

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. 9/21

Primary Care Briefing Note – Workforce Numbers

1. Background

- 1.1 This paper responds to the following action from the Medway Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 11 March 2021:
 - To provide a briefing paper on GP numbers across Medway, including the numbers of other primary care practitioners.
- 1.2 Additional information is provided in a the ‘Workforce Plan and Activities’ report which outlines the key activities in place across Kent and Medway as part of the wider Primary Care Workforce Plan.

2. Context

- 2.1 General practices are ever evolving to meet the increasing and more complex needs of local communities/populations. This requires new ways of working and a multidisciplinary workforce approach, maximising the use of wider professions to support GPs to deliver general practice and wider primary care services.
- 2.2 It is estimated that about 40% of GP consultations could be managed by new and additional roles which historically has not been the case. There is an important established part of general practice that is already not being provided by GPs and that is the practice nurses who have provided, as an example, diabetes and asthma care for the last 30 years with no loss of quality or patient satisfaction.
- 2.3 New and additional roles are therefore strengthening the primary care workforce to meet those needs to ensure patients see the right clinician at the right time.
- 2.4 There are proven benefits that have been identified in utilising additional roles. Clinical Pharmacists, for example, can support GPs, nurses, community pharmacists and other healthcare professionals to resolve day-to-day medicines issues in the practice. In addition, they can support medicines adherence with patients, managing and prescribing for long-term conditions in clinics, often in conjunction with practice nurses as well as reviewing patients on complex medication regimens. Similarly paramedics and advanced clinical practitioners can contribute to the primary care workforce through working within a multidisciplinary team, to decrease GP workload by assessing and treating urgent, non-complex patients.
- 2.5 As a result, GP’s’ time can be released to do more of what only they can do, such as spending more time with people with longer term, more complex needs.

Additionally, patients are offered a wider selection of relevant services and experience shorter waiting times. This is achieved by understanding the healthcare needs in the area and employing the teams who can deliver for the population and measuring it through quality assurance not numbers of specific professions.

- 2.6 This report provides an overview of primary care workforce numbers and the changing nature of that workforce.

3. General Practice Workforce Numbers

- 3.1 In December 2020 the nationally reported General Practice Workforce information detailed:

Weighted population to GP Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	Weighted Population	Total GP (excl. Registrars and Locums) FTE	Ratio of GP to Population
Medway	301,168	81.22	0.027
Kent and Medway	1,884,144	705.20	0.037

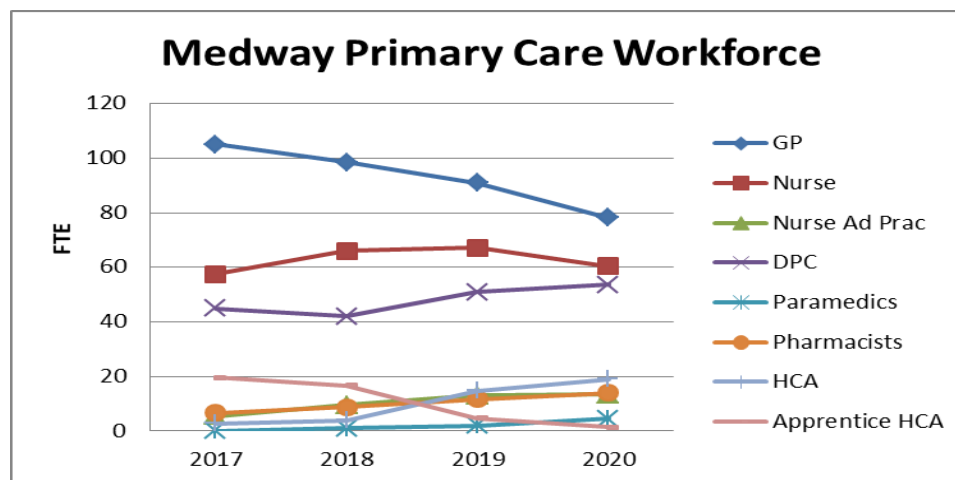
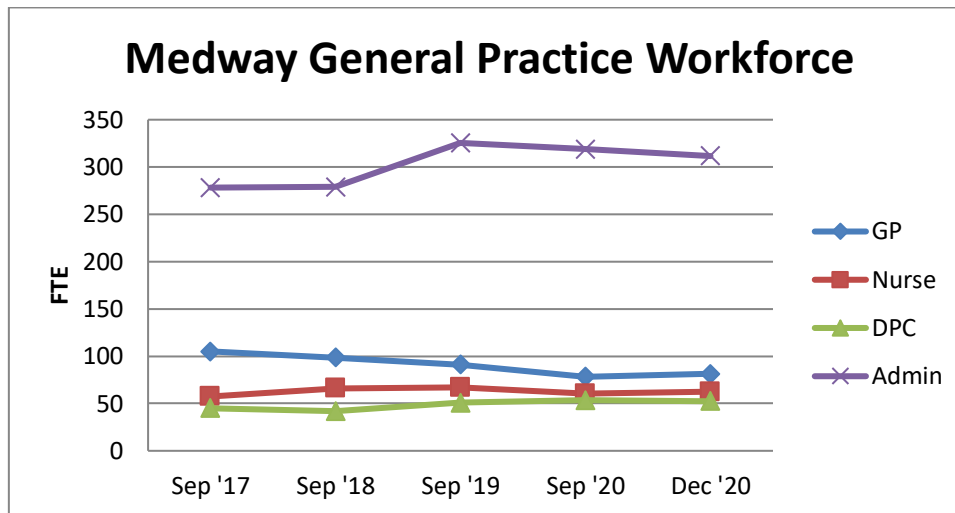
Weighted population to Nurse FTE	Weighted Population	Total Nurse FTE	Ratio of Nurse to Population
Medway	301,168	62.27	0.021
Kent and Medway	1,884,144	500.23	0.027

