



Workforce Planning Guidance

Guidance to support the Workforce Planning Toolkit



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Developing a workforce plan

Introduction

This approach to workforce planning has been developed together with a set of resources as part of a toolkit to support the development of strategic workforce plans.

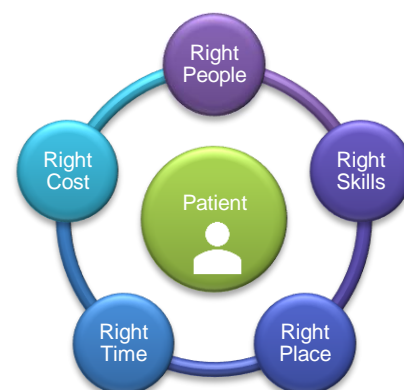
Background

NHS Wales, like many other health and social care economies around the world, is facing significant challenges in ensuring the availability of high-quality health and social care services within an affordable financial envelope; there is an aging population who are living longer with more complex health needs and consequent increasing demands. The general population's expectation around healthcare is also growing; there are major advances in technologies, new pharmaceutical interventions and new ways of working emerging. There is a drive to provide more integrated care at, or closer to home requiring cross professional, organisational and sector working.

Workforce plans are therefore required to ensure that people with the right skills, competences, values and behaviours are able to meet population needs through innovative approaches to service delivery.

What is workforce planning?

Workforce planning is an iterative process to design, develop and deliver a sustainable workforce of the right size, with the right skills and diversity, organised in the right way, within an affordable budget and who can deliver the services needed to provide patient care to required quality standards.



Why are workforce plans needed?

Healthcare is changing and new approaches to care delivery are emerging. Many of the drivers for change in healthcare suggest the need to operate collaboratively and at scale to benefit from multidisciplinary approaches, shared resources, back-office efficiencies and greater flexibility. This is seen as essential to deliver the care required for an ageing, multi-morbid population within limited resources.

Effective workforce planning will help create a sustainable workforce, prepare for future changes, identify and plan for any workforce gaps, whilst managing risk and exploring new innovative workforce opportunities.

Developing a workforce plan has many benefits which can include;

- Ensuring the supply of a workforce with the skills and competence to meet the health needs of the population
- Developing enhanced working relations within the organisation and with other partners
- Providing a focus for potential joint approaches to workforce including the development of cross professional and cross boundary working
- Improving staff retention and recruitment
- Making the best use out of existing staff skills and identifying future skills requirements

- Contributing to the delivery of effective and efficient services across pathways.

NHS Wales Workforce Planning Approach

The approach to workforce planning in Wales is based on the Skills for Health Six Steps Framework®. The Skills for Health Six Step Framework is based on the following Principles that support effective workforce planning:-

- Sustainability – plans should be realistic and affordable
- Encourages innovative thinking
- A focus on what skills and competences are needed rather than what we currently have
- Based on evidence and information
- Integrated planning across finance, service and workforce
- Iterative process
- Requires effective leadership
- Promotes Collaboration and shared solutions

Each step links to a section within the associated **Toolkit & Strategic Workforce Planning Template** which will help you to record and capture the rationale and outcomes of your plan. Going through the 6 steps will ensure you have included all the relevant information and considered all the important factors you need to think about when workforce planning. In practice, as you work through the steps you will find the divides are artificial and as you work on one step you will start to embrace questions from the next.

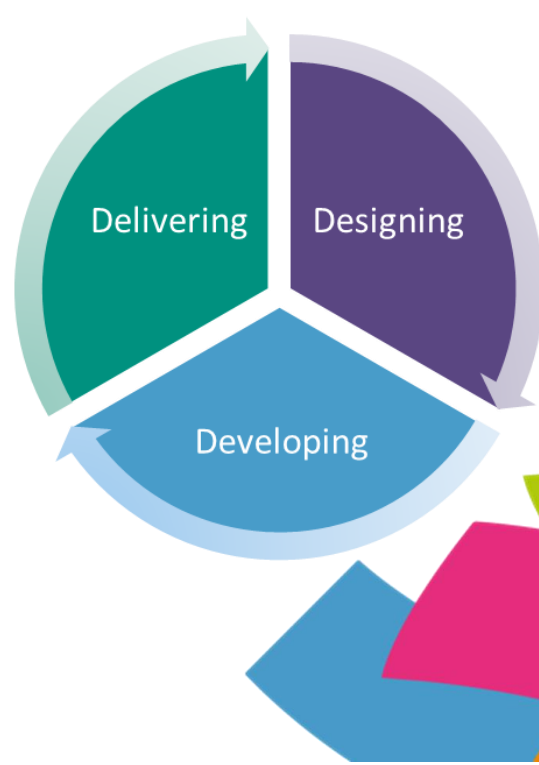


What's involved in Workforce Planning?

