



Dear Colleagues,

NATIONAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY: THREE YEAR WORKFORCE PLANS

1. This Director's Letter provides guidance to NHS Boards and HSCPs on completion of their Three Year Workforce Plans, including the key information and analysis that should be set out in those plans. Boards and HSCPs are required to submit a copy of their plan to the Scottish Government by **31 July 2022**. An analysis and feedback process will then take place, pursuant to which the plans should be published on organisations' websites by **31 October 2022**.
2. The guidance follows publication on 11 March 2022 of the National Workforce Strategy for Health and Care, and should be read alongside the NHS Recovery Plan, published in August 2021. The guidance appended to this letter constitutes the first iteration of new medium term workforce planning guidance for health and social care, with the express intention of improving the strategic alignment between organisations' workforce, financial and service planning.
3. When developing their workforce plans, we expect NHS Boards and HSCPs to align with the key policy commitments set out in the NHS Recovery Plan, considering also, where relevant, projected recovery needs in Social Care services, in anticipation of the development of the National Care Service. We expect that Workforce Plans will also sit alongside the priorities and deliverables that will be set out in the upcoming medium-term operational planning guidance, also due for submission in July.
4. Three Year Workforce Plans are expected to use the Five Pillars of Workforce Planning outlined within the National Workforce Strategy (Plan, Attract, Train, Employ, Nurture) as the basis for outlining proposed actions to secure sufficient workforce to meet local projected short-term recovery and medium-term growth requirements across the health and/or social care services you manage.

DL 2022 (09)

1 April 2022

Addresses

For action

NHS Board Chief Executives, Integration Joint Board Chief Officers and Local Authority Chief Executives.

For information

NHS Board Directors of HR, Local Authority Heads of Human Resources, NHS Directors of Planning, Medical, Nursing, AHP and Finance Directors; Employee Directors and National Staff-side representatives; National Workforce Planning Group
NHS Regional Workforce Planning Leads
NHS and Local Authority Workforce Planners

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Actions

5. NHS Boards and HSCPs are asked to use the Guidance to assess upcoming workforce demand and need in their Three Year Workforce Plans, and provide:
 - Information on their current workforce (undertaking a gap analysis comparing demand analysis with current workforce);
 - their assessment of workforce needs to fill the gap; and
 - an action plan to address the gap predicated on the Five Pillars of the Strategy.

Alignment with Service and Financial Planning

6. A key aim of the approach to workforce planning is to ensure a robust and aligned approach across workforce, operational service and financial planning. Three Year Workforce Plans should therefore align with priorities identified in Board Medium-term Operational and Financial Plans, and HSCP Strategic Commissioning Plans (SCPs). In particular, financial planning assumptions should reflect how you prioritise actions within your local workforce plans (i.e. to support training, new recruitment, retention etc.), so that investment is made in the areas that will make the greatest impact on achieving the Strategy's tripartite ambition leading to long-term workforce sustainability.
7. It is recognised that the financial outlook, over the medium term, is highly likely to remain very challenging. In the context of prioritising investment, Boards and HSCPs should, within their Plans, expressly consider approaches to filling existing funded vacancies, and/or opportunities to repurpose vacancies in order to support, inter alia, service reform and different models of recruitment.
8. As we finalise the Delivery Framework for health and care services, work is progressing on development of medium-term service planning guidance for NHS Boards, which is planned to be issued by 30 April 2022. As noted above, it is expected that your workforce plans, as far as possible, will reflect and align with the medium-term planning priorities.
9. In particular, this should consider where planned future changes to the shape, size, delivery infrastructure and location of services impacts on the quantum of workforce required, their skills and abilities, and changing education and training requirements. This might include, for example, the impact of expanding digital options in the future; of the improvement work being led and co-ordinated by the Centre for Sustainable Delivery; and the work of the National Treatment Centres.

Aligning workforce and service planning in HSCPs

10. We recognise that HSCPs are being asked to develop Workforce Plans at a time when they are yet to develop their Strategic Commissioning Plans (SCPs), setting out how they will plan and deliver services over the medium-term, using the integrated budgets under their control. These plans will generally include a high level summary of workforce issues.

Scope of Three Year Workforce Plans

11. The key elements of the guidance appended to this letter relate to all NHS Boards and HSCPs. We recognise however the distinct contribution made by National Boards, who will wish to engage with their respective Sponsor Teams in advance of submitting their Three Year Workforce Plans. All Boards and HSCPs are expected to discuss the development of their plan with relevant stakeholders and partners.

