



**GIG**  
CYMRU  
**NHS**  
WALES

Addysg a Gwella Iechyd  
Cymru (AaGIC)  
Health Education and  
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

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# A Strategic Framework for NHS Wales Careers

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# 1. Overview

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) is a Special Health Authority. It is the statutory education body and strategic workforce organisation for the NHS in Wales. Our vision is to develop a workforce that improves care and population health.

As part of the NHS, we work with colleagues across Wales and beyond, to plan, develop, educate, and train the current and future workforce, and we identify and lead on strategic and specialist workforce opportunities as well as addressing risks which affect workforce demand and supply.

The work that we do, affects everybody who works in health and social care in Wales, and ultimately the people who use our health services.

By developing a sustainable workforce for the future, we make a fundamental contribution to the implementation of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the five ways of working.

We want to attract people to roles in our health services and create a sustainable workforce for the future and are widening access to health careers and opportunities.

This framework outlines the principles of how we in HEIW, will lead the health careers attraction agenda, identify priorities, set direction and standards for health careers attraction, and how we will work with our partners and key stakeholders, with whom we engaged to shape this framework.

## 2. The themes of this strategic Framework

Four themes provide the overarching architecture of this Strategic Framework. These were developed in response to the findings which emerged from our research and analysis which underpinned this work, and input and responses from partners through our stakeholder engagement:

1. excellent, accessible, inclusive, age-appropriate approaches, information, and resources
2. meaningful and inspiring work-related experiences across NHS Wales
3. access to expert support and guidance including through ambassadors and mentors
4. maximising opportunities for digital and technological approaches.

We will continue to work collaboratively, with our partners and stakeholders, so that collectively, we will deliver our plans and opportunities, making sure they are accessible to all.



### 3. Why we are taking this approach

NHS Wales is the largest employer in Wales, with more than 100,000 staff working across more than 350 different roles offering huge opportunity for exciting and rewarding careers.

However, many of these roles, and how people can get into them are not well enough known. Alongside this, the way people want to work and study is rapidly changing – with more flexible approaches being desired.

Another influence on this work is the changing shape of our population. The 2021 Census tells us that Wales has a lower birth rate compared to England and we have a greater number of people aged 50-64, which means that we have growing demand for our health services, and increasingly fewer people in Wales who are able to meet the demand.

However, we have huge opportunities for varied and exciting careers in health, and our aim is to promote these opportunities so that health careers become the career of choice.

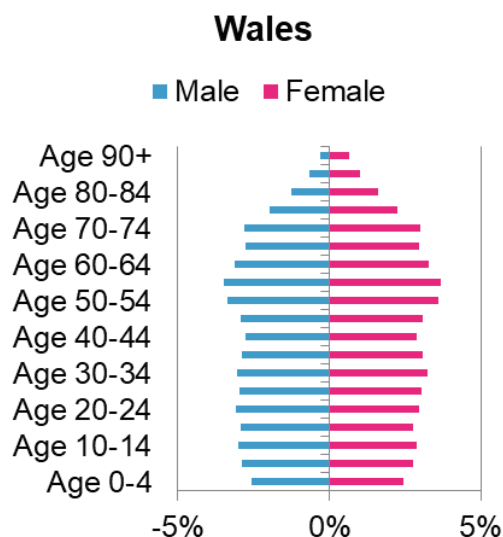
Our work must be relevant to the 5 different generations currently working, or soon to be working in NHS Wales – from the ‘Baby-boomers (those born up to 1965) through to Gen Alpha (born from 2010).

Each group has different expectations for their careers, so we need to ensure clear, innovative, and varied approaches are available to attract people to our careers offerings which will help them make informed choices about their future.

However, we are not doing this in isolation. In developing this strategic framework, we researched best practice, analysed a range of data and engaged with key partners and stakeholders to understand the situation better.

We collated a range of feedback and views to help us identify what was good that we could build on, where there were perceived gaps, and how best we could address them.

