

People Strategy

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHIER WALES

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Executive Summary

We are Public Health Wales and, with our partners, we aim to increase healthy life expectancy, improve health and wellbeing, and reduce inequalities for the people of Wales, now and for future generations.

Together, our teams work to prevent disease, protect health, provide system leadership, specialist services and public health expertise. We are the primary source of public health information, research and innovation, to help everyone in Wales live healthier lives.

We face a future of increasing demands and evolving public health challenges. To deliver our Long-Term Strategy, we must develop an engaged and high-performing workforce. The fast-moving external environment and evolving expectations of individuals demand a workplace that prioritises wellbeing, flexibility, and inclusion. We need to adapt to attract and retain top talent. This People Strategy outlines our plans to ensure we are designed and organised appropriately and that we attract, develop and retain a diverse, flexible, sustainable, and thriving workforce.

This strategy sets out five key focus areas to meet these challenges:

- **Talent Attraction and Inclusive Hiring**
- **Cultivating Future-Ready Skills**
- **Leading with Compassion**
- **Exceptional Staff Experience**
- **Designed to Deliver**

This People Strategy sets out our vision for our people, it charts a path for Public Health Wales to build a high-performing work environment where individuals and teams thrive, and everyone can come to work and feel comfortable to be themselves. A strong, inclusive culture and a commitment to a truly representative workforce are essential for attracting and retaining the talented people we need to meet future challenges and deliver our strategic priorities. By investing in our people and ensuring we are designed appropriately, we will be well-positioned to meet the challenges of the future, deliver our Long-Term Strategy, and achieve our vision of a healthier Wales for all; now and for future generations.

Dr Tracey Cooper, OBE

Pippa Britton, OBE

[Executive Summary to be signed by Chair and Chief Executive]

DRAFT

1. Our People Strategy

Working with others, we will secure a healthier future for Wales. To deliver this is complex and will require many different perspectives and inter-connected interventions. The primary purpose of this People Strategy is to ensure we have the right people, with the right capabilities and in the right environment, to effectively deliver on the ambitious goals of our Long-Term Strategy. It is a critical sub-strategy, setting out how we will attract, develop, and retain the talented people required.

Our People Strategy sets out our vision for our people. It is *how* we will deliver our [Long-Term Strategy](#) and it is critical to its success. We believe we cannot deliver our strategic goals unless our people are engaged and motivated, and enabled to work at their full potential. This means we need to embrace collaboration and diversity, ensure people feel valued and recognised for their contribution, enable ongoing professional development and equip our teams to innovate, learn and deliver.

Through this People Strategy, we have set out how we will work together for a healthier Wales, continually improving the context in which people work so we can all be at our best. We are a community of incredibly talented people, from diverse backgrounds, delivering many different roles. We want every member of this community to feel valued for their contribution to our mission.

We want to attract great people, from all backgrounds within Wales, the UK and beyond, and to develop and enable them to thrive. Our people are at the heart of our ability to deliver and we require talented people with the right capability, capacity and commitment to implement each of our Strategic Priorities and deliver our Long-Term Strategy.

1.1 Equipping our people to be ready for the future

Since our original People Strategy was published in 2020, we have witnessed a dramatic change in the way we work, prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and significant innovations in collaborative tools, expectations of the workforce, generative AI, and other technologies.

We are optimistic that post-pandemic ways of working will continue to shape a more prepared, responsive, and resilient public health landscape, ensuring better outcomes in future health emergencies. Additionally, increased emphasis on mobility of staff and continuous learning and development will help to equip staff with the skills needed for future challenges.

Since the original People Strategy was published in 2020, we have achieved so much across the organisation that supports and enables our people to be at their best:

- Assessed our existing and ideal culture, developed a shared narrative, and upskilled managers to reinforce our desired culture.

- Launched and integrated a values-driven behavioural framework, Being Our Best.
- Invested in leadership development, launched the Leadership Forum, Leadership and Management Academy, created a Leadership and Management Framework.
- Successfully implemented 'Work How It Works Best', providing agile working options.
- Developed an Employee Value Proposition (our people promise) reflecting staff experiences, expectations, and aspirations.
- Updated our priorities for equality, diversity, and inclusion, enhancing efforts towards a truly representative workforce.
- Supported the acquisition and development of Welsh language skills across our workforce.

There is much to build on as we work together to deliver our Long-Term Strategy.

Our [Long-Term Strategy](#), published in 2024, sets out our vision for achieving a healthier future for people in Wales by 2035. We are committed to working towards a Wales where people live longer, healthier lives and where everyone has fair and equal access to the things that lead to good health and wellbeing.

We will do this through focusing on six priorities and achieving our two high level strategic outcomes - to increase the healthy life expectancy and narrow the gap in healthy life expectancy between the least and the most deprived.

[1/2-page or 1-page visual of the Strategic Priorities in the Long-Term Strategy].

1. Influencing the wider determinants of health
2. Promoting mental health and social wellbeing
3. Promoting healthy behaviours
4. Supporting the development of a sustainable health and social care system focused on prevention and early detection
5. Delivering excellent public health services to protect the public and health outcomes
6. Tackling the public health effects of climate change



To deliver our Long-Term Strategy, we will equip our people, teams, people managers and organisational leaders to be change-ready: to be clear on shared purpose; to work together across boundaries; to engage our stakeholders, make shared decisions and prioritise where resources are allocated in the face of differing perspectives and priorities.

We therefore need to build confidence to work effectively with others, within and across teams in the organisation, with health and education partners, local authorities, health boards and local communities.

Embracing new ways of working will be critical and our long-term success will be shaped by our organisational culture, and by embracing agility, improving diversity, and nurturing wellbeing and innovation.

We believe that concentrating on the [key areas of focus](#) set out in this strategy will ensure we foster a caring and delivery-focused working environment; where we can attract, retain, develop, and enable the people we need to deliver our Strategic Priorities and achieve a healthier future for Wales.

DRAFT

2. Our Culture

Our ongoing work on our organisational culture and team climate will help to ensure all our people feel valued and respected, and can contribute their best to delivering our Long Term Strategy. Our Strategic Equality Plan is closely aligned to our People Strategy and our work to create an inclusive workplace where everyone can be their authentic self and give of their best.

In 2023, we assessed our organisational culture using the empirically validated Organisational Culture Inventory® (OCI), owned by Human Synergistics. We can now describe our ideal culture, which will encourage people to maximise their contributions and commitment to the organisation; enhance the quality of what we do; and enable consistency with our values and purpose.

