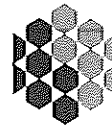


FROM THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH,  
SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY  
Jim Wells MLA



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

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Mrs Pauline Shepherd  
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Independent Health and Care Providers

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Our Ref: COR/106/2015

Date: 6 March 2015

Dear Mrs Shepherd

Thank you for your further letter of 3 January in response to my letter of 11 November.

I understood that IHCP had undertaken to provide the Health and Social Care Board with information to support the concerns which were expressed by your delegation during our meeting, and which you reiterate in your letter. I would encourage you once again to do so.

With regard to the issues you raise in respect of nursing shortages, my Department is aware of the particular issues the sector is facing.

My vision for HSC workforce planning is to move towards a more integrated, flexible and responsive system that identifies the workforce numbers, skills, values and behaviours that patients and their families need both to-day and into the future.

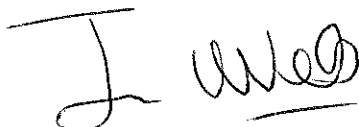
It is through regional and local workforce planning arrangements that we will ensure the workforce meets the needs of today's patients whilst delivering the future workforce in a way that not only maintains safe staffing levels but supports the service transformation necessary to improve quality of care.

You may be aware that Queens University recently reported that 20% of their nurse graduates were gaining employment outside of Northern Ireland. As I am sure you will agree a concerted effort must be made to attract these nurses into employment in your sector. I would encourage you to continue to work very closely with the universities and to particularly focus on the students who secure placements in your sectors and encourage them to apply for positions with you.

However, no matter how robust a workforce planning process is, there will always be immediate workforce resourcing requirements necessitating the use of short-term solutions, such as agency, temporary and bank staff and the need to recruit nurses overseas.

To this end, work on a Nursing and Midwifery Workforce Review has just been completed and is due to go out for consultation in the next few days. During development, a very well attended stakeholder event for the Independent sector was held on the 13 May 2014 facilitated by the RCN. All the issues identified at this event have been considered within the workforce review.

These measures are all vital resources to ensure the delivery of safe and effective care and the continuity of care.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Wells', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Jim Wells MLA**  
**Minister for Health Social Services and Public Safety**