Timescales

12. The guidance below this Director's Letter sets out the following timescales:

- **By end July 2022:** Three Year Workforce Plans should be submitted in draft to the National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan Programme Office WFPPMO@gov.scot
- **By end August 2022:** Draft Three Year Workforce Plans will be reviewed and feedback provided by Scottish Government;
- **By end October 2022:** Three Year Workforce Plans to be published on organisations' websites with electronic side copy to the email link above.

Stephen Lea-Ross
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Directorate of Health Workforce

NHS Scotland Boards and HSCPs: Three Year Workforce Plan Development Guidance

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April 2022

INTRODUCTION: ABOUT THIS GUIDANCE

This document provides guidance to NHS Boards and HSCPs on completion of their Three Year Workforce Plans, for submission by **31 July 2022**, and for publication on organisations' websites by **31 October 2022**.

This guidance follows the March publication of the National Workforce Strategy for Health and Care, and should be read alongside the NHS Recovery Plan published in August 2021.

Although plans for social care reform are still in development, Three Year Workforce Plans should address the need to achieve a sustainable social care workforce, leading to the introduction of a National Care Service for Scotland.

NHS Boards and HSCPs are asked to assess upcoming workforce demand and need in their Three Year Workforce Plans, taking into account:

- their current workforce (undertaking a gap analysis comparing demand analysis with current workforce);
- their assessment of workforce needs to fill the gap;
- and an action plan to address the gap predicated on the Five Pillars of the Strategy

NHS Boards and HSCPs should:

Reflect the local workforce implications of the National Workforce Strategy (Recovery, Growth and Transformation) by describing:

- Short-term (12 months) workforce drivers focusing on recovery and remobilisation of local health and care services;
- Medium-term (12-36 months) workforce drivers focusing on sustaining growth and supporting longer term transformation;
- Outcomes of local establishment gap analysis comparing demand for future staff with current workforce numbers and skills; and in three year plans;
- Profile the numbers of staff and new roles required to achieve the above.

Use the 5 Pillars in the Workforce Strategy (Plan, Attract, Train, Employ, Nurture) as a framework in Three Year Workforce Plans, to:

- Detail the actions which organisations will take to recruit and train staff in sufficient numbers to deliver the future workforce;
- Describe the current workforce and issues affecting the quality of staff experience, wellbeing and actions to support the retention of current staff;
- Identify any short/medium-term risks to service delivery in meeting projected workforce requirements and outline actions in place to mitigate shortfalls.

While Three Year Workforce Plans are an important element of organisations' local plans (including service and financial plans), they should also inform national developments, providing workforce planning information to support Scottish Ministers' decisions on health and social care services. A checklist of content is suggested at **Appendix 1** to support local organisations in achieving this balance.

NHS Boards and HSCPs should ensure that their workforce planning uses an approach which best meets their individual organisational needs. Further guidance on workforce planning methodologies and supporting tools currently in use across local authorities, the third and independent sector, and NHSScotland is set out at **Appendix 2**.

1. PURPOSE OF GUIDANCE

1.1 The purpose of this guidance is to support a consistent and collaborative approach to the development of local Three Year Workforce Plans by NHS Boards and Integration Authorities (though Health and Social Care Partnerships), across an integrated landscape.

1.2 Following publication of the National Workforce Strategy in March 2022¹, this guidance provides further advice on the process for development and submission of Three Year Workforce Plans and sets out the main aspects that NHS Boards and HSCPs should consider.

1.3 In developing Three Year Workforce Plans, NHS Boards and HSCPs should provide workforce planning information aligning local activity with the Strategy. Using the “5 Pillars” identified in the Strategy (Plan, Attract, Train, Employ, Nurture) they should clearly outline actions to address these objectives at a local level.

What this Guidance will be used for

1.4 Three Year Workforce Plans will inform Scottish Ministers’ decisions on:

- planned future models of care for health and social care services;
- aggregating local workforce needs into a national picture of workforce demand and supply requirements; and
- national approaches supporting the recruitment, training, and retention of a skilled and sustainable workforce.

1.5 It is imperative that organisations respond to each of the key questions set out in the ensuing sections as fully as possible, including quantitative detail throughout and clear narrative assessment.

1.6 Three Year Plans will also inform the Strategy’s commitment² to build a national projected growth trajectory based on the Medium-term Financial Framework. This will help achieve better understanding, for example, of the linkages between staffing capacity and affordability and modelling around pay, terms and conditions.