This work informed this framework, which has four strategic pillars - the high-level themes which are described in more detail later in this document - that we will use to deliver our actions up to 2030.



## HEIW's role in this arena

The careers landscape is complex, with many organisations and professional bodies having a remit for careers and therefore an influence on our work.

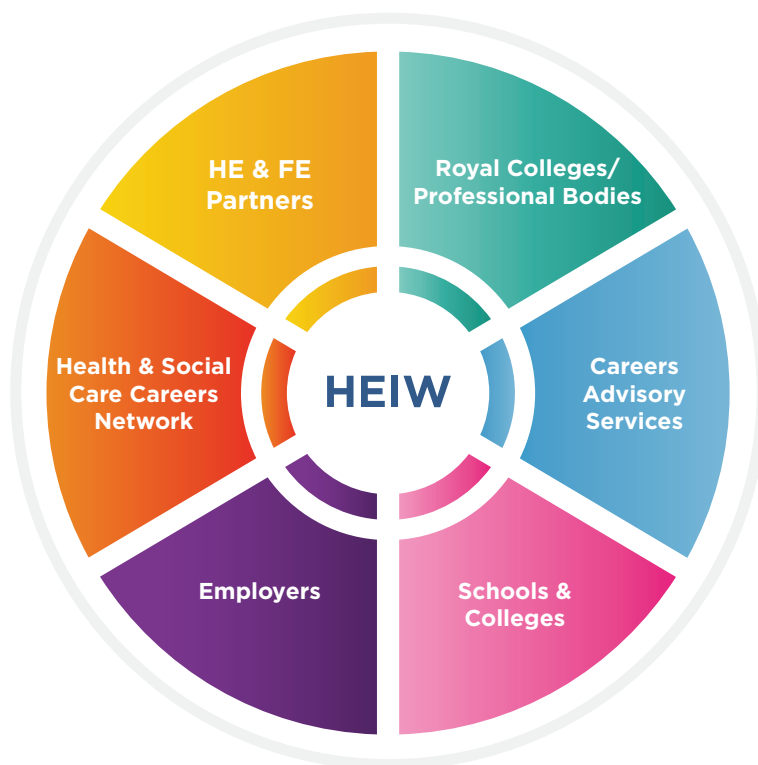
HEIW's statutory responsibility is to lead the careers agenda for NHS Wales. Our approach in developing this framework ensured that our work was centred on the people we are trying to reach and led us to developing the 4 overarching themes on which to frame our work.

## How we will work with others

As the lead for health careers attraction in Wales, we will identify priorities and set the direction and standards for information and approaches relating to health careers.

We will actively connect and work with colleagues and partner organisations to deliver these so that collectively we maximise our individual contributions.





### Employers

Employers have a critical role to provide opportunities for people to spend time in the working environment. We will work with them and support with resources and toolkits to help them provide exciting, and modern opportunities.

### Careers Advisory Services

We will support advisors with resources so that they are assured that they are providing accurate information, support and guidance to help people make the right choices for them.

### Schools and Colleges

We will connect the NHS and education, supporting teachers and lecturers by providing resources, information, access to ambassadors and work experiences.

### HE/FE Education Partners

We will work with further and higher education partners, to create inspiring opportunities through education and training provision, including simulation experiences linked to curricula and standards.

### Royal Colleges/Professional Bodies

We will work in partnership to share intelligence, and to help design, shape and define the future attraction offer.

### Health and Social Care Careers Network

Our thriving network is where our partners will come together to progress this framework. We will use this network to continually engage with our partners, share good practice, celebrate achievements, and identify improvement opportunities.

## 4. The four themes



**Excellent, accessible, inclusive, age-appropriate approaches, information, and resources.**



**Maximising opportunities for digital and technological approaches.**



**Access to expert support and guidance including through ambassadors and mentors.**



**Meaningful and inspiring work-related experiences across NHS Wales.**

# Theme one:

Excellent, accessible, inclusive, age-appropriate approaches, information, and resources.

