

Social care workforce planning fit for the future



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Background to the report

In ten years, the population across Wales and the services needed to support it will be very different to today. We want the social care workforce to be able to deliver services and adapt, strengthen and continually improve to provide new models of care and support.

To achieve this, workforce planning is critical. We need careful workforce planning to meet the objectives of our joint [Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care](#), which we launched with Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW) in 2020, and the broader ambitions of [A Healthier Wales](#). We must also make sure the workforce feels valued and supported to deal with challenging and increasing demands.

We've already published national workforce plans for the [direct care workforce](#), the [social work profession](#), and in partnership with HEIW, the [mental health workforce](#), but we wanted to understand approaches to workforce planning locally and regionally. So, we worked with Practice Solutions to produce a report looking at how things are currently and what's needed in future for effective workforce planning.

Along with the findings from the research, the report includes recommendations about possible improvements at local, regional and national levels.

What we've learned

The report shows that:

- workforce planning varies across Wales in how it's planned, implemented and delivered
- the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on workforce planning objectives
- workforce planning, governance and management can be successful when corporate and social services strategies align and teams work together with a clear focus on workforce issues linked to the budget cycle
- where workforce planning is well developed, there's evidence of more sophisticated workforce planning techniques and practices. This was mainly in larger local authorities
- several local authorities work in an ad hoc way with few structured workforce planning approaches. These local authorities would welcome support and intervention to add capacity and resources to develop their workforce planning approaches
- there needs to be a significant shift from operational to strategic workforce planning. This needs considerable investment and support locally, regionally and nationally
- it's concerning there isn't medium to long term planning using the right tools, systems, processes, resources and governance models
- workforce planning is held back by many factors, including local governance models, technology limitations, capacity, capability, inflexible budget frameworks and often outdated HR policies, processes and practice.

What the report recommends

The report recommends:

- creating a central online resource hub that links to guides, tools and templates
- setting-up a workforce planning network to encourage collaboration, peer-to-peer support and advice, and to share experiences

- targeted support and intervention for local authorities currently carrying out ad hoc workforce planning
- reviewing the role of leaders, managers and team leaders in driving strategic workforce planning
- reviewing the function and capabilities of Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) teams, to make sure there's strategic alignment with workforce planning at a local, regional and national level
- promoting the benefits of a HR business model approach
- reviewing the role of Regional Partnership Boards in social care workforce planning and development
- Implementing and launching new national initiatives and products around social care workforce planning and development
- considering a national approach to strategic workforce planning
- including specific references to joint workforce planning and sharing relevant intelligence in the National Framework for Commissioning and Support.

What we're going to do

We welcome the report's findings and recommendations.

We're going to consider what actions and resources are needed locally, regionally and nationally to be able to respond effectively and agree those with the relevant partners and stakeholders.

Find out more

To find out more about the report's findings or to get a full copy of the report, email: workforcestrategy@socialcare.wales.