1.7 A suggested checklist for Three Year Workforce Plan content is attached to this guidance in **Appendix 1**.

1.8 NHS Boards and HSCPs should ensure that workforce planning uses an approach which best meets their individual organisational needs. Workforce planning methodologies and tools currently in use across local authorities, the third and independent sector, and NHSScotland are set out at **Appendix 2**.

¹ National Workforce Strategy <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781804350058>

² Page 45, National Workforce Strategy, “We will, for the first time, publish our indicative projections for Health and Social Care Workforce growth later this year. This will allow us to expressly incorporate evidence from a range of sources, including Three Year Workforce Plans and the forthcoming revised Medium-Term Financial Framework. We will review these projections annually, in line with new and emerging evidence.”

2. NATIONAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY

2.1 The National Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care in Scotland published in March 2022 sits within a wider planning landscape, supported at local level by NHS Boards' and HSCPs' Strategic, Operational, Financial and Workforce Plans:



2.2 The Strategy includes the following vision:

“A sustainable, skilled workforce with attractive career choices and fair work where all are respected and valued for the work they do”

focuses on three objectives:

- **Recovery**
- **Growth**
- **Transformation**

and sets out “Five Pillars of the workforce journey”:

- **Plan** – supporting evidence-based workforce planning;
- **Attract** – using domestic and ethical international recruitment to attract the best staff into health and care employment in Scotland;
- **Train** – supporting staff through education and training to equip them with the skills required to deliver the best quality of care;
- **Employ** – making health and social care organisations “employers of choice” by ensuring staff are, and feel, valued and rewarded;
- **Nurture** – creating a workforce and leadership culture focusing on the health and wellbeing of all staff.

3. THREE YEAR WORKFORCE PLAN CONTENT

3.1 To support the Strategy, Three Year Workforce Plans must respond to the following four questions:

- i. What are your current service demands (including recovery requirements and projected Board/HSCP) population health needs), and the workforce requirements associated with these?
- ii. What is your current staffing profile (including quantitative detail)?
- iii. What is the establishment gap between projected service demand and your current staffing profile?
- iv. What actions are you taking at a local level, in accordance with the 5 pillars of workforce set out in the Strategy, to support service growth and transformation, in line with your gap analysis (as set out at iii. above)?

Organisations are expected to provide a sufficient level of detail in their responses to fully reflect their key local challenges and priorities. They should align their action planning with recovery objectives and new resource allocations, and prioritise actions accordingly.

3.2 Using the Five Pillars in the Strategy, Three Year Plans should:

- Detail actions to attract, recruit and train staff in sufficient numbers to deliver the future workforce in the context of changing local workforce demography - reflecting local, national and international employment markets;
- Describe the current workforce and issues affecting the quality of staff experience, wellbeing and actions to support the retention of current staff;
- Identify short/medium-term risks to service delivery in meeting projected workforce requirements, and outline mitigating actions including service design and implementation of new technology-enabled care;

4. ALIGNMENT WITH SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANS

4.1 A key aim of the national approach to workforce planning is to ensure a robust and aligned approach across workforce, operational service and financial planning. Three Year Workforce Plans should therefore align with local service priorities identified in Medium-term Operational Plans (incorporating Board Annual Delivery Plans for 2022/23). These plans will be developed in partnership with Integration Authorities and submitted to the Scottish Government at the end of July 2022.

4.2 Three Year Workforce Plans should also align with local Financial Plans and financial planning assumptions, reflecting appropriately any issues of affordability in achieving the required future workforce.

5. NHS RECOVERY PLAN

5.1 The Scottish Government published the **NHS Recovery Plan**³ in August 2021 which set out key ambitions aimed at addressing the backlog of care across the next five years while maintaining continued delivery of high quality health and care.

5.2 NHS Boards and HSCPs should ensure Three Year Plans reflect workforce implications associated with the priority areas outlined in the Recovery Plan i.e. Social, Primary & Community Care, Planned Care (including Outpatients and Diagnostics), Cancer Care, Unscheduled Care and Mental Health services.

6. NATIONAL CARE SERVICE FOR SCOTLAND

6.1 The Scottish Government's proposals for the development of a National Care Service (NCS)⁴ recognise the significant challenges facing social care in Scotland, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

6.2 Although the scope and nature of social care reform is still in development, Three Year Workforce Plans (particularly for HSCPs) should consider workforce implications of ongoing social care demand in advance of the development of a National Care Service. Based on organisations' existing service provision responsibilities, they should describe their projected workforce needs across social care and social work services in the short and medium-term s.

