WELSH GOVERNMENT

# National Workforce Implementation Plan: Addressing NHS Wales Workforce Challenges

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Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

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# Ministerial Foreword

It is five years since we published '*A Healthier Wales: our plan for health and social care'*, and prioritised the core need to address the challenges facing our health and care workforce. The supporting Strategy, **A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care Workforce** commissioned by Welsh Government from Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), in partnership with Social Care Wales, was published in 2020, it set a 10-year vision to enable us to realise our ambition to meet our aim of '*A motivated and sustainable health and social care workforce'*.

This strategic vision has been key to ensure we maintain our long-term direction towards the sustainable workforce for the future. Key building blocks have been put in place, with significant investment in education and training of our NHS Wales workforce in recognition that we must now be laying the foundation for our future sustainability.

Our workforce is at record levels, and we have seen excellent examples of innovative working with models of service delivery and rapid digitalisation supporting the way in which we know we must work.

However, NHS Wales is experiencing health and social care workforce challenges replicated globally. In September 2022, the World Health Organisation published their **Health and care workforce in Europe: time to act** report, highlighting the multiple workforce crises faced by health and social care systems across Europe. Exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic situation, the report lays bare chronic staff shortages magnified by recruitment and retention issues due to stress, fatigue, burnout, unattractive working conditions and poor professional development opportunities.

These workforce issues are threaded through every discussion I have with NHS Wales staff and leaders and have been front and centre in recent months. The message is clear – we must accelerate our action underpinned by strong, collective and compassionate leadership if we are to improve retention and recruitment and provide our workforce with the working environment and conditions that they need to be able to care effectively for the people of Wales.

This National Workforce Implementation Plan outlines a series of practical actions that will act as enablers to accelerate the ten-year vision fully recognising the work that is underway as part of the Workforce Strategy.

The Plan will be overseen by a Strategic Workforce Implementation Board chaired by Judith Paget, Director General of Health and Social Care in Welsh Government and Chief Executive of NHS Wales. The Board will manage interdependencies and emerging competition for resources across the wider system and help us to make tough decisions about where, as a system, we focus our limited resources.

The Board will bring together all key partners in the true spirit of collaboration and engagement to share knowledge, expertise and secure buy in to ensure commitment to delivery.

I absolutely recognise that there are no quick fixes, however we will look at all innovative approaches to change not only our ways of working but also our ways of thinking to create a sustainable NHS workforce for the future. We must respond quickly and decisively to tackle the challenges facing our workforce in NHS Wales.

The Strategic Workforce Implementation Board will be accountable to me as Minister for Health and Social Services, I look forward to receiving regular updates and progress reports into the delivery of the actions contained in this Plan, which I'm sure we all acknowledge are of utmost importance.

Finally, I would like to thank those who have been engaged with in the development of this Plan. Your input has been invaluable in shaping this final version and I would encourage you to continue working with us so we can continue to collaborate and deliver for our NHS workforce.

**Eluned Morgan MS**

**Minister for Health and Social Services**

# Introduction: Why a National Workforce Implementation Plan?

This Plan has been developed in response to the significant additional demands on our workforce due to the refocus and reprioritisation necessary to support our whole system approach and ambitious recovery plans. We committed to this Plan as part of our Programme for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing waiting lists in Wales published in April 2022.

The NHS in Wales has been facing unprecedented high levels of demand for a sustained period of time as we adapt to the pandemic and take steps to address the backlog of planned care. This has accelerated known workforce challenges which are not unique to Wales, with the World Health Organisation declaring a global healthcare workforce crisis in education, recruitment deployment and performance leading to their estimation of a projected shortfall of 10 million health workers by 2030.

We committed to addressing these challenges in A *Healthier Wales*, published in 2018. We have remained unequivocal that '*A motivated and sustainable health and social care workforce'* is at the heart of any shared understanding of the system change we needed in Wales and a component of the Quadruple Aim.

**A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care Workforce**

In order to drive workforce transformation, the Welsh Government commissioned HEIW in partnership with Social Care Wales to develop **A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care Workforce** which was published in 2020, setting a 10-year strategic direction and vision for workforce transformation.

As a Special Health Authority that sits alongside Health Boards and Trusts, HEIW was established, also in 2018, and is dedicated to transforming the workforce, to delivering NHS workforce change, and working in partnership with Social Care Wales on the wider health and care workforce. Actions identified as priorities for the first phase of the Workforce Strategy (2018-2023) have driven a range of targeted workforce plans that are currently under development as set out below.

The actions for the second phase of the Strategy are currently being developed through widespread consultation with stakeholders and partners, and a review of the evidence post pandemic. This strategic vision will continue to be vital to ensure we maintain our long-term direction towards the sustainable workforce for the future while we address the immediate challenging priorities to support our ambitious recovery plans.

This second phase of the Workforce Strategy will respond to our key clinical priorities for Wales including supporting our Cancer Implementation Plan, urgent and

emergency care, access to primary care and mental health and well-being including CAMHS.

We will also continue to develop and refine our longer-term approach to workforce planning in the context of the Workforce Strategy recognising the interfaces and synergies between Wales, other parts of the UK and even globally. For example, there is a very close relationship between the development and availability of appropriately trained health and care workers between England and Wales, the legislation and policy relating to professional regulation is a UK matter; and our ability to recruit from abroad is dependent on the visa and immigration policies determined at the UK level.

In Wales we published our workforce strategy in 2020, setting a 10-year direction of travel and there are common themes with the strategies that have since been published in other parts of the UK. We expect the UK Government to publish their long-term strategic workforce planning framework and workforce plan in 2023 – the first since 2003. We, therefore, look forward to adapting the plans in association with HEIW, developing system priorities as we move through our recovery priorities and responding to the future publication of the workforce plan in England.

### Timetable for workforce plans

| Service/Profession | Current Position | Next Steps |
|---|---|---|
| **Mental Health Workforce Plan** | Plan completed and launched (7 Nov) | Implementation underway – some actions subject to funding |
| **Matneo Workforce Solutions – Phase 1 short term** | Priorities identified | Implemented by end 22/23<br>Phase 2 to commence 23/24 |
| **Pharmacy Workforce Plan** | Plan at drafting stage | Plan finalised end 22/23 |
| **Dentistry Workforce Plan** | Initial stage of work | Plan drafted end 22/23 |
| **Nursing Workforce Plan – phase 1 short term** | Initial stages of work on 5 priority areas | Phase 1 Plan drafted end 22/23<br>Phase 2 to commence 23/24 |
| **Diagnostic Workforce Solutions – short term** | Process agreed | Costed and prioritised plan by end 22/23, implementation 23/24 |
| **Primary Care Workforce Plan** | Scope being agreed | Plan to be completed during 23/24 |
| **Genomics Workforce Plan** | Scope being agreed | Plan to be completed during 23/24 |

**Source: HEIW**

## National Workforce Implementation Plan

This Implementation Plan builds on the strategic direction in A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy, whilst recognising the need for rapid collective action on some key priorities in order to expand and accelerate progress in light of current pressures.

**This Implementation Plan will:**

- support the Workforce Strategy's commitment to deliver an inclusive, flexible, multi-professional workforce able to work across sectors and traditional boundaries.
- reinforce the Strategy's central focus on workforce wellbeing and its ambition to build compassionate, collective and inclusive cultures as a sustainable foundation for robust strategies to attract, recruit and retain talented people to train, work and live in Wales.
- identify ways to accelerate the Strategy's clear goals in facilitating effective health workforce deployment, using value-based approaches to deliver professionally fulfilling roles, multi-disciplinary teams focused on prudent healthcare principles and embracing the use of technology to release time to care.
- Co-ordinate action and interdependencies across the different organisations who play a role in delivery of our workforce ambitions.

