

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.

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



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.

Approximately 85% of our budget goes directly into education and training, funding today's workforce and building the workforce of the future. In 2025, our budget is £380m.

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](#): Sets out recommended education and training numbers across all health professional pipelines.

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

Expanded medical training - increased resident doctors and GP trainees by 50% since 2019, with GP trainees rising from 495 to 743, delivering thousands of extra appointments annually.

Strengthened dental services - achieved a 100% fill rate in the Dental Foundation Training Welsh Enhanced Recruitment Offer (DFT WERO) and increased Dental Specialty and Core Training numbers by 43%, boosting workforce availability in rural communities.

Developed pharmacy workforce - trained over 600 trainee pharmacists on the foundation programme since 2019, enabling enhanced clinical services across community and hospital settings.

Launched local nursing programmes - opened nursing courses in Aberystwyth and Wrexham, supporting over 1,200 students, including new Welsh language provision.

Invested in Health Care Support Workers - funding increased from £500k in 2018 to £2m in 2025, demonstrating sustained investment in education, development and progression opportunities for staff.

Managed apprenticeships at scale - delivered 14 apprenticeship frameworks covering 57 qualifications in partnership with Medr (Commission for Tertiary Education and Research) supporting equitable access to high-quality learning.

Highlighted NHS Wales career pathway - engaging over 17,000 users on the bilingual Careersville / Tregyrfa platform, achieving a 72% engagement rate and raising awareness of career opportunities and entry routes.

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

National leadership and talent programmes - delivered 10+ new programmes across early career, clinical, and executive levels, embedding compassionate, collective leadership.

Retention support - implemented the National Retention Programme and appointed local Retention Leads, helping reduce staff turnover and strengthen workforce stability.

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

Staff feedback - introduced an annual NHS Wales staff survey, gathering insights from 25,000 staff in 2024/25 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

Independent prescribing

Supported a wide range of disciplines, including pharmacists, optometrists, nurses and allied health professionals, with 730 pharmacists and 69 optometrists trained to expand access to services closer to home.

Primary Care Academies

Established seven across Wales, supporting local effectiveness and national consistency in education and training for the multi-professional team.

Digital learning

Developed innovations including the all-Wales national e-learning platform (NeLP) Y Ty Dysgu, the Virtual Pathology Academy, and AI learning tools, now accessed by more than 30,000 active users.

Workforce solutions

Addressed key service challenges through initiatives such as the Endoscopy Academy, perioperative workforce review, and urgent care practitioner framework.

Digital capability

Through the Digital Capability Framework, we're preparing the workforce with essential digital skills, supporting adaptability, leadership in digital transformation, and readiness for emerging technologies including AI and genomics.

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

Healthcare science

Published the first career framework for 7,000+ healthcare science professionals, with 11 profession-specific pathways covering education, career progression, regulation, and service provision.

Nursing workforce

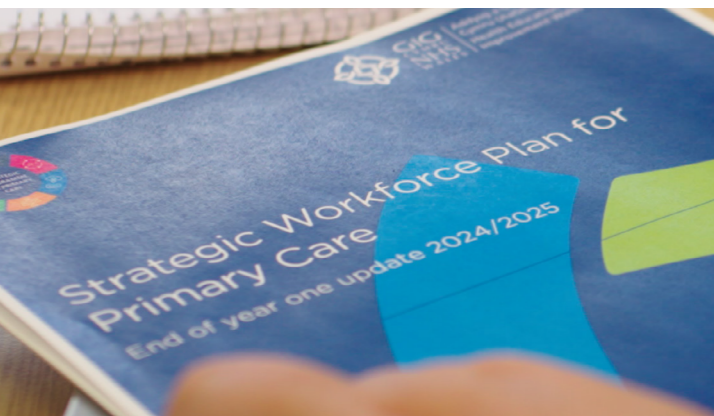
Developed Wales' first strategic nursing workforce plan for 40,000 nurses, setting five-year actions to grow, transform and support the profession.

Perinatal workforce

Introduced the first strategic plan to address staffing gaps, training needs and rising service demand, focused on quality, innovation and compassionate care.

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

Data and analytics - created 12 new dashboards via the data and analytics portal, used by 900+ professionals to support consistent, evidence-based workforce planning at local and national levels.

Workforce trends reporting - continued to improve the annual workforce trends report, providing intelligence and insights to inform strategic and operational plans.

National workforce plans - developed Wales' first coordinated plans across key priority areas, including mental health, pharmacy, dental, diagnostics, genomics, nursing, and perinatal services, delivering coherent and aligned approaches for the future.

Framework implementation - implemented workforce components of the AHP and Health Care Science Frameworks, enhancing workforce data, planning, profiles, and career pathways.

Workforce planning resources - Launched the Workforce Planning Hub to build system-wide capacity and capability, supporting consistent and effective workforce planning across NHS Wales.

Get in touch



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



heiw.nhs.wales



03300 585005



heiw@wales.nhs.uk



Sign up to our [Newsletter](#) to receive updates and insights



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



Respect for all
Together as a team
Ideas that improve



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