We consider Strategic Workforce Planning as being integrated across workforce, finance and service. It's about:-

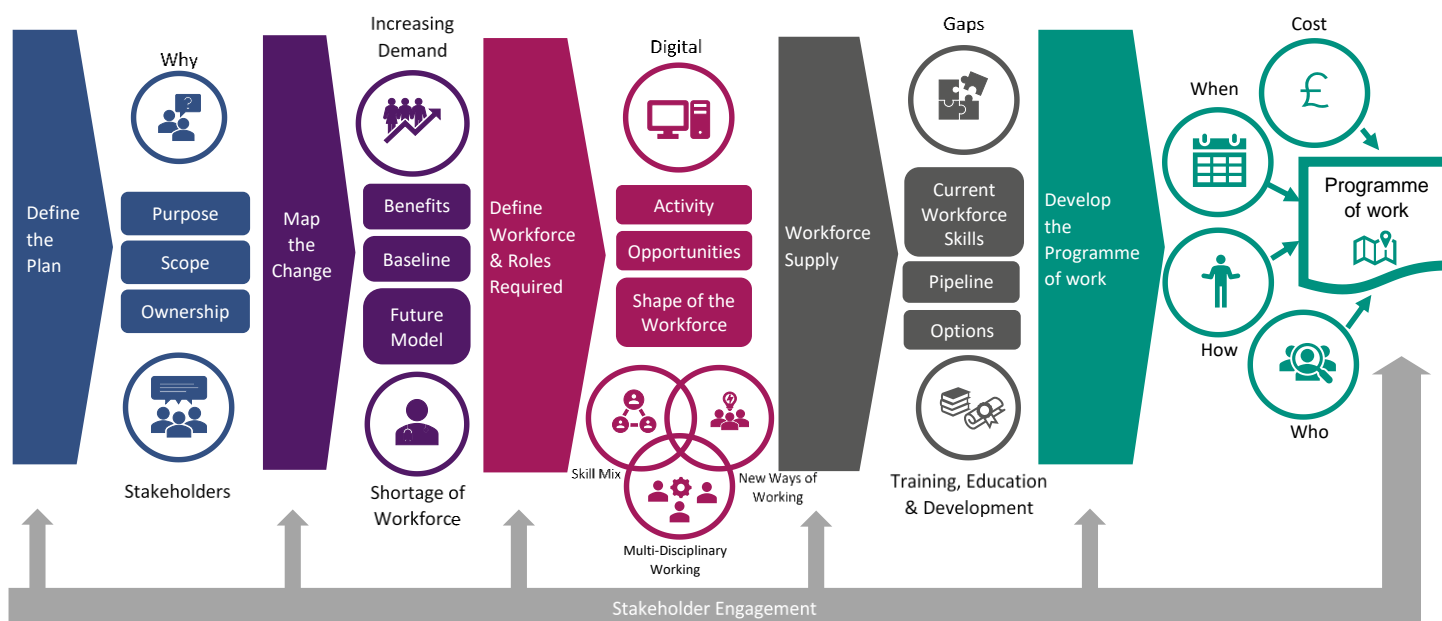
Designing - Not just about designing or re-designing a service and staffing it appropriately a skilled and diverse workforce, for strategic workforce planning it's also about understanding the impact that service changes will have on the current and future workforce and ensuring that these workforce implications are considered as part of the wider integrated planning process so it's achievable and sustainable and meet the needs of patients and service users.

Developing - Understanding what skills and competences will be needed to deliver planned services, where these skills and competences will come from and making provision and plans to develop these skills and competences if they are not already available within the current workforce



Delivering The management actions which are needed to ensure that clinicians are engaged; staff wellbeing is promoted; new ways of working are achieved; workforce development plans are delivered; and good practice is identified, shared and adopted.

