

# Primary Care Cluster Workforce Planning Guidance Notes

## Developing a cluster level workforce plan

### Introduction

This approach to workforce planning in primary care has been developed as a result of a pilot undertaken by Skills for Health with the North and South Cynon Clusters. The approach has been developed together with a set of resources for clusters to use.

The approach sets out a framework for primary care workforce planning which has been based on national and international best practice. The approach has been developed with the co-operation and collaboration of practices within each cluster. It is a framework that can enable clusters to work together to develop cluster wide solutions to the many workforce challenges primary care faces to ensure service sustainability.

This guidance document has been designed to be used in conjunction with the associated **Cluster Workforce Planning Template** and includes specific guidance notes aligned to the separate sections of the associated workforce planning template.

### 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.

Primary care services provide the first point of care, day or night, for more than 90% of people contact within NHS Wales. General practice is a core element of that service and will remain so in the future. However, it is not the only element and the future workforce must be shaped by an increasingly integrated contribution from a wide range of professionals and organisations.

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

An approach based on multi-disciplinary teams is seen as the core operational model of the future for primary care in Wales. The skills mix being based on local population and individual's needs.



Operationally, the workforce will come from different organisations and levels (e.g. GP practice level, cluster level, pan cluster level or locality) working together to provide integrated person-centred health and social care.

The make-up and skill-mix of the workforce at a cluster level should be based on an understanding of population need; therefore, this will vary across clusters in different parts of Wales and even within health board areas.

### **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?**

Primary care is changing and new approaches to care delivery are emerging. Many of the drivers for change in primary care 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 at a cluster level will help create a sustainable workforce across the practices within the cluster, prepare for future changes, identify and plan for any workforce gaps, whilst managing risk and exploring new innovative workforce opportunities. Developing a cluster 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 Cluster's population
- Developing enhanced working relations across the cluster 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 the cluster.



## Primary Care Cluster Workforce Planning Approach

### Getting started

1. Define the cluster plan based on policy direction

### Where are you now?

2. Engaging stakeholders

3. Cluster population and health needs analysis

4. Service demand analysis and cluster trends

5. Understand the current workforce issues across the cluster

### Where do you want to be?

6. Creating the shared vision across the cluster

7. Future workforce requirements

### How are you going to get there?

8. Identifying workforce transformation opportunities

9. Exploring workforce supply and development routes

10. Gap analysis-current versus future workforce

11. Developing the cluster action plan

12. Governance and delivery

The approach is based on four questions you might ask yourself and these are supported by several associate stages. Each stage links to a section within the associated **Cluster Workforce Planning Template** which will help you to record and capture the rational and outcomes of your plan. Going through the 12 stages 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 stages you will find the divides are artificial and as you work on one stage you will start to embrace questions from the next.

A **Workforce Data Analysis Resource (Primary Care)** has been developed to support you to analyse your workforce information from the **Wales National Workforce and Reporting System** and support cluster level workforce planning. Each practice within the cluster will need to complete the survey. Collated use of the data will provide the information required for stage 5 - understanding the current workforce issues across the cluster.



## Who needs to lead the cluster workforce plan development?

As primary care workforce plans are being developed at cluster level, it is advisable that a representative from each practice within the cluster should be part of a workforce plan development group to ensure all cluster practices are involved in discussions and are signed up to the plan and its implementation. In practise, we have found a lead person from one practice will take responsibility for co-ordinating meetings, discussions and the completion of the workforce planning template.

## Successful workforce planning within Primary Care Clusters requires:

- **Collaboration**  
Co-operation and collaboration across all practices in a cluster and with other identified stakeholder groups, working together to identify shared sustainable workforce solutions for local primary care services.
- **Effective leadership**  
Engaged and motivated leadership is needed to drive workforce planning within the cluster.
- **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.



## Guidance Notes for Developing a Primary Care Cluster Workforce plan

### 1. Defining the Cluster Plan

In the first section it is important to be clear about the purpose and scope of the plan. State whom the workforce plan is intended for. You must be clear why the cluster workforce plan is required, what it will be used for and how it can assist you to define the need for the workforce to meet your cluster's changing service demands. You should determine the staff groups it covers and be clear who are responsible for ensuring the plan is delivered.

**Things to consider:** The key documents – such as A Healthier Wales Plan, our plan for Health and Social Care, the Strategic Programme for Primary Care, NHS Wales Planning Framework, Cluster Transformation Plans and other key policies and strategies, and horizon scanning for potential changes.

**1.1 Purpose:** What's the rationale for the plan and who needs to be involved?

- What are the aims/objectives of the cluster plan?
- What will a good workforce plan enable you to do?

**1.2 Scope:** Define the scope once you have clarity about the rationale and the decisions it will support.

- What's in scope and what's out of scope?

**1.3 Alignment:** Consider the key policies, strategies and drivers for Primary Care in Wales and state how this plan aims to align with these.

