



CONSULTANT RECRUITMENT WITHIN NHS LANARKSHIRE FROM APRIL 2006

Background

NHS Lanarkshire for a number of years has experienced significant difficulty in being able to recruit and retain substantive medical staff, therefore, one of the drivers for Picture of Health was to develop a robust medical workforce solution. Recruitment to consultant posts is seen to be problematic within NHS Lanarkshire where there continues to be a vacancy rate of 14% against a Scottish average of 7%. There are a number of factors that continue to effect the recruitment to senior medical and dental posts including difficulty in recruiting to recognised shortage specialties; competing with the 2 larger teaching boards Edinburgh and Glasgow; the size and resources of small departments (often SpRs are drawn to specialist units where resources are concentrated, support is available, team working is effective and opportunities exist for sub-specialisation). The table attached shows that most consultants working in Lanarkshire live out with Lanarkshire, particularly in Glasgow. This means consultants are able to seek employment in Glasgow without moving house.

Consultant Establishment and Recruitment Trends

The consultant establishment within NHS Lanarkshire continues to increase and although some of these new posts remain vacant at present, increases in the establishment have risen for several reasons including EWTD legislation; New Deal for Junior Doctors and the implementation of MMC.

The following table summarises the vacancy position (headcount) for Consultant staff within NHS Lanarkshire from April 2006 – June 2007.

April 2006 – March 2007

No of vacancies as at 31 March 06	No of Leavers	No of New posts	No of Posts filled	No of Vacancies at year end
47	18	4	31	38

April 2007 – June 2007

No of vacancies as	No of Leavers	No of New posts	No of Posts filled	No of Vacancies
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at 31 March 07				at 30 June 2007
38	6	3	7	40

During the financial year 2006/07, **18** Consultants left NHS Lanarkshire's employment either due to retiral or taking up new appointments elsewhere. NHS Lanarkshire was successful in recruiting to **31** Consultant posts in various specialties; however, this still resulted in **38** vacancies at the year end. By contrast to the previous financial year 2005/06, Consultant vacancies have reduced from 47 to 38.

Medical and Dental (excluding GPs) staff account for 11% of NHS Lanarkshire's workforce. Recruiting to Consultant vacancies and in particular specific specialties such as Radiology and Anaesthetics has improved over the last two years. The ability to recruit depends on a number of factors eg recruitment initiatives; concentration of services/redesign of services a new Clinical Divisional structure.

The overall vacancy factor however is not solely due to increasing the Consultant establishment. Retention is also an issue for NHS Lanarkshire. In recent years, following the implementation of the New Consultant Contract, there has been an increase in the number of Consultants who have retired before the age of 60. Over the period April 2006 – June 2007 24 Consultants left NHS Lanarkshire's employment; 13 retirals (7 of who were under the age of 60); 9 took up employment within other boards and 2 were deaths in service. With 33% of the Consultant establishment in post being in the age bracket of 50-54 and 55-59, this means that a high turnover rate can still be anticipated. In addition retention of Consultants is affected by the fact that 60% of our Consultants live outwith Lanarkshire and in particular Glasgow.

Recruitment Initiatives

A considerable amount of effort is dedicated to filling Senior Medical Staff vacancies and several initiatives have been tested over the last two years. These are specifically:

- Recruitment drives are underway via world wide journals. The BMJ internet and our own local intranet are utilized in an attempt to obtain suitably qualified/experienced candidates for a variety of specialties.
- All Consultant vacancies are advertised on Scotland's Health on the Web vacancy database.
- Participation in the Scottish Executive's Advance Appointments Scheme for Transition of Specialist Registrars to Consultants. The scheme was created in 2006 to aid the transition from Specialist Registrar to Consultant. The scheme provides part funding to allow SpRs to take up Consultant positions where the existing Consultant is still in post. NHS Lanarkshire successfully bid for and received part funding to make 4 Consultant proleptic appointments during the

financial year 2006/07 (three in Radiology and one in Care of the Elderly). Recently we have received part funding to make a further proleptic appointment in ENT and are about to submit a further application for Medicine.

- Assistance was received from the Scottish Executive to help NHS Lanarkshire recruit to the Consultant Expansion Programme. The financial assistance aided the recruitment of 2 Consultant Radiologists, 6 Consultant Anaesthetists and 4 Staff Grade Anaesthetists via Bluecare Medical Agency. These individuals were contracted on an initially fixed-term basis during which time assessments took place and following which, if candidates were suitable, substantive posts were advertised and interviewed for in the normal way. To date 4 permanent appointments have been made.
- Participation in Job Fairs to attract Junior Medical Staff with both the Glasgow and Edinburgh Deaneries.

Impact of Redesign

A considerable amount of effort has been and continues to be put into filling Consultant vacancies. Existing staff often contribute to bridging the gaps within the service, although this is limited as they simultaneously have to meet the demands of their own role. The redesign and concentration of services have contributed greatly to aid recruitment and retention of Consultant staff particularly within the Children's Services and Urology specialties that are now able to recruit to their Consultant vacancies.

One of the focuses of role redesign is tackling staff shortages. This involves expanding the depth and breadth of roles, creating new jobs or moving tasks up or down a traditional uni-disciplinary ladder. Areas such as the Hospital at Night have redesigned the specialist nurse input that supports the medical staff who lead the team. NHS Lanarkshire was the first Board in Scotland to introduce these teams. NHS Lanarkshire is also participating in the national pilot schemes to implement new roles for Physician's Assistants and Anaesthetic Care Practitioners.

Despite these endeavors NHS Lanarkshire remains the Board with the highest vacancy rate for Consultants. There are many reasons, most of which have been mentioned above. NHS Lanarkshire firmly believed that the changes envisaged in a Picture of Health would go a long way to resolve this problem.

Home addresses of Consultants working in Lanarkshire

