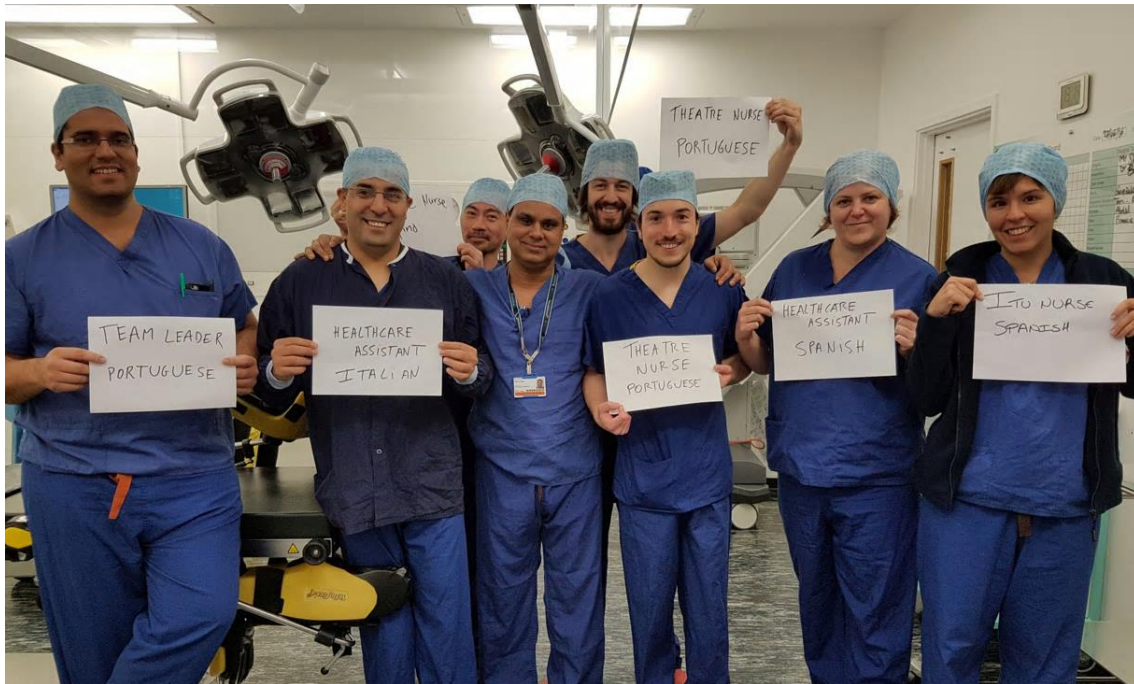




INSTITUTO
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Portuguese Nurses and Health Technicians in the UK

Group Assignment

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MA in Intercultural Studies for Business

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Abstract

This work will focus on the Portuguese Nurses and Health Technicians in the UK, why they go there and why the UK is open to these professionals. We decided to choose this topic because it is a very current problem and, in Portugal, it is causing a shortage of nurses in our national health.

To the later point, our methodology was to divide the main topic into smaller questions and go from there. We focused mainly on the different higher education systems, if there was something in the way nurses were taught that made them more attractive, backgrounds of UK and Portugal, to see why there was a need for and an opening for Portuguese healthcare professionals in the UK and why Portuguese wanted to go there. We also considered Brexit because it is something that without a doubt will change the workforce landscape in this area (as in many others).

To support our answers to these problems we relied on websites and news articles from both countries as well as government and international institutions, like *Observatório das Migrações* and the OCDE.

What we can conclude from our research is that indeed there is, on the UK side, a need and willingness to receive Portuguese health care professionals, because they are better trained than their British counterparts, due to a more demanding educational system and requirements to be a nurse in Portugal, which gives them more skills to perform nursing duties, be it in a nursing home or in a hospital. On the Portuguese side there is a need to emigrate because of low wages, and so coupled with the higher employment rates in the UK and the chance to be better paid and rise quicker in the salary ladder, this makes immigrating to the UK very appealing to Portuguese nurses. In regards to the Brexit what was found was that the future of these professionals is very uncertain, and only the future months will tell, what will happen to them and their jobs.

