SCOTTISH PARTNERSHIP FOR PALLIATIVE CARE (SPPC)

Submission of further evidence to the Health & Sport Committee requested at oral evidence session on 18th September 2018

• The impact on the vacancy rate in your sector due to EU staff leaving over the last 1-2 years as a result of the prospect of Brexit.

It is difficult to provide conclusive causal evidence of the impact on workforce trends of the prospect of Brexit. There is plenty of evidence of the importance of non-UK EU citizens in the heath and care workforce, of increasing recruitment difficulties, of high vacancy rates and concerns about the consequences of Brexit.

The Contribution of Non-UK EU Workers in the Social Care Workforce in Scotland (Scottish Government, June 2018) identifies that 5.9% of staff in adult social care are from non-UK EU countries. The report describes severe recruitment difficulties in some sub-sectors and a concern about the future impact of Brexit.

In its conclusion the report states:

“The estimate of the percentage of non-UK nationals employed within adult social care and childcare in Scotland emerging from this study is in line with that recorded in some previous research, at 5.6%. This aggregate result conceals some notable sub-sectoral variation, however; in particular, the higher prevalence of non-UK EU nationals in nurse agencies (16.5%) (as well as specifically for nurses and for those in auxiliary and care roles). These results take on added significance in the context of the survey finding that over half of managers who had tried to recruit NMC registered nurses, and around two in five who had tried to recruit care staff or practitioners over the last 12 months had found this more difficult that previously. In other words, any future impact of Brexit on EU nationals’ ability or propensity to remain in the UK would have the potential to exacerbate an already challenging situation for the sector.”

European Nurses in the UK (RCN May 2018) reports that:

“Since the 2016 Brexit vote far fewer EU nurses and midwives are joining the NMC register. The latest statistics from the NMC shows that between 2017 and 2018 there was a 77% fall in new EU registrations to the NMC. This translates to 881 much-needed nurses leaving the health and social care system in just one year3. Equally alarming is the growing numbers of established EU nurses leaving the UK altogether. Over the same 2014 – 2018 period, 11,880 established EU nurses left the UK nursing profession.”
Independent Sector Nursing Data 2017 (Scottish Care 2017) states that:

As close as can be reasonably estimated, the nurse vacancy level across respondents to this survey is 31%. Scottish Care’s 2016 estimation of a 28% vacancy level suggests a very concerning trend. However the vacancy level for some providers in the survey was as high as 60%. To put this into perspective, nurse vacancy levels within the NHS currently sit at around 4.5%. In fact, an extremely troubling trend is evident when examining nurse vacancy levels in more depth across independent sector care providers. The number of organisations experiencing difficulties filling nurse vacancies has increased year on year. When this question was asked by Scottish Care in 2015, the results indicated that just over 66% of organisations had these difficulties. In 2017 91% of providers surveyed indicated that they were having difficulties filling nurse vacancies. In the current survey some 54% of providers indicated that they had found the recruitment of nurses to be more difficult this year than the previous year, which was itself one of considerable challenge.

• Information published by the UK Government on economic projections which you identified as raising concerns.

The Westminster Government’s EU Exit Analysis Cross-Whitehall Briefing (January 2018) provides analyses of the impacts on UK economic growth of different future trade arrangements with the EU. All of the future options show a show a reduction in economic growth compared to the status quo. Scotland’s growth is shown as experiencing a bigger negative effect than the UK average headline figure under each of the 3 scenarios modelled (based on EEA, FTA or WTO). The briefing estimated that in a no deal/WTO scenario UK GDP would be 7.7% lower (range 5.0%-10.3%) relative to a status quo baseline.


In August 2018 the Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote to the Treasury Select Committee referring to this Treasury modelling stating:

“GDP impacts of this magnitude, were they to arise, would have large fiscal consequences. The January analysis estimated that borrowing would be around £80 billion a year higher under a no deal/WTO scenario by 2033-34, in the absence of mitigating adjustments to spending and/or taxation, relative to a status quo baseline. This is because any direct financial savings are outweighed by the indirect fiscal consequences of a smaller economy. The initial, January cross-Whitehall analysis is now undergoing a process of refinement in the run up to a parliamentary vote on the deal. However, we expect the analysis to show that for scenarios in which we have higher barriers to trade with the EU there will be a more damaging
effect on the economy and public finances. These are conclusions that many other credible external organisations have come to independently, including the IMF, the OECD, the LSE and NIESR.”


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