

NHS Vacancy Statistics England

February 2015 - September 2016, Provisional Experimental Statistics

Published 26 January 2017

This is the latest provisional experimental publication of NHS vacancy statistics created from administrative data related to published vacancy adverts obtained from NHS Jobs, the main recruitment website for the NHS.

This publication provides a proxy for vacancy information.

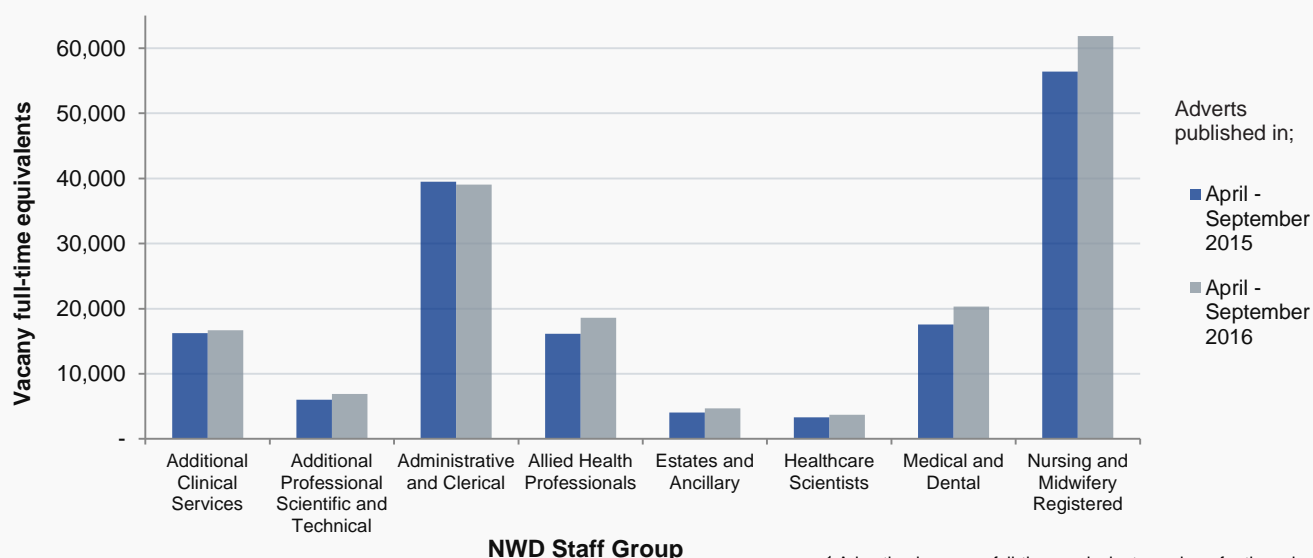
Key findings

The data now spans 20 months, allowing for seasonal patterns to be observed.

A comparison of NHS Jobs data against vacancy data extracted from the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) is also included in this publication for the first time.

Data is now available by pay scheme and pay band.

Figure 1: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents¹ in England between April and September in 2015 and 2016



¹ Advertised vacancy full-time equivalent numbers for those in the Student Staff Group are not included to improve presentation due to small numbers.

Contents

This is an Experimental Statistics publication	3
Summary	3
Introduction	4
Data Quality	6
Accuracy	6
Relevance	6
Comparability and Coherence	7
Timeliness and Punctuality	7
Accessibility	7
Performance cost and Respondent Burden	7
Confidentiality, Transparency and Security	8
Points to note	9
Results	12
Electronic Staff Record (ESR) vacancy data	15
Data Quality	15
Relevance	16
Results	17
Future Developments	19
Further Feedback	21

This is an Experimental Statistics publication



This document is published by NHS Digital, part of the Government Statistical Service

Experimental statistics are official statistics which are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage. It is important that users understand that limitations may apply to the interpretation of this data. More details are given in the report.

All official statistics should comply with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Official Statistics which promotes the production and dissemination of official statistics that inform decision making.

Find out more about the Code of Practice for Official Statistics at www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice

Find out more about Experimental Statistics at https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Guidance-on-Experimental-Statistics_1.0.pdf

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This report may be of interest to members of the public, policy officials and other stakeholders. This report provides a proxy for vacancy information within the NHS and a high-level comparison with related data extracted from the Electronic Staff Record (ESR).