This Plan highlights a number of actions that we need to progress immediately to address some of the most urgent pressures within the NHS now. These link with work already underway and so it is important that these actions are not seen in isolation, but instead are actions that either enable or accelerate actions included in the Workforce Strategy and other plans or are new actions that have been identified through conversations with stakeholders that must be prioritised for action now.

There are also actions included which are also in the Workforce Strategy as part of other actions or standalone actions. They are highlighted in this Plan based on the feedback we have received from stakeholders identifying them as priority actions for delivery in the immediate and short term.

This Plan is not an all-encompassing narrative but helps us to prioritise and track the key priorities through the Strategic Workforce Implementation Board. The Plan should be read in conjunction with the Workforce Strategy and other published plans containing workforce deliverables. The Plan will develop as our priorities emerge, such as immediate actions to support the Cancer Implementation Plan

In the same way, addressing urgent priorities for action on the social care workforce will be essential to meet key Ministerial priorities including joint working with local authorities to tackle delayed transfers of care. We will work in partnership with Social Care Wales and key delivery partners and stakeholders to develop an equivalent Implementation Plan to address social care workforce priorities for publication in the summer.

The actions in this Plan are framed around three key headings which will resonate both with the workforce and the public who rely on their services, these are –

**Fill the Workforce Gaps**

We have to acknowledge the challenges created by tight labour market conditions not just in the UK but across the world. Continuing recruitment of fully trained registered professionals and healthcare workers will be very challenging in the aftermath of several years of focus on Covid 19 and in a competitive employment market with skills shortages and global workforce for health.

**Retain our Workforce:  Engage, Support and Develop**

As we move through a challenging winter and look to the longer term it will remain vital to support the health and wellbeing of our existing workforce, focus on retention of our workforce and ensure that we develop the skills and capabilities needed for the future. However, we cannot simply recruit our way out of the situation – we need to think and act differently to take forward a range of approaches to deliver additional workforce capacity.

We know that diversity in the workforce will create the inclusive environment to enable all to enter, be supported and developed, and therefore thrive, flourish, and contribute.

**Plan for the Future**

It is important that we focus on ways to deploy our existing and future workforce more effectively. This will include the enhanced use of multi professional teamworking, with service, team and role redesign deploying new roles and advance practice models enabling people to develop their careers and work at the top of their license. We will also use technology and efficient process thinking to deploy people more flexibly, through effective rostering and work scheduling, enabling flexible employment across professional and organisational boundaries and reducing any delay or barriers in our employment systems and processes. In our system redesign we will explicitly consider the opportunity for digital solutions to release time to care

to support scarce workforce expertise and to enable people to work more effectively to improve services and reduce workload. This section will focus on actions that will make a difference in the immediate and short term whilst enabling longer term delivery of solutions.

The Implementation Plan will need to be an agile plan capable of reprioritising during delivery and updated regularly as experience over the last few years has demonstrated that:

- circumstances and priorities can change rapidly as we move through challenges to our services presented by future Covid waves, flu and other winter respiratory virus,
- key strategic programmes (such as Planned Care, Primary Care, Mental Health, Urgent and Emergency Care, Cancer) will naturally identify and refine the workforce requirements,
- new priorities will emerge from our National Clinical Framework and all-Wales programmes and networks for major conditions such as diabetes, women's health and cardiac/heart disease
- more specific workforce priorities will emerge from the individual organisational plans.

## Governance and Accountability

It is important that as the current pressures facing our NHS in Wales change in response to differing circumstances, that we are able to flex our thinking and alter priorities. The Strategic Workforce Implementation Board will be a key enabler to that approach, and it will be vitally important that the right people are around the table to make the relevant and necessary connections to not only the longer-term planning contained in the Workforce Strategy, but also our plans for recovery, NHS organisations individual plans, and our Strategic Programmes and Implementation Boards which often generate additional workforce priorities.

The Strategic Workforce Implementation Board will report to the Minister for Health and Social Services with a collective view from a range of key partners including policy and professional leads in WG, and representatives of NHS employers, staff organisations and professional representatives.

HEIW, as the strategic workforce body for NHS Wales, will remain the key organisation to drive change in this space and so this Plan needs to be read in conjunction with the HEIW IMTP which runs until 2025. However, there is a need to recognise that there are policies and structures that will need to influence the development and structure of the future of the health and social care workforce beyond HEIW's remit including developing appropriate policy models and proposals to address the needs of a modern future of workforce, a need to interact with Further and Higher Education and the Welsh Government Employability Plan.

Creating and delivering an effective workforce requires an evidence-based workforce plan which is integrated with our financial plans, focussed on areas of significant activity and aligned to individual organisations performance plans. The Implementation Board will not cut across existing governance and accountability mechanisms already in place for NHS Wales organisations but will ensure alignment for cross cutting actions and collective accountability, thus ensuring quality and timeliness of delivery and providing the ability to evaluate the impact of our actions on service delivery. It will enable us to align the common elements of our plans where these can be best delivered 'Once for Wales' and bring consistency and learning across Wales on implementation.

The Strategic Workforce Implementation Board will manage interdependencies and inform decisions about where, as a system, we focus our limited resources.

The Strategic Workforce Implementation Board's remit will be: -

- Create collective accountability for the interdependencies between workforce plans from different sectors, NHS organisational plans and our Strategic Plans.
- Enable an agile approach to delivery of the National Workforce Implementation Plan to enable us to incorporate emerging challenges and new priorities to reflect the dynamic nature of recovery.
- Manage overlaps with actions identified in other plans to avoid duplication whilst identifying synergies and areas for collaboration, not just across NHS organisations but with all delivery partners.

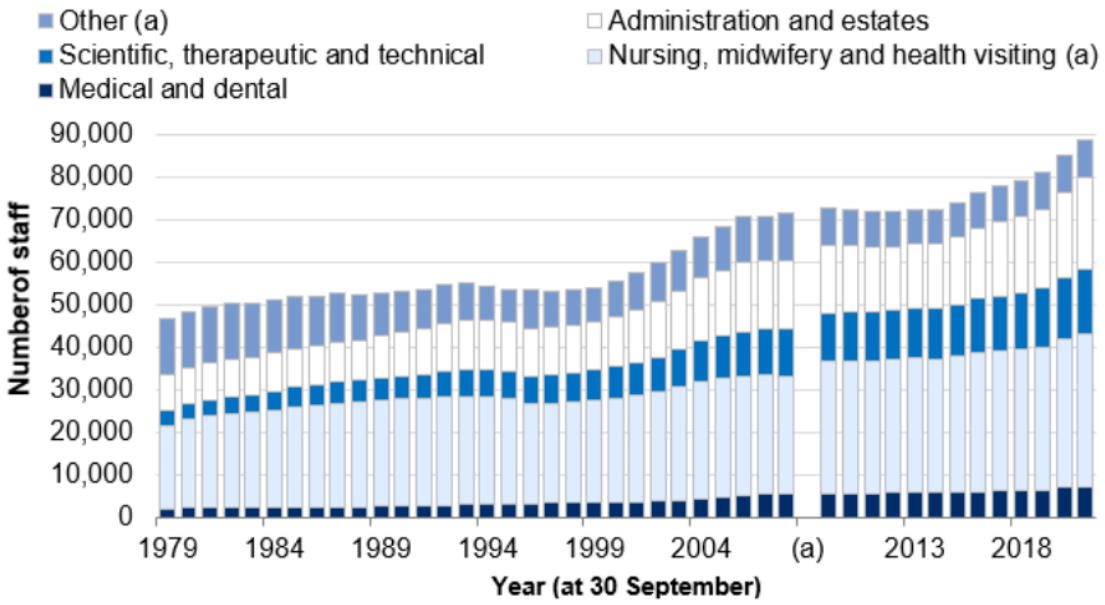
The membership of the Board at a minimum will comprise NHS Wales organisations (including HEIW and NWSSP), Welsh Government, professional leads, Trade Unions, Third Sector and others to ensure multi professional representation.