The diagram below shows a roadmap to developing a strategic workforce plan. The map shows progression through the six steps (N.B. step 6 is implementation of the programme of work) though, in reality there will be some crossover as most steps are interrelated e.g. current shortage of workforce may also impact on supply and pipeline.



Who needs to lead the workforce plan development?

As workforce plans are being developed, it is advisable that a lead person is identified to take responsibility for co-ordinating meetings, discussions and the completion of the workforce planning template.

Successful workforce planning requires:

Collaboration Co-operation and collaboration with your identified stakeholder groups, working together to identify shared sustainable workforce solutions.

Effective leadership Engaged and motivated leadership is needed to drive workforce planning.

Risk management Robust governance when exploring innovative workforce planning opportunities to weigh up the risks and benefits and develop enabling solutions and mitigations.

Change management Effective change management, including gaining the commitment of people to participate in the process and embrace workforce changes identified as required.

Step 1 - Plan Purpose

In the first step it is important to be clear about the purpose and scope of the plan. You must be clear why the workforce plan is required, who it is intended for, what it will be used for and how it can assist you to define the need for the workforce to meet your changing service demands. The **Strategic Workforce Plan Template** can help you make a start in shaping your plan.



You must determine and seek agreement on the scope of the plan, whether it will cover a single service area, a particular patient pathway or a whole health economy and the staff groups it covers, and given this, be clear who is responsible for ensuring the plan is delivered and who else will need to be involved in the planning process.

Key documents you might want to refer to at this step include:- A Healthier Wales; A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care; NHS Wales Planning Framework and other relevant key policies and strategies for your sector and/or organisation e.g. your Integrated Medium Term Plan (IMTP).

Things to consider and include in your plan:-

1.1 Purpose: What's the rationale for the plan and who needs to be involved. Being clear about the rationale for your plan will help to set the scene and keep you focussed and on track as your plan develops. A **SWOT** or **PESTEL** Analysis can help here alongside **Scenario Planning**¹.

Think about the following questions:-

- Why are you doing this? What are you trying to fix?
- What is driving this change?
 - Is it a change in service, or a new service?
 - Do you need to change the way things need to be done?
 - Is it because of external influences such as Government Policy or Strategy?
 - What is your current performance like?
- What are the goals/aims/objectives of the plan?

SWOT and **PESTEL** are both useful tools in helping you think about things in a structured way to generate meaningful insight. Once you have completed your SWOT and/or PESTEL you will need to prioritise the ideas generated and find solutions as you develop your workforce plan as the tools will only give you the starting point.

¹ If you are developing a longer-term strategic plan you will probably need to think about the 'what if' and undertake future Scenario Planning e.g. to identify advances in technology, new treatments or potential increased numbers of service users.

- What will the plan enable you to do?
- Who/what services will the plan affect, both directly and indirectly?

1.2 Scope: Define the scope once you have clarity about the rationale and the decisions it will support. Be clear about what's in scope and what's out of scope, this will help you to identify who your stakeholders are, who needs to be involved and who will be affected by the plan. An **Impact Assessment²** can help here.

Think about the following questions:-

- What are you considering in your plan? e.g. types of workforce. What is in scope and what is not in scope? e.g. Radiologists and Radiographers but not Medical Physics
- What team/department/service is covered by the plan?
- Do you know what steps you need to take to develop your plan (**Project Management Resources** can help here)
- Who are your stakeholders³ (internal and external), how will they be affected and how will they be involved? Who do you need to influence?

Engagement with internal and external stakeholders and partners is vital as it's important to identify who needs to be influenced if the plan is to be delivered successfully (A **stakeholder identification and analysis⁴** can help here)

1.3 Ownership: You need to be clear about who is responsible for ensuring the plan is delivered and who else will need to be engaged, this will ensure the plan is enacted. Think about the following questions:-

- Who owns the Workforce Plan, is it a team, service or department or senior leader?
- Do you have a lead person, what help do you need from them?
- Who needs to be involved both internally and externally?
- How will you engage with your stakeholders, partners and others identified, are there already communication channels in place? Does your organisation have a communications strategy you need to consider?
- Is everyone involved 'signed-up' to the plan?
- What risks⁵ have you identified and how should you manage them?

