

Transforming the Workforce for a Healthier Wales



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

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

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Who we are

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) is the statutory education and workforce body for NHS Wales. Established in 2018, we bring together workforce planning, education, and training in a single national organisation to build the skilled, sustainable workforce needed today and for the future.

We are one of 12 statutory bodies in NHS Wales, set up as a Special Health Authority with a unitary Board. Our Chair, pictured right, Dr. Chris Jones CBE, is appointed by the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Social Care and Early Years.



Our purpose

We exist to develop a skilled and sustainable workforce that improves care and population health.

Our work covers

- Planning, commissioning, and delivering education and training.
- Leadership, culture, and succession planning.
- Workforce strategy, planning, and intelligence.
- Workforce development and transformation.
- Attraction, careers, and widening access.
- Professional support for the people profession.

HEIW was set up to deliver workforce impact and improvements that could only be achieved through a national approach, focusing specialist expertise and resource on areas that add value and shift the dial on a sustainable workforce.



Alex Howells, Chief Executive

Approximately 85% of our budget goes directly into education and training, funding today's workforce and building the workforce of the future. In 2026, our budget is £397m.

How we work

We know lasting change happens in partnership. Our approach is:



Person centred

Keeping patients, communities, and staff experience at the heart of everything we do.



Collaborative

Working with NHS organisations, professional bodies, regulators, education providers, Welsh Government and other partners to understand challenges and co-design solutions.



Evidence-led

Using workforce data and intelligence to shape decisions.



Future-focused

Planning for long-term sustainability as well as today's needs



Bilingual

Embedding the Welsh language across our services, training and resources, ensuring staff and learners can access opportunities in both Welsh and English.

Our plans

Our work is guided by the [Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care in Wales](#). Each year, we produce two key plans:

- [Integrated Medium Term Plan](#): Combines transformational objectives, aligned to strategic priorities, with plans to deliver core business effectively, supported by an integrated resource plan.
- [Education and Training Plan 2026 - 2027](#): Agreed commissioning numbers.

Both plans are submitted to, and subject to approval by, Welsh Government. Partners play an integral role in developing and implementing both plans. A Stakeholder Reference Group brings together representatives from the NHS, Welsh Government, academia, professional bodies, and other partners to support collaboration and oversight.



Building the workforce of today and tomorrow

We invest in both the current workforce and the pipeline for the future, ensuring NHS Wales is equipped to meet evolving health and care needs.



Studying nursing in Aberystwyth means I can train locally without leaving my community.



Student Nurse

The expansion into Wrexham is a game-changer for north Wales, ensuring a steady supply of nurses trained in and for our region.



NHS Stakeholder, BCUHB

Key achievements

Commissioned 3,038 pre-registration healthcare professional places (Autumn 2025), achieving an 84% fill rate, sustaining investment in education and training.

Supported post-registration development for 2,153 learners, completing 2,638 modules across 787 courses.

Improved urgent and emergency care learning, with 1,200 views for the Optimising Patient Flow network and 400+ attendees at discharge webinars.

Expanded women's health education through 10 modules and a national hub launch, with ~500 engagements per module in the first month.

Progressed a long-term education strategy to support workforce transformation and improve learner experience.

Launched a national medical education reform programme, including pilots supporting resident and locally employed doctors.

Supporting a thriving workforce

We focus on leadership development and talent management, based on compassionate leadership principles and developing workforce responses and solutions, to create cultures that help staff thrive.

I feel more confident in my leadership skills, particularly compassionate leadership.



Clinical Leadership

Initiatives and impact

Strengthened workforce stability through the All Wales National Retention Programme, reducing overall turnover from 8.1% to 7.5%, voluntary resignations from 4.1% to 3.8%, and nursing turnover from 7.2% to 5.8%.

Strengthened leadership pipelines through development programmes engaging ~300 senior leaders and supporting inclusive leadership approaches.

Gwella leadership portal - attracted almost 10,000 registered users, providing [national leadership resources](#) and [cultural development](#) support.

NHS Wales staff survey gathered insights from 34,645 staff in 2025/26 to inform improvements in wellbeing, leadership, and organisational culture.

Having local Retention Leads has made the difference. Staff feel listened to, and teams are more stable.



Retention Lead



Developing an agile and responsive workforce

We equip staff with new skills to adapt services and improve patient care. By providing flexible, up to date learning opportunities, we ensure staff can respond to changing needs and deliver better outcomes for patients.

Key Initiatives

Rolled out CODI, the integrated digital system, to 10,000+ users to modernise postgraduate workforce management.

Expanded digital learning via Y Tŷ Dysgu to 38,000+ users, delivering 400+ modules and 200 live events.

Delivered 5,651 pharmacy e-learning completions, supporting expanded clinical services including Sore Throat Test and Treat and UTI pathways.

Launched the All-Wales Palliative and End of Life Care Competency Framework aligned to national priorities and positively received nationally.

Advanced the Genomics Workforce Plan, achieving 20,000 e-learning views and 1,200 completions, alongside expanded MSc module access.

Expanded digital capability through the Digital Capability Framework, with 2,500+ self-assessments completed.

Delivered the Strategic Mental Health Workforce Plan, achieving a net increase of 240 staff, reducing turnover in consultant psychiatrists (14.7% to 8.6%) and nurses (10.5% to 6.7%), and training over 5,000 staff.

Introduced AI learning tools, including HALI and the AI Foundation Module, engaging 1,000+ users.

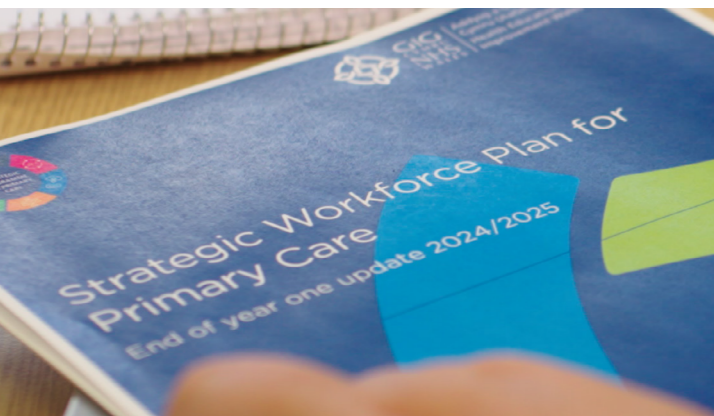
Y Ty Dysgu has become my go-to place for high-quality online education. It makes Continued Professional Development (CPD) easy and engaging.



NHS Wales Nurse

Planning for the future

A sustainable workforce relies on evidence, strategy, and coordination, and HEIW provides all three, shaping NHS Wales now and for the future.



Key achievements

- Strengthened workforce intelligence through the Workforce Planning Hub, increasing training completions by 137% and toolkit engagement by 91%.
- Advanced workforce supply and transformation across priority areas including primary care, pharmacy, dental, mental health, healthcare science and leadership.
- Established the Workforce Supply Oversight Group to improve alignment between training supply and workforce demand.
- Developed a Primary Care Deanery to strengthen and unify support for primary and community workforce transformation.

Get in touch



We are here to connect, collaborate, and answer your questions:



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[nhs-heiw](https://www.linkedin.com/company/nhs-heiw)



Respect for all
Together as a team
Ideas that improve



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