# What does our workforce look like now

**Size of the current workforce.**

The workforce is at record levels, with over 105,000 staff directly employed by NHS Wales organisations. Since 2015-16, the total pay bill has increased by 53% and at £5,028bn (2021-22) represents 58% of net operating costs for NHS Wales.

As of 30 September 2021, our workforce comprised –




(a) Includes ambulance staff, Health Care Assistants (HCA), support staff and non-medical staff. Following changes to the occupation codes, around 70% of the HCAs are included with nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff from 2009, previously in 'other'. Break in chart to indicate the change.

***Source: HEIW. Number of staff (FTE)***

In recent years we have also relied on additional working hours provided from a range of sources, this includes additional hours provided by our existing workforce and through our Staff Banks as well as a rapid deployment of agency staff across the NHS most particularly during the pandemic.

**Investment in training new workforce**

We have prioritised investment in the education and training of the future workforce over the past eight years. As a result, we are seeing the highest ever number of people entering education programmes. 2023/24 is the ninth consecutive year where funding to support health professional education and training in Wales will increase. £281.98m will be invested in 2023/24, this equates to an 8% increase from 22/23 which is an extra £1.7m (0.8% increase) for education and training programmes for all healthcare professionals in Wales. £7.14m (11.6% increase) extra for medical training places, an extra £1.68m (4.8% increase) to support core GP training numbers and a net increase of £3.41m (28.1% increase) for pharmacy training across Wales. We recognise that some training places have not been increased at the same rates as others and will need to consider this moving into the future.

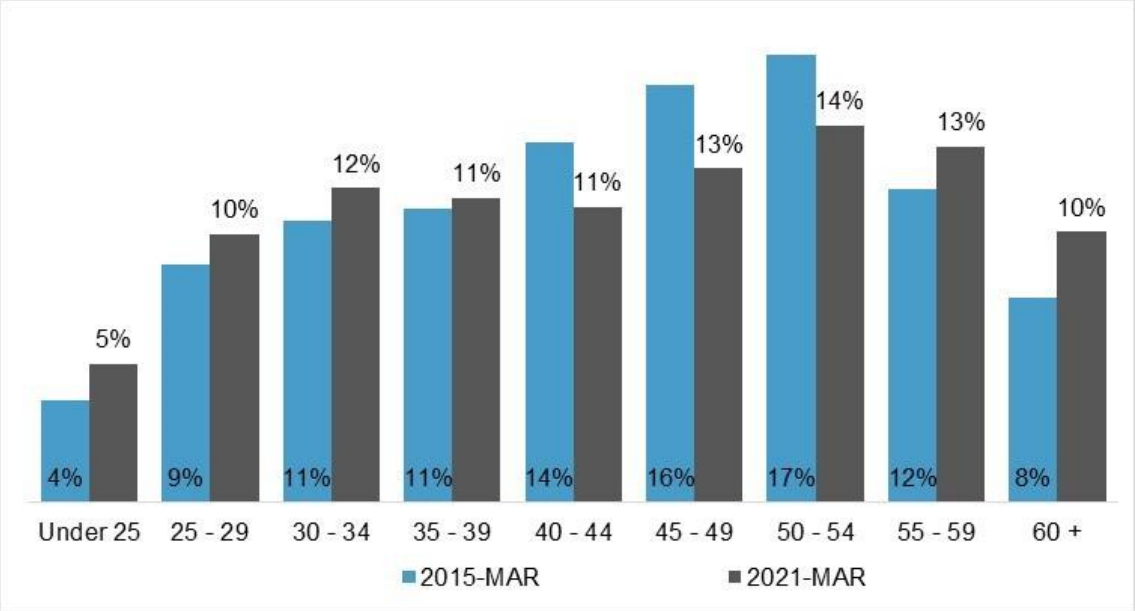
For example, this means for the last six years since 2017:

- Nurse training places have increased by 54.3% (from 1750 in 2017 to 2701 in 2023)
- Midwifery training places increased by 41.8% (from 134 in 2017 to 190 in 2023)
- Physiotherapist training places increased by 34.3% (from 134 in 2017 to 180 in 2023)
- Occupational Therapist training places have increased by 62.8% (from 121 in 2017 to 197 in 2023)
- Paramedic training places have increased by 39.5% (from 86 in 2017 to 120 in 2023)

As a result of that sustained investment, we are now seeing these increases flowing through into increases in the number of people graduating from these courses ready to take up roles within the health and social care system in Wales.

However, there are training places that have not increased at the same rate, and there are some professions that we do not commission or educate at all in Wales. Given the timeline of education and training commissioning, addressing these inconsistencies will be a longer-term action than this Plan. We recognise that some training places have not been increased at the same rates as others and will need to consider this moving into the future.

It is important to also consider the age profile of our workforce, the table below shows the age profile of our workforce as of 30 March 2021. We face the challenges of an ageing workforce, but the table below also shows a smoother age distribution across the age profile in the March 2021 data rather than a greater bias towards an older workforce in the 2015 data. This demonstrates that there are still larger numbers of our workforce in the older age brackets, but less so than in 2015.




***Data source: ESR DW as reported by HEIW*** ***NHS Wales Workforce Trends***

# What will our workforce of the future look like

Whilst this Plan is for the immediate and short term, it is important to acknowledge that longer term our workforce will look very different, and many of the actions in this Plan provide solid foundations for the future work. As we progress with realising the ambitions in *A Healthier Wales***,** we see the skills mix and demographic of the workforce change. Looking to the future we will see increased levels of care taking place directly in the community which is more personalised, and technology enabled. There will be a greater focus on population health, prevention and reducing health inequalities. Earlier diagnosis alongside new and integrated models of care, and better use of technology offer the potential to significantly improve the health of Wales and the care given to our population.

Wales has an ageing population, and in the coming years, a greater number of patients will be presenting with more complex health needs and increasing frailty. We must develop whole workforce planning approaches to meet the needs of an older population, which ensures that the needs of this part of our population are embedded across professional education and supported through new models of multi-professional working and also addressed in our longer term strategic direction for health and social care.

Scientific advances are very rapidly providing new and more effective ways to deliver treatment. For example, our increasing understanding of genomics provides opportunities for new more personalised and targeted treatments for some of our most prevalent disease. We have used new medical and technological advances to improve early diagnosis throughout bowel cancer screening programme which now enables people to take a test in their own home and the HPV immunisation

programme has effectively reduced the risk of cervical cancer and enabled us to better target our screening programmes. We can provide therapy interventions and rehabilitation remotely, reducing the need for people to travel in pain to appointments. Each of these changes has not only delivered better patient care but also enabled us to use our skilled workforce in different ways.

In the same way digital developments are already offering us real opportunity to deploy our workforce more effectively. For example, in our Programme for Government we committed to rolling our e-prescribing and current trials in Hywel Dda UHB and Swansea Bay UHB, early indications have shown that it frees up 15-20% in nurses time in doing rounds. We will continue developing and implementing digital technology and telemedicine to underpin our commitments to improve quality, increase efficiency, reduce physical travel, and enable different ways of working.

Moreover, people's expectations have rightly changed in terms of how they can access and receive services and we must continue to build on what works and utilise these new approaches to deliver on these expectations. We have invested £20m in the NHS Wales app and website to give people 'on demand' access to their GP records.

The use of digital platforms to aid supported- self management has accelerated the delivery of agreed follow-up pathways, reducing the reliance on patients attending a clinical setting and burden of unsustainable increases in outpatient attendances. The use of digital personal health records enables patients to share information with the clinical team to support the management of their condition, access a wide range of information including test results and when required advice about their symptoms and condition as and when they occur, rather than waiting for a routine appointment. The shift in focus from the traditional outpatient appointment to the use of digital platforms has already been successfully introduced in some Health Boards/Trusts in Wales, empowering patients to manage their health without the need to attend a hospital setting such as Prostate Cancer and Diabetes, with the potential for further expansion.