² Impact Assessments – you may need to undertake more than one impact assessment. The most common required are an Equality Impact Assessment and a Privacy Impact Assessment, but you might also need to consider a Quality Impact Assessment. Your organisation Equality, Quality and Information Governance Specialists can advise on what you need to do.

³ Stakeholders are people that have an interest in and can either affect or be affected by the workforce plan.

⁴ Stakeholder analysis is the identification, evaluation of stakeholders to prioritise, manage and engage with them effectively.

⁵ You will need to consider what the Risks are, you may have identified these in your SWOT and impact assessments. Does your organisation have a Risk Management Process that you need to follow?

Step 2 - Mapping the Service Change

Step 2 is about the service redesign in response to service user need and/or changes in service delivery. This is the first of three inter-related steps. You must be very clear about current costs and outcomes and identifying the intended benefits from service change. You should identify those things that support the change or may hamper it. There must be a clarity about whether the preferred model better delivers the desired benefits or is more likely to be achievable, given anticipated constraints.



2.1 Goals/Benefits of Change: What is your service and workforce vision, consider what are the different options (models) for achieving the vision. Some options will be better at achieving certain benefits than others. At this point it is also worth thinking about how you will *evaluate* and *measure the impact* of any changes you are considering as part of your vision.

Think about the following questions:-

- What are the benefits to this change?
- Will there be a more positive outcome; who for?
- What are the choices? An **Option Appraisal**⁶ can help here
- What will good look like? Will your workforce feel valued and supported?
- How will this align to the Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care? **Strategy Mapping** can help here

2.2 Baseline Summary: It is important to understand and describe the services you currently provide. Consider any quantifiable data you have about those services as this will help formulate a robust baseline from which you can then work when looking at any service and workforce changes e.g. patient feedback and staff surveys.

You should list and describe the key services you provide (both clinical and non-clinical aspects of those services) where you are seeing significant increases or decreases in demand, a **demand and capacity analysis**⁷ will help here. It is also useful to understand if any specific tasks and activities within any service are particularly in high demand or no longer required, a **population health needs**

⁶ Options appraisal consider a number of potential options you could take, discuss/evaluate them and decided which is your preferred model and why

⁷ Analysing your demand and capacity will help to identify where you have a mismatch between demand for your services and capacity to deliver them. This useful guide will help <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/qsir-demand-capacity-comprehensive-guide.pdf>

assessment⁸ will help here.

This information will support your decision making when considering where any service and workforce changes are required to ensure future service sustainability. Where data is not available, use your local service intelligence as anecdotal evidence.

Think about the following questions:-

- What are the current costs and outcomes under the current model? what things are working well? and what are not?
- What are planning to build on?
- What does your staff profile look like? What are your critical workforce points/risks e.g. an ageing workforce, too high turnover, too many specialist posts that can't be covered? Is multi-disciplinary teamworking embedded in your organisation?
- Is there any research that can support you in this mapping?
- Is there any National policies and strategies that could assist you?

2.3 Future Model Design, the Drivers and Constraints: You will need to consider the key policies, strategies and drivers for healthcare in Wales and state how this plan and the future service model aims to align with these. What are the risks in making/not making the changes, will the plan deliver the benefits and ensure sustainability? Refer back to your SWOT/PESTEL Analysis and Strategy Mapping and review your vision against your ideas. Are you able to prioritise your ideas and identify solutions?

Think about the following questions:-

- Challenge the driver(s) and ensure there are benefits to proceeding
- What was the result of your options appraisal?
- Think about the risks

⁸ Understanding the population needs for your services will help to determine current and future demand for services, it can also identify unmet need. Find a range of population health needs assessments on the Welsh Government site <https://gov.wales/national-survey-wales-population-health>

Step 3 - Define the Workforce and Roles Required

Step 3 involves identifying the workforce needed to deliver the future or reconfigured services. What skills/competence are needed, the type of workforce and numbers of staff required. This will involve consideration of which types of staff should best carry out particular activities in order to reduce costs and improve the patient experience even where this leads to new roles and new ways of working.



It's not just about the numbers or the types roles you already have or any additional roles you think you will need; if done correctly, it should also challenge the current workforce arrangements, by considering which type of staff should and could carry out different activities, perhaps across existing professional boundaries which may require some current roles to change. It should be a systematic process of asking questions, examining evidence and coming to a workforce configuration or shape that does all the things you need it to do. Workforce transformation opportunities should flow from examining the workforce requirement and may come about by changes in medicine, technology and digital.

