

# **CARDIAC PHYSIOLOGY** **WORKFORCE REQUIREMENTS IN LONDON**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- The Cardiac Physiology workforce is fundamental to the delivery of the diagnostics agenda and achieving the 18-week target.
- It has been highlighted in several reports that there is a severe shortage of this highly specialised professional staff group.

### **CURRENT WORKFORCE POSITION**

- The Cardiac Physiology workforce is concentrated at the Advanced Practitioner level due to the highly specialised nature of the work
- There is potential for further development of an Assistant Practitioner role
- Recruitment to Trainee posts is extremely successful (MTO 1 or 2 level) and increasing the number of established Trainee posts would free up currently down-graded senior posts
- The vacancy rate for Cardiac Physiologists in London is 22.6% (cf 5.2% for Nurses and 8.8% for AHPs)
- The current demand for staff significantly outstrips supply; this situation will worsen
- The annual spend for agency staff is £3,121,768 (based on current spend)

### **TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

- Cardiac Physiologists require a BSc in Clinical Physiology to be able to register
- The HPC will take over the regulation of the Clinical Physiology professions from late 2005 there is therefore a need to ensure existing staff are on the RCCP voluntary register
- The number of London based Cardiac Physiology applicants to the City of Westminster course is in decline and this appears to be due to a lack of capacity to accommodate students in Trusts
- An increase in the infrastructure support (established Trainee posts, full-time Clinical Trainers, rotational posts) would ensure that departments could take on more Trainees. An increase in the number of commissions could then be considered to manage the need for more qualified Cardiac Physiologists.
- Departments may also be able to take more Trainees if made supernumerary to the establishment as in the South West Peninsular example.

### **CURRENT SERVICE CAPACITY**

- The BCS recommends that there are 53-87 Cardiac Physiologists per million population
- There is currently only 29.6% of the required workforce for the workload undertaken in the London Trusts

- Waiting times for investigations range from 0 – 36 weeks
- Pan sector collaboration could provide some increase in capacity within departments

### **SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS AND WORKFORCE REQUIREMENTS**

- Service developments need to be balanced with appropriate increases in establishment to manage demands placed on services
- The introduction of Primary Angioplasty is likely to significantly increase the demands place on Trusts
- There will be 12 new Catheter Labs opening by 2006 which will also require an increase in the number of established posts
- Initiatives like the Cardiac Catheter Lab Practitioner Project provide an example of how to manage demand in the short-term, but its usefulness is limited by its reliance on the existence of staff with Cardiac Catheterisation experience.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Identify opportunities for pan-sector and pan-London collaboration e.g. International Recruitment, projects to drive down agency costs, pooling training resources
- Increase capacity within departments by identifying appropriate service improvement initiatives e.g. explore the potential to extend levels of responsibility for Assistant Practitioners
- Increase the number of Trainee and Assistant Practitioner posts
- Improve infrastructure to support Trainees in the workplace
- London SHAs to provide salary support for trainee posts
- Increase the number of Clinical Physiology commissions in the long-term and expand the commissions to include other institutions.