We will continue to build a digitally ready workforce programme and harness digital as part of service redesign, workforce planning, team and role design and workflows to focus scarce clinical input. We are committed to support our workforce to ensure that they are confident to use this new technology as it become available and that we 'think digital' whenever this provides us with opportunities to reduce the burden on the workforce and enhance our service to Wales. This will ensure that we meet our commitment to improve staff experience and support them to provide better care.

Realising the rapid advances in medicine, science and technology will mean we need to change the way we think about developing our future workforce. We cannot accurately predict the opportunities that will be presented to us during the careers of those new recruits currently joining the health and care system. We also will need to consider the ways in which our future workforce will wish to work, we already see a significant percentage of healthcare graduates that want to work less than full time. This means that we will need to adapt our training and education programmes, our workforce roles and multi-professional working in a way that will 'future proof' our

workforce.  We will need to develop and enhance skills of adaptability and flexibility and digital confidence.

It will also mean we need to focus on career long learning and skills development to ensure that our workforce remain well placed to realise the benefits of new technology as it emerges. We also need to consider how organisations adapt and change to be able to ensure that our workforce can work in the most effective way with the technology available with flexibility to work remotely. For example, Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) have implemented remote working for the 111 service through an increase in digital capability. WAST are now able to draw on people from much wider geography across Wales, thus expanding employment opportunities, instead of having to employ staff who can work in three fixed centres.

# Key Areas of Action to Deliver the Workforce

# Fill the Workforce Gaps

### Attract and Recruit

Both a Healthier Wales and the Workforce Strategy outline our aspiration that the NHS in Wales is an exemplar employer in employee wellbeing, and that roles within health and care provide people with opportunities for fulfilling and socially valuable work with secure and attractive terms and conditions of service. We want to attract a diverse range of individuals into careers in health and care and support the ambitions of Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales: A Plan for Employability and Skills and enable the NHS to act as a key employer in the foundational economy across Wales.

Due to the intense pressures of the system, the realities of providing care in NHS are in the spotlight like never before. The added challenges of the cost-of-living crisis and the competitive labour market both within the UK and internationally has resulted in a less attractive employment offer which has impacted our ability to attract people to work in the NHS in Wales.

With a challenging global skills shortage, and a competitive employment market, we need to find new innovative ways to attract people to health and social care making it easy to find available roles and to apply for them.

The goal to address this in A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy is to ensure that *" By 2030, health and social care will be well established as a strong and recognisable brand and the sector of choice for our future workforce"* . As a result, HEIW have developed an innovative

and interactive 'Careersville' site which provides an online and interactive tool to enable people to explore and find out more about the range of careers in health and care. Alongside 'Careersville' HEIW have established a Health and Social Care Careers Network to strengthen links and connections between careers approaches and job seekers in health and social care.

In addition, work is underway to review and develop schemes to address shortages in professional and occupational groups and difficult to recruit to areas. Work has also been targeted to ensure that under-represented groups are reached. This work has highlighted how geographic and economic characteristics of different parts of Wales will present opportunities to attract workforce from local communities. HEIW will continue to work in partnership to develop Career Development Frameworks for a number of sectors/professions and the use of work-based learning models. These foundations have enabled some health boards to work with local communities who would not normally consider a career in health and care to both highlight opportunities and remove any barriers to employment that may exist.

### Widening Access

HEIW are developing an apprenticeship area on Careersville and are linked in with the Colleges and Training Providers who deliver apprenticeships. Each NHS Wales organisations also has strong links with their apprenticeship providers. Organisations are keen to use more Healthcare Apprenticeship Frameworks both for new recruits and to upskill the current workforce and HEIW are undertaking work in this area. Frameworks are currently available in a number of areas including pharmacy, dental and maternity and paediatric support. By April 2023, all of the Healthcare Apprenticeship Frameworks will have been reviewed by HEIW meaning that NHS Wales will have a suite of Frameworks which is fit for purpose, with Frameworks containing the most up to date qualifications.

Some health boards have adopted models to recruit from their local communities and support recruits to complete apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning in order to develop their skills and qualifications and progress their careers within the organisation. We have an opportunity to learn and further expand the 'grow your own' local community recruitment models to attract candidates from the wider community through work-based learning and apprenticeships to earn, learn and develop their careers within the health and care system. We will work with HEIW to publish guidance to scale and spread 'grow your own' local community recruitment models.

### Reservists

HEIW are developing proposals to deploy a cadre of reservists in Wales who could bring additional skills and capacity to NHS Wales to support our regular workforce at times of extreme pressure, or where a concerted focus is required to deliver against a distinct priority, for example, if we faced a challenge similar to our national task to deliver the first COVID vaccination programme. By April 2023, HEIW will develop a costed business case for a reservist workforce model for Wales.

## International Recruitment

International recruitment will remain a key enabler to provide capacity to our health workforce in Wales. In 2022, we piloted an ethical 'Once for Wales' approach to nursing recruitment to fill specific needs and recruited in the region of 400 nurses from overseas. We provided them with carefully designed support and orientation to ensure they get the best start in their new roles and feel a true sense of belonging in the NHS and in Wales. We need to build on this experience of taking an ethical 'Once for Wales' approach to international recruitment and learning from the evaluation of phase 1 will feed into preparation for future nursing intakes in September 2023 and future recruitment exercises to fill other specific gaps in our workforce.

## Attract and Recruit – What this Plan will deliver

**By April 2023 -**

- Welsh Government will have set out a timeline for consultation on a refreshed NHS Wales Bursary Scheme.
- HEIW will have launched a refreshed and enhanced attraction and recruitment campaign for NHS Wales underpinned by Train, Work, Live to support national and overseas recruitment campaigns for substantive staff, enhanced Bank recruitment and returners.

**By July 2023**

- HEIW will engage in a broader recruitment campaign to reach shortages in professional areas.
- Welsh Government will work with NHS Employers and other NHS Wales organisations to develop incentivisation schemes to target key shortage groups and/or areas and which help retain people in Wales with monitoring mechanisms to ensure consistent and fair application.
- Welsh Government will commission work to develop new flexible employment and contract options that better suit those who wish to work in primary and community sectors to enhance services to communities most in need of health care, to include facilitation of flexible employment options for health board or local authority employed AHPs.
- Welsh Government will commission an exercise to identify underpinning date requirements which will facilitate an exercise to identify which professional roles have most pressing workforce shortages.
- Welsh Government will support NHS Wales Shared Services Partnerships (NWSSP) to develop proposals to address international recruitment challenges based on ethical recruitment evaluation including holistic support for international recruits and their families including housing and education.

**By September 2023**

- NWSSP will review and modernise recruitment processes to widen access.
- Welsh Government will support HEIW and NHS Wales organisations to apply to become a national OSCE testing centre to facilitate international recruitment.

**By January 2024**

- HEIW will work to increase work-based learning and apprenticeships to widen entry access in shortage areas and will consider a national nursing apprenticeship scheme.

## Enhancing service user experience through volunteers

The NHS has an active network of volunteer coordinators and volunteers who give their time to enhance patient experience and deliver additional services within our hospitals and communities. Volunteers will be deployed in line with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action compact agreed in partnership with the Trades Unions and Professional Associations which govern the fair deployment of volunteers.

## Enhancing service user experience through volunteers- What this Plan will deliver

**By July 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with HEIW to deliver targeted national campaigns to encourage additional volunteers into the health and care system to reduce the pressure on our workforce and enhance the experience of service.

**By September 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with key partners to establish a national volunteering portal to direct people to local volunteering opportunities.

