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Health Board

Strengthening the Rural Workforce

International Nurse recruitment in Rural Powys

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Background

Geography

- Largest county in Wales by land area
- Located in central Wales, bordering England to the east
- Landscape: Predominantly mountainous and rural



Demographics

- Population: Approximately 132,000 (as of most recent data)
 - Population density: One of the lowest in the UK
 - Predominantly White British
- Aging population: High proportion of residents aged 65+
- Main languages: English (majority), Welsh (significant minority)
 - Economy: Agriculture, tourism, public services



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Drivers for Change

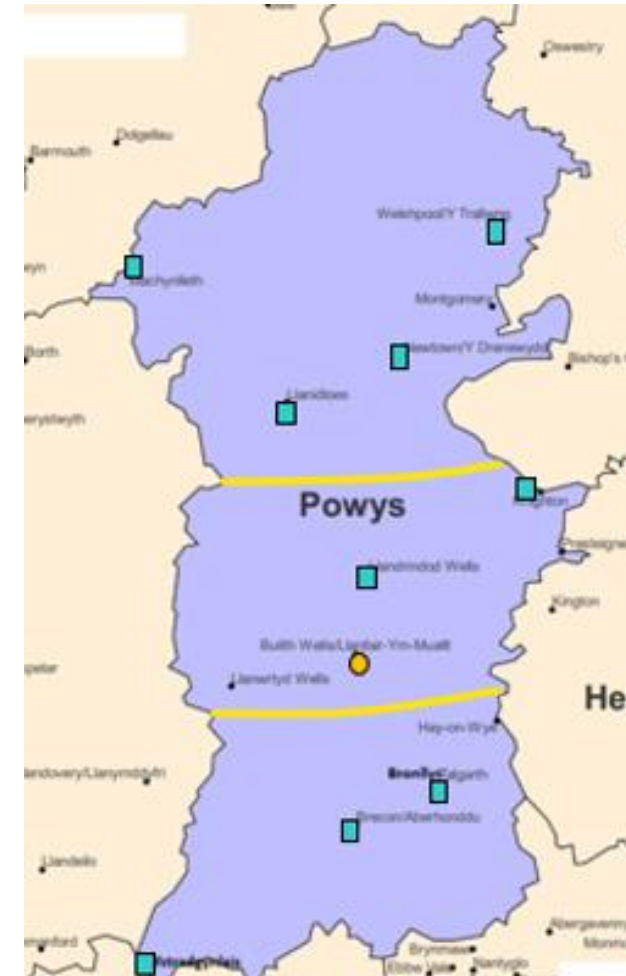
Workforce challenge

Community Hospitals

- 9 locations
- 1x without ward (co-located with residential home)
- 146 beds
- Significant gaps

Registered Nurse Establishment January 2025

| Month | Cost Centre Description | Budget RN's | SIP RN's | % RN Vacancy Rate |
|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------------|
| January 2025 | BRO - Hosp Nurs | 13.44 | 10.19 | 24% |
| January 2025 | BWM - Hosp Nurs - Eppynt | 13.55 | 9.01 | 34% |
| January 2025 | BWM - Hosp Nurs - Y Bannau | 10.83 | 9.03 | 17% |
| January 2025 | LND - Hosp Nurs | 13.55 | 10.03 | 26% |
| January 2025 | LWH - Hosp Nurs | 13.44 | 12.42 | 8% |
| January 2025 | MAC - Hosp Nurs | 13.32 | 6.80 | 49% |
| January 2025 | MCI - Hosp Nurs | 13.55 | 14.12 | -4% |
| January 2025 | VMH - Hosp Nurs | 16.87 | 9.88 | 42% |
| January 2025 | YCH - Hosp Nurs | 16.87 | 15.40 | 9% |
| | | 125.42 | 96.87 | 23% |



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Initial mitigation

Agency nursing

- High user of agency services
- Significant requirement for 'off-contract'
- Exceptionally high cost
- Quality & safety implications



**WHO issues a warning
on the nursing shortage
in the UK and Europe**

**Nurse shortfall could hit
38,000 even if
recruitment target
reached**



Grow your own

- Health & social care academy
 - Aspiring Nurse Programme
 - 22 candidates in year 1
- Targeted retire and return