### Why we are doing this:

In developing this work, we heard that careers information can be of variable quality and sometimes overwhelming.

Our stakeholders told us that, HEIW was seen as the go-to trusted partner, for health careers. This is important because easily accessible reliable and trusted resources, ideally from a small number of sources is key to their work.

We heard that our future workforce needs to have clear, age-appropriate, and relevant information so they can find out about the huge number of careers in the NHS, which are available and how they can access them.

The professionals who advise on careers told us that having access to high quality information developed by experts in healthcare to inform their approaches with their pupils, students and clients was very important them.

### What we want to achieve:

- people of all ages can easily find accurate, trusted, information and resources about NHS Wales careers
- Careersville/Tregyrfa (for children and young people), and the NHS Wales Careers web pages (for young people and adults) are the main source of information for NHS Wales Careers
- all roles are promoted, and we are reaching out to all parts of the community
- close working with partners (e.g., Education, Careers Wales), means our collective impact is maximised

- the status and standards of careers information is raised through our work with schools and colleges
- our work is attracting older adults who may be seeking a career enhancement or new opportunities
- practical and informative health careers content is supporting delivery of the education curriculum.

### What we will do:

- promote the roles and opportunities available with age-appropriate, accessible, and inclusive material that meets the needs of different age ranges, and backgrounds, across a variety of media and events
- provide comprehensive careers attraction and marketing campaigns, specifically aimed at children and young people
- develop careers campaigns and resources aimed at adult career and job seekers
- reach out to people in our communities that have skills and experience, so that we help and support people who may be thinking of a change in career and direction
- target specific shortage professions, so that we support NHS priorities, and strategic workforce plans
- reinforce the NHS reputation as an excellent place to work with many opportunities and life-long career development.

# Theme two:

Meaningful and inspiring  
work-related experiences  
across NHS Wales.

### Why we are doing this:

We heard that since Covid-19, work experience opportunities in many areas has been limited, particularly for school-aged learners.

The demands on the curriculum, coupled with difficulties in accessing work-related experience, means that we need to take a different approach.

Providing inspiring opportunities and real experiences of job roles is vital in attracting and raising the understanding of what work in health and social care can be like.

Our work will encompass school and college learners, as well as adults who are seeking more insight into their future careers.

This is because our prospective future workforce needs to understand about work and the skills, values and behaviours that are valued in the workplace

### What we want to achieve:

- work experience in healthcare is relevant and of high quality
- building on the good practice already in place, our work experience is transferrable and recognised when applying for future studies and jobs in Wales
- our guides, information and resources help employers plan and deliver meaningful experiences which can range from 1-day taster experiences for school pupils, through to longer internship approaches, and back to work schemes
- a range of work experience models, suitable and tailored to the career will assist people to make informed decisions

### What we will do:

- work with employers, schools, colleges, and universities to build on current good practice, and create a good practice framework
- create a suite of targeted, inclusive, and accessible toolkits for adults, children, and young people, with supporting resources to promote consistent standards and improve attraction and engagement with people from under-represented communities
- work with employers to increase the availability of inspiring and inclusive work-related opportunities
- provide innovative approaches targeted at specific age ranges, to help the future workforce understand the full range of opportunities available to them and gain first-hand experience of the workplace
- seek opportunities where work-related experience can be recognised and count towards qualifications, and applications to both work and study
- gain a better understanding of current provision, as well as where and why there are gaps. This will inform our improvement and our work with employers and partners.

# Theme three:

Access to expert support and guidance through ambassadors and mentors.

### Why we are doing this:

We want our workforce to be representative of our population, and we know that there are misconceptions about some roles in health.

Our engagement highlighted the importance of hearing first-hand experience, and many suggested the development of workplace ambassadors, who could give a personal perspective on what it is like to learn, train and work in healthcare in Wales.