Introduction

“My daughter, a nurse, emigrated today to United Kingdom. She did as 12,500 colleagues of her who are already there to work. We are paying with our taxes the training of our young people who are going to give their best to countries that are much richer and have given up training their nurses. It's cheaper for them to come and get ours!... We know that the world is today the workplace of our young people, but they should not be driven from your own country by the wrong policies and truly murderous of national interests. They still called them "piegas" do you remember? Stay? It was no solution. An institution wanted to pay them 3.5 euros/hour! Others, "Bom Sucesso entrepreneurs" from catering sector, wanted to pay them for a part-time work, 200 euros/month and still there after 11pm at night, every nights! These pseudo-entrepreneurs who are the future of the country, endorsed by tv programs that idolize them as genuine entrepreneurs! Stupid tv programs from and for illiterate go brutalizing people and not to leave them thinking. Is this the future? It seems. Until the day that people realize that this is the past brought into the present. But until then, we see broken families and the country losing the value of their entire investment in education. We need to go back to the nineteenth century where they said everything in the newspapers, where they were called to take a stand, or they took the initiative? "J'Accuse" do you remember Zola?”

Posted to Facebook in October 2015

In Portugal this is the common feeling of thousands of Portuguese parents who in recent years are faced with similar situations.

The economic recession in Portugal and the debt crisis led to severe economic restrictions and the increase of unemployment, as well as the worsening of working conditions and consequent professional demotivation in several sectors, namely in the health service. These will be the main reasons that led some to go alone or through their personal networks, looking to improve their life. And there are those who decide to accept the proposals and support of the recruitment agencies, with more or less certainty, accepting to deal with the uncertainty factor.

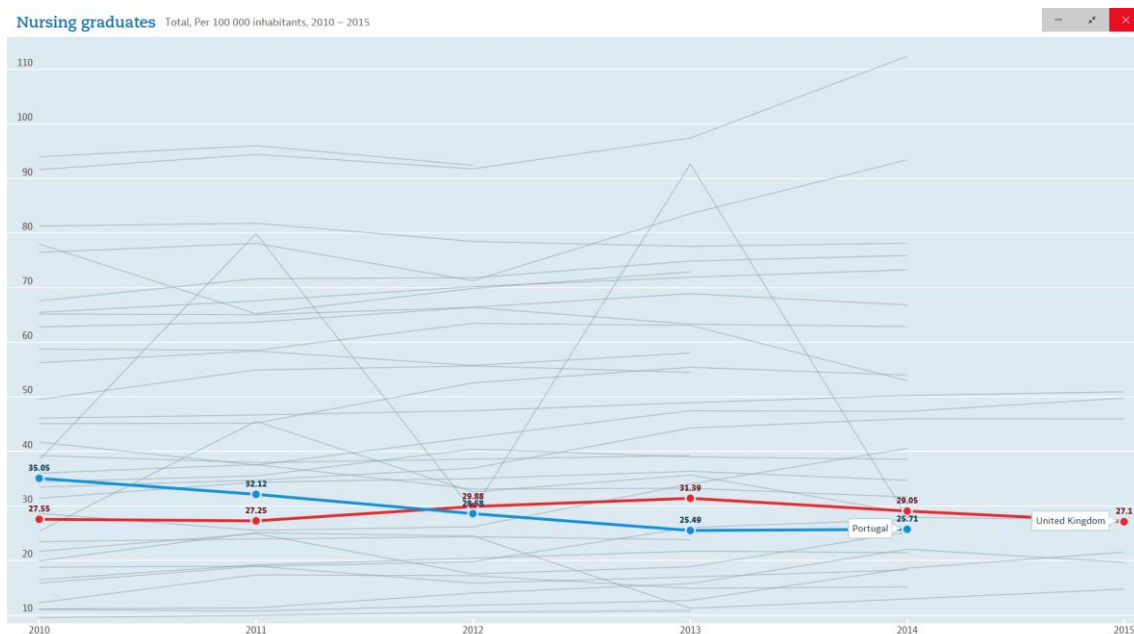
Results

OCDE Numbers

According to OCDE's Health Statistics 2015, nurses greatly outnumber physicians in most OECD countries. They are key to health care both in hospitals and in long-care facilities, but also more and more in what concerns home care and in primary care. What

seems to be an exceeding number in Portugal, according to the general feeling, is the opposite of what statistics say of many countries: at this moment and for the foreseeable future, there is a shortage of nurses in relation to the needs of most countries.

Below is an evolution indicator, comparing Portugal and the UK in terms of nursing graduates per 1000 inhabitants.



Source: OECD (2017), *Nursing graduates (indicator)*. doi: 10.1787/c54611e3-en (Accessed on 16 January 2017).