**By January 2024**

- Welsh Government will work with key partners to develop a new portfolio of volunteer roles and opportunities to help people actively support their health and wellbeing within their own local communities.
- Work with existing volunteer networks, third sector partners and community groups to advertise these opportunities and match people quickly to them.
- NWSSP will develop a volunteer ‘passport’ to aid the swift movement of volunteers around Wales.

## Effective deployment

Our workforce has grown substantially in the last few years and this rate of increase is unlikely to be sustainable in the current employment market.  NHS Wales Shared Services Partnerships' employment modernisation programme aims to ensure that recruitment and cross- organisational working across NHS Wales and third sector organisations supports and embraces our ambition for flexible and responsive deployment.

We will deploy all our workforce as effectively and fairly as possible, reduce bureaucracy and make robust financial decisions about deployment of the workforce. We will maximise opportunities to use technology to optimise workforce productive time and minimise short notice rota gaps through efficient and compassionate rostering, job planning and work scheduling systems**.** This, amongst other initiatives, will incentivise substantive employment and Bank working by offering easier access to shifts, faster payments and attractive reward packages.

As new, sustainable service models are developed, some services will need to be regionally planned and delivered. This approach allows for more equitable access to services by patients, for example in diagnostics, ophthalmology and orthopaedics.

NHS organisations are expected to develop a network of regional clinical teams and centres flexibly to meet local demand. For some services, treatment centres or centres of excellence may be the best option, which will provide opportunities for specialised roles and training.

## Effective Deployment – What this Plan will deliver

**By July 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with partners to implement systemic benchmarking with other nations to ensure competitiveness of reward packages.

**By January 2024**

- Welsh Government will work with NHS Wales organisations to develop and implement best practice and compassionate roster management and work scheduling across NHS Wales to enable people to plan their working time in advance and reduce last minute use of Agency shifts.
- NWSSP will develop a 'passport' approach to recruitment and recognition of previous skills/competency attainment to support flexible deployment across NHS Wales organisations.
- NWSSP will roll out a technology enabled All-Wales Collaborative Bank.
- Welsh Government will work with partners to ensure NHS Wales organisations implement HR best practice and effective systems to streamline recruitment and induction processes including DBS checks.

## Educate and train

Over the last eight years, through the work HEIW undertakes in the annual development of the Education and Training Commissioning Plan for Wales we have increased our investment in the education and training of our workforce so that we now have the highest ever number of people training across professional groups ready to join the health and social care workforce.

Work is underway to deliver the Programme for Government commitment to establish a medical school in north Wales, and we anticipate the first cohort of undergraduate medical students will start in September 2024.

We need to ensure that this investment continues to meet the needs of services in Wales and is targeted through robust workforce planning to deliver the services we will need in the future.

Healthcare students apply from all over the world to study in our universities and train in our communities. Many of our healthcare courses top league tables for excellent teaching and student experience. Our talented and dedicated educational supervisors pass on their skills and nurture our future workforce, and students play a valuable role in service delivery and care whilst on placements across Wales. Some undertake paid work providing them with additional valuable experience, and additional workforce capacity for organisations.

We must maximise the benefit of this investment through the employment and retention of newly qualified professionals in health and social care in Wales to deliver a sustainable workforce for the future and to ensure that the routes into education and training are attractive and accessible to our local population and communities.

It is critical that we ensure that students are motivated to stay in Wales and build on their positive Welsh healthcare student experience. We will create ways to retain and welcome those who study in Wales into employment. This will include a range of options to make working in Welsh health and care attractive, appealing and a ‘good’ choice for all. The Welsh Government are supporting HEIW and NHS Wales organisations to review and improve the graduate pipeline into employment in health and care in Wales.

Flexible and up to date training is essential for our workforce to continually develop their skills and be able to adapt to respond to the changing needs of patients and their families. We are committed to ensuring that organisations provide the time and expertise so that their staff can grow and develop.

We have provided £730,000 to HEIW to fund an innovative three-year pilot establishing a Care Home Education Facilitator (CHEF) network in Wales, to help recruit registered nurses to work in care homes.  By exposing student nurses to a wider breadth of high-quality practice placements in social care it is hoped that newly qualified nurses will consider the sector as a career option.

Established as an outcome of the HEIW Care Home Action Plan to facilitate and support student placement experiences within care homes. CHEFs provide opportunities for nursing students to gain better understanding of the personal and healthcare needs of residents living in care home settings which is critical to a wider appreciation of holistic care, inter-professional ways of working, and the fundamental importance of a person-centred approach as set out in *A Healthier Wales.*

## Educate and Train – What this Plan will deliver

### By July 2023

- HEIW will develop a plan to design and deliver top up training to enhance specific skills to enable staff to undertake roles where there are urgent capacity gaps and where it is appropriate.
- HEIW will ensure that foundation pharmacists are provided with multisector training across primary and secondary care and implement a post-foundation programme enabling all pharmacists to become independent prescribers.
- HEIW will review policy developments and intended changes in ways of working to inform the education and training commission plan for 24/25.

### By September 2023

- Welsh Government will receive an evaluation from HEIW of the impact and benefits of the CHEF pilot to inform next steps.
- HEIW will commission a piece of analysis to understand the career decisions of Welsh healthcare graduates.

### By September 2024

- HEIW will have developed a clear strategy for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) across professional and occupational groups, increasing interprofessional learning and the specific needs of different roles as a commitment in through the Staff Welfare Project delivered in social partnership.
- Welsh Government will have worked with HEIW to secure additional places for dental therapy training.

# Retain our Workforce: Engage, Support and Develop

## Retain our existing workforce

Many factors contribute to our workforce choosing to continue working within the health and care system, these are wide and far ranging from terms and conditions through to the facilities in which they work. Taking a holistic approach to retention of our existing workforce is essential. Through the Staff Welfare Project, we have committed in partnership to get the basics right, for example, ensuring that staff are hydrated and well looked after at work. This builds on the embedding of compassionate leadership and the investment in health and wellbeing to ensure that the core needs of staff are met and are an integral part of organisational planning.

We also know that there are career points where people are more likely to leave health and care roles and we can target these points to reduce attrition, turnover and vacancies. Newly qualified people are more likely to be retained if they are supported to have a good start in their professional career. We know comprehensive and targeted induction or preceptorship provides the support and are a proven way to encourage people to achieve their most effective performance in a new role and to help them feel valued and so stay in the workforce when followed up with career spanning support.

Retention is also based on opportunities to use skills and develop expertise. We therefore also need be creative about ways to retain our more experienced workforce who may be considering ways to achieve a better work life balance or wish to pursue a portfolio career to include a mix of clinical, educational, research and leadership roles in all sectors.

Traditional job roles and employment models need to be modernised to be targeted on different life and career stages where people may wish to take a partial step back from work rather than leave the workforce altogether. We need to support all staff with flexible work options that build around their other commitments or life events, for example staff who have caring responsibilities or those considering retirement. We must provide competitive total reward packages to enable people to develop their skills and careers in fulfilling and meaningful way.

## Retain our existing workforce – What this Plan will deliver

**By April 2023**

- HEIW will deliver a nurse retention plan as part the work being completed on a strategic nursing workforce plan This will draw on findings of the RCN report Retaining Nurses in the Workforce: What Matters?
- Welsh Government will work with partners to deliver a nurse preceptorship scheme to support newly qualified nurses and use the model to develop similar schemes across other professional groups.

**By July 2023**

- NHS Employers will lead a piece of work to explore improving return to practice routes including retire and return.
- Welsh Government will work with HEIW to ensure that organisations conduct systematic ‘stay’ interviews to identify solutions that may encourage people to stay, and 'exit’ interviews if they leave. Use the intelligence from these to understand the turnover in our workforce and continue to develop our employment offer to support retention.
- HEIW will work with NHS organisations to develop a plan to embed our model of health and care joint induction across Wales to ensure a positive induction experience for all staff.
- HEIW will review allied health professions to understand the current position and future needs to deliver our services, resulting in an AHP retention plan.