We also heard that access to relevant experts for those who provide careers advice will enhance the quality of their work and increase confidence in delivering the right information.

As careers is now embedded into the curriculum, there is an additional opportunity to link healthcare careers across the curriculum.

Good quality work experience, supported by a range of resources to ensure the experience is of value to both the individual and host employer, will help widen career opportunities.

### What we want to achieve:

- a network of healthcare ambassadors will showcase the diversity of our people, and the role they undertake
- by ambassadors sharing their personal experiences and expertise, there are increased ways in which our future workforce gains first-hand knowledge of the opportunities open to them
- people are able to gain insight into the work of specific professions and roles, helping them to make more informed choices about their future
- professional careers advisors, whose role is to guide young people and adults, will be supported to deliver their work through access to NHS Wales ambassadors.

### What we will do:

- seek and support NHS staff to become career ambassadors, who will be able to share their personal experiences, and promote opportunities for those who wish to learn, train and work in NHS Wales
- create a community of practice to support professional careers advisors including teachers who provide careers advice, and enable sharing of practice, information, and opportunities.

# Theme four:

Maximise opportunities for digital and technological approaches.

### Why we are doing this:

We know that digital and gaming technology is becoming more accessible, and we heard that where possible we need to provide accessible careers advice and information in this way.

Giving opportunity for people to 'have a go' using simulation experiences and 'hands on' practice will enhance understanding of careers.

We need to target and effectively engage specific groups through digital activities and gamification.

The way we deliver healthcare is rapidly changing, and we must keep up to date with these advances and changing career opportunities. However, we are also mindful that this is dependent on access to available resources.

### What we want to achieve:

- our work is constantly evolving to meet the needs of our communities and audiences
- we are capitalising on the skills and resources of partners to jointly create excellent 'real-life' opportunities
- people of all ages can try out specific skills in a range of areas to inform their future choices.

### What we will do:

- continue to expand Careersville/Tregyrfa to provide accurate, clear, and up to date careers information and advice to our children and young people
- further develop our information and resources which are accessible on our web and social media platforms so that they are effectively targeting adults
- together, our suite of digital platforms will continually improve and be the primary source of reliable and trusted information for both our future workforce and our partners
- in the longer term, we will seek opportunities to develop digital and non-digital simulation scenarios, and to create meaningful experiences through gamification, virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI).

## 5. The Duty of Quality

The Duty of Quality has come into force since we started developing this strategic framework.

We are confident that the actions outlined will make a positive contribution towards this duty across the system.

Ensuring we have an engaged, motivated, capable flexible and sustainable workforce in sufficient numbers is key to improve quality, safety, and patient experience, underpinned by the right leadership and culture.

### What will be different:

- people of every age are easily able to find robust, accurate, trusted, up to date information and resources
- 350+ roles, entry routes, career opportunities and pathways are understood, and people are attracted to careers in NHS Wales as the career of choice
- future students and trainees are well prepared for their courses and future roles, prior to entering the training programmes
- our future workforce is from a wide range of backgrounds and traditions
- great partnerships with employers, schools, professional bodies, careers advisors
- further and higher education bodies support delivery of inclusive experiences, trusted advice, and information.



### Core indicators

To help us measure progress and continually improve our work in this area, we will develop a suite of qualitative and quantitative core indicators which will include, but are not limited to:

- use of Careersville, webpages and other key resources – including number of hits on specific pages
- increase in delivery of work-related experiences
- targeted campaign performance
- user-experience feedback e.g. survey of schools/head teachers
- partner and stakeholder feedback
- annual best practice review.

Delivery of this strategic framework will contribute to ensuring we have a motivated and engaged future workforce supply for NHS Wales.

## 6. How we developed this framework

Early in 2023, we commenced our stakeholder engagement with our Health and Care Careers Network, involving with representatives from across health, social care, higher and further education as well as careers advisory bodies.

