

# Strategic Nursing Workforce Plan:

2025 – 2030  
Summary



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# Introduction

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) led the development of the first [Strategic Nursing Plan for Wales](#) with invaluable input from all NHS organisations, professional bodies, and Welsh Government.

The plan covers all nurses in Wales, including those in the private sector, primary & community care, social care, and the nursing support.

The Nursing Workforce Plan aims to:

- ❏ Deliver actions over a **5-year period, up to year 2030. It is dedicated to Nurses, who make up 40% of the NHS workforce.**
- ❏ Find solutions to well documented challenges facing nursing such as population health, retention of staff and lack of clear career pathways and opportunities.
- ❏ Develop the nursing role in improving population health, addressing health inequalities, and leading public health efforts.
- ❏ Establish new roles and essential skills for nurses i.e. digital and genomics.
- ❏ Support improvements in public health and a reduction in health inequalities across communities.

## Case for Change

- ❏ The Welsh Government's plan, "A Healthier Wales," highlights the need to address current and future demands on the health system.
- ❏ Challenges include fewer people becoming nurses, more demand for mental health services, and the need to improve nurse well-being.
- ❏ The strategy focuses on preventive care and community-based services.

In response to [A Healthier Wales](#) HEIW published a [Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care](#) setting out the ambition to have a motivated, engaged and valued health and social care workforce with the capacity, competence and confidence to meet the needs of the people of Wales, for now and for the health and well-being of future generations.

A commitment in this Strategy was to develop a strategic workforce plan for nursing, recognising the significant challenges and opportunities facing the profession.

The immediate and unprecedented pressures on NHS Wales post pandemic have been acknowledged, accelerating many of the known workforce challenges including:

- ❏ Declining numbers entering the nursing profession.
- ❏ Demographic changes, increased demand for mental health services, care closer to home and a changing burden of disease due to a reducing birth rate and an ageing population.
- ❏ Science, research, technology and digital advances which will continue to influence and support the way nurses deliver care.
- ❏ Shortage of supply and skills to provide consistent, good quality care and associated financial implications.
- ❏ The need to address fatigue and excessive workload impacting on the wellbeing of our nurses.
- ❏ Changing aspirations and expectations of nurses and a multi-generational workforce.

Alongside these challenges, a shift from reactive to preventive care is required to enable people to make healthy behaviour changes, manage their own health, and long-term illnesses, and make it easier for people to remain active and independent in their homes and communities.

This transformation requires a greater focus and investment in shifting services out of hospital to community-based services, and improved integration between services.

## Approach

The plan was developed using HEIW's three pillar approach which includes [literature review, research and horizon scanning](#), a review of the nursing [workforce data](#) and the delivery of an extensive [engagement](#) and consultation period with key stakeholders across the nursing workforce and wider.

### Literature review, research and horizon scanning

Published reviews, articles, reports, and other material produced by a wide range of bodies including professional bodies, think tanks, policy documents and academia were reviewed as part of the development of this plan. The research recognised the change required in nursing to meet future demand. Factors such as difficulty in recruiting and retaining nurses, high workload, burnout, and technological advancements enabling new approaches in the way care will be delivered were identified.

### Workforce data and analytics

Analysis of the nursing workforce data showed that:

- ▣ The nursing workforce has grown 17% since 2013.
- ▣ Adult Nursing has the highest FTE out of the four fields of Nursing and accounts for 73% of the total workforce.
- ▣ Within the registered Nursing staff group, Band 5 accounts for 42% of FTE.
- ▣ In 2023 the largest number of nurses leaving the workforce is aged 55-60+.
- ▣ In 2023 the largest number of new starters for registered nurses was in the 25-29 age group.

### Engagement

Extensive engagement with the workforce highlighted five key themes:

- ▣ Appreciate us - celebrate nurses' contribution to healthcare with recognition and reward.
- ▣ Develop us - remove barriers to learning and development.
- ▣ Trust us - involve nurses in decision making.
- ▣ Support us - through compassionate leadership and wellbeing resources.
- ▣ Help us - increase efficiency thought investment in infrastructure.

## Key Themes

The Strategic nursing workforce plan was developed under three key themes



### Growing the nursing workforce

- ▣ An increased number of nurses is essential to meet the growing demand for care.
- ▣ We will attract and improve retention of our Nursing workforce.



