

These figures show an improvement on the previous year both in regard to the proportion of nurses to patients and registered nurses to pupils:—

	1946.	1947	1948.	1949.
Total number of nurses to patients ..	1 to 1·9	1 to 1·77	1 to 1·68	1 to 1·4
Total number of registered nurses to pupils	1 to 2·4	1 to 1·3	1 to 2·5	1 to 2·4

For several years the Department has been basing the requirements for staffing in the proportion of 1 nurse to 1·5 occupied beds and 1 registered nurse to 2 pupil-nurses. These requirements were based on a forty-four to forty-eight-hour week.

It has become evident that in the large base hospitals where there are several theatres, special clinics and departments, and a large number of supervising staff this basis is inadequate and that an average of 1 to 1·25 will be required, or a fresh basis of assessment considered.

If a staff of 1 to 1·25 is required for a forty-four to forty-eight-hour week, in those hospitals where a forty-hour week is to be worked a staff of at least an additional one-sixth will be required—*i.e.*, approximately 1 nurse to 1 occupied bed. No hospital has a staff of anything like this proportion, although a few of the base hospitals are now finding it necessary, in order to provide a proper service, to have 1 nurse to 1·3 patients.

This basis of staffing is quoted in the British Working Party's report as being already in existence in some English hospitals where a forty-eight-hour week is worked but where they are many special services.

An alternative method is to calculate staff requirements on a ward basis and add to this for special wards or for special departments—*i.e.*, in several international studies the number of nurses required for a 30-bed medical and surgical ward on a forty-eight-hour week was shown as 12—3 registered, 6 for day duty, 2 night duty, and 1 reliever—but this number was increased by 1 registered nurse and 2 pupil-nurses in a children's ward of the same size.

OBSTETRICAL HOSPITALS WHICH ARE TRAINING-SCHOOLS

A few of the country hospitals have had a difficult period, but on the whole, in spite of the increased number of births, the staffing position has not only been maintained, but slightly improved.

The increased beds are due to the public hospital system having to be responsible for more beds, due to the closing of private hospitals.

	1947.	1948.	1949.
Total number of beds	759	863	940
Daily average occupied beds	613·9	702·3	780·5
Total number of confinements	15,217	16,628	18,813
Total number of registered nurses—			
Midwives	138	138	187
Maternity nurses	91	73	137
Total number of midwifery trainees	49	48	39
Total number of maternity trainees—			
Registered nurses	218	193	215
Eighteen months' trainees	170	214	235