



ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
PHYSICIANS AND  
SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

## **Nurse to staff ratios are needed**

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**The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow supports the proposal by the Safe Staffing Alliance to standardise nurse to patient ratios in the NHS.**

Care of patients deteriorates when staff levels are stretched. This is evident within the nursing and medical professions. While it is clear that the nurse to patient ratios and the skill mix of nurses will vary from ward to ward and from department to department, standards should be set in the different clinical area such as ICU, acute admissions wards, and step progressive care wards, specialty wards and long stay wards.

The nursing budget represents the largest financial component of operational spend in health boards and health authorities. As a result, when funding is reduced this is always looked on a potential source of saving.

The drawing up of unequivocal standards of nursing numbers in the different types of wards using benchmarking and the considerable expertise that is available is worthy of consideration. Having these numbers independently monitored would close the door to inappropriate budgetary savings in this area and thereby eliminate the risk to patient safety and care.