**By September 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with partners to develop guidance, standards and resources to facilitate NHS Wales organisations’ ability to offer more attractive flexible working options and patterns to support staff.

## Attractive total reward package

Since 2015-16, the total pay bill has increased by 53% and at £5,028bn (2021-22) represents 58% of net operating costs for NHS Wales. Without increased funding from the UK Government our freedom to fully match the pay aspirations of our workforce is constrained but we are committed to working in social partnership with our workforce to achieve the best total reward package that we are able to deliver.

This year approximately 6% of the total NHS Wales pay bill will be spent on agency workers, totalling some £318m, and important work is underway to reduce agency use and spend. It is not the case that the total spend on agency could be saved because a significant proportion would go towards paying people who would be in work on a non-agency basis. But incentivising a move from agency working into Bank or substantive NHS employment enables us to save the elements of this expenditure which covers VAT charges and profit elements.

Whilst we are committed to recruiting and filling substantive vacancies, we will always have times when we need to bring in additional staffing capacity and we are keen to draw on the expertise of our own workforce where they are prepared to work additional hours and when we are sure this will not compromise their wellbeing. In order to achieve the best terms and conditions for our workforce and the best value for the Welsh pound we are keen to incentivise substantive employment within the health and care system and delivery of additional hours via an attractive offer through our in-house staff banks.

Total packages are wider than just pay, we will also seek to understand the wider benefits that would retain staff, including development opportunities, supervision and support, role breadth, job planning, workload and working relationships, in line with the principles of compassionate leadership.

## Attractive total reward package– What this Plan will deliver

**By July 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with partners to standardise additional hours pay rates for both secondary care and primary care to ensure they are attractive to the workforce and sustainable to the organisations.
- Welsh Government will work with partners to introduce a refreshed control framework to ensure staff agency spend is reduced to maximise value for money.
- Welsh Government will work with partners to deliver on the staff welfare project in social partnership to enhance staff wellbeing, working conditions and learning and development opportunities.
- Welsh Government will work with partners to commission research into wider benefits being utilised elsewhere that attract and retain staff.
- Welsh Government will work with NWSSP and NHS Wales organisations to roll out an All-Wales Collaborative Bank.

## Strong social partnership

We have well developed and strong social partnership structures and relationships between government, employers and unions. We remain committed to building engagement through social partnership as we deliver the workforce solutions that we need to deliver health and care services for the future. This will enable active engagement and co-design of the solutions to the challenges we will face in the next few years, drawing on a wide range of perspectives as we develop new ways of working as individuals and across teams and organisations, as well as to facilitate progress on delivery. We will maintain and strengthen our national and local social partnership mechanisms and relationships and will build stronger links between our national and local structures to ensure that national agreements are implemented consistently across Wales in the spirit of partnership and mutual respect in which they were agreed.

### Strong Social Partnership- What this Plan will deliver

**By July 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with partners to develop and issue national guidance and training and development materials to support integrated social partnership in line with the Social Partnership Act. This covers issues such as facility time.
- Welsh Government will work with partners to co-produce an agreed partnership work programme to deliver in key areas of the workforce implementation plan in line with NHS core principles – particularly benefiting staff recruitment and retention.

## Valuing and including everyone

The pandemic highlighted and magnified unacceptable inequalities across Wales. We must make the health system a place where everyone can bring their whole selves to access services or to work without fear of any form of discrimination or bullying and harassment. We expect that our organisations act as an exemplar employer and our workforce has developed the cultural competencies and inclusive behaviours needed to meet our ambitions.

During the development of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan we heard how Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff in NHS Wales experience both covert and overt racism and are disproportionately affected by disciplinary procedures. The Equality and Human Rights Commission report published this year highlighted how lower paid ethnic minority health and social care staff experienced different treatment to White colleagues, lacked awareness of their rights and feared reporting concerns or making complaints about working conditions. The Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan outlines the expectation of taking collective responsibility and committing to lead the systemic shift we need to see to eradicate racism and, in the same respect, all forms of discrimination in NHS Wales.

We have a vibrant and committed NHS Wales Equality and Diversity network in Wales and we will support them to deliver at all levels across our organisations, embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as everyone's business, supported by empowered Board Champions.

## Valuing and including everyone- What this Plan will deliver

**By July 2023**

- NHS Employers will work with partners to deliver and promote a new Speaking up Safely framework to raise the confidence of our workforce of their right and ability to speak out about any concerns about unfair treatment in the workplace.
- Welsh Government will work with partners to implement the workforce actions in the final LGBTQ+ plan.

**By September 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with partners to implement recommendations and findings of the independent audit of all-Wales NHS workforce policies and procedures to ensure anti-racist principles are embedded in core practice.
- Welsh Government will work with partners to introduce a Workforce Race Equality Standard across health and social care to provide an evidence base to make and measure targeted structural change.

**By January 2024**

- NHS Employers will work with partners to implement systemic monitoring of concerns of workforce discrimination and bullying raised by NHS Wales staff ensuring accurate capture of protected characteristics.
- Welsh Government will work with partners to implement a plan to ensure broader employment opportunities in NHS Wales supporting the aims of **Stronger, fairer, greener Wales: a plan for employability and skills** and acting as a key player in our Foundational Economy.

**By September 2024**

- Welsh Government will work with partners to embed the social model of disability across all-Wales NHS workforce policies, recruitment and employment practice.

## Welsh language

In Wales, over 100,000 staff are employed by the NHS, by far the largest employer in Wales. There is therefore a huge opportunity for NHS organisations to become exemplars in providing proactive Welsh language services, enabling effective and person-centred communication and care, at a time when patients and their families are at their most vulnerable. Supporting and developing the Welsh language skills of the current and future workforce is a key theme in the refreshed More Than Just Words framework, that sets out an ambitious five-year plan to embed a cultural change to mainstream the Welsh language and provide all staff with the opportunity to develop their Welsh skills to benefit patients and their families. This will also contribute to the Welsh Government's ambition to increase Welsh language use and the number of Welsh speakers by 2050.

**By September 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with NHS Wales Organisations to agree a national framework for the collection and collation of data on the language skills of all staff working in health and social care in Wales.
- Welsh Government will work with NHS organisations to ensure delivery on the actions identified in More Than Just Words.
- Welsh Government will support HEIW to work with NHS Wales organisations to identify workforce skills gaps in key areas and develop plans to address them, with a focus on those with Welsh language skills but lack confidence to use them.
- HEIW will produce a Welsh language 'awareness 'course which will explain how important Cymraeg is in service delivery and as a patient need and will work with NHS Wales organisations to ensure mandatory completion.

## Investing in Health and Wellbeing

Workforce wellbeing is a key thread throughout 'A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care Workforce'. Having a healthy and engaged workforce working to their full potential is the only way that we can reach our ambitious plans for NHS recovery and achieve the best care for people of Wales. Taking a proactive and preventative approach to enable people to maintain their own health and wellbeing will contribute to the retention of our existing workforce which is essential in the very competitive international and local labour markets.

In their 2021 report, Audit Wales praised the way in which NHS organisations enhanced their staff wellbeing offer during the pandemic, noted the positive benefits both for the workforce and also the very strong evidence that a well engaged workforce has measurable positive benefits for the quality of service provided and the outcomes for the population. The report also recognised the economic and organisational cost poor staff wellbeing. The International Public Policy Observatory estimate that the financial cost to the NHS in England of poor wellbeing at £12.1 billion a year, and that around £1 billion could be saved by successfully tackling this

issue. This modelling illustrates the significant benefits that could be achieved in NHS Wales by taking positive action to protect and promote staff well-being.