Weighted population to Direct Patient Care (DPC – see below for full explanation) FTE	Weighted Population	Total DPC FTE	Ratio of DPC to Population
Medway	301,168	52.41	0.017
Kent and Medway	1,884,144	480.69	0.026

Weighted population to Admin FTE	Weighted Population	Total Administration FTE	Ratio of Admin to Population
Medway	301,168	311.82	0.104
Kent and Medway	1,884,144	2,167.01	0.115

- 3.2 In Medway GP FTE numbers have reduced by approximately 24 between September 2017 and December 2020. There was an increase of 3 FTE GPs reported between September 2020 and December 2020. The workforce figures above for GPs excludes Registrars and Locums.

- 3.3 There has been a growth in multi professional roles (Direct Patient Care roles) employed by GP Practices with eight (head count) advanced clinical practitioners, five paramedics, seven pharmacists and 24 healthcare assistants supporting the GP workforce, as can be seen in the charts below.



Footnote to graphs

1. DPC data not always submitted by practices across Kent and Medway which can impact on workforce data. Regular communication with PCN Education Leads to promote the benefits of submitting workforce data.
2. Occasions when practices did not submit data for roles such as nurses so will impact on locality data presented above
3. DPC data includes all non-medical clinical roles including paramedics, pharmacists and healthcare assistants but DPC data broken down with examples as portrayed in the graphs
4. The workforce data presented in this report does not include roles employed by PCNs on behalf of practices.
5. The report does not include Advanced Clinical Practitioner roles within other disciplines as this is currently not collated by NHS Digital GP workforce data
6. Advanced Nurse Practitioner figures may not be an accurate representation of numbers, given that the term was used interchangeably with Nurse Practitioner. The Advanced Clinical Practice framework was published in Nov 2017 with subsequent Core capabilities for Primary Care recently clearly defining the role to minimise risk.
7. Workforce data accuracy based on practice submissions

4. Primary Care Network Workforce Numbers

- 4.1 In addition to roles directly employed by General Practices the Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are progressing with employing additional staff under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) across Medway. On average, a PCN will employ 20 FTE staff by 2023/24. The intention of the scheme is to grow additional capacity through new roles, and by doing so, help to solve the workforce shortage in general practice.
- 4.2 The tables below (taken from the national PCN workforce returns for December 2020) highlight the progress Medway PCNs have made in their recruitment:

PCN STAFF GROUP	Total staff recruited across Medway PCNs (Headcount)
Clinical Directors (Medical and Direct Patient Care)	9
Care co-ordinators	3
Health and Wellbeing Coaches	1
Pharmacists	13
Pharmacy Technicians	2
Physiotherapists	4
Social Prescribing Link Workers	11
Managers/Admin/Non Clinical	10
Total	53

PCN NAME	Total Direct Patient Care staff recruited by Medway PCNs (Headcount)
Medway South PCN	5
Strood PCN	4
Medway Peninsula PCN	6
Medway Rainham PCN	11
Gillingham South PCN	9
Medway Central PCN	8
Rochester PCN	10
Total	53

Notes:

- *The PCN workforce is separate and distinct from the GP practice workforce although some individuals may work part-time in both types of organisation*
- *Some PCNs may have not yet provided full workforce information to this collection and figures do not include estimates for those PCNs not yet submitting.*
- *For Clinical Director Headcount the CCG has manually adjusted (increased) the nationally reported figure to reflect the known position.*
- *Clinical Directors are existing GPs that have taken on a leadership role in addition to their clinical practice.*