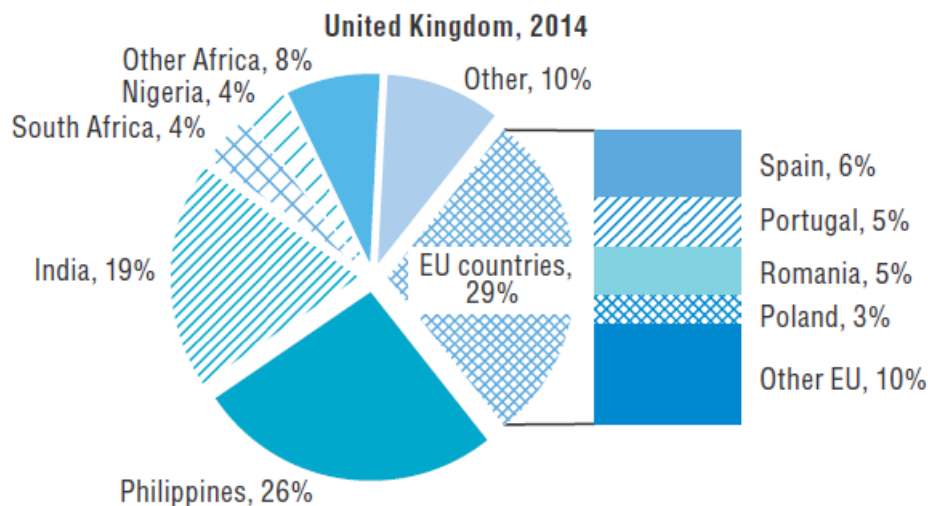
Very soon, and with the many aging and the few being born to study health related subjects, nurses will become a rare good, so to speak. With this in mind, many countries are taking action training nurses and other specialized health related professionals (at this time the UK has more than 8.2 practising nurses per 1 000 population and Norway 16.7. Portugal has only 6.1 but it is a number on the rise), by training and retention efforts. Another curiosity is that a nurse is so much needed in health care that in any country they outnumber the physicians. The ratio of nurses to physicians is 3 to 1 in the UK and 4.7 in Finland. This difference in some countries has lead in fact to nurses taking on advanced roles. In the UK this has proven a good way to

reduce waiting time with no loss to patient treatment quality, with high satisfaction rate, while the impact on cost is either cost-reducing or cost-neutral.

The economic crisis had a big impact in the immigrant health related professionals' numbers, but many countries have been able to improve working conditions, and OCDE will show how these efforts have prompted more professionals to stay or return from abroad.

When you look at the other side, the side of foreign-trained nurses you see that the number and share of foreign-trained nurses working in most health system varies very much. In Portugal the share is of 3% but in the UK it is of 12.7% (or in absolute terms 86 000 foreign-trained nurses in 2014).

In the case of the UK, according to OCDE, nearly half of all foreign-trained nurses came from Asian countries, mainly from the Philippines (26%) and India (19%). But a growing number of foreign-trained nurses also came from other EU countries, such as Spain, Portugal, Romania and Poland. In 2014, more than 4 000 nurses trained in Portugal were working in the UK.



Source: OECD Health Statistics 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.

Different Higher Education Systems

Although both are European, Portugal and the United Kingdom have different educational systems for the same field.

This has to do with the different requirements needed to be a nurse. Because in the UK for some types of nursing jobs you did not need to have higher education, you only needed to attend a training course with varying durations, and so many nurses had opted for a degree in nursing. Now it is different and in order to be a nurse you have to register and have your degree, the same as in Portugal. The one thing that differs between the 2 is the duration of the degrees and of the internships, and the way the courses are structured, because in the UK when you apply to a degree you have to choose if you want to be in the Adult, Children or Mental Health area, whereas in Portugal you have a general degree in nursing and then you choose your field.

As said in the above paragraph there are differences in the level of training and it is this kind of training and learning that is appealing to British recruiters because Portuguese nurses are more versatile than the UK taught professionals.

After the academic training in both countries there is a certain number of formalities that need to be met, because to be a nurse in Portugal you need to be registered with the *Ordem dos Enfermeiros* and to be one in the UK you have to be enrolled in the Nursing and Midwifery Council. This could be a problem at first glance due to the 2 different educational systems, but with the European Union law called the "Free Movement of Professionals" this problem is solved, since it states that "Professionals can move across borders and practice their occupation or provide services abroad". This law goes even one step forward because it has, as of 2016, a new tool called the European Professional Card and "The procedure, currently available for general care nurses, physiotherapist, real estate agents and mountain guides, makes it easier for Europeans to work where their professional skills are needed", which solves the problem of the two differing systems.

Background – UK

On the United Kingdom's side the first question most would ask is Why so many nurses and health technicians from abroad? In 2014, over 7500 nurses alone, from Romania, Spain, Italy and Portugal arrived to the UK to work. And the fact was that they were needed and integrated in UK's health care system. But one must go back to the before, to the why.

In 2009 critics were saying that there was no point for nurses to go for Higher Education because they were already receiving the necessary training in doing their jobs. For a long time though three key elements seen in both nursing and other health care support jobs as essential are the care towards patients – which Higher Education cannot teach – but also the use of scientific principles and the informal education about healthy lifestyles.

The point of a specific higher education programme being mandatory for nurses, for example, is to have them think critically and responsibly instead of just training to perform tasks. All of this while maintaining a high practical component so as to keep the connection of the student with the (very) real world that awaits.

The workforce from Wales and Scotland were already setting the pace, because all student nurses there were already studying to degree level. As for the remaining workforce (England and Northern Ireland), it might have been getting higher education but not specific for the area. It is also interesting to see that the type of student that goes for this sort of degree is older, and therefore non-traditional.

Since the 1990's nursing has been part of Higher education offer – which shows that it is viewed politically as a profession that requires, as mentioned, critical thought and responsible behaviour, that systematic reflexion can provide. Also, sophistication and complexification of the instruments at the disposal of nurses and health technicians makes the specific degrees a sine qua none requirement for the professions' benefit.

What do you need to work in the UK?

First you have to find out if your profession is regulated or not in the UK and what you will need to do in order to go to the UK and pursue your profession. If you are a citizen of a Member State of the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland then you have the right to work, to seek work, to set up business or to provide services in any other Member State, in this instance the UK. Nonetheless you must find out if no law exists which requires specific national qualifications to access the profession, which is the case for the medical sector. You need to, therefore, obtain professional recognition of your qualifications to be able to practise your profession in the UK. All this information can be found at UK NARIC, the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills.

Background – PT

Emigration is a fact

Portugal has its history associated with the discovery of the world as well as achieving the recognition of diversity as a factor of development, cohesion and knowledge.

However, the flexibility and social adaptability required to interacting in an intercultural environment, isn't always spontaneous or well assimilated. There are Portuguese who have been two or three years out and returned because they have not adapted to the culture or the climate. Others do not always succeed because either they are far from the family, have difficulties with the language in a technical context, feel the loneliness and in many cases fear of being always seen as immigrants. The bitterness with which they left for another country, blinded their perception of citizenship and share of values to reach fully integration in another community.

Emigration should be an option, never an obligation!

Emigration is a serious and old problem in Portugal. However, after the great economic crisis of 2008 that pushed those from the South to the North of Europe, it also began to be a concern of the European agenda. The emigration that takes the youngest and most qualified ever.

The numbers

If the exit rhythms remain intense, serious problems will occur in Portuguese society. The aging process is already in imbalance and according to data from Pordata¹, “in 1960, there were 27 elderly people per 100 young people, in 2011, the ratio is reversed for 129 elderly people per 100 young people. The social sustainability of state is at risk, since in 2030 the population over 50 could represent 50% of the population (currently, the percentage is 38%) and which one in four people will have more than 65 years old.”

According Eurostat, the collected data for 2014 shows:

Elderly aged 65 or over - 20.1 % Portugal / 18.7 % UE 28

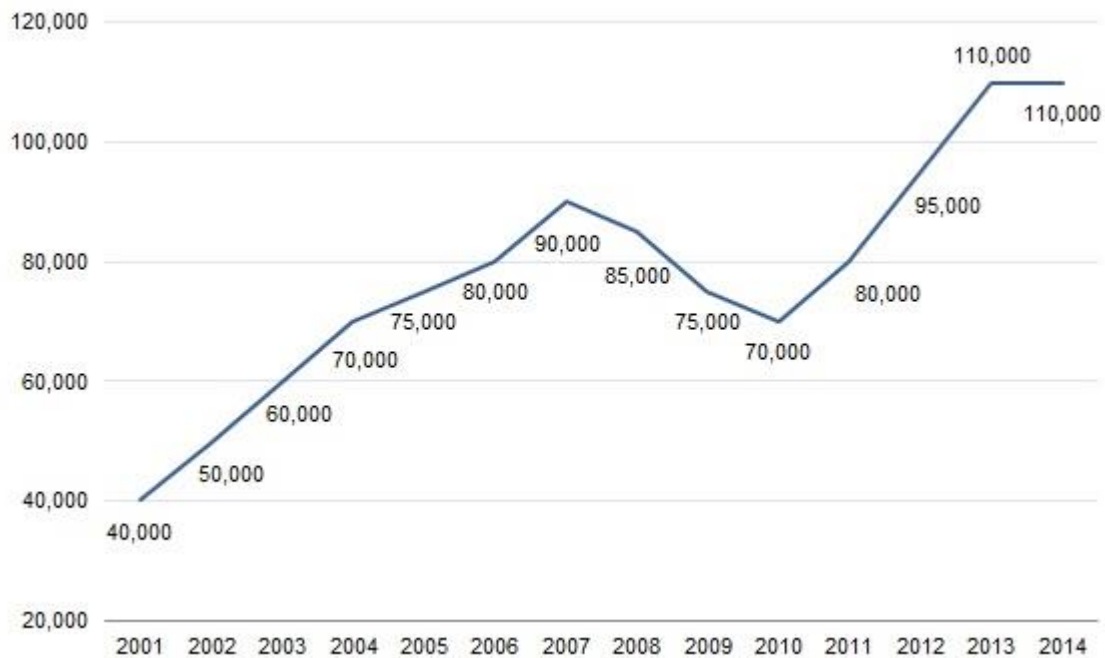
Elderly per 100 young people - 138.6 Portugal - 119.8 UE 28

At this moment, Portugal does not have demographic density to resist such large outflows. If this holds true in demographic terms, it is also valid in social and economic terms.

The latest estimates of the Emigration Observatory indicate that: “The Portuguese diaspora is about 2 million people, it is difficult to get all these people in contact, but the idea is to find out where these people are associated so that there can be contact and a permanent circulation of information.”

¹ Pordata, a project of the Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation, is a free service of access to statistical information since 1960, whenever possible, to the present day on Portuguese society. Pordata, has the collaboration of more than 60 official entities for information, with emphasis on ‘Statistics Portugal’ and ‘Eurostat’.

Estimates of total outflows of Portuguese emigrants, 2001-2014



Source: Graphic prepared by the Emigration Observatory based on data of Portuguese arrivals in countries destination.

Through the statistics of the Emigration Observatory, it is known that Portuguese emigration is deeply diverse and geographically dispersed. However, it is surprisingly similar to what it was in 1992 and even with what it was in the 60s, the difference is that there is no rural exodus, there are no peasants to jump, the emigration of the illiterate population. Between 2004 and 2014 the population growth with higher studies, confirmed by the number of PhDs per 100 thousand inhabitants, even surpassing the European average.

🇵🇹 from 8.5% to 38.5%.

🇪🇺 EU28 from 16,8% to 25,6%

*Sources/Entities: INE, DGEEC/MED - MCTES, PORDATA
 Last updated: : 2016-09-22*

However, this increase of literacy led to a new range of unemployed. Portugal may have to lose if we confirm the significant levels of very qualified people outputs for which it invests and doesn't get a return, due to insecurity and lack of professional

perspectives for a future where they can accomplish their professional ambitions and dreams. The return on investment is mostly done in the host country.

Unemployment: total and by highest level of education completed – Portugal

Individual - Thousands

2015 - 646.5
1992 - 194.1

Sources/Entities: INE, PORDATA
Last updated: 2016-02-11

There are a lot of people of every qualification level that has not seen fulfilled their professional and social ambitions in Portugal and therefore, believes that the solution is to move abroad. While others to survive or to repay loans, can't find resources in Portugal and have to leave.

However, Portugal remains a poor country in relation to the European Union average, according to DGERT/MTSSS, the National minimum wage in Portugal from 2017 will be EUR 557. Very below average, particularly in comparison with the United Kingdom, as can be seen in the following table:

Average monthly wage of employees: basic remuneration and earnings (average monthly Euro)

	1999	2016
Portugal	356,72	618,33
United Kingdom	902,03	1.529,03

Sources/Entities: Eurostat | INE | MASTE, PORDATA
Last updated: 2016-04-22

So, the thought is ongoing that there is a better future in the richest countries of the European Union, as is the case of the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom, for example, was a country that was almost ignored in the old emigration and started to be a country of destination of the new Portuguese emigration in the 21st century.

