

All Wales Nurse Staffing Programme

District Nurse Workstream Update
September 2022



Introduction

The All-Wales District Nursing Workstream consists of senior representatives from health boards across Wales who are working towards developing and testing an evidence-based workforce-planning tool to determine appropriate nurse staffing levels within district nursing (DN) services in Wales.

Our remit:

- Create and develop robust suite of national workforce planning tools to aid workforce planning and assist health boards with methods, tools, and approaches to determine nurse staffing levels in district nursing services.
- Ensure a 'Once for Wales' approach to ensure national consistency and standardisation.
- Support the use of the triangulated methodology to calculate nurse staffing levels.
- Support Health Boards and remain informed and conversant, with their progress of the Interim District Nurse Staffing Principles.
- Help facilitate the implementation of the workforce planning tools within community settings in health boards in Wales.
- Develop a way of evidencing how professional judgement is used to define district nursing staffing levels and skill mix which enables district nursing teams to meet the needs of patients sensitively.
- Deliver the actions set out in the working groups plan to the timescales, highlighting risks and challenges to the work.

- Provide regular reports on the progress of the workstream against the workstream plan to the All-Wales Nurse Staffing Group and the Nurse Directors and Chief Nursing Officer.

Progress to date

Welsh Levels of Care

With the support of hundreds of district nurses from across Wales, a working draft (Version six) of the District Nursing Welsh Levels of Care (WLoC) tool has been developed. Rigorous testing of the tool has taken place with the district nurses from across all health boards at all stages of the three testing phases.

WLoC Pilots:

- Phase one testing July 2022 – 87 DN’s used the tool to attribute an acuity level to 1433 patients visited over three days. 86% of participants thought the tool was easy or very easy to use.
- Phase two testing, December 2021 – case studies from all levels of care were sent to district nurses. They were asked to attribute a level of care. The results showed a good level of consistency and agreement of all levels attributed to patients.
- Phase three testing – April 2022 – small workshops were set up to focus on the Nursing Themes within the WLoC document and to review the tool for duplication or inconsistencies. The document was revised and updated in accordance with the consensus opinion of the workshop members and the workstream group. There was a reduction in nursing themes from seven to five, making the document more concise and serviceable. The district nursing Welsh Levels of Care (version six) has been approved by the All Wales Nurse Staffing Group as a working draft and has been disseminated to all health boards for use.

The five nursing themes are:

- Observation, assessment and risk
- Social Support and environment
- Personal care, nutrition and hydration
- Cognition, communication and behavior
- End of life

At all stages of testing the WLoC tool training has been undertaken by district nurses. Train the Trainer sessions on the use of the WLoC tool were undertaken by over 150 district nurses who will cascade train all DN team members between June and sept 2022.

Quality Indicators

- Grade three and above pressure ulcers, avoidable and those with nurse staffing levels attributed to the cause
- Wound care documentation
- Continence care documentation
- End of Life pathways

The quality indicators above which are sensitive to district nursing services have been audited. The first being through a six-month, retrospective review of datix which showed a variance in the numbers of these incidents across the different health boards and only very few (5%) to have nurse staffing implicated. A one day 'spot' audit was undertaken in June 2022 with all district/community nurses completing a Microsoft teams questionnaire on the quality compliance with current and complete national documentation for wound care, continence and end of life.

Professional Judgement

A short questionnaire with guidance, has been devised for district nursing team leaders to complete at the end of each shift for a two-week period. This is aimed at finding out the nurse's judgement on the nurse staffing levels within their teams and what, if anything, would have been done differently if more staff were needed. It is also intended to find out if care was missed or rescheduled due to staffing levels.

Next steps

- District Nurses across Wales to use the (working draft) WLoC tool and capture live patient acuity data in Once for Wales system.
- WLoC to be re-evaluated after three months of use for consistency and validity.
- WLoC data to be assessed and analysed after three months of data collection for validity and consistency.
- Quality indicator audit data to be analysed and findings fed back to health boards.
- Quality indicators to be retested after operational staff have been informed of findings.
- Professional Judgement workbook to be completed by DN Teams and data analysed.

To access previous newsletters and find out more about the All Wales Nurse Staffing Programme and work undertaken by the workstream [please access the website](#).

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