2016
Contract Completion	Friday 11th March 2016

Resources

16. The tenderer must provide details of the staff involved in the research team, and of how that team is managed.
17. To assess the suitability of the research team, tenderers must provide the following information and an up-to-date CV for each team member (if any):
18. For the project lead:
 - relevant skills in undertaking research in this area;
 - projects undertaken in the last 3 years; and
 - current ongoing projects (and their approximate value and dates).
19. For any team members:
 - name and position; and
 - skill set for undertaking related research ('related' can either refer to subject-area or methodological relevance).
20. Tenderers must detail the number of days and daily rates incurred for each member of the research team, as well as full estimates of the overhead expenses that are expected to be incurred.

Evaluation criteria

21. The tender will be evaluated against the following criteria, which will be given equal weight in the assessment process:

- the suitability of the proposed methodology to address the questions;
- how far the proposed methodology contributes new evidence to the existing literature;
- the relevant skills of the team members included in the tender;
- the tenderer's quality and continuity management processes and their ability to deliver a high-quality project of value to the MAC; and
- value for money.

How to respond

22. Tenders should be submitted as a **single PDF document** that incorporates all aspects of the bid, including the CVs of the research team and the price schedule. The tender should be no more than 10 pages (excluding CVs). The name of the PDF document should take the form 'Evaluation of migration forecasting - [tenderer name]'.
23. To be considered for this research paper please send the PDF document to **HOSProcurement@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk**, quoting **HOS/15/053**. The demand for, and supply of, foreign-born nurses in the NHS in the subject box, by **noon on Friday 6th November 2015**.