

RCPCH Workforce Census 2017: Focus on Scotland

This document accompanies the [Focus on Scotland full report](#)¹, providing go-to key information. Scotland has 11 Health Boards that provide paediatric services across the total 14 Health Boards. Consultant growth in Scotland between 2015 and 2017 was 5%, lower than overall growth in the UK of 7.8%. Growth of consultant numbers in Scotland has slowed since 2015: between 2013 and 2015 WTE consultant growth in Scotland was 14.2%.

The shortfall in medical paediatric staffing across Scotland is clearly seen in rates of rota gaps and vacancies, which are higher than the overall UK rates on tier 1 and tier 3. To meet the RCPCH standards set out in [Facing the Future](#)², Scotland needs to appoint an additional 82.5 whole time equivalent (or 100 headcount) consultants. This would be an expansion of the current workforce of 25%.

The general paediatric workload is shifting, and we report a year-on-year upwards trend of admissions. A more effective way of working across primary and secondary care, as described in [Facing the Future Together for Child Health](#)³, is needed to keep up with this surge in admissions. The number of paediatric trainees and consultants are unlikely to rise by the amount needed to meet demand any time soon, especially as [only 6% of foundation year 1 \(F1\) doctors consider specialising in paediatrics](#)⁴. Therefore, workforce planners need to develop non-medical workforces, and see their potential in helping paediatric services meet standards and demand.

There are positives in this report from Scotland. First, trainees want to train in Scotland, and there is twice the national average of applicants for each available post. Second, UK (and likely Scottish) trainees want to be consultants in Scotland since 78% of consultants and SAS doctors in Scotland are UK graduates, compared to 64% across the whole of the UK. Third, the paediatric community is keen to work to address the problems we all face; Scottish centres had a 100% 2017 workforce census return.

The RCPCH makes workforce recommendations specific to Scotland in 4 key areas:

1. Planning the child health workforce
2. Recruiting, training and retaining more paediatricians
3. Incentivising the paediatric workforce
4. Planning for and expanding the non-medical workforce

¹ <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/workforce-census-2017-focus-scotland>

² <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/facing-future-standards-paediatric-care>

³ <http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/improving-child-health/better-nhs-children/service-standards-and-planning/facing-future-together-c-1>

⁴ http://www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2019-01/F2%20Career%20Destinations%20Report_FINAL.pdf

Key Facts

Career grade workforce

- The consultant paediatric workforce in Scotland grew by 5% (4.8% WTE) between 2015 and 2017 from 323 (309.5 WTE) to 339 (323.5 WTE).
- The RCPCH estimates that between 393 and 419 WTE consultants in total are needed in Scotland to meet demand. Taking a midpoint of 406, an increase of 82.5 WTE is recommended.
- There were 122 headcount (99.5 WTE) SAS doctors in 2017, a 3.9% decrease in headcount (6.4% decrease WTE), compared to 2015 when there were 127 (106.3 WTE). Scotland's career grade workforce has a higher proportion of SAS doctors at 26.5% compared to 15.3% in the UK.
- The majority of SAS doctors in Scotland work in Community Child Health, 67.2%.
- Scotland has the highest proportion of female consultants of the four nations. In 2017, 56.0% of consultants in Scotland were women, compared to 53.5 in the UK overall.
- In 2017, consultants in Scotland have the lowest rate of less than full time (LTFT) working in the UK (17.2%). This has decreased from 18.0% in 2015 which is the opposite trend to the rest of the UK.

Trainees

- Scotland has much higher rates of applications for paediatric training posts than the rest of the UK. In January 2018, the first preference applications to posts ratio was 3.3 to 1, compared to 1.4 to 1 for the UK overall.
- In Scotland, there is a 13.0% rota vacancy rate on tier 1 (junior) which is higher than the tier 1 UK rate overall. However, there is also a 13.0% vacancy rate on tier 2 in Scotland, compared to 14.5% in the UK overall.

Service pressures

- 90.9% of respondents in Scotland said that there was "Difficulty recruiting paediatric consultants" and that there were also "Nursing, allied health professionals and other staff shortages".
- There were 120 days when neonatal units had to close to new admissions in the year preceding the census.