

Future Workforce Solution (ESR Transformation)

April 2026

People and OD Committee

Future Workforce Solution

Context and Purpose

Summary

- The current Electronic Staff Record (ESR) system will be replaced by a modern, integrated Future Workforce Solution (FWS).
- This is a *major workforce transformation programme*, not a system upgrade.
- National implementation will begin with early adopters in 2026/27.

Purpose of this update

- To provide the Committee with an overview of national ESR Transformation progress, and what it means for Public Health Wales.
- To set out the preparatory actions underway locally to ensure the organisation is ready for transition to the Future Workforce Solution (FWS).

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What is the FWS?

A national, 15-year programme delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) and supplier Infosys (led in Wales by Welsh Government and NWSSP), by replacing ESR with a solution that will:

- Connect workforce data across NHS Wales and England.
- Modernise HR, payroll, learning, recruitment, and workforce planning processes.
- Strengthen integration with rostering, establishment control, analytics, and other workforce systems.

Key Features

- Single, trusted workforce record.
- AI-enabled analytics and user-focused design.
- End-to-end workforce lifecycle management.

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National Implementation Timeline

Programme milestones

- Oct 2025 – Programme moved into implementation phase.
- 2026 – Organisations to complete baseline readiness. Wave Allocation to be confirmed by Autumn 2026.
- 2026/27 – Early adopters go-live.
- 2028-2030 – Full roll-out across NHS Wales and England.

Implications for PHW

- Wave assignment will determine detailed timelines.
- Early readiness work will ensure minimal disruption during transition.
- Ambition for all NHS Wales organisations to transition by 2028 to avoid prolonged dual running of systems.

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National Expectations – Foundational Readiness

All NHS organisations must demonstrate readiness across four areas:

Leadership and Governance

Clear ownership of planning and decision-making.
Programme structures in place early.

Capacity and Skills

Identified resources for implementation.
Alignment of BAU and project capacity.

Foundational Readiness

Data Quality and Standardisation

Clean, accurate workforce data.
Standardised, mapped processes.

Engagement and Change Readiness

Consistent communication with the workforce.
Preparedness for the scale of change.

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National Risks and Considerations

Risks Identified Nationally

- Variation in digital maturity across organisations.
- Inconsistent workforce data quality.
- Local capacity limitations during dual-running of systems.
- Information governance and cyber security dependencies.
- Potential misalignment between organisational readiness and supplier readiness.

Mitigating Actions

- Early governance and working group structures.
- Data Cleansing and process mapping.
- Learning from early adopters.
- Investment in PMO and Change support.

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Our Approach: Governance and Planning

To manage the scale and interdependencies of the change, PHW will:

Establish a People and OD-Led Working Group

- Acts as a precursor to a formal FWS Programme.
- Oversees readiness across People & OD, Finance, Digital, Communications, Business Planning.
- Ensures alignment with other workforce digital systems.

Supported by PMO

- Milestone planning, risk management, co-ordination.
- Reporting into Change Board/Executive structures.

Whole-System Scope

The programme spans:

- FWS (ESR Replacement)
- E-Rostering
- Establishment Control
- Recruitment Systems
- Workforce Analytics and Reporting tools

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Preparatory Work Underway

Data and Process Readiness

- Early review of People & OD and Finance systems and processes.
- Identification of high-risk data areas and cleansing requirements.
- Reviewing establishment control, recruitment and e-rostering dependencies.

Engagement and Communication

- National updates via workshops, networks and briefings.
- Local engagement with People & OD leadership and wider stakeholders.

Capacity Planning

- Assessing resource requirements for readiness and implementation.
- Future need for dedicated specialist roles and PMO capacity.

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What this means for Public Health Wales

Opportunities

- Modernised, integrated digital workforce environment.
- Significant improvements in data quality and workforce insights.
- Enhanced user experience for managers and staff.
- Alignment with long-term workforce planning and IMTP ambitions.

Challenges

- Balancing BAU pressures with change delivery.
- Ensuring organisation-wide consistency in process and data.
- Managing dependencies across multiple digital workforce systems.



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Next Steps (indicative)

Quarter 1-2 (2026/27):

- Launch FWS Working Group.
- Complete baseline readiness assessment.
- Begin no-regrets activity: data cleansing, process mapping.

Quarter 3-4 (2026/27):

- Respond to national readiness survey.
- Refine governance and resource plans.
- Incorporate early adopter learning.

Future commitments

- Update Committee once national wave allocation is confirmed (Autumn 2026), and present detailed implementation roadmap.



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Any questions?

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to receive assurance in relation to the preparatory work underway to support organisational readiness for the FWS, provide any comments, and raise any questions for discussion.