### Transforming the nursing workforce

- ▣ We will create new ways for nurses to work in hospitals and communities.
- ▣ Focus on improving health of our population and prevention.
- ▣ Focus on new skills linked to areas such as Genomics, using data and technology.



### Supporting the nursing workforce

- ▣ Create flexibility for developing skills through further studies or learning new practical skills.
- ▣ Have compassionate Leaders and enhance diversity in leadership roles.

# Section 1: Strategic Actions



## Growing the nursing workforce

	Action	Delivery	Status
1	To improve data including the RNA role to understand the supply and demand information for nursing annually.	HEIW	New
2	Improve Retention rates to 5%, especially early and late career nurses.	HEIW, Health Boards and Trusts	Accelerate
3	Implement the Registered Nursing Associate role (B4) and find a flexible route for them to become registered nurses.	HEIW, Health Boards, Trusts and Social Care	New
4	Re-launch the Train Work Live Brochure through different digital platforms to inspire entry and career progression in nursing.	HEIW	New
5	Introduce work experience placements into nursing.	HEIW	Accelerate
6	Alongside Shared services, develop a method to improve nursing workforce data in health boards to help workforce planning.	NHS Wales Organisations	Accelerate
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase number and variety of student placements across community and other NHS organisations such as digital, NHS Executive and Public Health Wales.</li> <li>Improve resources for those supporting students.</li> </ul>	HEIW	Accelerate
8	<b>Strengthen the clinical educator workforce</b> to meet future demand by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining the role, and its impact.</li> <li>Develop competencies including leadership training.</li> </ul>	HEIW, Health Boards and Trusts (Education Leads)	Underpinning
9	Create a pathway that supports band 5 nurses' preparation for band 6 roles through delivering a competency framework.	HEIW	Accelerate
10	Develop return to practice options after a break in service to increase the numbers of nurses rejoining the profession.	HEIW	Underpinning



## Actions: Nursing workforce transformation

	Action	Delivery	Status
11	Support community-focused nursing roles by increasing numbers and commissioning education for enhanced skills, emphasising prevention and primary care relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and Social Care specialist practice Qualification (SPQ)</li> <li>Community learning disability and Mental Health SPQ</li> <li>Community and Public Health Nurse</li> <li>Occupational Health Nurse</li> <li>Advanced Practice, clinical decision making and PHD nursing</li> <li>Motivational interviewing</li> <li>Preventative to enhanced community care</li> <li>Fast tracking Dual Roles.</li> </ul>	HEIW, Social Care Wales and the Strategic Programme for Primary Care (SPPC)	New
12	Understand what effective technology is currently used in nursing across Wales that can be shared to build on the Topol; review and meet the <a href="#">Digital and data strategy for health and social care in Wales</a> .	HEIW, DHCW, SPPC, Health Boards and Trusts	New
13	Develop and implement a Genomics Workforce Development Toolkit and Capability Framework.	HEIW	New
14	Ensure HEI's curriculum contains sufficient content on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>genomics,</li> <li>public health,</li> <li>digital requirements and</li> <li>automation.</li> </ul> Evaluate post graduate curricula's on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>prevention,</li> <li>population health, and social determinants.</li> </ul>	HEIW	Underpinning

	Action	Delivery	Status
15	Support Welsh Government by establishing the value of “team around the person” as a model for care.	HEIW, WG, NHS Organisations and Social Care	New
16	Executive Directors of Nursing will lead a shift to community focused care that meets the action set out in “A healthier Wales”. They will work with SPPC to deliver the vision for primary and community nursing.  This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❏ Scoping roles required, including community matron,</li> <li>❏ Focus on the changing population needs</li> <li>❏ Case management of at-risk patients and</li> <li>❏ Prevention.</li> </ul>	HEIW, SPPC, Health Boards, Trusts and Social Care	Accelerate
17	As highlighted in CNO/AHP research action plan - Review access to research skills and Quality Improvement training for the nursing workforce	HEIW and Welsh Government	Accelerate
18	Work with Social Care, Health Boards and Trusts to explore the role of the Virtual Nurse with focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❏ How it works</li> <li>❏ Its benefits</li> <li>❏ Required education and skills.</li> </ul>	HEIW	New
19	Review and strengthen the current prescribing pathway to include new technologies and improvements in quality and safety procedures.  Plan how our new registrants will move from being prescriber ready to actively prescribing.	HEIW	New
20	Utilise the Digital Capability Framework to identify and address areas for digital skills development for the nursing workforce.  Work with others, to scope and develop a digital competency passport for nurses, based on the Digital Capability Framework for healthcare in Wales.	HEIW, DHCW and Health Boards	Accelerate