Summary

This is the latest provisional experimental publication of NHS vacancy statistics created from administrative data related to published vacancy adverts obtained from NHS Jobs, the main recruitment website for the NHS.

The statistics referred to in this document and the accompanying tables are exploratory and provide information on the administrative data available from NHS Jobs as much as on the recruitment of staff.

This publication provides figures which are an insight to recruitment in the NHS but which should be treated with caution, though the expanded time series now allows users to consider relative changes over time.

This publication incorporates feedback received in response to the three previous publications and includes a high level comparison of NHS Jobs data against vacancy data extracted from the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) for the first time. Also included are two new tables, showing advertised vacancy full-time equivalents by Tertiary Area of Work and pay scheme/band.

Further updates regarding data quality, consistency and comparability are provided in the Data Quality section.

Further input is welcome regarding the future development of this publication series.

Introduction

This is the latest publication of NHS (Trusts, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Support Organisations and Central Bodies) vacancy statistics based upon administrative data relating to published vacancy adverts from the NHS Jobs website. The figures do not include vacancy data for GPs or practice staff. Data covers the period of 1st February 2015 to 30th September 2016 inclusive. As this is still very much a developing publication series and data resource we again request feedback following this publication.

These figures are presented as experimental and provisional and are not directly comparable with previous NHS workforce vacancy statistics. Due to methodological changes, data in this publication is not directly comparable to the first two publications in the series, though the time series covers the whole period for which comparable base data exists.

Whilst there have been some improvements in the data quality and our understanding of the underlying administrative data, it is not our intention that users should draw direct conclusions from this data at this early stage of its development. The continuing expansion of the time series should now allow users to consider relative changes over time, and this report considers other potential sources of NHS recruitment information which may in time increase the utility of this publication series.

Despite the minor changes to the processing undertaken, as one vacancy advert can be used to fill multiple vacancies it is still not possible to accurately state the number of vacancies in a period. Therefore the only accurate statement remains that the number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents (fte) shows the minimum number of vacancies advertised. Because of the differences in practice between different organisations and

across different staff groups it is not possible to state the precise level of undercounting, but it is possible to say that it will vary for different staff groups. For example the undercount for nurses is likely to be greater than for other staff groups because of the high-level of rolling adverts (i.e. adverts kept open continually) used for that staff group, and also the advertising of vacancies directly to audiences overseas which will not be undertaken through NHS Jobs.

A comparison of NHS Jobs data against vacancy data extracted from ESR is also included in this publication for the first time.

Following feedback received in response to the three previous publications, two new tables have been included, Tertiary Area of Work and pay scheme/band.

Data Quality

As with any new data source there are a number of data quality issues which require further investigation as the data is exploited further. As far as possible these have been accounted for in the processing undertaken by NHS Digital but some issues still remain within the data as published. For example a small number of test adverts which have not been possible to remove and apparent contradictions between different fields within the data. The data upon which this publication is based included a small number of invalid occupation codes. Where possible these have been imputed by NHS Digital and where this has not been possible they have been assigned to the unspecified category.

Please read the [Points to note](#) section on page 9 for more detail in addition to the separate elements of the data quality statement.

As a result of the inclusion of a comparison with vacancy information extracted from ESR being included in this publication, there is also a separate section focusing on the data quality issues related to that data. Please see page 15 for details of the consideration of data quality issues for the ESR data used in this publication.

Accuracy

These statistics are experimental and provisional. They are provided as an indication of the potential of the data available and as a guide to the number of published vacancies advertised and other related information. However they should be treated with caution, particularly with respect to what they actually refer to and their interpretation. Continued improvements within the completion of the source data and the processing carried out by NHS Digital increases confidence in the accuracy of the data. The increased consistent time series now makes internal comparisons possible and therefore increasing the scope for relative comparisons within the series to be undertaken.

Consideration will be given to removing the experimental and provisional label for future publications.

Relevance

The statistics exploit recent developments in the NHS Jobs website, and the administrative data it contains, which allow the production of information to answer some of the frequent requests for information from users relating to recruitment in the NHS.

