

Strategic Perinatal Workforce Plan for NHS Wales

Why we are developing a plan.

The purpose of the Strategic Perinatal Workforce Plan is to address the requirements for the perinatal workforce on behalf of NHS Wales. Engagement with the NHS perinatal workforce, health boards, service users and wider stakeholder groups has been an integral part of creating and informing the plan.

The term perinatal has been used instead of maternity and neonatal based on feedback from colleagues who feel that a change is needed in terminology to ensure the team are considered as one.

There are interdependencies across these teams and strong working relationships are essential to improve the quality and safety of care and experience for women, birthing people, babies, and families.

There has been a clear vision and policy position for maternity services in Wales since 2011, as outlined in '**A Strategic Maternity Vision for Wales**'¹ which highlighted the need for a highly trained workforce able to deliver high quality, safe and effective services.

Building on this Welsh Government published '**Maternity Care in Wales: a five year vision for the future (2019-2024)**'² which acknowledged the need for skilled multi-professional teams to provide safe and effective, family centred care.

More recently in 2023 Improvement Cymru published the findings from the discovery phase of the Maternity and Neonatal Safety Support Programme³, which highlighted the importance of working together as one perinatal team and acknowledged that high quality care and improved outcomes are dependent on the perinatal workforce.

Moreover, that a highly reliable workforce requires adequate numbers, educated with high skill levels, motivated with good team working and communication.

Workforce planning is a complex process of getting the right people with the right skills, and in the right place to meet population needs.

¹ Welsh Government 2011. A Strategic Vision for Maternity Services in Wales. Available at: [a-strategic-vision-for-maternity-services-in-wales.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/a-strategic-vision-for-maternity-services-in-wales.pdf) Accessed on: 27/02/24

² Welsh Government 2019. Maternity Care in Wales. A five year vision for the future. Available at: [maternity-care-in-wales-a-five-year-vision-for-the-future-2019-2024.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/maternity-care-in-wales-a-five-year-vision-for-the-future-2019-2024.pdf) Accessed on: 27/02/24

³ Public Health Wales 2023. Improving Together for Wales. Mat Neo Safety Support Programme Cymru. Available at: phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/improvement-cymru/our-work/matneosp/report-summary/ Accessed on: 30/04/24

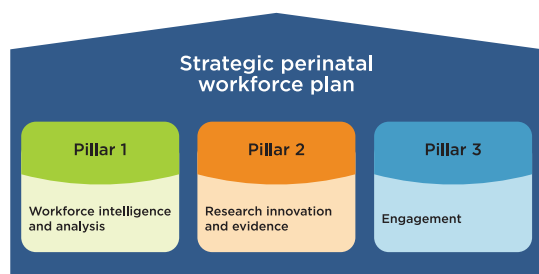
The size and shape of the perinatal workforce needs to be appropriate to meet the needs of women, birthing people, babies, and families in the future.

The challenges facing perinatal teams include:

- ❏ Workforce shortages and difficulties attracting and retaining staff.
- ❏ Increasing levels of complexity, linked to increasing maternal age, rates of obesity, caesarean sections and women or birthing people with complex medical conditions becoming pregnant.
- ❏ Increased demand for care and services.
- ❏ Negative media coverage.

The aim of the plan is to develop innovative solutions to transform perinatal teams to ensure a sustainable workforce to meet the needs of the population of Wales.

Steps taken to develop the plan.



The plan has been developed using the HEIW three pillar approach, of workforce intelligence and analysis, research innovation, evidence, and engagement. We have completed an analysis and review of the perinatal workforce data, including identification of workforce intelligence gaps.

We have completed our horizon scanning, reading and summarising published reviews, articles, reports, and other material produced by a wide range of bodies including professional bodies, think tanks, policy documents and academia.

The engagement phase of the development of this plan including an online questionnaire, webinars and face-to-face discussions with people across Wales who work in perinatal teams to better understand the challenges that people face and potential solutions. The full report is available heiw.nhs.wales/files/perinatal-engagement-summary-report-pdf. The engagement provided us with top 10 insights which have been used to shape and inform the actions.

Next Steps

Please take part in our consultation, this is your opportunity to influence the development of the Strategic Perinatal Workforce Plan actions. We would welcome you telling us what is **strong**, what is **wrong** and what is **missing**.

Through the consultation we will, describe the strategic **action**; the **evidence** to support it; the **impact** of the action; and **who** is responsible for leading it. There are several ways that you can participate.

Please visit our webpage where you will find further details and information [Strategic perinatal workforce plan - HEIW \(nhs.wales\)](https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/perinatal-workforce-plan-heiw-nhs-wales).

Following the consultation, we will review and reflect on all the contributions we receive, revise the actions as necessary, and develop a costed implementation plan.

Thank you for engaging in the consultation and supporting the development of the Strategic Perinatal Workforce Plan for NHS Wales.