Activity and competence analysis will help you identify what it is the workforce needs to do. You need to consider 'how much' of 'what' you will need to deliver the future service.

3.1 Activity Analysis: Your workforce plan needs to be based on the needs of your local population for whom you provide services. Therefore, it is essential to understand the population profile and health needs to consider the impact these will have on the services you need to provide, and the workforce required to run those services.

Think about the following questions:-

- What is your activity telling you about your service and your current workforce? has demand changed or are there new activities that require new skills and knowledge?
- What are the key tasks within the new service delivery model? **Pathway Mapping** can help here. Will the tasks meet current/future population/service user needs? To find this type of information, you can access the Public Health Wales Observatory website <http://www.publichealthwalesobservatory.wales.nhs.uk/online-data-tools>
- Have the activities been broken down into tasks, skills, competences and knowledge?
- Do the right people in your current workforce have the knowledge or skills?
- Do you know your workforce trends (a **workforce baseline** will help here), how does your workforce compare to other similar organisations?
- What support do you need e.g. business intelligence support, workforce planning expertise; finance input.

3.2 New Ways of Working: you will need to have a clear picture of what workforce is currently being used and what issues, and challenges they are experiencing. Do you

know what your skill mix⁹ is? do you have a **workforce baseline**?. Refer back to Step 2 when you looked at your workforce profile, then consider that the largest component of the future workforce will be your current workforce and that workforce challenges can often be the key drivers for workforce change e.g. an aging workforce.

Think about the following questions:-

- Have productivity implications been considered based on technology, patterns of working, clinical and service models, skills mix and/or redistribution of tasks and training requirements?. **Workforce Re-design Analysis** can help here.
- Are there any process/system developments that need to be taken into account, new technology, non-staffing considerations e.g. estates/equipment
- Have you considered the here and now as well as the long term future e.g. population needs, sustainability and resilience, **Workforce trends analysis** can help here, you can also find trends on the main profession sites e.g. BMA, RCN. What did you learn from your scenario planning?
- What are the timeframes to consider e.g. training time, leading time for technology and building the digital capability of the workforce?

3.3. Types and numbers of Staff Required - When looking at workforce requirements you need to consider where there are opportunities for transformation could you improve productivity¹⁰ and outcomes by incorporating new ways of working, changing skill mix and/or the introducing new and /or enhanced roles.



Our experiences during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 saw us being able to make rapid changes to the ways in which we provided services to our patients. This was aided by a rapid adoption and use of digital technologies and the ways in which we used these to work differently.

We can use experiences such as this to consider and plan for other opportunities to transform the ways we work or utilise the skills, knowledge and competencies of multi-disciplinary teams. Consider if there are opportunities for using other new technologies, new therapies, different patterns of working, redistributing tasks, and sharing roles across traditional boundaries? What will be the benefits and impact of any of these? You should consider the development of your existing staff to meet changing workforce requirements, both clinical and non-clinical roles and ways of working.

When considering the development of new roles or new ways of working it is helpful to review what types of innovative approaches are being developed elsewhere.

⁹ Skill Mix refers to the type of roles within your workforce e.g. doctors, nurses, healthcare support workers.

¹⁰ Productivity – achieving increased service activity for a given level of workforce input

Think about the following questions:-

- Have you identified the roles required against the patient/ service user pathway? What type and size workforce do you need? Is it multi-disciplinary? What did you identify from your **Workforce Re-Design** analysis?
- Is there any evidence/research base or regulations that can support you in defining the workforce requirements?
- What roles could you introduce? What will the effect of these roles be on other staff? What training or development does your current workforce require? **NHS Wales Guidance on Delegation** and **Advance Practice Frameworks, HCSW Career Development and Framework** and **Role Re-Design** can help here.
- Will this affect other services, teams or individuals? What will be the impact?
- What is the size and composition of the workforce needed to deliver the service?

Step 4 - Workforce Supply

Step 4 involves an internal and external review of the skills available. The overall aim is to have some assurance that the future workforce you have identified through Step 3 are deliverable. It will involve considering the existing workforce, their existing skills and deployment, and any problem areas already identified.



