

**Private & Confidential**

Mr Bryan Turner  
Chairman  
Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee  
County Hall  
Wall Street  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 1RQ

13 February 2020

Dear Bryan

**Re. Recommendations from Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee - 15 January 2020**

Thank you for your letter dated 24 January 2020 raising the issue of nursing staff vacancies across West Sussex.

In your letter you detail the vacancy rates for the Trust, however, these were incorrect. I have provided the latest vacancy data below for information:

	<b>Nursing - qualified</b>	<b>Ancillary - non qualified (HCA)</b>	<b>Medical</b>	<b>Allied e.g. Psychologist/ OT etc.</b>
<b>SPFT West Sussex</b>	17.50%	5.91%	25.75%	3.65%
<b>SPFT Trust wide-Operational</b>	15.80%	13.62%	16.06%	4.91%

In terms of the actions the Trust is taking to reduce the current level of vacancies I can confirm a number of initiatives have been developed. These include:

- Focused recruitment campaigns in priority areas with increased use of radio advertising, social media and advertising at areas of high usage such as bus stops and on the side of public transport.
- A £2,000 golden hello for new nurses.
- Fast track career progression scheme.

Chair: Peter Molyneux

Chief Executive: Samantha Allen

Head office: Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Swandean, Arundel Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 3EP

[www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk](http://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk)

- Improved flexible working arrangements.
- Funded Return to Practice training for nurses who have left the profession but want to return
- A Refer a Nursing Friend scheme has also been launched across the organisation, where existing staff could be paid up to £1,000 for successfully helping to identify new staff
- Active recruitment of Trainee Nursing Associates to improve the longer term pipeline for qualified nurses.

In addition through our Nursing Strategy, we are working with Brighton University to support Return to Practice Nurses, retain nursing students on completion of their training, and are attending careers fairs at various Universities across the UK to attract staff to work for the Trust.

To improve retention, we are addressing how we support our nurses in their clinical career pathways with preceptorship, mentorship and a Band 5/6 development programme. Additionally, we are also encouraging new roles such as Mental Health Graduate Practitioners, Peer Support Workers and Nursing Associates to enhance skill mix and patient care time.

In terms of recruitment to our medical vacancies we have been undertaking the following actions:

- Developing a programme which will support Specialty Doctors and Associate Specialist grades to become Consultants. Whilst this does not create an immediate solution, it will be important for attracting and retaining doctors as well as developing consultants for the future.
- A continued recruitment campaign focusing on Adults and CAMHS services based in West Sussex.
- A Relaunch of the Medical Bank to reduce dependency on agency and also to provide a recruitment pipeline for individuals who may be interested in joining the Trust but want to gain some experience of working in the organisation first

The work that the Trust is undertaking on medical recruitment is having a positive impact. 3 full time Speciality Doctors and 1 Consultant are due to join the Trust in February and a further 1.6 Speciality Doctors and 3.2 Consultants are currently undergoing employment checks before a start date is confirmed.

Of these new appointments, 4.6 will be based in West Sussex. This is very positive given the national supply issues in certain specialities. I also wish to highlight that whilst a post is vacant, 'locum' cover arrangements are in place to meet patient care.

I hope this information provides you with assurance that the Trust is taking ongoing steps to reduce its vacancies. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to let me know

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Allen', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Samantha Allen**  
**Chief Executive**

CC: Pennie Ford, Coastal West Sussex CCGs