7. HEALTH AND CARE (STAFFING) (SCOTLAND) ACT

7.1 Progress is continuing on measures within the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act, with the Scottish Government (SG) continuing to fund the Healthcare Staffing Programme (HSP) through Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS), and the Safe Staffing Programme (SSP) through the Care Inspectorate. HIS and Chief Nursing Officer Directorate (CNOD) have also developed a number of real-time staffing resources (for use during Covid-19), which will inform further developments.

7.2 HIS has developed a Self-Assessment Template to support NHS Boards in preparations for implementing the Act and its reporting requirements once in force. Feedback from testing indicates that this is a useful tool, both for external reporting to Scottish Government and internal reporting within local Health Boards.

7.3 A care management safety huddle tool⁵ developed during the pandemic for use in care homes for older people is being used by HSCPs and others to mitigate identified risk. The tool is also informing the Care Inspectorate's approach to developing workload tools for social care.

³ NHS Recovery Plan 2021-2026 [NHS Recovery Plan 2021-2026 \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/nhs-recovery-plan-2021-2026)

⁴ [National Care Service - Social care - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/national-care-service-social-care)

⁵ [Safety Huddle Care Management Tool - update for Care Inspectorate newsletter - Final 20 August 2020.pdf \(careinspectorate.com\)](https://www.careinspectorate.com/safety-huddle-care-management-tool-update-for-care-inspectorate-newsletter-final-20-august-2020.pdf)

7.4 NHS Boards and HSCPs should use all available workforce modelling tools to inform their assessments of projected workforce demand in Three Year Workforce Plans.

8. DEVELOPING PLANS IN PARTNERSHIP

8.1 NHS Board and HSCP workforce planning leads should develop their Three Year Plans in partnership with stakeholders (including those in third and independent sectors and in primary care) and Trade Unions, to present an aligned and cohesive picture of health and care workforce need across their geographic areas.

8.2 There are also strong interconnections between strategic commissioning, service procurement and workforce planning. To support longer term workforce planning, third and independent sector providers will need strategic commissioning and workforce plans to be clear about what kind of care and support will be required, in order that they can plan and develop their workforce appropriately.

9. SUBMISSION, FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION TIMESCALES

9.1 The timescales below align as far as possible with other extant requirements of NHS Boards and Integration Authorities:

- **By end July 2022:** Three Year Workforce Plans should be submitted in draft to the National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan Programme Office WFPPMO@gov.scot
- **By end August 2022:** Draft Three Year Workforce Plans will be reviewed and feedback provided by Scottish Government;
- **By end October 2022:** Three Year Workforce Plans to be published on organisations' websites with electronic side copy to the email link above.

10. ANNUAL REVIEW OF WORKFORCE PLANS

10.1 NHS Boards and HSCPs will require to review and update their Workforce Plans annually in the years between publication of full Three Year Plans. This will not require full new Workforce Plans and should reflect progress on actions and workforce planning assumptions.

10.2 Annual revisions to Workforce Plans should be submitted to the Scottish Government WFPPMO@gov.scot and updated Plans published on organisations' websites by the end of October each calendar year.

11. REVIEW OF WORKFORCE PLANNING GUIDANCE

11.1 Scottish Ministers strongly support the role of clear and consistent guidance in supporting employers to improve and integrate workforce planning so it fully informs and addresses national as well as local responses to demand. They recognise the need for more consistent linkage between workforce, service and financial planning, as well as commissioning processes.

11.2 While this Guidance relates to the submission of Three Year Workforce Plans, existing guidance on wider workforce planning will be revised to reflect this document and other developments including those on the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act and the National Care Service for Scotland and published in due course.

Appendix 1

THREE YEAR WORKFORCE PLAN – INDICATIVE CONTENT CHECKLIST

Heading	Indicative Workforce Plan Content	Yes	No	n/a
Methodology	Our Workforce Plan has been developed using a methodology appropriate to the organisation's needs.			
Partnership Working	Our Workforce Plan describes the process for developing the three year plans.			
	A Responsible Officer has been appointed to ensure the development, submission and publication of our Three Year Workforce Plans in line with the timescales outlined.			
	Our Workforce Plan reflects discussions with stakeholders, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Service Planning Leads • Financial Planning Leads • Trades Unions • NHS/Local Authority/HSCP Workforce Planning Leads • Social work/social care Leads • Professional lead officers, including Nursing and Medical Directors, AHP Directors and Healthcare Science Leads • HR Leads • Third and Independent Sector Representatives • Primary Care Contractor Representatives • Other identified stakeholders 			
	Our Workforce Plan development process has support from the organisation's senior management team.			
Alignment with other strategic documents	Our Workforce Plan aligns with other local strategic, service and financial plans.			
	Our Workforce Plan reflects service priorities identified in our: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium-term Operational Plans (incorporating Board Annual Delivery Plans for 2022/23) • Strategic Plans 			
	Our Workforce Plan reflects our local Financial Plan assumptions and affordability in achieving the required future workforce.			
Planning the required workforce	Our Workforce Plan describes how the workforce will support recovery, growth and transformation.			
	Our Workforce Plan analyses the health and care needs of the population and identifies the impact on local workforce demand.			

