

Special Edition Newsletter: Workforce Strategy Winter 2021



Dear Colleagues,

It's hard to believe as time is going so fast, but this October marked one year on since the publication of the [**ten-year workforce strategy for health and social care**](#) following the biggest consultation and engagement exercise ever undertaken on the health and care workforce in Wales.

Recently, we were pleased to give evidence to the Senedd's Health and Social Services committee on progress implementing the strategy. This complemented and supported a range of evidence provided by partners and key stakeholders. Notwithstanding the pandemic, real progress has been made in this first year. This special edition stakeholder bulletin gives us an opportunity to share with you progress so far.

Although HEIW and Social Care Wales are leading the implementation of the strategy, contribution and actions from all organisations across the sectors is needed to meet the strategy's ambitions. There's still lots to do and it's critical we have a clear way forward on what we need to be doing collectively and as individual organisations. In the spring we are aiming to hold a stakeholder implementation planning event to co-produce the medium-term plans.

We hope you find this update of interest.

Kind regards,

Julie Rogers

HEIW Deputy CEO and Director of Workforce & OD

Sarah McCarty

Social Care Wales Director of Improvement and Development

The Strategy

The ten year **strategy**, lays out the ambition that by 2030 we will 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. It describes an approach which puts wellbeing, inclusion and the Welsh language at the heart of plans for the social care and NHS Wales workforce. It reflects a core element of the Parliamentary Review and A Healthier Wales' 'Quadruple Aim' to have an inclusive, engaged, sustainable, flexible and responsive workforce to deliver excellent health and social care services.

How we got here

Extensive engagement with partners reinforced the importance of;

- a strategic approach
- reflecting a need for flexibility over time
- defining a clear ten-year strategic intent
- act as a framework for the development of the workforce
- could be applied universally to inform and align workforce strategies and plans across both health and social care.

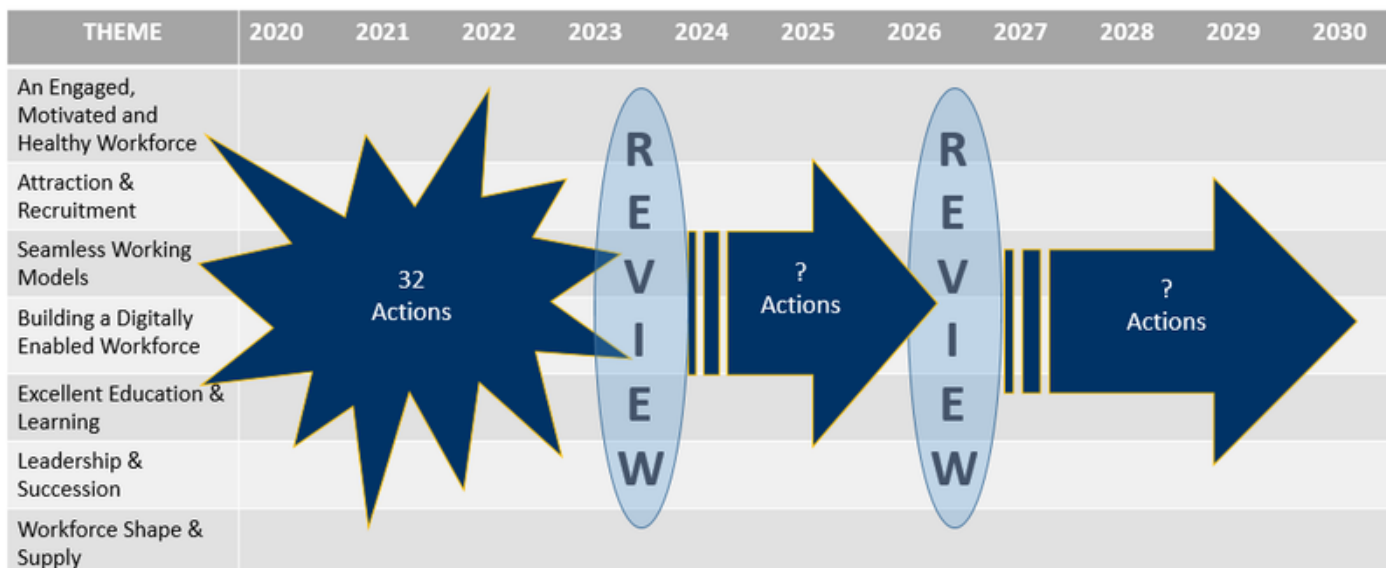
Where we are now

Significant progress has been made since the strategy was published and we are on track for delivery by 2030. The strategy is divided into three phases, with a review point every three years, allowing for adjustments to ensure it remains live and valid.