We made a very significant investment in our workforce health and wellbeing during the pandemic, and we acknowledge the substantial adverse effect that the pandemic has had on our workforce. As the longer-term effects come to light, we remain committed to supporting health and wellbeing and to continue to respond and work with social partners to put in place tools to complement that which is offered locally by organisations. We are committed to ensuring that staff can access proactive, high-quality support at the time they need it most. We know that it is best for service delivery, for individuals and their colleagues if we take a proactive approach to avoid people being absent from work wherever possible and enable a rapid return to work where people have been absent.

### Investing in Health and Wellbeing - What this Plan will deliver

**By June 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with partners to develop costed proposals to provide equitable and sustainable occupational health model of provision underpinned by a well -supported a pipeline of OH workforce.
- NHS Employers will work in social partnership to implement proactive policies which enable individuals and their line managers to take a flexible and responsive approach to managing attendance at work.
- HEIW will require NHS organisations to review results of the NHS Wales Staff survey and assess how systems, policies and procedures can positively contribute to workforce health and wellbeing.

**By September 2023**

- Welsh Government will roll out an individualised Workforce Wellbeing Conversation Guide based on data from pilot to proactively understand and address workforce needs.

## Leadership, compassionate and collective approaches

A significant body of research demonstrates that health and care organisations that practice and embed compassionate and collective leadership have a more engaged workforce which in turn leads to better health outcomes for people. Compassionate leadership will be critical at all levels and across all professional groups if we are to effectively refocus, develop and redesign our NHS services for the future, to retain our workforce and to engage and involve them to develop new solutions, manage change and deliver effective experiences for people using services and quality improvement.

In line with the Workforce Strategy, HEIW and Social Care Wales have developed a set of Compassionate Leadership Principles and a compassionate leadership behaviour compass to provide a route map for creating compassionate leaders and compassionate cultures across health and care. These underpin all of the national leadership development programmes that have been developed by HEIW over the last 3 years, supported by other resources, masters level modules, workshops, masterclasses and podcasts which are all available through the Gwella Leadership Portal.

The Gwella Leadership Portal gives open access to credible compassionate leadership offerings and resources, and has received half a million hits to date, has over 3,000 registered users and hosts dozens of vibrant leaderships networks and communities of practice helping to create a compassionate leadership social movement.

Individual organisations will also build on this material to contextualise the national offer to gain traction in their own organisations and develop bespoke approaches where required. HEIW have developed a number of approaches to identifying a 'talent pipeline' of those who aspire to senior leadership roles across the NHS and have the skills and experience to move into these roles in the future. Opportunities such as the 'Talentbury' events have supported those identified for progression across Wales with development resources, personalised support and an alumni network.

Since 2011, Welsh Government have invested in the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Leadership Programme, providing aspirational GPs committed to change with the opportunity to develop their clinical leadership skills. Paused due to the pandemic, the Programme will be reinstated in 2023 to develop a new cohort of primary care leaders.

It will be critical to equip all our line managers with the skills and capabilities, plus a range of tools and techniques to support the development of leadership at all levels. We will need to ensure that all our line management approaches support the wellbeing of our workforce and embed the practice of compassionate leadership in a tangible way that makes a difference to our workforce day to day.

We will also develop and support line managers and the wider workforce across the professions to build skills and capabilities and take a proactive and preventative

approach to issues that arise in the workplace.  This is a key part of both ensuring our workplaces are fair and also underpins our Quality Strategy.

The introduction of *Healthier Working Relationships* as an overarching cultural development to move to more compassionate, collective, healthier and fairer behaviours, work and workplaces, signalled a significant change in our approach to workplace relationships in the NHS in recognition that where relationships are not valued, it harms care. We will monitor and evaluate this collective commitment to continue to embed a culture of respect, fairness and understanding in the NHS in Wales.

## Leadership, compassionate and collective approaches – what this Plan will deliver

**By July 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with partners to ensure compassionate leadership is embedded in policies and practice.

**By September 2023**

- HEIW will use data from NHS Wales Staff Survey results to underpin workforce culture transformation actions.
- NHS organisations will deliver priorities identified by the Healthier Working Relationships social partnership group.

## Embedding Improvement, Change and Quality management skills and techniques

As we need to transform our workforce teams and the delivery of our services, we need to ensure that people from all backgrounds, at all levels, in our organisations are equipped with the best practice tools and techniques to enable them to take forward improvement in their own their team, organisation or nationally.  Drawing on our NHS Quality and Safety Framework and the expertise we have developed with Improvement Cymru we must emphasise that quality is everyone's business and needs a multi-disciplinary approach at both a local and national level. This concept needs to be embedded within the culture of our workforce, understanding and improving the quality of care we provide.

# Plan for the Future

### Workforce shape and supply

We need a clear and close to real time understanding of our workforce and the dynamic flow of people in and out of organisations, both at local and national levels. We must then be able to turn that data into effective intelligence to inform decision making locally within NHS organisations and nationally.

Our workforce pay bill currently runs at some 58% of the total budget of the NHS in Wales and so improved workforce data will also support enhanced use of resources across the system building on value-based analysis of the most effective clinical pathways and the optimised workforce models that support them.

Workforce data is vitally important not only for planning purposes but also to inform education commissioning for the whole system, so that we educate sufficient staff.

### Improve workforce data

Robust understanding of our data is essential to underpin both operational planning and delivery of services as well as management of contingencies and risk during times when the system is under pressure. This clear understanding of the dynamics of our workforce is also required to underpin effective long-term planning for the future needs of the workforce when combined with the impact of population health and demographics on demand and capacity for services.

## Build capacity and capability in workforce planning using standardised methodology

HEIW have produced workforce planning toolkit for NHS organisations to adopt as they plan their workforce and there is an active network of NHS workforce planners who have been sharing approaches and methodologies to further develop their planning approaches. We will develop this toolkit and the learning from its implementation to develop tools underpinned by what we know about the impact population health and demographics to plan our future workforce needs to underpin wider workforce plans.

## Workforce Shape and Supply, Data and Planning - What the Plan will deliver-

**By June 2023**

- Welsh Government will publish NHS Wales vacancy data for the directly employed workforce.

**By September 2023**

- Welsh Government will review with NHS organisations, the approach to collection of workforce data and its robustness and ensure that this data provides an accurate and consistent basis for understanding our workforce and decision making across Wales.
- Based on the data review, Welsh Government will establish a timetable for the publication of a national workforce dashboard to bring transparency the progress and priorities across the workforce in Wales.
- HEIW will work with partners to improve the quality, availability and access to workforce data, and will develop a national workforce data methodology and model to assess workforce supply and demand.

- HEIW will review and evaluate progress on current workforce planning priorities as identified in the table on page 6.
- Welsh Government will work with partners to set priorities for future profession specific workforce plans in addition to those listed in the table on page 6.
- Welsh Government will work with HEIW and SCW to devise an approach to a long-term workforce plan for health and care.

## Seamless workforce models and Whole Person Care

'A Healthier Wales' is clear that we want to deliver care at home or as close to home as possible and provide this care through the principle of 'the team around the patient'. This requires us to shift services from secondary care to more local settings and work across traditional professional and organisational boundaries to deliver high quality seamless care, making the most of everyone's skills and delivers our services in different ways using new roles and approaches. For example, we are committed to developing community-based prehabilitation and rehabilitation models,

direct access to therapy and treatment and implementing nationally agreed models of hearing health care, including direct access to audiology services.

The NHS and local authorities are currently working together on a Community Care Capacity Building programme which is increasing the number of ‘step down to recover’ beds or community care equivalent as part of the patient pathway. These measures aim to meet the needs of people in the community and aid the flow of patients through hospitals. This will increase the need for skilled rehabilitation and reablement staff in both health and social care.

The Allied Health Professional Framework sets out clear aims for the transformation of services, including shifting AHPs to work in directly accessible primary and community services.