Our people managers and organisational leaders will ensure that our ideal culture and organisational values are apparent in everyone's lived experience; they will lead with compassion, creating an environment in which people can thrive, and where people aren't thriving, they will have honest and open conversations that enable us to put things right.

Our Cultural Narrative

We are purpose-driven and people-focused. We work for the greater good of Wales.

We will create an environment where expectations and responsibilities are clear, and all our colleagues can thrive.

- Everyone plays an important part in bringing our purpose to life. We respect everyone, whatever their profession, role or position.
- With empowerment comes accountability. We take personal and collective responsibility for the commitments we make to ourselves and others.
- We care deeply about people and their wellbeing. We are compassionate, no matter what, but we don't shy away from honest conversations about behaviour or performance.
- Our focus on performance means we embrace improvement and challenge ourselves to think differently. We accept failures that lead to learning and act quickly to put things right.
- We create and invest in meaningful partnerships, both within and outside of our organisation, actively looking to learn from the diversity of skills and expertise around us.

We treat ourselves and each other well and stand up for what is right. We work together for a healthier Wales.

3. Our People Ambition

Our ambition is to have a flexible, sustainable and thriving workforce with the capability, capacity and desire to successfully deliver our Long-Term Strategy.

Research indicates that when people feel valued, respected, and empowered, their engagement and productivity increase significantly. We will enhance organisational effectiveness by continually improving the context in which people work at organisation, team, and individual levels.

In refreshing the People Strategy, we reviewed a wide range of evidence regarding the trends and challenges facing organisations and the likely workforce implications by 2035. It is clear that there is a need to:

- Develop innovative ways to attract and develop talented people, addressing scarce skills and critical roles.
- Embed succession planning and talent management to identify and grow diverse internal talent for critical roles, and improve the diversity of our senior teams.
- Focus on our ideal organisational culture and staff experience, striving to create an inclusive, healthy and empowering environment that actively recognises what matters most to our people.
- Further invest in our managers and leaders, who are critical to creating the climate which our people can thrive.
- Organise ourselves to maximise agility and personal contribution by reducing silos and increasing collaboration across boundaries, recognising this requires better people data, processes that support agility, and a shift in mind-set.
- Shape work to fit the lives of our people through greater use of flexible working in its widest sense, to respond to the changing needs and expectations of our people.
- Understand and plan for the skills that we will require, and agree a more sustainable way of funding strategic investments in learning and development.
- Influence the design, commissioning and sustainability of relevant education provision and embrace new and immersive ways of delivering education and development.

4. Our Current Workforce

[Infographic of workforce demographics]

To plan effectively for 2035, there are a number of key workforce issues that will be critical to address.

Only 5% of our people are 25 years old or younger, with 20% aged 30 or younger, compared with 37% of the UK working age population aged 30 or younger (Office for National Statistics (ONS)). Developing more entry-level and non-graduate opportunities, focussing on skills rather than solely on formal qualifications, will help make our organisation more accessible to young people and talented individuals from diverse backgrounds. Feedback from our young ambassadors and new starters shows desire to see more non-graduate routes of entry is top of their agenda.

We have seen a small decrease in the number of staff aged 50-plus, from 30% in 2014 to 28% in 2024, although this is likely to increase as people expect to work longer and the State Pension age increases. Approximately 33% of the working age population in the UK is aged 50 or older. By 2030, it is projected that the proportion of people over 50 in employment will rise to 47% (ONS). We need flexible employment processes and ways of working that meet the needs of this group, e.g. flexible retirement options. The older workforce has significant expertise and experience, and we must use the opportunity to match their aspirations to share that wisdom with those of younger staff who want to learn, through coaching and mentoring approaches.

About a third of our people work part time (31%), and 91% of these are women, but we have limited detail on the prevalence of informal flexible working or agile working arrangements. It would be useful to consider whether the high percentage of women in part-time roles has implications for career progression, leadership representation, or perceptions of equity. Career paths are not always linear, and we need to recognise the contributions of those who work part-time and provide opportunities for growth and development.

Increased use of agile working over the past four years has enabled colleagues to work from various locations and improved work-life balance and job satisfaction for many. However, there is emerging evidence of unintended harms arising from remote working, including isolation, and potential challenges for productivity, learning, and organisational culture. We also know that not all roles within the organisation offer the same degree of flexibility, and we need to ensure there is equity of opportunity regardless of where people work, e.g. access to career development.

Exit survey data indicates that perceived 'lack of career progression' is a reason for leaving (7% in 2023/24). Investment in a sustainable skills development programme that empowers individuals to acquire new skills and knowledge relevant to their

roles and career aspirations could help to demonstrate the organisation's commitment to career progression. This will be critical in a competitive job market where people increasingly prioritise employers who invest in their development.

Our young ambassadors and staff diversity networks also prioritised an inclusive and safe culture that was supportive of wellbeing and mental health. As well as being the right thing to do, supporting health and wellbeing and improving inclusion and equity are essential elements for creating and retaining a diverse, happy and healthy workforce. While we have made good progress, we also need to work systemically to ensure proportional representation at all levels of the organisation, create a more inclusive workplace, and ensure all voices are heard.

We know how important it is to provide our services in Welsh. Only 14% of our workforce is able to speak Welsh at level 3 or above. In line with our [Welsh Language Clinical Consultation Plan](#) we will continue to prioritise identification of skills gaps, recruitment and learning of Welsh to ensure that we have sufficient Welsh speakers in frontline roles.

Welsh is also an important part of our identity as a culturally vibrant, inclusive organisation and our commitment to the [Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, More Than Just Words](#) and [Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers](#), which will drive the embedding of the Welsh language into all the services we provide for the people of Wales.

Feedback from our people, most recently received through our 2023/24 staff survey, has been fundamental in developing our strategic approach to engagement. This addresses three specific themes, which are reinforced through the key areas of focus in this Strategy:

- **Culture and leadership**, including ensuring that people feel safe to speak up and that leaders and managers are supported to role model the values and behaviours that underpin the organisation's ideal culture.
- **Support and wellbeing**, including understanding what is driving stress and burnout and responding appropriately.
- **Professional growth and improvement**, including supporting team and individual effectiveness through clear job design and roles.

Understanding our current workforce is essential for effectively planning for the future. While we have achieved notable successes in areas such as leadership development, agile working, and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, the data reveal several issues that still need to be addressed. These require focused attention so that the organisation can effectively navigate the challenges that lie ahead.

5. Trends and Challenges

The health outcomes gap in Wales continues to widen with compounding population health challenges including the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the cost of living crisis, climate change and the health and care system facing significant workforce and financial challenges. To address these issues, we will need to leverage the diverse talents and expertise within the organisation. Offering a great staff experience with relevant, attractive, and developmental career paths will be essential to attracting, retaining and enabling our people to achieve our long-term goals and improve overall health outcomes for the people of Wales.