Payment comparison

One giant fact to keep in mind is that Nursing and Health Technician salaries are quite good, when considering the average payment and the minimum wage of both Portugal and the UK.

So it is safe to say perhaps that both types of professionals move from Portugal to the UK mainly for other conditions and even to just be able to work.

We can also safely say that the lack of jobs in Portugal means the State pays for higher education that is to serve other States, in this case the UK, and UK will benefit from this higher education in a way. Even so many declare that in health related professions the language barrier plays an important role, and that problems arise from lack of communication that put lives at stake, or in the least create a sensation of being less safe in the patient.

At the same time, each foreign nurse is said to cost the UK £3,000 to settle in. But they are necessary for domestic shortage and to avoid neglect accusations. This need is generally emphasized by advancements in technology, increasing prominence of preventive care, the health care demands of the ageing population and the increasing population of elderly in European countries that statistical data collected reflects.

In the United Kingdom, the average yearly pay for a nurse is from between £18,467 – £34,180 with the median average collecting £24,444 per annum. The average hourly pay of a nurse working in the UK is from between £10.04 – £22.30 per hour.

Other health care professionals working for example in the field of optometry, dentistry, medicine and pharmacy, and who are a big part of health care teams and contribute to the overall function of health care system and that take on areas also such as technical, diagnostic, direct patient care, therapeutic and support services which are essential for a full service to patients also in assisting other professionals in these and connected areas of expertise. These health care professional, as they have such a wide range also have a quite wide range of salaries and bonuses or benefits, which depend on education level, experience and location of the job of course but also it depends upon the number of working hours per day or week.

Also, when we speak of the type of work in general, it offers aside from the salary medical insurance and paid sick leave in both countries and are seen as stable.

An example of offers made in the UK is presented below, with a value above the average as it requests a specialized professional:

Sector > Nursing and midwifery job search > Job list > Job details

Job summary

Main area:
Musculoskeletal & Specialist Surgery

Grade:
Band 6

Contract:
Permanent

Hours:
37.5 hours flexible shifts

Job ref:
358-590885-NUR

Employer:
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

Employer type:
NHS

Site:
Glenfield and Leicester Royal Infirmary

Town:
Leicester

Salary:
£26,302 to £35,225 pa


Closing:
29/01/2017 23:59

University Hospitals of Leicester 



Caring at its best

Macmillan Breast Cancer Nurse Specialist Band 6

An exciting opportunity supported by Macmillan, for an experienced registered nurse has arisen within the Breast Cancer Nurse Specialist Team. Our department has 800 patients per year diagnosed with Breast Cancer. We are looking to recruit a Macmillan Breast Cancer Nurse Specialist at Band 6 to work as part of the well established team of specialist nurses. The role is to support patients as part of their cancer journey. Working in the team of nurse specialists you will be required to help support primary and secondary breast cancer patients. Macmillan will also work in partnership with the successful candidate to provide education and support to the individual. Cross site working and flexible shift patterns apply. A forward thinking and motivated individual with oncology experience, excellent interpersonal and communication skills are essential for the role. Ability to work in nurse-led clinics is also essential. Breast Cancer Care experience, with a post graduate specialist degree or willing to work towards one is desirable. In-house training will be given to the right candidate as required.





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If you are excited and inspired to be a lead commissioner playing a key part in major change and improvement in one of the most vibrant boroughs in the country this role is for you. We believe how you commission is as important as what you commission and that means we are just as interested in your skills and behaviours as we are your technical expertise and knowledge.

Closing Date: 17th January 2017, Midnight

More



Applicant requirements

- You must have appropriate UK professional registration.
- This post is subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions Order) 1975 and it will be necessary for a submission for Disclosure to be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Documents to download

Macmillan Breast Cancer Nurse Specialist

To print a document or save it to your computer, please click with your right mouse button on the document title and select "Save Target As...". You can then save the document in a suitable place on your computer ready to print it out. Clicking with the left mouse button will open the document in a new window (if your web browser can do so).