	Our Workforce Plan has considered internal and external environments and how they may impact on our services and workforce.			
	Our Workforce Plan has been informed by the use of available national workforce planning and workload tools.			
	Our Workforce Plan describes and summarises the workforce required in the short (12 months) and medium-term (36 months) to deliver the key service recovery and growth priorities, outlining <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required staff numbers (FTE/WTE) • Job Families and Professional Roles 			
	Our Workforce Plan analyses our current workforce profile and considered the impact of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age profiles and retiral projections • Leavers and turnover projections 			
	Our Workforce Plan contains an analysis/description of the establishment gap between the projected future workforce need and current staffing in terms of overall numbers (WTE/FTE).			
	Our Workforce Plan considers options to meet required workforce demand (e.g. increased supply, improved productivity, demand suppression including surge capacity, bank use etc.).			
Action Planning	Our Workforce Plan details local actions required to achieve necessary changes to the workforce through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Recruitment • International Recruitment • Service Redesign • Role Redesign • Staff Training and Development 			
	Our Workforce Plan describes and quantifies opportunities to transform the delivery of health and care services identified or accelerated during the pandemic – e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding and extending the role of Digital Health and Telecare using Virtual/Remote Consultations • Virtual Wards • Hospital @ Home • Extension of MDT (multidisciplinary team working) • Opportunities to support Mutual Aid, Joint and Regional Working. 			
	Our Workforce Plan describes areas of workforce skills development that will be required to support future models of care/ service. Our workforce plans describe the need for and development of new posts/new roles/extension of current duties including:			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Practice roles; • Physicians Associates; • Assistant Practitioners roles; • Extended Social Care roles in Primary Care and Community settings • Other new roles 			
Staff Wellbeing	Our Workforce Plan describes actions supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of our staff.			
	Our Workforce Plan considers workforce diversity and inclusion as a key part of profiling and defining future workforce requirements and needs.			
	Our Workforce Plan describes key workforce issues affecting the quality of staff experience, and projected impact of these on staff retention.			
Summary of Actions	Our Workforce Plan summarises actions being taken to address identified workforce challenges			
	Actions being taken align to the Five Pillars of the Workforce Journey contained within the National Workforce Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan • Attract • Train • Employ • Nurture 			
Implementing and Reviewing	Our Workforce Plan identifies key workforce targets to be achieved.			
	Our Workforce Plan describes how/when targets and milestones will be measured.			

Workforce Planning Methodologies and Guidance Documents

Workforce Planning Methodologies and Supporting Documents		
Publishing Organisation	Document Title	Content Description
Skills for Health - Workforce Projects Team	The Six Steps Methodology to Integrated Workforce Planning http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/resources/guidance-documents/120-six-steps-methodology-to-integrated-workforce-planning	Developed for use in the NHS, this methodology provides a practical guide to sustainable and evidence based workforce planning applicable across workforce and service based planning to support designing new ways of working
Skills for Care	Practical Approaches to Workforce Planning http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Document-library/NMDS-SC,-workforce-intelligence-and-innovation/Workforce-planning/Workforce-planning-guide.pdf	This guidance, is aimed at owners, managers and organisational leads responsible for workforce planning in small and medium sized organisations delivering adult social care. Though developed for use by social care providers in England the advice contained will, in part, be transferable.
Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit	Workforce Planning - A Toolkit for Voluntary Sector Social Services in Scotland http://www.ccpscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Workforce-Planning-Update-July-2009.pdf	Developed for application within the voluntary sector, the toolkit provides an introduction to the key stages involved in workforce planning. The tools included help build up the information required for voluntary sector organisations to develop workforce plans. The toolkit is structured around a set of six key stages of Workforce Planning.
National Improvement Service for Local Government in Scotland	http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/workforce-planning.html	A suite of tools, checklists and training materials which promote better understanding of the requirements for workforce planning and ensure effective workforce planning within Councils