We have a unique legislative and policy context in Wales and a critical role to play in helping Welsh Government, and our partners, achieve our collective ambition for Wales. Our people will also need to be ready to respond and adapt to any changes in the political landscape that may arise during the period of this Strategy.

We continue to face persistent long-term shortages in a number of areas where demand outweighs supply and where we are less competitive in pay terms than other industries. This includes a growing concern about the capacity of public health specialists in all four countries of the UK. The problem is likely to increase as converging technologies and cross-disciplinary skills dissolve boundaries between sectors and new roles emerge.

We know that there are some consistent issues with public health careers across all nations of the UK, including a lack of clear routes into public health careers a lack of clear pathways beyond the specialist public health workforce; challenges retaining the workforce; and ensuring that opportunities for development and progression are equitable (Royal Society for Public Health).

More broadly, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated changes we were already anticipating or working through, such as the adoption of agile working models that combine remote and on-site work, providing increased flexibility and improved work-life balance.

We can expect the context to remain challenging and unpredictable and we must navigate technological advances, geopolitical instability, sustainability and climate change, an ageing population and shifting societal expectations.

We need to understand the implications of these trends and prepare for their impact. Wales is facing challenging times which will impact on the work we do and the skills we require, and on our people more widely in terms of availability, ways of working and expectations of the workforce.

There is overwhelming evidence that staff health and wellbeing have an impact on staff engagement and experience, and how this enables organisational productivity, individual performance and ultimately the quality of care and outcomes for our service users.

5.1.1 Trends and Challenges

Our People Strategy has been informed by key workforce intelligence which shows:

AGEING POPULATION

- Almost all advanced economies will experience a decline in their working population over the next decade, leading to a global labour market shortage. We must develop innovative strategies for developing and reskilling talent required for continuity and growth.
- The proportion of people aged 65 and over is expected to rise from 19% in 2022 to 27% by 2072 (UK Parliament). This demographic shift will reduce the proportion of the population who are in work.

HYBRID/AGILE WORKING

- Organisations are still grappling with changing working practices and the associated challenges for productivity, learning and organisational culture.
- As of 2023, 83% of UK organisations have implemented hybrid/agile working, with 45% having a formal policy and 24% taking an informal approach (CIPD).

NEW MODELS OF ORGANISATION

- Internal and external organisational boundaries are shifting with cross-functional working, outsourcing, and the contingent workforce.
- Cross-functional teams are becoming more common, with 75% of companies reporting increased use of such teams for project-based work (Harvard Business Review).

LARGE-SCALE TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

- Underpins all other areas. This will require upskilling, reskilling and modernisation.
- According to the World Economic Forum, 50% of jobs will require new skill sets by 2027. It is estimated that 94% of UK workers will need reskilling by 2030 (McKinsey).

AI AND GENERATIVE AI

- AI will change organisations and reconfigure some types of work. Organisations will need to develop new strategies to benefit from this increasingly powerful and sophisticated technology.
- In 2024, 65% of organisations are regularly using generative AI, nearly double from the previous year (McKinsey).

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Sustainability and climate change are now mainstream concerns; staff and other stakeholders expect organisations to take action. 85% of UK workers believe their organisations should prioritise sustainability and climate action (OBR).
- Globalisation and climate change will see emerging threats in infectious diseases, food safety and antimicrobial resistance as well as more extreme weather and heat-related health problems.

[Read more: Trends and Challenges](#)

6. Our Future Workforce

6.1 Inclusion and Diversity

We want an increasingly diverse workforce which more closely reflects the diverse population of Wales. We are committed to creating an inclusive workplace where all our people feel valued and respected. As outlined in our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28, diversity and inclusion are integral to our organisational culture. We know that diverse teams and organisations outperform their less diverse counterparts, and inclusive environments, where people feel they belong, lead to higher morale and increased productivity.

Embracing diversity also allows us to tap into a wider talent pool, helping us to attract the best candidates. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment that supports the needs and perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds, including for example, neurodivergent and disabled people. We will seek to foster innovation, creativity, and problem-solving, enriching the workforce and strengthening our ability to deliver our Long-Term Strategy.

We are committed to supporting people's changing needs by increasing opportunities for flexible and agile working and making tailored adjustments that help people work at their best, stay well and in work. We will make necessary adaptations to working patterns or the physical environment as needed to enable everyone to contribute fully.

As part of our commitment to the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, and in line with our Strategic Equality Plan, we are committed to becoming an anti-racist organisation, able to draw on a diverse spectrum of voices to inform how we lead, manage, and work with others to deliver our services. We are also committed to widening access to careers in Public Health, to attract people from a more diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds and enable social mobility, through innovative recruitment processes and monitoring the socio-economic backgrounds of job candidates, so that we can ensure we are reaching people from all backgrounds.

We will strengthen our Welsh language services and promote and facilitate use between our people and with our service users. Welsh speakers are scarcer in the pool of the working-age population. Ensuring that we have sufficient numbers of Welsh speakers is important and will continue to be a challenge.

6.2 The impact of technology

Technology will have a major impact on our work and our people. While much of what we do in 2035 may remain similar to now, how we do it will change as work becomes increasingly digital. In many cases, technology will augment our jobs, in some cases it will create new roles, and reduce the need for others. This will enable us to move capacity to where it will add most value.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) will change and reconfigure some types of work. We will need to develop new strategies to benefit from this increasingly powerful and sophisticated technology. Other technology is already having an impact on how we engage with the public and deliver public health services and this is likely to increase. For example, as diagnostics increasingly incorporate genomic testing, this will create the need for skills to mine and apply the data, and polygenic risk scores may enable more efficient targeting of existing screening programmes and extension into new age ranges and disease types.

The Strategic Priority Route Maps that underpin our Long-Term Strategy highlight the importance of integrated IT systems, innovative technology, and digital platforms for service delivery, and data sharing, to enable us to deliver our strategic priorities. This further reinforces the need for a workforce skilled in utilising and adapting to evolving digital technology and data systems.

We need to address new issues such as the inequality of access to some technology and consider how best we balance the needs and interests of our service users.

To deliver our vision we will need to increase the inter-operability of our information technology systems and invest in new software. We will also need to invest in expertise and systems that enable us to better understand our workforce and enable us to use people analytics to inform our decision-making.

