Workforce and the NHS Long Term Plan

Health and care leaders have come together to develop a Long Term Plan to make the NHS fit for the future, and to get the most value for patients out of every pound of taxpayers’ investment. Our plan has been drawn up by those who know the NHS best, including frontline health and care staff, patient groups and other experts.

To help provide the workforce needed for the future, the NHS Long Term Plan will:

- Provide funding for 5,000 more nurse clinical placements, above the 2018/19 number from 2019/20, a 25% increase.
- Improve nurse retention by at least 2% by 2025, equivalent to an extra 12,400 nurses.
- Bring in new national arrangements to support NHS organisations to recruit from overseas.
- Shape a modern employment culture for the NHS, extending the Workforce Race Equality Standard to 2025 and redoubling efforts to tackle bullying, harassment and violence.
- Provide increased investment each year, for the next five years, in Continuous Professional Development (following agreement of the Health Education England training budget).
- Support improvements in regional workforce planning, with NHS Improvement, Health Education England and NHS Employers working together with local employers.

For the NHS Long Term Plan to succeed, the NHS will need more staff, working in rewarding jobs and a supportive culture.

We will ensure we have enough people, with the right skills and experience, so that staff have the time they need to care for patients well.

We will ensure our people have rewarding jobs, work in a positive culture, with opportunities to develop their skills and use state of the art technology, and have support to manage the complex and often emotive nature of delivering patient care.

And we will strengthen and support good, compassionate, diverse leadership at all levels, managerial and clinical, to meet the complex practical, financial and cultural challenges a successful workforce plan and the Long Term Plan will demand.

Focus will also go on reducing geographical and specialty imbalances for doctors, and creating a more adaptable workforce by expanding multi-professional credentialing for clinicians.

Opportunities to enter the nursing workforce will be widened, with a new online nursing degree for the NHS, and investment in the growth of nursing apprenticeships, with 7,500 new nursing associates starting in 2019, a 50% increase on 2018.

A modern employment culture for the NHS will also be a priority – promoting flexibility, wellbeing and career development, and redoubling our efforts to address discrimination, violence, bullying and harassment.

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Case study

Southend University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has successfully created the ‘Stay @ Southend’ retention model to reduce the number of nurses leaving their job.

A cross-discipline working group developed a number of initiatives, which were closely monitored at ward level.

A plan for the first 90 days of a new nurse’s employment to improve first impressions.

Managers were also supported with practical steps on how to ensure they were engaging positively with their teams and understanding their needs.

Existing policies, such as on flexible working and retire-and-return, were also reworked to reflect staff’s changing needs.

As a result, turnover rates have fallen, and the trust has a better understanding of staff’s aspirations and concerns.