**WRITTEN STATEMENT**

**BY**

**THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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| **TITLE**  | **Investment in sustainability of health care workforce** |
| **DATE**  | **8 December 2017** |
| **BY** | **Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services** |

The healthcare system in Wales faces increasing demands for its service and as a result of continuing investment there are currently more frontline NHS staff working in Wales than ever before.

The difficult financial climate as a result of the austerity policy pursued by the UK Government has had a significant and detrimental impact on the budget available to the Welsh Government. In these circumstances investment made in training is often one of the first casualties. This is short-sighted and a choice which in the longer term can lead to more acute difficulties.

As a Government we have chosen not to take this approach. We continue to increase the level of investment we are making in the future workforce of NHS Wales. Today I am announcing a £107m package to support education and training programmes for healthcare professionals in Wales. This represents a £12m increase on the package agreed for 2017/18 and will enable more than 3500 new students to join those already studying healthcare education programmes across Wales. The total number of people in education and training places for 2018/19 will be 9,490 compared to 8,573 in 2017/18.

This package includes a 10% increase in the number of nurse training places – an extra 161 – which will be commissioned in 2018/19. This is in addition to the 13% increase in 2017/18, the 10% increase in 2016/17 and the 22% increase in 2015/16 and continues our investment in nurse education numbers.

In addition as part of the two year budget deal reached between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru for 2018/19 and 2019/20, £2m per year was agreed to support a Welsh Buurtzorg pilot of neighbourhood nursing care. I have agreed £1.4m of this funding for each of the years to support the education and training programmes required to underpin these pilots including support for the release of nurses to train as district nurses.

It also includes an increase of 10% in physiotherapy and physiotherapy and occupational therapy training places and an increase in health visitor training places. The 40% increase in midwifery training places for 2017/18 has been maintained for 2018/19 as have all other levels of commissioned training places.

It is important the investment we make does two things. First it must enable current services to be maintained and secondly it must assist changes in the way services are delivered to deliver our aim of providing services closer to individuals’ homes as possible. We are doing both.

As part of the 2017/18 package of support I announced £750k to support general practice to take advantage of advanced practice and extended skills training and education and support for health care support worker training in this area. This development has had a positive reception and given the potential for this approach to support changes in service provision and service models I am announcing a further £250k to further support this approach.

I am also providing a further £250k to support level four education and training for health care support workers.

This package of support will maintain investment in training places for other key parts of the workforce including health care scientists, paramedics dental hygienists and therapists and radiographers. In addition we will be making a further cohort of physician associate training places available from September 2018 on the same basis as 2017.

The above investment is in addition to an increased investment of £0.5m agreed earlier this year for additional medical training posts including clinical Radiology, Ophthalmology, Oral Medicine Dentistry and Paediatric Dentistry.

This Government has, and will, continue to invest in the workforce required to support our health system in Wales.