6.3 Future workforce skills

We require an agile, flexible, multidisciplinary workforce for an increasingly digital workplace, able to develop the skills needed to adopt and exploit new technology, such as generative AI. The labour market will remain challenging and we will need to look for opportunities to create more entry-level roles with a clear plan for continuing development.

Multi-disciplinary teams, new and emerging roles, and greater use of advanced practice will create opportunities for progression across all career pathways. We will retain many of the current public health skills and develop new ones, such as Health Economics, bioinformatics, 'big data' analytics, policy analysis, research and evaluation. We will work with partners such as the Faculty of Public Health as they explore innovative solutions to address specialist workforce shortages, e.g. investigating models like joint accreditation training with other specialties.

We will need people with well-developed universal skills like critical thinking and problem solving; emotional intelligence; interpersonal and leadership skills; with active learning strategies, who will adopt a continuous, life-long approach to learning. As an organisation, we will continue to diversify our learning and development offer to make it easier to access universal skills for ongoing professional and leadership development.

We know that data and its role in decision-making will become even more important, as will data literacy and the ability to understand and work with data. We will need greater capacity and capability in digital and social media skills and cyber security. As data analysis becomes automated, we need to be better at framing the right questions and interpreting the information through a public health lens.

As generative-AI and other AI becomes commonplace within many existing applications, there are risks such as loss of critical thinking or problem-solving capabilities, overstating certainty over complexity, and lack of appreciation of context. We will need to support our people to become skilled in the human-AI interface. This may require specific upskilling such as writing prompts for generative-AI or may link to the development of other, more universal skills, for example, evaluative skills and critical thinking.

Evidence-based decision making, futures thinking, and improvement skills are key to influencing long-term policy development and if we are to effect real change, we will need to develop our behavioural science expertise and understanding of behavioural change approaches especially using new media.

There is also a requirement for subject specialists with high-level Welsh language skills in frontline roles. As the demand for services increases, we will require a greater capability and capacity to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.

Working across organisation boundaries will require greater understanding and sensitivity to our partner organisations' needs, challenges and ways of working. We need to develop our expertise in the wider determinants of health, encompassing housing, employment, environment, economics and climate change.

Our people managers and organisational leaders will be key to realising our ideal organisational culture, leading, engaging and empowering an increasingly diverse workforce. In the longer-term, our leaders may be working across a range of current 'traditional boundaries' in public sector organisations and we need to be growing these leaders now, through opportunities for placements and secondments.

With regard to technical skills, we will need to ensure the right balance of people with breadth of expertise, and those with more depth or specialist skills. A breadth of skill sets will enable flexibility in the workforce but there will always be a need for access to specialist expertise, particularly to deal with emergencies.

The vast majority of roles will require increased digital literacy, with different areas of the organisation requiring additional technical skills such as data science, systemic reviews, bioinformatics, genomics and digital imaging. Specific details will be set out in our strategic workforce plans.

6.3.1 System Leadership, Influencing and Advocacy

Given the legislative and policy context in Wales, we are working to support increased investment in prevention to enable full implementation of the priorities set out in [A Healthier Wales](#).

The health and social care sector is broadening and public health is increasingly seen as everybody's business. As a system leader where appropriate, we have a role and responsibilities at a societal level to both champion the unique value of public health specialists and harness skills from the public, private and third sectors in Wales.

We have a fundamental role in influencing and advocacy, effecting legislation and policy change that has the health and wellbeing of the public at its heart as well as delivering specialist advice and services. Our international reputation and influence will continue to grow as we provide capacity and support to both national and international policy requests as Wales becomes an Influencer nation for health equality in Europe.

6.3.2 Partnership and Collaboration

To deliver our Strategic Priorities, we will be working with partners (local, national, international), to understand the interconnectedness of various public health challenges. We will develop broader and stronger relationships to help people across the system to understand public health and to influence investment and improve the social return on public health. This requires a workforce capable of fostering collaboration and working effectively with diverse stakeholders to deliver our vision for a healthier Wales.

Many of the wider determinants of health lie outside the health service such as housing, employment and the environment where we will accelerate our work with all parts of society and all sectors to strengthen delivery through our multi-agency approach including greater knowledge transfer and data sharing.

We will build greater reach into communities, particularly marginalised and vulnerable communities, through better engagement and developing meaningful networks and coalitions that focus on how we can help.

6.3.3 Enabling Functions

Our enabling functions will be critical in providing the tools, policies, support and infrastructure needed to enable the organisation to deliver. They will operate as true business partners, valued for their professional expertise, integral to management teams, and seen as equals in delivering our strategic priorities. There will be an increased focus on seamless working both across the enablers and with wider shared service providers to enable access to expertise and best practice.

We will see better organisation and triangulation of data to provide insights and support to business decisions, helping improve prioritisation and planning. In doing so we will ensure the focus is always on outcomes rather than processes.

6.4 Sustainable Development

Our commitment and contribution to sustainable development and corporate social responsibility is reflected in our Long-Term Strategy and our Decarbonisation and Sustainability Plan.

We have a vision to be a sustainable organisation which protects and enhances our environment. This necessitates a workforce that is climate-literate, understands the health impacts of climate change, and can integrate sustainability principles into their work.

We have the opportunity to become a leading organisation in environmental sustainability, working with our staff, teams, other organisations and Welsh Government to take an integrated approach to protect biodiversity, promote sustainability and prevent mitigate and adapt for climate change. This work aligns to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, particularly the goal of being a 'resilient' and 'globally responsible' Wales.

6.5 Agility

A more agile approach to our work, aligned to our Strategic Priorities, will reduce silo working and allow us to draw on resources from across the organisation to enable us to focus on priorities and provide 'surge' capacity when needed.

Multidisciplinary team-working will grow, enabling us to make best use of our multi-professional expertise, valuing diversity and supported where needed with increased capacity at advanced practitioner level, ensuring the sustainability of many programmes.

Work will increasingly be designed around the needs of the organisation, the team and the individual, with increased adoption of flexible and agile working. Wherever possible, we want our people to be able to work in whatever ways best suit them, while recognising there are some things that are best achieved in-person, and acknowledging the importance of social belonging and connection with our peers, and the learning opportunities this brings.

Working across organisation boundaries will become the norm with a range of partnerships enabling us to share skills, capacity and technology through both formal and informal reciprocal mechanisms. There will be greater collaboration and exchange between our local and central teams, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability in responding to both urgent needs and to developing longer term capability and capacity.

In the longer term, we envisage more career mobility across public sector organisations enabled by greater parity in terms and conditions alongside more joint workforce planning and talent development.

7. Key Areas of Focus - Overview

[1-page visual of the 5 themes and key outcomes, based on the below].