The content of this publication has been updated further in response to feedback received in the consultation. These changes, including producing an updated time series; increased information on a monthly basis; greater regional comparability within the supplementary graphing tool and new analysis of information related to Tertiary Area of Work and pay scheme/band tables should increase the relevance of the series to users. A comparison of NHS Jobs data against vacancy data extracted from ESR is also included in this publication for the first time.

Comparability and Coherence

The figures included in this publication are not directly comparable to the first two publications in the NHS Vacancy Statistics series. The first publication differs in that the original methodology was a count of the number of adverts published, whereas the second and third publications used advertised full time equivalent (fte) information provided by NHS Jobs relating to published adverts, this is also the case for this publication. Revised organisational information after the second publication made it non-comparable to future publications, but the third and fourth publications are directly comparable and include the full time series of comparable base data available from NHS Jobs.

Despite these further enhancements it still remains difficult to link figures in this publication to other workforce publications by NHS Digital due to differences in data source, methodology and coverage. The inclusion for the first time of a comparison of the data from NHS Jobs with related vacancy data extracted from ESR is intended to be part of the process to attempt to bridge this gap. This publication aims to help establish a set of statistics which will become an accepted standard.

Timeliness and Punctuality

The results of the consultation which relate to the timeliness and punctuality of the statistics suggest that users would like to see the data produced on a more frequent basis, perhaps monthly or quarterly, although there were also responses that such frequent refreshes of the data were not required. With the feedback in mind, NHS Digital will consider increasing the frequency of the publication in future, provided that the availability of data will allow this change. In the meantime the publication will remain biannual until it has completed its initial developmental stage to provide sufficient time to allow for developments and improvements to the analysis provided. NHS Digital will work with NHS Jobs to ensure that the timeliness and punctuality of the statistics are maximised and the frequency of the publication will become fixed as part of an on-going series. The publication has been brought forward this time by a month to increase timeliness.

Accessibility

The feedback function of this publication is to allow all users to understand the data, to provide input into our understanding of the underlying data source and to determine what useful statistics should be produced from it in the future.

Performance cost and Respondent Burden

The availability of this data was part of the enhancement of NHS Jobs service envisioned by the Department of Health to provide a proxy for vacancy information from administrative data to avoid any burden on the NHS. Several of the responses to the consultation propose that a direct data collection should be reinstated in order to gain access to the level of data required to supplement the information available from NHS Jobs. If such an approach were taken, full consideration would be given to minimising the burden of the additional data collection and focusing on the information which is

available to and needed by those organisations involved in healthcare workforce recruitment. Further consideration of potential additional data sources is included in the Future Developments section.

Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

The standard NHS Digital data security and confidentiality policies have been applied in the production of these statistics, though the information upon which they are based relates to published vacancy adverts and not to individual applicants and therefore no identifiable data has been used in the production of these statistics.

Points to note

This section summarises general points which need to be considered alongside the figures provided in the tables that make up this publication.

1. Despite this publication being called Vacancy Statistics the figures in the tables provided do not represent vacancies, although they relate to vacancies.

This report focuses on data from NHS Jobs, providing an indication of the advertised vacancy fte based upon the data relating to vacancy adverts placed on NHS Jobs whose published date falls within the quarter/month specified and limited to known NHS organisations within the stated regions for published vacancies advertised as being of Fixed Term or Permanent type only. Again this differs slightly from the first publication which was based on the number of unique vacancy adverts and did not attempt to account for the fte advertised. Although the fte field is completed for all vacancy adverts there remain some issues with regards to the way in which this field is completed. For example the inclusion of hours rather than fte, the use of a default number for rolling adverts and fte inflation related to system interface issues for reused adverts etc. NHS Digital has sought some direct input from users of the system and corrected those records where it has gained additional information. Based upon this information, the feedback to the consultation and cross comparison of different fields within the data it has also been necessary to undertake some additional cleansing of the fte data as received.

A comparison of NHS Jobs data against vacancy data extracted from ESR is also included in this publication for the first time. Further information can be found in the [ESR section](#) on page 15.

2. Despite the changes to the underlying data and the processing undertaken, as one vacancy advert can be used to fill multiple vacancies it is still not possible to accurately state the number of vacancies in a period. Therefore the only accurate statement remains that the number of advertised vacancy fte shows the minimum number of vacancies advertised. Further feedback on this development is very much welcomed to enhance our understanding – both of the usefulness of the figures provided and also in relation to the completing of fte information related to vacancy adverts within NHS Jobs.
3. Vacancies advertised are classified in various ways, with some ambiguity around the staff groups. NHS Jobs uses a set of Staff Groups based on the National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Groups. These are shown in Tables 2a to 8, this grouping is also available in ESR which is the main HR and payment system for the NHS. This form of categorisation is not used in the majority of standard workforce statistics published by NHS Digital. The NWD Staff Group is a mandatory field within NHS Jobs and therefore is complete for all adverts. Although there may be some minor data quality issues it provides a more complete way of categorising staff group for this data than Occupation Codes.

Another staff grouping is shown in Tables 10 to 11. These are based on Occupation Code (<http://content.digital.nhs.uk/article/2268/NHS-Occupation-Codes>) which allows categorisation at several levels of detail. Table 10 shows the main functional

grouping, whilst Table 11 is based upon the staff groups used in standard NHS Digital workforce publications to give more detail. The staff groups presented in Tables 10 and 11 are not directly comparable with the Staff Groups in the other staff group tables in this publication.

NHS Digital was advised that the Occupation Code classification mechanism within NHS Jobs allows for adverts to be created without specifying a particular code, and that the means of inputting a code when creating an advert may contribute to issues with the classification of adverts in this way. This is evidenced in the fact Tables 10 and 11 show there are a significant number of published vacancy adverts where Occupation Code has not been specified. A small number of Occupation Codes have had to be imputed by NHS Digital due to issues in the data, for example transposed codes.

Due to the difference in the origin of the two staff group classifications they are not directly comparable. For example some nurse occupation codes showing as Admin and Clerical staff under the NWD Staff Group.

4. The Area of Work information presented in Tables 9a, 9b and 9c gives an indication of the areas which the adverts relate to, for example in Accident and Emergency or Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The inclusion of the new Table 9c presents data by Tertiary Area of Work, HEE Region and published month. It is possible to recreate the quarters detailed throughout this publication by directly combining the relevant months e.g. April 2016, May 2016 and June 2016 can be combined to give the figures for the quarter 30 April 2016 - 30 June 2016.
5. Not all trusts will use NHS Jobs in the same way, or even at all in some cases. If they use it to publish a vacancy then the data will show that and the system will record the number of web hits on the advert and the applications submitted, although organisations may choose to close an advert early if the number of applications is particularly high.

However if they do not use NHS Jobs to shortlist applicants then we will not have the full statistics on numbers shortlisted, and if they do not update the site with the details of applicants appointed then we will only have partial data on that as well. In general the completion of data gets less further along the recruitment process and this is visible in Tables 3-6.

6. Currently the data does not clearly specify a date of recruitment so it is not possible to quantify how long it has taken to recruit or whether an advert has failed to recruit. This means that we cannot replicate previously published vacancy statistics which showed a vacancy rate for vacancies outstanding for 3 months or more. In future it may be possible to give an indication of which adverts have been re-opened, although this may include both adverts which had previously failed to lead to a successful recruitment and also successful adverts which had simply been reused.
7. NHS Jobs does not include the standard list of NHS Organisation Codes upon which the majority of NHS Digital workforce publications are based.
8. Whilst the system does contain organisation information relating to those bodies placing adverts and some indication of their region, it is not suitable for secondary

analysis and NHS Digital had to undertake some processing to assign the adverts standard organisation code and regions.

Because of the assumptions made in this processing the information is not suitable for analysis below Health Education England (HEE) Region level at this time. The organisation information in this publication has been enhanced further as the data is better understood and the inclusions and exclusions updated slightly since the last publication. Again the data has been limited to only include English NHS organisations, which this time, as far as possible, reflect the organisations included in the standard quarterly NHS Digital workforce publications, incorporating NHS Trusts, CCGs, Support Organisations and Central Bodies. Further consideration needs to be given to it in response to the consultation as there is a strong theme of requests for more granular organisational data. Some organisations have been excluded, for example Hospices, Local Authorities, Charities, Private Organisations, Universities, Schools and GP Practices. There is only partial coverage in these sectors so analysis on these organisations would be incomplete.

Despite the enhancements the data is still not suitable for publication at an organisational level, although improvements in classification and processing have allowed the production of tables based on organisation functional cluster groupings in addition to the regional data in an attempt to provide a more granular level of detail.

9. This report includes the full time series of advertised vacancy fte data for the period of 1st February 2015 to 30th September 2016 inclusive. Future publications are intended to extend this time series and to ensure consistency, any analysis of this data should always refer to the latest publication.

As with any new administrative data source there are concerns about completeness of the fields; what the available fields relate to; the classification of vacancy Staff Groups, Area of Work and Occupation Codes and consistency of practice at trusts.

There are also inconsistencies within the data with some records containing contradicting information. In these cases the fields were investigated and those we had a greater confidence in were selected.

Results

The tables showing the statistics from NHS Jobs data are available from this [link](#). The data is provided for NHS Trusts, CCGs, Support Organisations and Central Bodies in England and excludes the relatively small number of adverts placed on NHS Jobs outside of this sector, for example it does not include adverts for roles within Primary Care. The data is related to adverts published on NHS Jobs between 1st February 2015 and 30th September 2016 inclusive, and is split into quarters, in line with other workforce information publications, and monthly data as specified.

ESR vacancy data covering 1st April 2016 and 30th September 2016 (inclusive) has been extracted and compared to NHS Jobs data covering the same period.

Care should be taken in the interpretation of wider comparisons using these figures. These experimental provisional statistics are not directly comparable to previously published information on NHS Vacancies, or to other current NHS Digital publications relating to the NHS workforce. One of the aims is to make vacancy data more comparable with standard workforce information in future. For the first time this publication includes a comparison of the NHS Jobs data against data extracted from ESR relating to vacancies with the aim of increasing our understanding of how the two data sources relate to each other. Work on this is currently ongoing and a further update will be provided in the next publication.

As one vacancy advert can be used to fill multiple vacancies it is still not possible to accurately state the number of vacancies in a period. Therefore the only accurate statement remains that the number of advertised vacancy fte shows the minimum number of vacancies advertised. It is not possible to state the precise level of undercounting, but it is possible to say that it will vary for different staff groups. For example the undercount for nurses is likely to be greater than for other staff groups because of a number of issues including the high level of rolling adverts used for that staff group.

Whilst there have been some improvements in the data quality and our understanding of the underlying administrative data, it is not our intention that users should draw direct conclusions from this data at this early stage of its development. The figures are provided as an illustration of the kind of information which is available, but which needs further development to finalise processes and assumptions. Continued improvements within the completion of the source data and the processing carried out by NHS Digital increases confidence in the accuracy of the data. The increased consistent time series now makes internal comparisons possible and therefore increasing the scope for relative comparisons within the series to be undertaken.

In response to the consultation feedback additional tables have been added to show advertisements by pay scheme/band and to provide information by Tertiary Area of Work. Also, a comparison of NHS Jobs data against vacancy data extracted from ESR is included in this publication for the first time.

The tables contain data for the following:

- Table 1: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England published per month by Health Education England region - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 2a: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Group and Health Education England region, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 2b: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Group and Health Education England region, published within each specified month - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 3: Number of web hits per advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Group and Health Education England region, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 4: Number of applications per advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Group and Health Education England region, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 5: Number of shortlisted applicants per advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Group and Health Education England region, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 6: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents and appointed posts in England by National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Group and Health Education England region, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 7i: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents by appointment type in England by National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Group and Health Education England region, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 7ii: Percentage of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents by appointment type in England by National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Group and Health Education England region, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics

- Table 8: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Group and Organisation Cluster Group, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 9a: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by Secondary Area of Work and Health Education England region, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 9b: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by Secondary Area of Work and Health Education England region, published within each specified month - Provisional Experimental Statistics. Presented as a pivot table.
- Table 9c: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by Tertiary Area of Work and Health Education England region, published within each specified month - Provisional Experimental Statistics. Presented as a pivot table.
- Table 10: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by High Level staff group based on Occupation Code and Health Education England region, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 11: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by Occupation Code staff group and Health Education England region, published within each specified quarter - Provisional Experimental Statistics
- Table 12: Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents in England by National Workforce Data Set (NWD) Staff Group, pay scheme, pay band and Health Education England region, published within each specified month - Provisional Experimental Statistics. Presented as a pivot table.
- Table 13: NHS Jobs and Electronic Staff Record (ESR) vacancy related data comparison, in England by Health Education England region - Provisional Experimental Statistics.
- A graphing tool to show the number of advertised vacancy full time equivalents in England by NWD Staff Group and Health Education England Region, published for each month
- A csv formatted dataset file which can be used to create the majority of the tables which form this publication and includes the following variables: NWD staff group; HEE region code; HEE region name; Job Type; Secondary Area of Work; Tertiary Area of Work; Cluster Group; Pay scheme; Pay band; Published month; Advertised vacancy full-time equivalent.

Electronic Staff Record (ESR) vacancy data

ESR is a payroll and human resources system which, since April 2008, has contained staff records for over 99% of the directly employed NHS staff in England.

There are two Foundation Trusts (Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust) which do not use the ESR and submit workforce data to NHS Digital via the wMDS (workforce Minimum Dataset). NHS Digital will investigate their vacancy data and compare it against NHS Jobs vacancy data in a future publication.

ESR is designed to support the entire recruitment process; thus vacancy data is also collected within ESR. NHS Digital has attempted to produce a high level comparison between the vacancies advertised in NHS Jobs and those recorded in ESR for the first time. Details are in the [results](#) section below on page 17.

Along with other members of the Workforce Information Review Group (WIRG), NHS Digital is setting up a sub group to look at improving the utility of the vacancy information captured in ESR for secondary analytical purposes.

Data Quality

As with any data source there are a number of data quality issues within the ESR data which require further investigation as it is exploited further. As far as possible these have been accounted for in the processing undertaken by NHS Digital but some issues still remain within the data as published. For example:

As one opened vacant post can be used to fill multiple vacancies it is still not possible to accurately state the number of vacancies within a specified period. Therefore the only accurate statement remains that the number of created vacancy full-time equivalents shows the minimum number of vacancies. It is not possible to state the precise level of undercounting, but it is possible to say that it will vary for different staff groups – for example the undercount for nurses is likely to be greater than for other staff groups because of a number of issues including the high-level of rolling vacancies linked to generic posts within ESR used for that staff group.

Although it has not been possible to identify job type information within the data (i.e. whether a vacancy is for a permanent, fixed term, bank or honorary post etc.), NHS Digital has been able to make some exclusions around job type based upon different fields within the data. For example, where possible bank vacancies have been excluded from results based on records having a Tertiary Area of Work of 'Bank', a blank FTE or an FTE <0.1. It has not been possible to exclude all bank vacancies, so there may be some which remain in the data. It should also be noted that ESR vacancy related data is therefore not refined to fixed term and permanent job types only.

Where unrealistic FTE values were included e.g. ≥ 10 , NHS Digital has assigned more realistic FTE values in an attempt to reduce over estimating the number of vacancies advertised, usually by dividing FTE by 37.5. Original FTE values supplied could be due to hours or sessions being stated instead of FTE, or on two occasions Assignment Numbers being used in place of FTE which significantly inflated the overall FTE value until accounted for.

After further investigation, some rolling vacancies are assigned a default FTE = 99. Although it is not possible to tell how many FTE one vacancy is referring to, NHS Digital has assigned an FTE = 1, with the only accurate statement remaining that the number

of full-time equivalent vacancies shows the minimum number of vacancies opened within ESR over the period.

Relevance

The statistics explore the vacancy data held within ESR and it is hoped that with further investigation and refinement this information can be used to produce an answer to some of the frequent requests for information from users relating to recruitment in the NHS.