Apply online now

Source: http://healthjobsuk.com/job/UK/Gwynedd_Isle_Anglesey/Tremadog/Betsi_Cadwaladr_University_Health_Board/Community_Psychiatric_Nurse_Dual_Diagnosis_drugs/Community_Psychiatric_Nurse_Dual_Diagnosis_drugs-v505821?_ts=1

The NHS pay scales 2016-17, that is the pay scales for NHS nursing staff in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland from 1 April 2016, are set below and show internal differences in the UK:

England

Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6
£15,251	£15,251	£16,800	£19,217	£21,909	£26,302
£15,516	£15,516	£17,351	£19,655	£22,458	£27,361
	£15,944	£17,978	£20,348	£23,363	£28,462
	£16,372	£18,152	£21,052	£24,304	£29,333
	£16,800	£18,653	£21,692	£25,298	£30,357
	£17,351	£19,217	£21,909	£26,302	£31,383
	£17,978	£19,655	£22,458	£27,361	£32,407
				£28,462	£33,560
					£35,225
Band 7	Band 8A	Band 8B	Band 8C	Band 8D	Band 9
£31,383	£40,028	£46,625	£56,104	£67,247	£79,415
£32,407	£41,373	£48,034	£57,640	£69,168	£83,258
£33,560	£43,038	£50,467	£60,202	£72,051	£87,254
£35,225	£44,703	£53,285	£63,021	£75,573	£91,422
£36,250	£46,625	£56,104	£67,247	£79,415	£95,832
£37,403	£48,034	£57,640	£69,168	£83,258	£100,431
£38,683					
£40,028					
£41,373					

Scotland

Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6
£16,132	£16,132	£17,360	£19,902	£22,218	£26,565
	£16,529	£17,895	£20,327	£22,683	£27,635
	£16,944	£18,503	£21,000	£23,597	£28,746
	£17,360	£18,868	£21,683	£24,547	£29,626
	£17,895	£19,354	£22,092	£25,551	£30,661
	£18,503	£19,902	£22,218	£26,565	£31,696
		£20,327	£22,683	£27,635	£32,731
				£28,746	£33,895
					£35,577

Band 7	Band 8A	Band 8B	Band 8C	Band 8D	Band 9
£31,696	£40,428	£47,092	£56,665	£67,920	£80,209
£32,731	£41,787	£48,514	£58,217	£69,860	£84,091
£33,895	£43,469	£50,972	£60,804	£72,771	£88,127
£35,577	£45,150	£53,818	£63,651	£76,329	£92,357
£36,612	£47,092	£56,665	£67,920	£80,209	£96,791
£37,777	£48,514	£58,217	£69,860	£84,091	£101,436
£39,070					
£40,428					
£41,787					

Wales

Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6
£14,581	£14,581	£16,598	£19,217	£21,909	£26,302
£14,947	£14,947	£17,149	£19,655	£22,458	£27,361
£15,314	£15,314	£17,776	£20,348	£23,363	£28,462
	£15,742	£18,152	£21,052	£24,304	£29,333
	£16,170	£18,653	£21,692	£25,298	£30,357
	£16,598	£19,217	£21,909	£26,302	£31,383
	£17,149	£19,655	£22,458	£27,361	£32,407
	£17,776			£28,462	£33,560
					£35,225
Band 7	Band 8A	Band 8B	Band 8C	Band 8D	Band 9
£31,383	£40,028	£46,625	£56,104	£66,582	£78,629
£32,407	£41,373	£48,034	£57,640	£68,484	£82,434
£33,560	£43,038	£50,467	£59,606	£71,338	£86,390
£35,225	£44,703	£53,285	£62,397	£74,825	£90,537
£36,250	£46,625	£56,104	£66,582	£78,629	£94,883
£37,403	£48,034	£57,640	£68,484	£82,434	£99,437
£38,683					
£40,028					
£41,373					

Northern Ireland

Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6
£14,437	£14,437	£16,433	£19,027	£21,692	£26,041
£14,799	£14,799	£16,979	£19,461	£22,236	£27,090
£15,163	£15,163	£17,600	£20,147	£23,132	£28,180
	£15,586	£17,972	£20,844	£24,063	£29,043
	£16,010	£18,468	£21,477	£25,047	£30,057
	£16,433	£19,027	£21,692	£26,041	£31,072
	£16,979	£19,461	£22,236	£27,090	£32,086
	£17,600			£28,180	£33,227
					£34,876
Band 7	Band 8A	Band 8B	Band 8C	Band 8D	Band 9
£31,072	£39,632	£46,164	£55,548	£66,582	£78,629
£32,086	£40,964	£47,559	£57,069	£68,484	£82,434
£33,227	£42,612	£49,968	£59,606	£71,338	£86,390
£34,876	£44,261	£52,757	£62,397	£74,825	£90,537
£35,891	£46,164	£55,548	£66,582	£78,629	£94,883
£37,032	£47,559	£57,069	£68,484	£82,434	£99,437
£38,300					
£39,632					
£40,964					