To deliver our ambitions to have a flexible, sustainable and thriving workforce for 2025-2035, we have agreed 5 key areas of focus:

1. **Talent Attraction and Inclusive Hiring:**

We will become an 'employer of choice', attracting diverse talent which reflects the communities we serve.

2. **Cultivating Future-Ready Skills:**

We will equip our people with essential skills for current demands and emerging challenges.

3. **Leading with Compassion**

We will nurture a psychologically safe workplace, where compassionate leadership is fostered at all levels.

4. **Exceptional Staff Experience:**

We will prioritise wellbeing, flexible working options, and opportunities for career growth and progression.

5. **Designed to Deliver:**

We will ensure the organisation is designed to deliver its strategic objectives and plan for sustainable growth.

8. Our People Outcomes

By 2035 we will see:

- An organisational culture where people of all generations and backgrounds want to join, stay, and are supported to thrive.
- Successful delivery of our Strategic Priorities through a sustainable workforce that meets current and anticipated needs.
- Widened access to public health careers, strengthened talent pipelines for all scarce skills and critical roles.
- A diverse learning and development offer, delivered through flexible and accessible routes.
- A more diverse workforce that reflects the population in terms of minority groups and social mobility, with greater representation at all levels of the organisation.
- Improved strategic workforce planning, with forward investment in recruitment and development.
- Reduced silo working and increased multi-disciplinary and multi-organisation teams aligned around our Strategic Priorities.

As evidenced by:

- Increased numbers of appropriately skilled applicants who match our values; fewer vacancies; and timely recruitment.
- Potential shortage areas are known earlier and targeted effectively, with plans in place for all identified scarce skills and critical roles.
- Internal and external talent schemes producing great applicants from a diverse variety of backgrounds.
- Career frameworks and succession plans in place for our various job families.
- Increased diversity of staff, representative of the population of Wales.
- Reduced pay gaps.
- Increased staff engagement and an improved staff experience.
- More organisational leaders and managers experienced in workforce planning, with workforce planning integrated with our strategic planning cycle.
- Established mechanisms for identifying, matching and deploying people with the necessary skills to our strategic priority requirements.

9. Key Areas of Focus – In detail

9.1 Talent Attraction and Inclusive Hiring

While employment is expected to grow, the workforce demand over this period is forecast to outstrip supply, due to the need to replace those leaving work, as the population ages.

As competition increases and this ‘demographic crunch’ impacts, we need to find innovative ways to identify, attract and recruit talent and compete with industry for new and emerging skills where we are not seen as a natural choice of employer and may struggle to match salary expectations. We have selling points including our unique purpose and status as a national public health institute and World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre. Strengthening our research and evaluation culture, and influencing at local, national and international level, will enhance our reputation as a great place to work and our ability to attract talented people.

We are an all-Wales organisation and geography can be a challenge. We must adapt our attraction strategies to meet local requirements, leveraging national approaches such as ‘Train. Work. Live’. We will contribute to creating a sustainable future for Wales and build more robust talent pipelines through a range of local academic partnerships and employment initiatives that develop a work-ready workforce across every community.

To connect with the communities we serve, we must become more representative of them. We need to attract, recruit and retain a talented and diverse workforce and provide the very best development and progression, and the autonomy to work in the way that suits individual needs and preferences.

Given the changing age profile of the workforce we must focus more attention on our workforce of the future, creating early engagement to encourage young people to consider a career with us. Building on existing engagement with schools, colleges, and universities and establishing partnerships with schools and further education providers will help to raise awareness of Public Health Wales as an employer and enable us to develop pipelines for harder to fill roles, for example through entry-level positions, apprenticeships, and on-the-job development.

By 2035, we want to be an employer of choice with a truly representative workforce and the ability to generate excellent candidates for every vacancy. Our people will say:

“I can see that Public Health Wales is committed to being a diverse and inclusive organisation. I feel welcome and valued. I can be my authentic self and I am confident that I can develop my career here.”

9.1.1 Objectives

By 2035, we will have:

- Developed an integrated approach to engaging people from all backgrounds.
- Built relationships with those who offer routes into employment and raise our profile as an employer.
- Developed our use of entry-level roles/ non-graduate entry routes.
- Established internal succession and talent management processes and pipelines that have a positive impact on our diversity.
- Modernised our recruitment processes and approaches.
- Enabled our people to work at times and locations that suit their needs and preferences.
- Understood the impact of our requirements on our ability to attract and recruit and address barriers.
- Established skills and knowledge as equivalent to formal qualifications, so those with the right competence and experience are not overlooked.

9.1.2 Outcomes

- A diverse pool of appointable, talented applicants for every vacancy, including sufficient numbers of Welsh speakers (as set out in our [Strategic Equality Plan](#) and [Welsh language Clinical Consultation Plan](#)).
- A more diverse workforce at all levels, representative of the Welsh population, particularly in terms of protected characteristics (e.g. disability, ethnicity, gender) and Welsh language skills.
- Accessible, technology-enabled recruitment processes that are attractive and adaptable for all applicants.
- Approaches that emphasise our values, competence and experience, not just qualifications and which recognise skills and knowledge as equivalent to qualifications.
- A strong presence in schools, further and higher education, with clear evidence of pipelines into roles (including apprenticeships and entry-level roles for all job families).

- A talent management approach that balances our ambition for career development opportunities and diversifies our workforce.

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9.2 Cultivating Future-Ready Skills

We will ensure our approaches and investment plans enable us to develop and access the skills needed to deliver our Strategic Priorities and provide development opportunities which enable personal growth for all our people.

The skills we have identified we need for the future can be seen [here](#). This list will be updated as we move through the period of the People Strategy, to account for the changing external context; annual integrated planning outputs; and emerging scarce skills.

We will achieve these skills by developing our current staff, building on existing programmes, and investing in new programmes, roles, technology and strategic partnerships.

Our workforce plans will set out the detailed action required and as we progress through the period of the People Strategy, we will increasingly focus on job families and the development of career pathways, talent management, and succession plans to improve the retention of people with the skills we need for the future.

By 2035, our staff survey results and other feedback from our people will confirm that they have the skills and personal growth they need and want.

9.2.1 Life-long learning

Factors including technological advances means the acquisition of new skills is a life-long endeavour. To support, this we will develop a growth mind-set and learning philosophy aligned with the [70:20:10 model](#). We will continue to embed learning Welsh through workplace education, culture and conversation, so we reflect the bilingual society in which we live.

We have a role to play in strengthening the provision of academic public health in Wales to ensure availability of education, research, and training. The same is true for other clinical and scientific courses. The requirements by professional bodies on registered staff to maintain their competence and develop new skills are likely to increase and we must keep pace.