Covid-19 reinforced the need to press on with publication and implementation of the strategy due to its ability to contribute to recovery and reset. Plans to date have necessitated a short-term focus, recognising the wide ranging and significant pressures on the system which could not have been foreseen.

An initial six months **supporting the winter protection plan** prioritised areas of the workforce strategy to support the response to Covid-19 and winter pressures, resulting in early implementation in some areas.

Existing governance mechanisms oversee delivery of early implementation. Together, we provide leadership and direction, on behalf of the organisations who will deliver the strategy with us. A joint HEIW and Social Care Wales steering group reports to both organisations' CEO and Chairs, through to the respective Boards and consequently Welsh Government. The objectives and deliverables from the workforce strategy's 2021/22 plan are integrated in our **corresponding** organisational **business plans**. As part of our operating model, we use our stakeholder briefings, regular board papers and update reports to share our progress.



Highlights so far

While some actions are not yet due to start, all 32 actions will commence during phase one (the first three years) of the strategy. More detailed information about progress and actions can be found in our workforce strategy themes progress paper and in our written evidence to the committee.



By 2030 the health and social care workforce will feel valued and supported, wherever they work

This joint approach is being developed and delivered over the long term. To date we have progressed work in support of the ambition, ministerial priorities and the programme for Government. Early in the pandemic, we implemented measures to support staff wellbeing, and were part of a joint health and care sub-group of the workforce cell developing resources and providing access to specialist services for the workforce. By March 2022, through engagement with the workforce, we will have developed sector specific wellbeing and staff governance frameworks based on common principles.

Although Social care Wales and HEIW are leading the implementation of the strategy, action across many organisations is needed to meet its ambitions. For example, under this theme, includes an action to work towards fair reward and recognition across the health and social care workforce. Reflecting this commitment, Welsh Government has established a Social Care Fair Work Forum, bringing together employers and trade unions to support the move towards fair work, which has set out an **ambitious plan** for its work and has been providing detailed advice to Welsh Government on ensuring a Real Living Wage for social care workers. Social Care Wales is an active member of the forum.

Attraction and Recruitment

By 2030 health and social care will be well established as a strong and recognisable brand and the sector of choice for our future workforce

Our work aims to attract people of all ages and backgrounds to health and care. We continue to use our bilingual [WeCare](#) (Social Care Wales) and [Train.Work.Live](#) (HEIW) marketing approaches, and are working towards the longer term goal of establishing a national careers service for health and social care. In preparation for this, we launched our joint careers network in July 2021.

In areas of acute workforce shortages work has commenced on workforce plans for key occupations recognised in the actions, such as nursing, mental health, social work and the direct care workforce.

We launched 'Tregyrfa' and 'Careersville' our Welsh and English language virtual villages housing 'buildings' showing how health and social care is delivered and the associated careers available. Tregyrfa/Careersville will evolve over time to become the leading, recognisable, go-to resource on health and social care careers, with resources, live events and support for those applying to universities and jobs in health and/or care.

Seamless Workforce Models

By 2030 multi-professional and multi-agency workforce models will be the norm

Our ability to work together as a whole system is critical to our recovery. The workforce strategy identifies enablers to support this, particularly in seamless working and delivering excellent education and learning, underpinned by digital capability and compassionate leadership. Our joint work supporting the strategic programmes for primary care, mental health and the implementation of the Allied Health Professionals framework feature strongly in progressing the workforce strategy.

Our work to translate workforce models developed through Regional Partnership Boards has refocused to support the winter plan, with existing tools and guidance being drawn together alongside good practice and innovation that is already in place. We have established with Qualifications Wales and the Consortium of WJEC and City and Guilds, joint vocational qualifications across social care and health at levels two-five, as well as a joint apprenticeship framework to underpin workforce models. The joint health and social care induction framework is also in place and a joint approach to implementation tested through a pilot in the Hywel Dda area. We will share lessons learnt to ascertain next steps, timeframes and investment required for wider delivery.

During 2021/22 we expanded training to health workers in care homes through care home education facilitator (CHEF) roles, piloting a joint training initiative approach to hospital discharge and contributing to the development of an induction standard for volunteers, led by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). Throughout the pandemic we worked with regulators to safely provide flexibilities to enhance the workforce response such as creating temporary registers.

Building a Digitally Ready Workforce

By 2030 the digital and technological capabilities of the workforce will be well developed and in widespread use to optimise the way we work, to help us deliver the best possible care for people

The pandemic led to an acceleration of the use of digital technology. We are working to increase the digital skills of our workforce, enabling them to work and learn using appropriate technology. With partners we are increasing the availability and catalogue of virtual learning solutions, including e-learning, virtual classroom and simulation. In addition, we are building relationships with key partners including TEC Cymru, Digital Public Services and Digital Communities Wales and continuing our close working relationships with Digital Health and Care Wales.

Excellent Education and Learning

By 2030 the investment in education and training for health and social care workforce will deliver the skills and capabilities needed to meet the needs of people in Wales

The pandemic significantly disrupted academic studies. Our teams and partners undertook a mammoth exercise, rapidly altering the way programmes, assessments and exams were delivered, to minimise disruption and ensure course completion as far as possible.

Our long-term goal challenges traditional ways of training and education in order to develop a flexible and sustainable workforce. We are maximising opportunities for work-based learning (WBL), apprenticeships and supporting a reduction in differential attainment across health and care education programmes.

A range of mechanisms have been introduced to support learning providers and employers to implement a new suite of health and social care vocational qualifications, including good practice workshops and peer learning support. We are also developing skills across hospital and social work staff in a joint programme focusing on person centred care and strengths-based conversations for more effective discharge.

A research and engagement project to establish what is needed to train social care

workers of the future, including models of funding, ensuring they are confident professionals on completing their training, is underway.

Throughout all of this work we are driving improved opportunities for learners to undertake education and training through the medium of Welsh.

Leadership and Succession

By 2030 leaders in the health and social care system will display collective and compassionate leadership

Our approach to leadership is **evidence based**, underpinning everything to create a culture which allows our people to thrive, and consequently improve outcomes for the people we serve. We have made excellent progress in this area and have completed two of the three key actions with significant progress towards delivery of the third.

We have developed and launched the principles for compassionate leadership for health and social care in Wales. These principles clarify our shared definition, understanding and language relating to what compassionate leadership looks like, and how it translates into the work that we do. We have a range of resources and tools on our Gwella leadership platform to support embedding these principles and behaviours across the system.

We are continuing to produce digital content to support leaders and recently launched 'Gwella on Air', comprising of podcasts from leaders and teams sharing how they have created compassionate and collective cultures within the workplace.

Workforce Supply and Shape

By 2030 we will have a sustainable workforce in sufficient numbers to meet the health and social care needs of our population

Development of the centre of excellence for workforce intelligence is a long-term goal. Phase one focuses on the need to develop capacity and capability in workforce planning, underpinned by high quality robust data, and appropriate data systems to enable effective planning and workforce modelling. Social Care Wales has led a major reform of the approach to collecting workforce data across social care. A new collection system has been established gathering data from statutory, private and voluntary providers in all settings, which will be available to the sector on a new workforce data portal. We are continuing to develop resources and shared approaches, and have adopted the standardised six-step workforce planning methodology and are using this to develop our workforce plans for mental health and nursing.

Digital resources have been developed along with online training to support workforce planning for health and social care providers. By the end of this financial year, we will have published the workforce plan for the mental health workforce, direct care workforce and social work workforce. Plus, we will have supported the development of a national workforce plan for both imaging and cellular pathology. In addition, we are mentoring the service managers to develop their organisational level plans that underpin the co-production of the national plan.

Work is also on target to develop a workforce planning training pack that can be flexibly delivered by organisations to local teams. This will be supported by the development of the underpinning workforce planning competences for service managers.

Find out more

To learn more about the health and social care strategy visit the following websites.

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