It will also involve considering where the new skills and roles you have identified will come from. In other words what can you do to influence the future supply of the workforce so that it meets the requirement identified?



Remember, it may be that the ready availability of staff with particular skills, or, alternatively, the shortage of certain staff itself is a key driver for the workforce plan so alternative supply solutions need to be explored.

4.1 Current Workforce: Things to consider in your current workforce include existing skills and deployment, plus any problem areas e.g. recruitment difficulties, turnover or other critical workforce points.

Think about the following questions:

- What are the skills of the current workforce? Describe the current workforce in terms of numbers of certain types of: staff, skills, competences, services – do you know the current workforce well?
- Are you working effectively/productively now?
- What current vacancies are there within the service area? What impact are these having? Do they represent a significant recruitment issue? Do they represent a skills shortage or supply issue?
- Do you have any critical workforce points e.g. ageing workforce, small number of specialist staff, limited succession planning, access to

suitable education, leadership development? or skills gaps e.g. non-medical prescribing

- Is your workforce representative of your community?
- Have you benchmarked your workforce? e.g. benchmarked against similar organisations or against Nursing Staff Levels Act Wales or SCoR Principles for Safe Radiographers etc.

4.2 Workforce Forecasting: In identifying your future workforce requirements, reflect back to Step 3 noting that the largest component of the future workforce will be your current workforce, consideration, therefore, should be given to the practicalities and cost of any re-training, redeployment and/or recruitment activities that could increase or change workforce supply as well as identifying workforce in the training/education pipeline.

Think about the following questions:

- Do you know what skills, training and qualifications are required for the workforce?
- What turnover/attrition is expected?
- What numbers are in the training/education pipeline?
- What influences on supply are there even with no service change (e.g. flexible working trends)
- What is the anticipated competition for skills with other employers in the local/national labour market? Do you know the wider environment and the supply? You may find the **Governments Shortage Occupation List** helpful here.
- Will this help you to have the right people, in the right place with the right skills?

4.3 What are the options: Time to pause and reflect, what are the options that will give assurance that your future workforce requirements can be met, ensuring resilience and sustainability and is your preferred option realistic and achievable.

Think about the following questions:

- What options for retention, retraining, recruitment, redeployment etc. can be realistically developed?
- What are the options for extending roles e.g. advanced practice, introducing assistant roles?
- Have the options for working differently been analysed and costed?

- Do you have effective succession planning¹¹ in place?

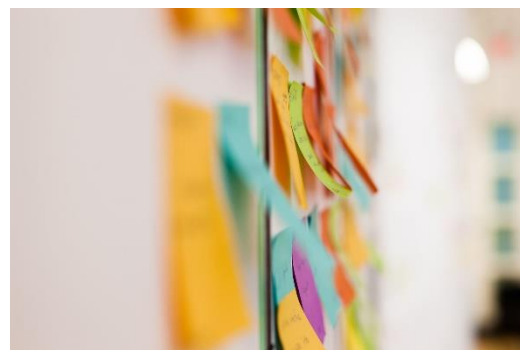
It would be helpful to start a **Gap Analysis** at this point. Gaps can occur not only in the overall numbers of staff needed in the different roles but also in the skills they need. More subtle gaps can also occur in terms of flexibility, location of working and ways of working. e.g. 7 day working, peak times, twilight services, community or shared hub-based services etc.

Once you have looked at what workforce is required based on the needs you identified (Step 3) and you've explored what workforce you can supply (Step 4) and identified the gaps and possible ways to fill those gaps you may need to revisit the realism or achievability of your shared vision and proposed service/ways of working change based on your analysis, this may require re-doing steps 3 and 4.

Step 5 - Define the Actions Required

Step 5 is about developing your plan for delivering the right staff, with the right skills in the right place needs to be developed with milestones and timescales, this will then become a programme of work to deliver your workforce plan.

This step involves reflecting on the previous 3 steps and determining the most effective way of ensuring the availability of staff to deliver redesigned services, even if this means some further service redesign.



You should also include an assessment of anticipated problems and how you will build momentum for change, including clinical engagement and continued communication with your stakeholders.

Your programme of work should outline your plans to develop current staff skills, implement new ways of working, implementing, embedding and reviewing new roles required, recruitment planning, retention planning, succession planning, changes to work processes and technologies and their impact on the workforce.