We will support the development of all of our people, in their areas of expertise, personal skills and as people managers and organisational leaders.

9.2.2 Job Families

We will implement job families to optimise workforce planning and skills development; resourcing; career progression and pathways; and talent and succession. Heads of Job Families will have an important role in articulating their needs through strategic workforce planning and will be key to our relationship with HEIW in the commissioning of programmes to meet our needs, as well as commissioning work or bringing in external expertise to work alongside us.

9.2.3 Planning Investment

We need to be brave and allocate appropriate funds to future skills now, given the lead time required to develop. Initiatives must be properly planned and sustainably resourced as many will require multi-year commitments. We need to better understand our recurring commitments to central programmes such as statutory and mandatory training and colleague development, as well as those held by directorates to cover existing professional development aligned to job families. Our people will say:

"I am confident that I have the skills and knowledge I need to do my job well, now and in the future. I am encouraged and supported to continuously learn and develop, and I can see clear pathways for development and progression."

9.2.4 Objectives

By 2035, we will have:

- Developed a sustainable skills development programme prioritised against our Strategic Priorities.
- An agreed approach to funding on a multi-year basis.
- Fully embedded Job Families approach across the organisation.
- Workforce plans in place which address scarce and emerging skills risks and prioritised action plans.
- Worked with HEIW, academic faculties and professional bodies to influence and support commissioning of a modernised registration and education system that meets needs of public health, medical and scientific professions.
- Developed a clear programme of advanced practice covering a wide range of roles.
- Developed strategic partnerships, sharing skills, capacity and technology.
- Implemented innovative and engaging development for staff based on the latest thinking.

9.2.5 Outcomes

- A sustainable and equitable skills development programme prioritised against our Strategic Priorities, agreed on a multi-year basis.
- Effective medium- and long-term strategic workforce planning, which is job family focussed.
- Increased skills for public health through inclusion in further/ higher education curricula.
- Advanced practice development covering a wide range of roles.

- Increased number of strategic partnerships, sharing skills, capacity and technology.
- Strengthened relationships with communities and partners, including with academia, to develop and share skills in a way which also aligns with our ambition for a more diverse workforce.
- Engaging personal and professional development opportunities for all our people, which meet our skills needs and provide personal growth.

9.3 Leading with Compassion

Our people managers and organisational leaders will consistently lead with compassion, creating an environment where our ideal culture and organisational values are the lived experience of everybody who works at Public Health Wales, and in which people thrive. Where people aren't thriving, we will have honest and open conversations that enable us to put things right.

Leadership and culture are inextricably linked, so leaders and managers are key to role modelling our values and behaviours. Their relationship with their teams, how they manage people and tasks, what they value and what they don't, set the tone for what is expected throughout the organisation.

After refreshing our Long-Term Strategy during 2023/24, we assessed our current and ideal culture, and our people told us that the culture we want and need in Public Health Wales, our ideal culture, balances compassion with performance, creating an inclusive and supportive environment that enables the organisation to achieve its Strategic Priorities.

We have recently identified the measures we will use to track our progress against the actions agreed to close the gap between our current and ideal culture and increase staff engagement; and we continue to embed our behavioural framework, Being Our Best, in everything we do to make our values, Working Together, with Trust and Respect, to Make a Difference, everybody's lived experience.

By 2035, we want an organisational culture that meets the needs of our people and our business, where managers and leaders embrace compassionate and collective leadership, our people exercise personal responsibility, and we have the conditions which enable any issues with performance or behaviour to be addressed constructively. Our people will say:

"My manager leads with compassion, valuing my contributions, and providing me with the support I need to succeed. I feel respected and empowered to voice my ideas and concerns, knowing they will be heard."

9.3.1 Objectives

By 2035, we will have:

- Timely and actionable information on culture and engagement that promotes local ownership for managers and leaders.
- Developed organisational policies and processes which are reflective of our ideal culture and enable compassionate leadership.
- Agreed secondments and partnership arrangements which take into account cultural alignment.
- Developed a sustainable, diverse management and leadership pipeline, equipped to practise compassionate leadership, at all levels.
- Built a psychologically safe organisation where people are confident to raise ideas and concerns, where people can have good conversations without reliance on formal policy/processes to resolve disagreements and ensure healthy working relationships.

9.3.2 Outcomes

- Local ownership of culture and engagement by people managers and organisational leaders.
- Managers who coach and mentor their people, encourage a development mind-set and support life-long learning.
- A sustainable, diverse management and leadership pipeline at all levels, equipped to practise compassionate leadership.
- Healthy working relationships within a psychologically safe environment, where people are confident to raise ideas and concerns, and able to have good conversations without resorting to policy to resolve disagreements.
- All our people can translate our culture and values into their everyday behaviours and actions; we all know how we are expected to behave.
- Everyone's opinions and ideas are equally respected regardless of seniority or status and everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts.
- Those who are unwilling or unable to align to our values are supported to move on with dignity.

9.4 Exceptional Staff Experience

Staff experience is about creating a great work environment for people, and enabling them to be at their best. This is crucial in attracting and retaining talented individuals in today's evolving work landscape.

We will prioritise culture, purpose, and wellbeing to ensure a strategic and holistic approach to engagement and ensure a great experience for our people. This will support people in being their authentic self, being at their best, and ultimately contributing to a healthier future for Wales.

Since 2020, driven by our strategic intent to shape work around life and to empower everyone to have more choice in how they work, we piloted our award-winning 'Work How It Works Best' approach and, in 2023, we confirmed our policy for agile working and began to embed this as our established way of working.

Our people continue to work together to balance the needs of the work we do, the team and individuals and agile working arrangements allow our people to achieve a better work-life balance and experience greater job satisfaction. However, given the diversity of roles within the organisation, not all roles offer the same degree of flexibility. We are committed to addressing potential inequalities and ensuring all colleagues are able to exercise some degree of flexibility in how and where they work.

We also acknowledge that there is emerging evidence of potential harms arising from remote or agile working, including isolation, and increased lack of connection to purpose. Agile working arrangements may also affect the induction and retention of younger/ new people joining the organisation. We will need to find new ways to investigate and mitigate these risks as we continue to support our people to work how it works best.

We aspire for a healthier Wales, and we know that 'Fair work' is a critical building block for good health and wellbeing, and a healthy engaged workforce contributes to business productivity and societal prosperity. We must provide meaningful and rewarding work that reflects our commitment to fair work practices. Our jobs should be well designed and our people should experience a workplace where healthy behaviours are promoted. Health and wellbeing should be front and centre of our decision making, with shared responsibility at all levels.