This also gives us the opportunity to explore the development of new roles and professions, for example, Physicians Associates, Anaesthetic Associates and Specialist Doctors flowing from the revised Speciality and Specialist Doctors (SAS) contract. This must be a considered and coordinated process with a full impact assessment with appropriate education, supervision infrastructure and guidance for employers in place.

The Finance Delivery Unit has a range of detailed value-based analyses of the variation in delivery across different clinical procedures and clinical pathways. Analysis and benchmarking of the workforce models that underpin the most effective processes and pathways combined with an understanding of the limits to professional licenses will provide us with rich information about how we might redesign and optimise workforce models using new roles and top of license practice and how sharing and adoption of these proven models could lead to more consistent and effective delivery across Wales.

We know that we have high levels of long-term ill-health, an ageing population and that services are reporting higher levels of complex need. Data from 2019 suggests more than 16% of people take five or more medicines and more than 7.5% take eight or more. By the age of 80, more than a third of all people are on eight or more medicines.[1]

Our services and workforce will need to respond in different ways to support people with such complex requirements. Our policy direction is clear and provides the potential solutions to enable health and care in Wales to meet these changes. Our workforce will need to work differently and in different locations, with more direct access to the right professionals, service, or treatment if we are to deliver the quality-of-care outcomes needed. Actions to meet this changed need will include improvements in seamless working, greater joint roles and services with staff from partner organisations working alongside each other. We will need to ensure care pathways focus on meeting the needs of the person, rather than specialist separate responses which may not resolve the actual needs of the service user. A thorough review of skill mix, and roles would help ensure the right workforce is available to meet the complex needs of this growing cohort of people using health and care services.

The AHP Framework identifies the need for transformation of AHP workforce to provide far more preventative, early intervention. It also states clearly the need to increase community-based rehabilitation and reablement to both prevent people needing long term care, including hospital admission, and to maximise people's recovery and ability to live as independently as possible for as long as possible (A Healthier Wales 2018).

### Seamless workforce models and Whole Person Care – What this Plan will deliver

**By April 2023**

- Welsh Government will initiate scoping work to inform the development of policy on the Band 4 roles in support of the nursing workforce, including a policy position on Band 4 registrant roles.
- Welsh Government will work with NWSSP to establish an all-Wales steering group to oversee the transformation programme required to replace the current Electronic Staff Record [ESR] across NHS Wales organisations.

**By September 2023**

- Welsh Government will work with partners to develop clear workforce models to ensure new professional roles are fully used to maximise capacity.
- Welsh Government will work with HEIW to develop roles and models for deployment of support staff to enable clinical staff to focus on their core professional duties.
- Welsh Government will consider how the National Clinical Frameworks can be used to adopt and embed proven optimised workforce models that underpin the most effective clinical pathways.
- Welsh Government will commission technology solutions to maximise Once for Wales intelligence-led demand and capacity modelling to enable this intelligence to underpin the design of multi-disciplinary team working and workforce modelling.
- HEIW will assess impact of new multi professional team models on implementation of the Nurse Staffing Act.
- HEIW will use the AHP workforce guidance to organise how AHPs work in integrated services, maximising their impact, wellbeing and professional governance and skill mix.

### Digitally ready and enabled workforce

Digital, data, and technology are crucial enablers to deliver better and more compassionate care for the people of Wales. Throughout the pandemic, digital solutions were rapidly deployed to maintain and deliver new services, and, according to the 2021 NHS Wales Covid 19 Innovation and Transformation Study Report, the workforce embraced changes and innovations. It is imperative that we look to maximise the benefits from digital investment and prioritise digital solutions which will have the greatest impact in providing our care professionals secure access to standardised, quality data and information at the right time to support decision making.

Workforce was a key theme noted within and there are many examples of good practice:

- Work was done in partnership to deliver a combined NHS COVID-19 App for England & Wales and built a Welsh Pandemic Record which held real-time data to inform clinical and policy decisions.
- Attend Anywhere is included as a case study in this report, this involved the provision of digital/video consultations and has subsequently been both scaled across the system and rigorously evaluated. Benefits and savings show a reduction in time to delivery and receive care, reduction in travel time for both patients and workforce. Through the work of the newly established Technology Enabled Care Centre in Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW), Telecare, Telehealth and Video Consultation initiatives across Wales will be identified for national upscale. This central hub for all service providers will help foster joined up working, sharing of good practice and collaboration for all telecare related activity for the whole of Wales.

Leveraging the power of digital and data requires not only implementing new solutions – such as telemedicine or Artificial Intelligence (AI) based diagnostic software. Our staff must also get the best out of those digital services. We will ensure that we support our workforce through digital literacy and make digital services easier to use, informed by user design. In addition to providing training and support, we will utilise Centres of Excellence (COE) to grow our capability, skills base, and expertise, following the example of the NHS Wales Microsoft 365 Centre of Excellence.

HEIW are finalising their digital capabilities framework and establishing the “Building a digitally ready workforce programme” to increase digital capability throughout our workforce, enabling them to work and learn using appropriate technology and digitally enabled ways of delivering health and care services.

The uptake and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is increasing and developing and sustaining specialist AI-related skills will require appropriate education, accreditation, and career pathways. Work has already begun in Wales to skill map the requirements of Digital, Data and Technology Professions (DDAT) professions, review of health informatics apprenticeships supported by HEIW and a growing strength in digital leadership through AI Special Interest Group for Health, to coordinate AI and Machine Learning work across healthcare in Wales, sharing learning and experiences. Harnessing the power of AI effectively requires a range of skills, and we will develop professionalised job families, career pathways and competence frameworks and build data and digital into leadership roles to take advantage of the opportunities AI offers.

We have a track record of identifying good practice in innovative working and digital solutions in NHS Wales organisations and rolling them out, on a ’Once for Wales’ basis. For example:

- **Welsh Nursing Care Record (WNCR)** has demonstrated enhanced efficiency, value, and timeliness of care as well as improvements to patient

safety, experience and outcomes. It allows patient information to be recorded stored and accessed electronically saving time for nurses and improving team working.

- **Electronic test requesting** for radiology, already live in the Royal Glamorgan Hospital, shortens waits for diagnostics imaging and removes risks of lost paper requests and improves understanding of demand management. System is ready for roll out across Wales and will enable cross-LHB border requesting.
- **Respiratory Innovation Wales** ran 10-week COPD virtual clinics with patients simultaneously in Tregaron, Carmarthen and Llanelli, this not only saved clinician and nursing time but also saved patients 6500 miles of travelling, many of whom wouldn't have travelled and received the treatment.
- **Digital Maternity Record** – a single record for the whole of Wales will allow all the various medical professionals involved to share vital information more quickly, reduce bureaucracy and duplication, freeing up more time for midwives to focus on people and allow patients to have more control over their information.
- **Welsh Community Care Information Service** will be a single system and will share electronic records across Local Authorities and Health Boards in Wales to integrate Health and social Care services and free up time for the workforce by reducing the administrative burden for the workforce.
- **WAST electronic patient clinical record** is a £2.5m investment rolled out to all Welsh ambulances to provide the workforce with a more efficient way of recording patient clinical details, improving the care that they are able to provide and minimising handover times. Enhancements to this programme will extend access to first responders and other groups involved in emergency patient care.

## Digitally ready and enabled workforce - what this Plan will deliver

**By July 2023**

- Welsh Government will develop a 'Think digital' approach to the delivery of services and their redesign to most effectively use clinician input and improve care in value-based approaches.
- Welsh Government will support the further implementation of the WNCR and work to expand to maternity and children.
- Welsh Government with partners will identify priority digital solutions to deploy to reduce burden on workload including/ through the national data resource programme
- Welsh Government with partners will identify a process that will ensure systematic implementation of 'Once for Wales' effective and innovative digital approaches which reduce workforce pressure.