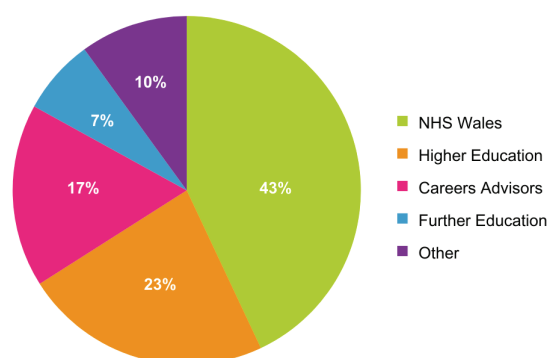
We researched the latest thinking and best practice and examined population trends to help inform our conversations.

During late spring and summer 2023, we held a series of engagement events, where we brought together our research and early engagement feedback, tested our thinking and knowledge to help us shape this work. A summary 'on a page' of this approach is shown on page 4 of this document.

We asked our stakeholders to give us their views on current approaches across the system, how effective they felt they were, where there were opportunities to strengthen good practice, and where there were gaps which needed to be addressed.

### Contributors

Representatives of 32 organisations across Wales actively contributed to our engagement events and their contributions informed this document.



### What we heard

We heard that access to timely, targeted bespoke approaches, supported by high quality and trusted resources was key. Examples of this included delivery of excellent and accessible work experience and work tasters, information, and guidance on education routes as well as job roles, and being able to talk to people in the roles.

We also heard of the need to ensure that careers advisor professionals as well as teachers could access a single point of expertise for health careers.

This has led us to 4 overarching principles. We tested this thinking with these stakeholders, who confirmed that their contributions were accurately reflected in this approach.

## 5. Developing our Careers Strategic Framework - Our approach

### Why this is important

Workforce is not an enabling issue - it's critical to service delivery. There are severe system pressures and significant workforce shortages. We need to:

- be more aligned to service need
- attract workforce for today, 5, 10 and 15+ years ahead
- offer lifelong, continuous learning and development
- have clear, visible, exciting career development pathways
- be better prepare our future students and employees.

This is not all about young people, but 2nd, 3rd and career seekers. Our 2030 Health Professional Graduates are in GCSE years. Our 2030 F1 doctors are now studying for A levels. Our health professional graduates of 2033 are Gen Alpha. We can't do too much, too early!

### Our aim

To inspire, inform and influence individuals of all ages to seek careers in NHS Wales.

### Our timescales

**March - August:** Engage/gather evidence

**July - October:** Analyse and draft

**November - December:** Consult on

**December - February:** Final shaping

**March:** Board approval

**April:** Launch

### What we tested

Timely, targeted bespoke approaches including:

- inspiring pre-work-experience learning
- excellent and accessible work experience tasters
- career pathways for staff
- information, guidance and myth busting
- marketing including TV advertising
- mentoring, secondments and ambassadors
- widening access and WBL
- resources and guides for parents, guardians, teachers and advisors
- digital/technology resources including simulation and virtual reality.

### Our scope

- schools and FE colleges
- advisors and career teachers/tutors
- higher education and university partners
- health and Social Care employers in Wales
- hard to reach future workforce.

### The steps we took

Engaged with internal and external partners and stakeholders to inform and shape the strategy. We curated research and best practice, analysed data - including population trends and generational differences, and produced a strategic framework.

### **Our target cohort**

- school learners, leavers, mature students, graduating students and trainees
- NHS employees
- carers
- people from seldom heard groups
- mature, and those seeking a career change
- volunteers.

### **What implementation success looks like**

People of every age can easily find information and resources and are attracted to careers in NHS Wales. There are clear career progression opportunities with multiple pathways. Our staff represent a wide range of backgrounds and traditions. Potential students are well prepared for the courses and future roles in healthcare, prior to entering the training programmes. Information on 350+ roles is available. Perceptions challenged and aspirations raised. Great partnership with employers, schools, FE and HE to provide great advice, experience and support.



Transforming the workforce for a healthier Wales

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