As detailed in [2. Cultivating Future-Ready Skills](#), we recognise the importance of life-long learning and providing opportunities for growth and progression, within and beyond the organisation. We will support our people to develop within their current role, and to explore new career pathways, or to transition to opportunities outside Public Health Wales.

By 2035, we envision a workplace where all our people feel empowered, valued, and supported throughout their careers. We are dedicated to equipping our people with the necessary skills and resources for success, celebrating their contributions, and creating opportunities to make a difference for the people of Wales. Our people will say:

"I feel valued and respected. My wellbeing is a priority, I am empowered to work flexibly, and I have opportunities for growth, development and progression."

9.4.1 Objectives

By 2035, we will have:

- Embedded our Employee Value Proposition and employer brand. This will be reflected throughout the working lifecycle, from attraction to exit.
- Facilitated open and honest career conversations to meet individual and organisational needs.
- Normalised flexible and agile working while ensuring equity of opportunity and reduce risks of harm arising from agile working, such as isolation.
- Created an inclusive workplace where everyone feels supported and valued; supporting all colleagues in understanding the importance of diversity and inclusion and ensuring career progression for people from under-represented groups.
- Prioritised health and wellbeing; actively identify and address organisational causes of burnout, and strive for recognition as an exemplar in staff experience through staff surveys and external schemes (see our Engagement Plan for more details).

9.4.2 Outcomes

- Increased attraction and retention supported by a strong Employee Value Proposition and employer brand.
- Career progression and proportional representation at all levels of the organisation.
- Flexible and agile working as the norm, with the potential harms of agile working minimised.
- A workforce that embraces diversity and inclusion, actively taking action to improve representation at all levels, with Strategic Equality Objectives informing all workforce plans.
- Recognition as a top employer reflected through year-on-year improved staff survey results and external recognition, such as Great Place to Work®.
- Improved wellbeing, including reduced burnout.

9.5 Designed to Deliver

We will ensure the organisation is designed to deliver its strategic objectives effectively, shape the workforce to meet future needs, and plan for sustainable growth. We will increase our ability and agility to deploy resources where needed, reducing silos and increasing collaboration and cross boundary working.

As part of this, we will actively plan and manage towards our agreed optimum workforce size and shape. Our workforce shape will be driven by two major choices; how we decide to align resources to focus on our Strategic Priority areas, and the strategic mix of 'employed' versus 'contingent' workforce.

Technology will continue to re-shape the organisation, particularly influencing job design, leading to the re-profiling of existing roles and a re-distribution of skill sets.

To fully realise the benefits of new ways of working, a systematic review of roles and structures would help the organisation to address inconsistencies and promote parity and transparency, leading to a clearer understanding of available resources and expertise. Resources will be allocated more flexibly, promoting innovation and responsiveness to evolving priorities. Additionally, a more agile approach to our work will enhance cross-boundary collaboration, enabling Public Health Wales to leverage external knowledge and expertise.

We want a mechanism for ensuring the optimum model for any given time span, which provides a sustainable workforce supply to meet current and anticipated needs. Our workforce planning skills are improving but we need to be better at integrating all the different perspectives of Directorates, Strategic Priority Leads, and Heads of Job Families.

By 2035, we want increased agility and collaboration where multi-disciplinary teams and cross boundary working is the norm, enabling resources to be focused on maximising our impact and influence. Our people will say:

"I understand my role and responsibilities within the organisation, and I am confident in my ability to contribute to our Strategic Priorities. I am empowered to work collaboratively across boundaries, and I have access to the resources and support I need to be successful."

9.5.1 Objectives

By 2035, we will have:

- Reviewed and refined the organisational design to optimise workforce size, shape, and expertise, ensuring alignment with our Strategic Priorities and Job Families.
- Integrated workforce and financial planning processes to ensure sustainable funding for workforce priorities, effectively allocating resources to organisational, Directorate and Strategic Priority needs.
- Supported the change of mindset required to manage and operate in a more agile structure.
- Developed systems to identify and leverage existing skills and expertise within the workforce. Explore opportunities for economies of scale through shared service models and flexible resource allocation to prioritise strategic work.
- Developed appropriate mechanisms to enable easy cross-boundary, inter-organisation working and movement.

9.5.2 Outcomes

- An increasingly networked organisation design which aligns with our OD principles based on hubs, relationships and strategic partnerships.
- Establishment of well-designed, organisational structures that ensure consistency in roles, responsibilities, and banding across Job Families.
- Successful implementation of a more agile operating model, with leaders equipped with the necessary skills to effectively navigate ambiguity, foster collaboration, and manage relationships within this structure.
- Utilisation of robust workforce data to inform strategic planning, ensuring the organisation has the capability and capacity to meet future needs.
- An agile and adaptable workforce, with individuals seamlessly working across organisational boundaries through mechanisms like secondments, joint appointments, and academic placements.
- Improved alignment of workforce and financial planning, with sustainable, prioritised funding, focused on workforce priorities.

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10. Enabling the Delivery of the People Strategy

Our People Strategy underpins our Long-Term Strategy to 2035. It will be implemented through the actions summarised in the attached implementation plan, delivered through Directorates in line with our existing governance structures, e.g. through our Integrated Medium-Term Plans (IMTP) and related reporting mechanism.

Capacity to deliver the Strategy will be assessed through the IMTP and workforce planning processes and any risks to delivery will be escalated through our risk reporting structures as necessary.

Action will also be reported through the People and Organisational Development Directorate, and established Board-level governance, i.e. the Business Executive Team, People and Organisational Development Committee, and the Board of Public Health Wales.

Ongoing work to embed our values, behaviours and desired organisational culture, along with relevant enabling plans such as our Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Clinical Consultation Plan, will also support delivery of our People Strategy. These plans have been developed through collaboration and engagement with our staff, Trades Union partners, staff diversity networks, and external stakeholders.

We will continue to monitor progress and adapt our People Strategy throughout the period it covers, to mitigate emerging risks and take advantage of opportunities on the horizon.

The People and Organisational Development Directorate will develop and drive the implementation plan primarily through the integrated planning cycle. They will lead the development of pan-organisation people initiatives, policies and processes, aligning where appropriate with the HEIW Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care.

People and Organisational Development colleagues will work with the Operations and Finance Directorate to support a long-term, integrated approach to people and financial planning that enables prioritisation of and investment in strategic development and resourcing initiatives.

Heads of Job Families will work with Directorates on developing pan-organisation workforce plans, career paths and strategic alliances with academia and professional bodies to support the development of their professional communities.