The programme of work is a **key output of the workforce planning process** as this will **act as your practical guide for implementation of your identified workforce** development and planning priorities and the milestones identified.

5.1 Gap Analysis: you will have started to identify your gaps at the end of step 4, now you will need to identify what changes are needed to bridge the gaps.

¹¹ Succession planning is the process for identifying and developing new future staff who can replace existing staff when they leave or retire and increases the availability of experienced and capable staff who are prepared to assume these roles as they become available

Think about the following questions:

- Has a gap analysis been undertaken of each scenario? Has the gap analysis identified any gaps between demand and supply of your workforce. What changes or action are needed to the current workforce to address the gaps? What about leadership roles and succession planning?
- Has the gap analysis identified the need for any new skills, knowledge and competences required for the current and future workforce? What actions are required to address this?
- Have you or do you need to expand job roles? Do you need a training plan or to develop a recruitment plan? Can you opt for a less traditional route (e.g. apprenticeships)?
- Have you considered all the equality aspects? Is your workforce representative of your community? Have you considered the Welsh Language Standards?

5.2 Priority Planning: You need to develop an action plan for your programme of work using SMART¹² objectives. Include your workforce planning priorities as well as who needs to do what, by when, identifying what resources are needed.

Think about the following questions:

- What are the most significant areas for change (to reduce the gap in Supply & Demand)?
- What is the cost? Is there a Cost Improvement Plan in place?
- What are the least significant areas for change (to reduce the gap in Supply & Demand)?
- Have you considered National Issues – national shortages?
- What are your critical workforce points?

5.3 Managing Change: Change Management techniques will be required to support implementing your planned change; does your organisation have change champions? Can you get some help from your workforce & OD colleagues to support the implementation of your plan, particularly around staff wellbeing?

You should also include in your plan an assessment of anticipated problems and how you will build

¹² SMART objectives are goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and, Timely (or time-bound).

momentum for change, including clinical engagement and maintaining your stakeholder engagement.

Think about the following questions:

- Has momentum been built in for change? Is the change mandated/endorsed from senior leadership (this is why gaining ownership of your plan was so important)? Do you have support from key stakeholders? Are Workforce, OD, Planners and Financial resources addressed?
- How will momentum and engagement for change be sustained?
- How will you support wellbeing for all those involved in the change?
- Do you need to manage the change under the Wales **Organisation Change Policy (OCP)**.
- What are the risks?
- Are you properly engaged with your stakeholders?

Step 6 - Implement and Monitor

Your plan must be delivered effectively and will need periodic review and adjustment and for this to happen your workforce plan implementation needs to be championed by senior staff.

The plan should be clear about how success will be measured and evaluated. Risks and unintended consequences of the changes can be identified during review so that corrective action can be taken. You will also need to have robust Governance¹³ structures in place.



6.1 Implementation: You will need to identify the key milestones of your plan and how progress will be monitored.

Think about the following questions:

- How are you going to monitor delivery and quality?
- How will you monitor risks?
- How does this fit into your wider organisation planning requirements (e.g. IMTP)?

¹³ Governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented

6.2 Monitoring: You may be required to provide formal monitoring reports in line with your local programme, project management and governance processes. The **Project Management Resources** can help with this if you don't already have an organisation process in place.

Find out if there are any measures already in place within your organisation that can help you to monitor progress on implementing your workforce plan e.g. new roles or skills sets having an impact on access, outcomes or patient satisfaction.

Think about the following Questions:

- How are the outcomes and unintended consequences going to be measured?
- Can you identify workforce risks and mitigation i.e. actions that can be taken to manage and reduce any potential risk?
- What will you measure? (e.g. Budget; Surveys; Activity; Sickness)

6.3 Evaluation: You may need to refresh your plan and actions as work progresses to take account of any changes required. Think about what this process will look like and how you will manage the changes and who needs to agree the changes and how will you engage with your stakeholders on the changes.

Think about the following questions:

- What is the process for revisiting your plan and refreshing any requirements?
- When will you evaluate your plan, how will you manage changes to the plan?
- How will you know your plan is working?
- Who will you involve in the evaluation?
- Did you identify any lessons learned? and how will you share these?

For more information on workforce planning in NHS Wales visit

[HEIW site link](#)