So far a HEE region level investigation comparing vacancy information extracted directly from ESR for recently opened vacancies and corresponding advertisement information extracted from NHS Jobs has been undertaken.

As far as possible the same conditions were applied to each data set including organisation exclusions, over the same time period.

For a wider consideration of the data quality issues related to the workforce information extracted from ESR and published by NHS Digital on a monthly basis, please refer to the latest monthly NHS Workforce statistics publication on the NHS Digital [website](#).

Results

Results for full-time equivalent vacancies for the HEE regions were considered in greater detail to identify whether their ESR information corresponded with information from NHS Jobs.

Full-time equivalent vacancies included in the analysis covered vacancies opened between 1st April 2016 and 30th September 2016.

There was a large variation in results, see table 13 below.

Table 13: NHS Jobs and Electronic Staff Record (ESR) vacancy related data comparison, in England by Health Education England region - Provisional Experimental Statistics

1 April 2016 - 30 September 2016

	NHS Jobs ¹	ESR ²	Percentage Difference ³
	(advertised vacancy full-time equivalents)	(vacancy full-time equivalent)	
England	172,051	81,334	47.3%
Health Education East Midlands	11,206	5,024	44.8%
Health Education East of England	17,240	6,555	38.0%
Health Education Yorkshire and the Humber	12,861	6,856	53.3%
Health Education Wessex	9,568	5,358	56.0%
Health Education Thames Valley	7,627	3,798	49.8%
Health Education North West London	11,711	4,954	42.3%
Health Education South London	9,360	4,976	53.2%
Health Education North Central and East London	13,893	6,536	47.0%
Health Education Kent, Surrey and Sussex	17,202	6,419	37.3%
Health Education North East	6,184	4,023	65.1%
Health Education North West	20,741	12,079	58.2%
Health Education West Midlands	15,196	5,754	37.9%
Health Education South West	12,544	5,689	45.4%
Special Health Authorities and other statutory bodies	6,717	3,312	49.3%

¹ Number of advertised vacancy full-time equivalents are based on adverts for Permanent and Fixed Term Job Types only, with a published date within the time period specified.

² It has not been possible to identify job type information within the data, therefore the figures published are not refined by job type i.e. unlike NHS Jobs data, ESR figures are not solely based on permanent and fixed term job types only. Despite the lack of job type information, NHS Digital has excluded bank vacancies where possible, based on different fields within the data.

³ This comparison is given as ESR vacancy full-time equivalent as a percentage of NHS Jobs advertised vacancy full-time equivalents.

Results for a selection of organisations were considered in greater detail to identify whether their ESR information corresponded with information from NHS Jobs. There was a large variation in results, with data for some organisations matching exactly, others partially matching and some not matching at all as no data was recorded in ESR and vice versa. This investigation is currently ongoing, specifically looking at different organisation types and whether there is significant variation in practice across different organisation types, such that for some ESR data may correlate more closely with NHS Jobs data than for others. It is hoped there will be a greater understanding for the next publication.

Further investigation is required to better understand the issues underlying the differences in the full-time equivalent figures for the two data sources. This investigation may allow the inclusion of additional analysis within future publications and may also contribute to data quality improvements across both NHS Jobs and ESR data. It also raises the need to consider whether it could be possible to investigate data from other systems which sit between ESR and NHS Jobs and may explain the lack of information for some organisations using ESR.

Future Developments

This publication incorporates some changes in response to the feedback generated by previous publications in the series. The format of the tables continue to follow a common theme, with the HEE Regions as the column headings for all tables (except table 13), which should make cross comparison of different aspects of the analysis more straightforward. Updates to the processing continue to be made to help improve the utility of the data, and such developments will continue along with attempts to influence the data quality of the source data.

The workforce data quality roadshows which were held throughout 2015/16 by NHS Digital, the ESR Central Team and Health Education England included content specifically related to NHS Jobs data quality, and this activity will be built upon in future linked to the development of this publication series.

Along with other members of WIRG, NHS Digital are currently in the process of setting up a national sub-group to look at vacancy related information which should help to influence and improve vacancy related data. It would particularly aim to encourage ESR use and provide advice on better data quality within ESR surrounding vacancy related information. It would also be a way to gain more feedback surrounding this publication series with the hope to improve vacancy related data in the future.

