



A stepped approach to successful **workforce planning**



There is a lot of positive work happening throughout the North West to support changes in working practices. Whether it's changes to doctors' rostering and training in preparation for the European Working Time Directive, supporting New Ways of Working or ensuring maximum productivity from a reconfigured service, organisations are seeking to adapt.

Skills for Health's Workforce Projects Team has developed strong partnerships working closely with employers across the region to ensure healthcare workforces are shaped to deliver the best possible patient care. With their support, healthcare managers are using a stepped approach to workforce planning and a competence based approach to role design, to make the task more manageable.

Action planning backed up by practical tools

At 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust, they are putting the Workforce Projects Team's Six Steps Methodology to Integrated Workforce Planning into practice.

Damian Byrne, Workforce Planning & Resourcing Manager at the Trust explains why a planned approach is best:

“Over the coming months, I want to devise an action plan for embedding workforce planning which will be based around the Skills for Health – Workforce Projects Team Six Steps Methodology.

To ensure buy-in amongst service managers and staff it is important to take a consistent approach when rolling out a workforce planning framework. The Six Steps model is a planning methodology supported by practical tools which enables us to do this in a methodical easy to follow way.”



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Making the workforce plan manageable

“ *Help and support is vital to encourage managers to workforce plan. By breaking the detail down into manageable chunks, it's easier to approach and that's what the Six Steps model does.*

To get people on board with workforce planning, you need the supporting tools to help embed any change and plans across the organisation. That's why their model appeals, because it's a structured approach and each step has tools to support you. It is a real and practical solution for those who want the extra support and detail.

For example the Workforce Planning Competence Tool they have developed will provide a great starting point to allow me to gauge workforce planning skills and capabilities within the organisation and provide a platform for me to move forward and measure progress. ”

Building skills in workforce planning

As workforce planning comes to the fore, senior healthcare leaders are seeing that implementing policy, new directives and responding to changes in service need must be underpinned by a better understanding of planning and shaping the workforce. That's why many are turning to the Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic Workforce Planning which enables learners to put the Six Steps Methodology into practice, at operational and strategic level.

Managers learn how to create a flexible workforce that can adapt to changes in service need, as well as build links and partnerships with others from across health, social care and public health. It reflects the trend of moving towards a more integrated workforce with more effective team based services working across professions and disciplines, whether public sector, voluntary or independent sector.

Hand in hand with planning – a competence based approach

Once the planning is complete, the next step is to ensure the planned workforce has the right skills and competences in place to deliver newly configured services.

Chris Middleton, Head of Clinical Education at Spire Healthcare, explains why a competence based approach to workforce planning is the logical way forward:

“ *Spire Healthcare offers a comprehensive range of clinical education programmes, a significant part of which are the competence based programmes. We use National Occupational Standards to support staff development.*

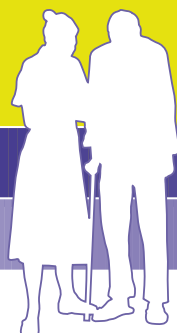
The competence framework allows us to be flexible in what people do – each employee can have a personal competence profile according to their role. We use core, mandatory training, and medical device and role specific competences. ”

Competences across the board, whatever the role

“ *Competences enable us to support both staff development and staff levels across the professions and progression through a career framework. For example, in imaging we might train someone as an assistant, who in time could progress to Assistant Practitioner, and then on to Practitioner in Radiography – there's clear opportunity for people to progress.*

We have built up other flexible roles such as the advanced scrub practitioner in theatre, and assistant practitioner in plain X ray imaging. Skills for Health competences help us to shape the right roles to meet service need and improve patient care.

We find a competence based approach gives us the freedom to create unique roles within an accountable framework. This is an important part of supporting new ways of working, since it allows us to mix and match job roles in response to changing healthcare needs. ”



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Skills for Health is delighted to see employers embracing a competence based approach to workforce planning and role design, as it underpins one of our strategic aims to increase workforce flexibility to improve service delivery. We believe these examples and many others like them are helping to give positive results for employers, healthcare professionals, and patients in the North West.

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To find out more about the Six Steps Methodology visit www.healthcareworkforce.nhs.uk or call 0161 266 2300