
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

Mr Marcus Jones MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

12 February 2015

Dear Mr Jones,

NHS WORKFORCE NUMBERS

Thank you for your letter of 12 December about the statement in a Labour Party YouTube video¹ that ‘Part of the problem in the NHS is there simply aren’t enough frontline staff, thousands have been lost under David Cameron’. I am sorry for the delay in responding, it was necessary for Statistics Authority officials to make enquiries as part of reviewing the issues you raised.

We have been told by Labour Party officials that the source of the statement “thousands have been lost under David Cameron” is the answer to a Freedom of Information request prepared by the Department of Health (**Annex A**). This estimates that 9,330 people working on the ‘frontline’² have been made redundant between 2010-11 and 2013-14.

Taken at face value, the estimate of 9,330 redundancies is consistent with the statement that “thousands have been lost under David Cameron”. However, it is reasonable to note that redundancies are only part of what determines the size of the NHS workforce; the total number of frontline staff is also affected by the rate of recruitment of new staff and by voluntary leavers and retirements. There is some merit in looking at the number of frontline staff over time in order to understand better the relevant trends.

I understand that ‘frontline staff’ is not a categorisation used in the relevant official statistics, which are the *NHS Workforce Statistics*³ published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC). These show head counts, role counts, and full-time equivalents (FTE). The NHS Hospital and Community Health Service (HCHS) statistics are presented for the following categories:

- i. Professionally-qualified clinical staff
Of which:
 - a. HCHS doctors (non-locum and locum)
 - b. Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff
 - c. Qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff

¹ *Changing Britain Together – An NHS fit for the future* - www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EV51WxrSjQ

² The definition of ‘frontline’ underpinning this information refers to professionally qualified clinical staff, qualified or registered nurses (including midwives and health visitors), qualified ambulance staff, and support to clinical staff; it excludes those staff working in an ‘infrastructure support’ role, in line with the terms of the FOI request.

³ <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/searchcatalogue?productid=16855&topics=0%2fWorkforce&sort=Relevance&size=10&page=1#top>

- d. Qualified ambulance staff
- ii. Support to clinical staff
- iii. NHS infrastructure support

The Head of Profession for statistics at HSCIC has told Statistics Authority officials that as well as professionally-qualified clinical staff, all staff working in roles categorised as 'Support to clinical staff' have direct contact with patients/service users, and so would generally be accepted as providing a frontline service.

Table 1 below shows FTE staff numbers for the main categories of HCHS staff at May 2010, when the Government came into office; at August 2014, which was the most recent data available when the YouTube video was published; and at October 2014 (the most recently published statistics).

Table 1: Numbers of staff (FTEs) - NHS Hospital and Community Service

	May 2010	August 2014	October 2014	Change between May 2010 and August 2014	Change between May 2010 and October 2014
All HCHS doctors	97,729	105,837	107,052	8,108	9,324
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	310,793	311,670	316,561	877	5,767
Qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff	129,700	134,197	135,893	4,497	6,192
Qualified ambulance staff	17,727	17,615	17,774	-113	46
Support to clinical staff	296,008	303,664	305,823	7,656	9,815
Total staff having direct contact with patients and service users⁽¹⁾	851,957	872,982	883,102	21,025	31,145
NHS infrastructure support	204,695	183,639	184,383	-21,056	-20,312
Total HCHS	1,056,652	1,056,621	1,067,485	-31	10,833

(1) Defined as the sum of Professionally Qualified Clinical staff and Support to Clinical Staff.

Note that full time equivalent figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source: Health and Social Care Information Centre, Provisional NHS Hospital & Community Health Service (HCHS) monthly workforce statistics.

Table 1 shows an estimated increase of 21,025 in staff having direct contact with patients and service users on a FTE basis between May 2010 and August 2014, and a corresponding increase of 31,145 between May 2010 and October 2014.

The table at **Annex B** presents equivalent information on a headcount basis. It shows an estimated increase of 13,022 in staff having direct contact with patients and service users on a headcount basis between May 2010 and August 2014, and a corresponding increase of 23,074 between May 2010 and October 2014.

I am copying this letter to the National Statistician, John Pullinger and the Head of Profession for Statistics at the Health and Social Care Information Centre, Julie Stroud.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Dilnot". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'D'.

Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

Department of Health response to a Freedom of Information request – August 2014



Department
of Health

29/08/2014

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your request of 30 July 2014 under the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Your exact request was:

“1) how many redundancies were made in each of the years 2006/07 to 2013/14 frontline NHS staff (excluding those who work in NHS management/finance/legal teams)

2) How many front line NHS staff (excluding those who work in NHS management/finance/legal teams) have left the NHS (either voluntarily or involuntarily) and have not been replaced in each of the years 2006/07 to 2013/14.”

1) The Department holds some information relevant to your request.

The figures are estimates as they are based on unvalidated data as recorded in the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) Data Warehouse. This is a monthly snapshot of the live ESR system, the HR and payroll system that covers the majority of NHS employees. ESR does not cover those working in General Practice, some NHS staff who have transferred to social enterprise and two NHS trusts who do not use the ESR system.

The Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) publishes workforce and redundancy figures on a quarterly basis so I will, under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act, refer you to the published source. The HSCIC publication separates professionally qualified staff and those working in a support capacity. The latest HSCIC figures are published here:

<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/article/2021/Website-Search?productid=15085&q=redundancy+data&sort=Relevance&size=10&page=1&area=both#top>

For the purposes of this question the “frontline” includes staff working in the following areas:

1) Professionally Qualified Clinical Staff Hospital & Community Health Service Doctors, Qualified or Registered Nurses (including Midwives & Health Visitors)
Qualified Scientific, Therapeutic & Technical staff
Qualified Ambulance Staff

2) Support to Clinical Staff
Support to Doctors & Nursing Staff
Support to Scientific, Therapeutic and Technical Staff
Support to Ambulance Staff

Staff working in an "Infrastructure Support" role have been excluded. This category would include the following roles:

Managers
Senior Managers
Central Functions
Hotel, Property & Estates
Other Staff or Staff of Unknown Classification

In order to recognise that some people in a support role are also working on the frontline the estimates below have split the support category and so will differ from the published statistics.

Based on these classifications we estimate that the numbers of frontline staff made redundant since April 2007 are as follows. The figures for 2006/07 are not available as ESR was only fully implemented for the financial year 2007/08.

Year	Number of Frontline Redundancies
2007-2008	1,100
2008-2009	770
2009-2010	740
2010-2011	1,900
2011-2012	2,720
2012-2013	2,410
2013-2014	2,300

Source: Electronic Staff Record Data Warehouse

2. The Department does not hold this information.

Decisions on filling posts are made locally as it is the responsibility of NHS organisations as independent employers to determine their staffing requirements based on the needs of their patients and local communities.

However, you may wish to contact any relevant NHS authority directly.

Contact details for Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) can be found on the following website:

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ccg-details/>

Contact details for all other NHS authorities can be found on the NHS Choices website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/thenhs/about/pages/authoritiesandtrusts.aspx>

If you have any queries about this email, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Head of the Freedom of Information Team
Department of Health
Room 520
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Email: freedomofinformation@dh.gsi.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Department. The ICO can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Young

Freedom of Information Officer
Department of Health

freedomofinformation@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Numbers of staff (headcount) - NHS Hospital and Community Service (HCHS)

	May 2010	August 2014	October 2014	Change between May 2010 and August 2014	Change between May 2010 and October 2014
All HCHS doctors	104,328	111,963	113,214	7,635	8,886
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	353,912	351,446	356,404	-2,466	2,492
Qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff	149,855	154,778	156,468	4,923	6,613
Qualified ambulance staff	18,463	18,576	18,729	113	266
Support to clinical staff	354,826	357,418	359,489	2,592	4,663
Total staff having direct contact with patients and service users ⁽¹⁾	980,307	993,329	1,003,381	13,022	23,074
NHS infrastructure support	237,176	211,153	211,718	-26,023	-25,458
Total HCHS	1,215,311	1,202,718	1,213,336	-12,593	-1,975

(1) Defined as the sum of Professionally Qualified Clinical staff and Support to Clinical Staff.

Note that Headcount totals are unlikely to equal the sum of components due to some staff working in more than one role.

Source: Health and Social Care Information Centre, Provisional NHS Hospital & Community Health Service (HCHS) monthly workforce statistics.