### 2. Engaging Stakeholders<sup>1</sup>

In stage 2 you need to be clear who needs to be involved in the planning process to develop the cluster plan. Engagement with other internal and external stakeholders<sup>1</sup> and partners is vital. This will include undertaking a stakeholder analysis<sup>2</sup> which may include: Primary care teams, providers of other services that your cluster interacts with such as social care, the third sector and the local Health Board, as well as staff, patients and the public. Stakeholder engagement will be ongoing.

**2.1 Ownership and engagement**

- Who will own the cluster workforce plan?
- Who needs to be involved both internally to the cluster and externally?

**2.2 Stakeholder Identification**

- Make a list of the key stakeholders and consider how they need to be engaged

[Stakeholder identification and analysis](#)<sup>2</sup> can be helpful here as it's important to identify who needs to be influenced if the plan is to be delivered successfully.

<sup>1</sup> Stakeholders are people that have an interest in and can either affect or be affected by the workforce plan.

<sup>2</sup> Stakeholder analysis is the identification, evaluation of stakeholders to prioritise, manage and engage with them effectively.



## 3. Cluster Population and Health Needs

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.

To find this type of information, you can access the Public Health Wales Observatory website <http://www.publichealthwalesobservatory.wales.nhs.uk/online-data-tools>, or speak to your local Health Board Public Health Wales lead/link. There is also usually a population and health needs analysis overview in your local Health Boards Integrated Medium-Term Plan. The types of information that are particularly useful to understand include the demography (population profile and life expectancy), social deprivation, chronic disease prevalence and local lifestyle behaviour trends.

Don't underestimate your own local knowledge - use any data you have collated from practices across the cluster.

### 3.1 Population

- What are the key population factors that are influencing the services currently being used?

### 3.2 Health needs analysis

- What are the key health needs that are influencing the services currently being used?

### 3.3 Insights

- Are there any population or health trends that stand out locally?
- How does this information provide any insights into how services may need to change in response to any changes and trends emerging?



## 4. Service Demand Analysis – Cluster Trends

It is important to understand and describe the services you currently provide across the cluster. 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.

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. It is also useful to understand if any specific tasks and activities within any service are particularly in high demand or no longer required. 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.

### 4.1 Current service overview

- Provide a brief overview of the services you currently provide across the cluster and identify where there are any pressure points?

### 4.2 Changes in demand

- Are there any specific service demand trends across the cluster? If so, what are they? Quantify the change in demand if possible.
- Can you identify any specific workforce skills/tasks and activities that are in high demand?
- Are there any seasonal peaks you are aware of that affect your workforce requirement?

## 5. Service Demand Analysis – Cluster Trends

The cluster needs to have a clear picture of what workforce is currently being used across the cluster practices and what issues, and challenges they are experiencing. Remember, 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. recruitment issues, aging staff and longstanding vacancies.

A detailed workforce profile of the current workforce across the cluster is extremely useful to identify where there are workforce pressure points already and where challenges may appear in the future. The **Workforce Data Analysis Resource (Primary Care)** has been designed to assist your cluster to analyse your workforce data that you can extract from the **Wales National Workforce and Reporting System** so that you can easily collate your cluster level workforce data to inform this plan.

### 5.1 Workforce profile headlines

- What are the characteristics of the current workforce across the cluster?
- Types of staff, FTE, headcount, age profile, gender and retirement profile, vacancies and leavers, skills mix, part time/full time split
- Turnover, vacancies and attrition
- Recruitment and retention issues
- Skills and skills shortages

### 5.2 Key workforce challenges and issue

- From the workforce profile headlines, can you identify the key workforce challenges and issues that need to be addressed in the workforce plan?



## 6. Creating the Shared Vision – Future shape of service

Up to this point you have been collating and analysing information and data which together

with your service intelligence provides a robust picture of where you are now, and what's driving the

need for change. Using this information, the cluster, now needs to create a shared vision which identifies the key service (including possible service redesign areas) and workforce themes, priorities and outcomes which you can all work to. You must be clear about the intended benefits of the vision you have created.

Once you have agreed a shared vision you then need to consider 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.

Tools that can help explore what forces support change and what forces hamper change you are considering include **PESTLE**<sup>3</sup> analysis and/or **SWOT**<sup>4</sup> analysis.

### 6.1 Shared Vision

- What is the clusters shared vision?
- What are the benefits/goals of the cluster vision?
- What are you trying to achieve through this workforce plan?

### 6.2 Options appraisal<sup>5</sup>

- Can you identify a preferred model to deliver the shared vision? Why? What's the rationale?
- Does it deliver the benefits more effectively than other options? Or is it simply more achievable?

<sup>3</sup>PESTLE Analysis – an analysis of potential factors i.e. Political Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental forces that may impact on service delivery

<sup>4</sup>SWOT Analysis – An analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats an organisation faces,

<sup>5</sup>Options appraisal consider a number of potential options you could take, discuss/evaluate them and decided which is your preferred model and why



## 7. Future Workforce Requirements

This stage involves identifying what workforce will be needed, the skills needed by that workforce and the types and numbers of staff required to deliver the vision through the preferred workforce model.