Strategic Priority Leads will help define the capability and capacity required to deliver each Priority, and facilitate multi-disciplinary working approaches.

Leaders will support the implementation of this Strategy through embedding our desired organisational culture, leading with compassion, and creating an environment where our people can thrive. They will build capacity and capability through the actions in their workforce plans, including identifying and building strategic relationships to support access to knowledge and talent development, ensuring diversity and inclusion is considered throughout.

Our recognised Trade Unions are valued partners with whom we have built strong relationships. They will provide support, advice and challenge. We will continue to consult on key pieces of work and any changes associated with implementation of the People Strategy.

10.1 Ongoing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptation

Throughout the 10-year implementation period (2025-2035), it will be essential to:

- Establish clear metrics, including baseline measurements, to enable progress to be tracked and measured.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation efforts, using a mix of quantitative and qualitative data to assess the impact of initiatives and identify areas for adjustment.
- Communicate our progress to our people, fostering engagement, buy-in, and a shared sense of ownership of success.
- Be flexible and adaptable, recognising that the workforce, the external environment, and Public Health Wales' priorities are likely to evolve over the 10-year timeframe. Regular review and refinement of the implementation plan will ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

11. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This strategy has been developed and will be implemented following the five ways of working, as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act.

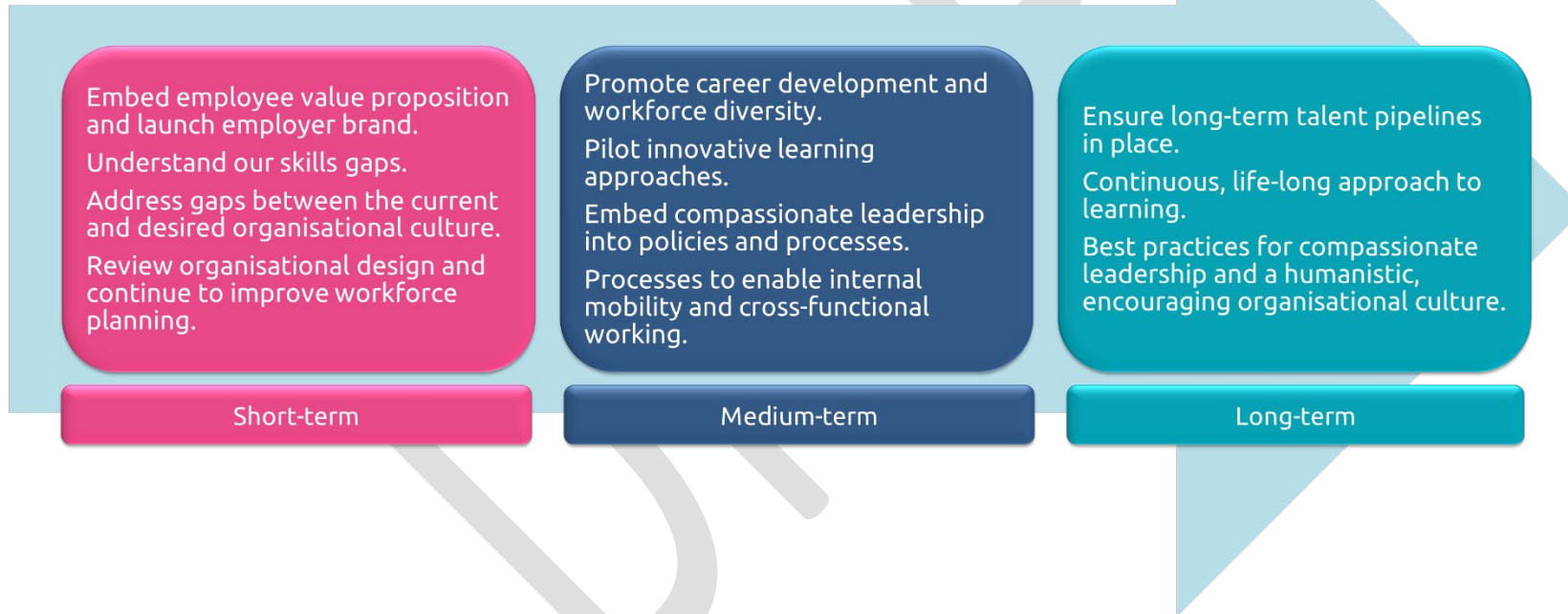
<p>Long term</p> 	<p>The implementation of the People Strategy and Workforce Plans will support longer-term aspirations and ensure a sustainable workforce for the future.</p>
<p>Prevention</p> 	<p>The actions will contribute to attracting, building and mobilising a workforce that will contribute to the prevention of ill health and disease.</p>
<p>Integration</p> 	<p>Our integrated approach to strategic, financial and workforce planning and partnership working with staff side representatives support our organisational values and the achievement of our Strategic Priorities.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> 	<p>Collaboration and optimising relationships across the organisation and with partners in industry, academia and the wider health and social care system will support the achievement of the Strategic Priorities and ensure representation of diverse perspectives.</p>
<p>Involvement</p> 	<p>We will continue to involve our staff, stakeholders and partners in the implementation and future development of all aspects of the People Strategy.</p>

12. Implementation Plan/ Route Map

[Simple visual in main document. Implementation Plan will be developed in 2025/26 and held in a separate document to allow regular updates.]

Working together for a healthier Wales

Route Map to 2035



[Read more: [Insert link to Implementation Plan](#)]

13. Conclusion

Our People Strategy provides the vital framework for ensuring that we have the talented, diverse, and engaged workforce needed to deliver our ambitious Long-Term Strategy and achieve our vision of a healthier Wales for all.

Our people are truly at the heart of our ability to deliver, and this strategy outlines our collective commitment to fostering an environment where everyone can thrive and contribute their best.

By focusing on our key areas of Talent Attraction and Inclusive Hiring, Cultivating Future-Ready Skills, Leading with Compassion, Exceptional Staff Experience, and Designed to Deliver, we are charting a path to become an employer of choice with a high-performing, flexible, sustainable, and thriving workforce. Central to this is our unwavering commitment to nurturing an inclusive environment, championing equality and diversity, prioritising wellbeing, and ensuring that all our people feel valued, respected, and empowered.

We recognise that the external landscape will continue to evolve, presenting new challenges and opportunities, and we will need to monitor and adapt this strategy throughout its 10-year timeframe to ensure we remain agile, resilient, and responsive.

By working together, with trust and respect, we will make a difference, building a future where our people can be themselves, deliver their best, and contribute to a healthier future for Wales.