Given the limitations of the available data related to the wish lists included in the consultation responses, NHS Digital will continue to evaluate what can be achieved and where possible will expand the coverage of the analysis in the next publication although it will not be possible to incorporate all of the information requested, and some things may never be possible from an administrative data source. More consideration will be given to the request for more detailed information by grade building upon the initial analysis included in this publication. Further consideration will be given to pay scheme/band information as more fields available within the dataset are understood.

Despite the enhancements the data is still not suitable for publication at an organisational level, though improvements in classification and processing have allowed the production of tables based on organisation functional cluster groupings in addition to the regional data in an attempt to provide a more granular level of detail. NHS Digital will continue to investigate what more can be done with a view to publishing information at a lower level in future.

Not only is potential data quality an issue, but also understanding the complexity of what people actually want and ensuring that everyone is consistent in their understanding. For example there are so many different ways of defining a 'Vacancy' and therefore even more of a 'Vacancy Rate'. NHS Digital will work with others to consider what definitions can be standardised with relation to healthcare recruitment information and the ESR vacancy functionality will be discussed at the WIRG subgroup and progress will be made and reported back as part of the next publication.

Linked to ensuring consistency of definition, NHS Digital will continue to investigate the ESR vacancy data and other sources of data available (or potentially available) to enhance the information extracted from NHS Jobs. For example the vacancy aspect of the workforce Minimum Data Set, information for which is beginning to flow from some Independent Sector Healthcare Providers and also the two NHS Foundation Trusts which do not use ESR. This information could be supplemented by information directly extracted from ESR, or even by expanding direct data collection or tapping into the work of the various Recruitment Streamlining groups.

So far a high-level investigation comparing vacancy information extracted directly from ESR for recently opened vacancies and corresponding advertisement information extracted from NHS Jobs has been undertaken. As far as possible the same conditions were applied to each data set including organisation exclusions, over the same time period. This investigation may allow the inclusion of additional analysis within future publications and may also contribute to data quality improvements across both NHS Jobs and ESR Data. It also raises the need to consider whether it could be possible to investigate data from other systems which sit between ESR and NHS Jobs and may explain the lack of information for some organisations using ESR. The ESR comparison included in this publication is a first step, not an end point, therefore still relevant to future developments

Whilst this summary of the developments in response to the feedback received has not gone into detail regarding all of the individual elements of feedback received, consideration will be given to it all as part of the development of future publications and further updates will be provided as part of those publications.

Further Feedback

We continue to seek the input of users to understand the potential of this data, its limitations and how it can be used to provide the information that users require.

As before, feedback is particularly welcome on, but not limited to, the following topics:

- How the report can be improved, including covering what people would really like to know.
- Information about the reality of recruitment in the NHS and how NHS Jobs is used during recruitment. For example:
 - Is it completed at every stage?
 - How are adverts for multiple vacancies specified by users on NHS Jobs?
 - Are all successful candidates recorded in NHS Jobs?
 - Do you know of data quality, completeness or consistency issues with the information input to NHS Jobs upon which the statistics are based – or are there elements you are confident are consistently more reliable?
 - Do you use ESR as well as NHS Jobs?
 - Do you use ESR to manage vacancies, and if you do - how do you use it? If not then what system do you use to manage your vacancies?
- Tell other people about this work if they may find it useful.
- Feedback related to any of the suggested developments to ensure we are making the right changes.

We appreciate that this is an unstructured framework for feedback but this is deliberate. We want user requirements to drive the development of these statistics and we rely on the experience of experts to understand the potential of data to fulfil user requirements.

We anticipate that people may need to talk to us as part of this feedback process and welcome this:

Please call Nick Armitage on 0113 25 47179

or mail: n.armitage@nhs.net

There is no formal response document, we will accept any written form of response we are sent. We always welcome feedback to our statistics, so there is no formal closing date for feedback, but to enable us to make full use of your responses in the next publication it would be appreciated if feedback could be sent by March 2017.

The responses will be collated and used as part of our development of the next publication in the series, due for publication in July 2017.

Please send all feedback to: n.armitage@nhs.net

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