Source: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/employment-and-pay/nhs-pay-scales-2016-17>

Recently in the news, Carlos Barroso, from Agência Lusa, reported that nurses were to earn €1200 of base salary, even those that are to work 35 hours per week and non-unionized nurses with an individual work contract, from October onwards. Until then the salary was of €1020 and the expectation was that it would rise only €30. In Portugal there is a Unique Remuneration Table, from this we come to the salary grid of nursing pay positions:

Salary Positions	15	19	23	27	30	33	36	39	42	45	48
Nurse (€)	1.201,48	1.407,45	1.613,42	1.819,38	1.973,86	2.128,34	2.282,81	2.437,29	2.591,76	2.746,24	2.900,72
Salary Positions	49	51	53	55	57						
Head Nurse (€)	2.952,21	3.055,19	3.158,18	3.261,16	3.364,14						

With these numbers in mind we can compare salaries in a year between Portugal and the United Kingdom (in euros, for a clearer insight):

	Portugal	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Minimum	€16.820,72	€17.572,30	€18.587,39	€16.800,32	€16.634,40
Maximum	€47.097,96	€115.717,24	€116.875,21	€114.571,94	€114.571,94

So it is not an exaggeration to say that if you are a nurse and can find no jobs in Portugal but have seen even from as early as when you were in higher education, job listings in United Kingdom, where from the start the chances of rising in wider career ladder is clear, perhaps then it is not a mystery that so many graduates are taking on jobs in the health care sector abroad for lack of jobs domestically and specifically in the UK given the salaries practiced there.

Brexit Consequences

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES), a UK independent centre for research and evidence-based consultancy, that provides insights on employment and human resource management topics to help improve policy and practice, says the worst part of Brexit is the uncertainty.

Those that hire are in trouble because they rely on non-UK workers for a great percentage of their staff. And a high number of them come from within the EU, Portugal being one the highest providers. This in a system where there is already a shortage that

has caused high profile cases in the recent past. This with a population that is getting older and in growing need of care.

“The current and projected shortage of nurses has left the NHS nursing workforce in England particularly vulnerable to any disruption to its recruitment pipelines, both from the EEA and outside of it,” says the study *Beyond Brexit: Assessing key risks to the nursing workforce in England*, which was led by Dr Rachel Marangozov.

Also, the uncertainty leads nurses on the job to make plans to leave at the same time as potential nurses from abroad are making plans to go elsewhere – people go and stay where they feel welcome, specially people that have higher education degrees. And these are the people that are right there when you are born and when you die, to paraphrase the words of Carole Cadwalladr, in *The Guardian*, on 16 October 2016, and for everything in between, we want to add.

Another factor that may come into play, when Brexit is negotiated and applied is the status of those who are now working in the UK as part of the Schengan agreement therefore not needing a work or leaving visa or passport, and they will no longer be under the protective umbrella of the European Professional Card, which means that they will no longer have their qualifications instantly recognized in that country.

If and when the deal is concluded it is essential that those responsible take this factor into account and guarantee that these foreign nurses, especially the Portuguese ones, have time to adjust their legal status, if not, as has mentioned before, these professionals will be considered illegal immigrants and will inevitably leave their jobs, thus creating a large strain on an already (in some cases) understaffed NHS and other places that need these sort of people, which will in some cases be occupied by less qualified workers. There is also the case of the loosing of teachers and trainers, because the teaching of nursing is also done in loco, so the new students will lose some of their teachers. Also the students that are in Portugal learning nursing, will also be affect because it is uncertain if their studies will continue to function this way.

Conclusion

Based on our work the first conclusion we can draw is that the Portuguese nurses and healthcare technicians that are currently in the UK serving in the various fields of nursing, are an important part and resource of the healthcare industry in the country. Because as mentioned they make up 5% of the total nurses in the the UK, and if the trend continues this figure is likely to grow in the future.

These Portuguese professionals do this, as we have seen, for various reasons, because there is, perhaps, a lack of work in the country and they are compelled to leave to another country, or the pay is better (which in the case of the UK it is), or they are just looking for a new challenge.

What is certain, is that given the UK's necessity for national trained professionals, the Portuguese nurses will always be welcome in that country, and will be appreciated, because of their skills, their willingness to work and learn, and the recognized quality.

Despite all of this, a vital 5% of NHS nurses is at risk of leaving the country and putting a strain on an already undermanned sector, as a result of one of the most important debates in British society, the Brexit.

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