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All Wales International Recruitment Programme

- The International Recruitment (IR) programme was commissioned by the Welsh Government in 2021
- Aim to appoint 422 Registered General Nurses (RGNs) across Wales.
- By March 2022, 413 offers were made, achieving 97% of the target.
- A formal MOU with the Government of Kerala led to a recruitment event in May 2023, appointing 58 RGNs
- The "Once for Wales" approach standardised recruitment processes across the country, addressing significant variations in recruitment experience, eligibility criteria, and pre-employment checks.
- A further 250 international staff planned in 24/25, with £5million funding.



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International Pre-registration Nursing

HEIW are currently funding 30 international students per University in Wales to study nursing.

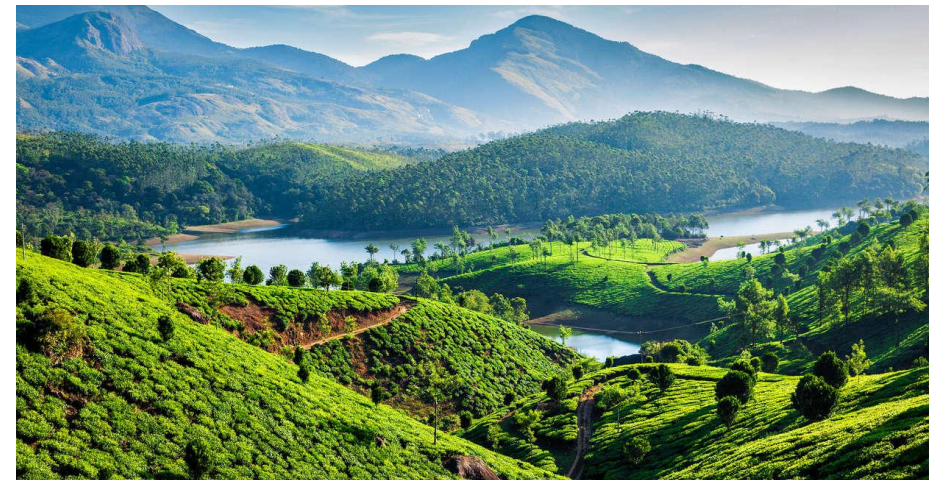
[For more information, please click this link](#)



Powys approach

Overview of process

- ❖ Health Boards commitment to annual recruitment plan
- ❖ Nationally organised recruitment events in Kerala
 - Agency contracted to supply candidates
- ❖ Events attended by representative of Health Board (HR & Nursing)
- ❖ Interviews undertaken, along with initial recruitment checks
- ❖ Onboarding undertaken by agency, including immigration checks
- ❖ Local operational planning for receipt & training of successful candidates.
- ❖ Some cross collaboration with estates team



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Local implementation

- ✦ Initially driven by HR team
- ✦ Some cross collaboration with estates team
- ✦ Limited operational ownership
- ✦ Working group established by AD CSG
- ✦ Includes:
 - Recruitment lead
 - Training lead
 - Estates
 - Operational teams
- ✦ Local 6-week training programme, including practice for OSCE
- ✦ Integration into ward team after 2 weeks
- ✦ Working at Band 4 until NMC pin number received.



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Problem solving

- ❖ Accommodation availability
 - Required significant flexibility of model
 - Very limited options from estate agents
 - Became experts in developing the market
 - Consumed 90% of time and energy of team
 - Ground rules / setting expectations vital
- ❖ Welfare role need identified early
 - Bank accounts
 - BRP cards
 - OSC examination arrangements
 - Accommodation troubleshooting
 - Community integration
- ❖ Training locations not always easy
- ❖ Weekly task & finish group essential



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Positive results



- ❖ From 2022 we have now recruited 41 nurses from Kerala
- ❖ This includes 6 x Mental Health nurses
- ❖ 100% success in passing examinations
- ❖ 100% retention
 - Contract constraints notwithstanding
- ❖ Reduction in reliance on agency staffing
- ❖ Huge positivity from the Nurses and the local teams



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