## Actions: Supporting our workforce

	Action	Delivery	Status
21	Publish a Career Framework demonstrating career options and routes from healthcare support worker level to consultant nurse level.  Explore the consultant nurse workforce to inform national and local workforce planning .	HEIW, Health Boards, Trusts and Social Care	New
22	Develop a culture of continuous learning for nurses through the adoption of HEIWs CPD Strategy.	HEIW, Health Boards and Trusts and Social Care	Underpinning
23	Promote the availability of Welsh language training courses set out in the “More than just words” action plan.	HEIW	Accelerate
24	Have a robust succession plan that includes training programmes for our chief executive, executive director and deputy director nurse leaders.	HEIW	New
25	Pilot a senior leader talent pool that supports and develops Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic leaders.	HEIW	New
26	Implement an all-Wales scheme for mentoring and coaching across all levels of nursing to support professional and career development.	HEIW	Accelerate
27	Implement a train the trainer approach for compassionate leadership and practices within nursing to build a compassionate culture.	HEIW and Health Boards	New
28	Provide leadership and management training for Senior Nurses and Matrons.	HEIW	New
29	Sell the existing leadership programmes to advanced, consultant and aspiring nurse leaders across all settings.	HEIW and Health Boards and Trusts	Accelerate
30	Ensure nurses are aware of wellbeing resources that they can use when needed.	HEIW	Underpinning
31	Progress with Restorative Clinical Supervision implementation and develop the Professional Nurse Advocate role in Wales to support it.	HEIW, SPPC, Health Boards and Trusts	Underpinning
32	Work with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) on the review and refresh of The Code and Revalidation for nurses.	NMC & HEIW	Underpinning

## Section 2: Benefits

Implementation of the actions within the Plan will bring benefits across different stakeholder groups. A benefits realisation exercise has been undertaken and impact measures developed:

### Benefits to patients/citizens

- ✔ Better care from nurses who work with other health professionals to help people and communities.
- ✔ Health approaches that improve individual, community, and population health and show the impact of nurses on national health policies.
- ✔ More health services available in the community.
- ✔ Patient and citizen feedback.

### Benefits to the nursing workforce

- ✔ More nurses with better skills.
- ✔ More nurses, fewer vacancies and less agency use.
- ✔ Clear career paths and opportunities to progress.
- ✔ Improved wellbeing, motivation and job satisfaction.
- ✔ More flexible working opportunities.
- ✔ Access to support and mentorship, supervision and preceptorship.
- ✔ Access to leadership training.
- ✔ Increase the number of skilled nurses.
- ✔ Reduce vacancies and reliance on agency staff.
- ✔ Establish clear career paths with growth opportunities.
- ✔ Enhance well-being, motivation, and job satisfaction.
- ✔ Provide more flexible working options.
- ✔ Ensure access to support, mentorship, supervision, and preceptorship.
- ✔ Offer leadership training opportunities.

### Benefits to employing organisations

- ✔ A nursing workforce with enhanced clinical, education, research, digital, and leadership skills.
- ✔ Stronger attraction, recruitment, and retention of nurses.
- ✔ Improved healthcare quality and value.
- ✔ More nurses, fewer vacancies, and more students in nurse education.
- ✔ Improved feedback from patients and the public.
- ✔ Lower turnover and sickness rates, with better staff survey results.

## Section 3: Implementation

The actions identified in this plan will be delivered over a five-year period recognising the need for capacity and resources to support implementation.

To inform the implementation planning process the actions have been categorised into new, accelerate, underpinning – to reflect that not all these actions will require the establishment of additional workstreams and resources.

Many of the actions are for HEIW to lead at national level with support of partners. Many of these actions can be progressed by building on work and resources already in place, or through the core functions of HEIW.

An implementation plan with prioritised actions, timescales and governance structure is being developed.