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 across the cluster. It 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.

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.

### 7.1 Activity analysis

- What are the key activities the workforce (activity analysis) will need to do in the new model?
- Can the activities be broken down into competences, skills and knowledge?
- How much activity is going to be needed? (consider your demand identified in stage 4)

### 7.2 Types and numbers of staff needed

- Identify the types and numbers of staff required
- Have the teams through which the service is to be delivered been identified?



## 8. Identifying Workforce Transformation Opportunities

Opportunities to transform the workforce, to support the delivery of more effective and efficient services, should flow from the workforce requirements stage. When looking at workforce requirements you need to consider where there are opportunities to improve productivity<sup>6</sup> and outcomes which could incorporate new ways of working, changing skill mix and the introduction of new and /or enhanced roles.

Our experiences during the coronavirus pandemic have seen us be able to make rapid changes to the ways in which we provide services to our patients. This has been aided by a rapid adoption and use of digital technologies and the ways in which we have used these to work differently. We can use these experiences to consider and plan for other opportunities to transform the ways we work, and we utilise the skills, knowledge and competencies of the multi-disciplinary team in and supporting primary care. Are there opportunities for using other new technologies, new therapies, different patterns of working, redistributing tasks, and sharing roles across the cluster? 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. A useful place to start is the [Compendium of Emerging Roles and Models in Primary Care](#) resource.

### 8.1 Productivity<sup>6</sup>

- Have you considered how you could improve productivity?
- Describe the productivity implications you have considered

### 8.2 New roles and new ways of working

- Have new ways of working been explored?
- Have new roles been identified as part of the workforce requirement?
- If so, which roles/ways of working? Why?
- What impact do you expect them to have?

<sup>6</sup>Productivity - achieving increased service activity for a given level of workforce input



## 9. Exploring Workforce Supply and Development Routes

This stage 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 stages 7 and 8 are deliverable for the cluster.

It will involve considering the existing workforce across the cluster, their existing skills and deployment, and any problem areas already identified (outputs of stage 5 will be valuable here).

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.

### 9.1 Future workforce configuration considerations

### 9.2 Supply and development routes

- What can you do to influence the future supply and development of the workforce so that it meets the requirement identified?
- Have you considered different supply routes?
- How have you incorporated succession planning<sup>7</sup>?

<sup>7</sup> 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.



## 10. Gap Analysis – Current versus future workforce

The previous stages have given you a picture of what workforce is required for the future and what workforce is likely to be available. 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.

### 10.1 Undertake a gap analysis<sup>8</sup> and consider how you might bridge gaps identified (solutions)

- Gaps in skills, knowledge and competence of current staff which require development.
- Gaps in skills, knowledge and competence of current staff which may create demand for a different type of worker (new or extended roles)
- Gaps in terms of roles needed (between current and future workforce)
- Gaps in terms of patterns flexibility and ways of working

NB: You've looked at what workforce is required based on the needs you identified (stage 6 & 7) and you've explored what workforce you can supply (stages 8 & 9) 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.



## 11. Developing the Cluster Workforce Action Plan and Priorities

This stage involves reflecting on the previous stages and determine the most effective way of ensuring the availability of staff to deliver any redesigned services. A cluster **workforce action plan** for delivering the right staff, with the right skills in the right place needs to be developed with milestones and timescales.

Your action plan needs to consider development of current staff skills, new ways of working, deployment and redeployment of skills across the cluster, new roles required, recruitment planning, retention planning, succession planning, changes to work processes and technologies and their impact on the workforce.

The action plan 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 identified. Some actions will be within the scope of the cluster to just get on and proceed with, while others may require work to secure support from external stakeholders. This work should be included within the action plan

### 11.1 Develop a workforce planning action plan using SMART<sup>9</sup> objectives

- What are your workforce planning priorities?
- Who needs to do what, by when, identifying what resources are needed?

### 11.2 Supporting action planning

- What are the most significant areas for workforce change? Can you cost these?
- What local education and training strategies support this plan (have you linked with the Primary Care Lead?)
- Has momentum been built in for change-mandated by GPs and senior staff?
- Is there ownership from key Stakeholders? Cluster staff, Local Health Board, financial resources identified?
- How will momentum for change be sustained?

<sup>9</sup> SMART objectives are goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and, Timely (or time-bound).



## 12. Governance and Delivery

Governance<sup>10</sup> needs to be in place to include how workforce plans are to be monitored and adjusted. The **action plan** must be clear about how success will be measured with regular monitoring and review of implementation, so that any corrective action can be taken in a timely manner.

Workforce plan implementation needs to be championed by senior staff across the cluster. All workforce change should be evaluated.

### 12.1 Implementation

- What are the key milestones of your plan?
- How will progress against the plan be monitored?
- Are there any measures 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?

### 12.2 Measuring progress

- 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?

### 12.3 Refreshing your plan and actions

- What is the process for revisiting your plan and refreshing any requirements?

<sup>10</sup> Governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented

