



Western Sussex Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Worthing Hospital

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2nd March 2020

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

Dear Bryan

I am writing in response to your letter dated 24th January 2020 regarding our vacancy levels. You have asked for a response outlining the actions being taken by the Trust to address these.

The Trust has a good stable workforce and we have had fantastic success with our international recruitment. We intend to build on this success alongside a strong domestic recruitment campaign. Whilst maintaining a strong focus on recruiting the best people we supplement this and maintain flexibility through our high calibre temporary workforce.

However, as you will be aware there are high levels of vacancy across the NHS, with a number of nationally and regionally identified staff shortages. There is work underway at both a national and local level to address these issues. We can assure you that we are also actively taking all steps to reduce our vacancy levels and review our plans and initiatives on a regular basis. Recruitment initiatives in place include:

- ongoing overseas recruitment
- review of recruitment methods and materials to ensure we are reaching all possible candidates
- successful targeted approaches to temporary staff to transfer into substantive posts
- redesign of vacant posts to attract candidates and develop career academic pathways
- review and introduction of new roles and ways of working including Physician Assistants, Surgical Care Practitioners, enhanced AHP roles, Nurse Associates and a range of apprenticeships
- ensuring an attractive offer for new recruits including flexible working options
- Refer a friend scheme

In addition to taking steps to recruit staff we also have initiatives in place to retain our workforce. These include carrying out stay interviews with our staff to identify and address any triggers for leaving, focus on initiatives to improve staff engagement and health and wellbeing. Our turnover rate has been reducing over the course of the last 12 months and is now at 6.9%. This is currently the lowest rate within the ICS. We have also seen positive improvements in our latest staff survey results for staff intention to leave the organisation. We have seen a 3% reduction in staff indicating they intend to leave compared to last year and our results are 6% lower than the national average for acute Trusts.

It is important to note that we also have a strong temporary workforce and our vacancy rate when taking this workforce into account has been 2.5% for the financial year to date.

I hope this provides the reassurance you require regarding the measures being taken by the Trust, but should you require further detail please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maggie Davies'.

Maggie Davies
Chief Nurse