

# Beyond the NHS league tables

Skills for  
Health

## Building the future workforce through data-driven planning

The latest NHS league tables highlight both progress and persistent challenges across access, workforce, and quality of care. Behind the rankings lie complex workforce realities, changing demands, capacity pressures, and the need for new roles and skills.

Drawing on our work with healthcare organisations across the UK, we've aligned practical case studies, proven approaches, and resources to each domain to show how data-driven workforce planning and innovative role design can turn insight into action.



### Access to services


NHS league tables highlight persistent pressures on patient access, from elective care to cancer, urgent, and mental health services. Rising demand, evolving service complexity, and gaps in workforce capacity are driving the case for innovation in roles, skills, and service delivery models.

## Elective care

### Practical support for trusts

[Workforce planning](#): Helps trusts align staffing capacity with elective care demand to reduce delays and waiting lists.

[Capabilities frameworks](#): Provide structured approaches for redesigning roles and deploying skills more effectively across care pathways.


 **CASE STUDY:** Hull & East Yorkshire Hospital used the CHD competence framework to review processes and develop new role profiles, job specifications, and training plans, supporting workforce redesign in elective care services. [Read more](#)

## Cancer care

### Practical support for trusts

[ACCEND Career Framework](#): A national approach to developing cancer and diagnostic career pathways.

[Cancer and Diagnostics Careers Resource Guide](#): Practical guidance for managers and workforce leads on role development and workforce planning.


 **CASE STUDY:** South East London Cancer Network created senior support worker roles to improve chemotherapy service continuity, free up clinical staff time, and build a more sustainable workforce model. [Read more](#)

## Urgent & emergency care

### Practical support for trusts

[Scenario planning for demand surges](#): Prepares services for seasonal peaks and unexpected pressures.

[Workforce modelling tools](#): Helps trusts match workforce levels to patient flow needs.


 **CASE STUDY:** Northern Health & Social Care Trust used workforce competence frameworks to reconfigure its bed management team into a patient flow team, improving discharge processes and meeting A&E performance targets. [Read more](#)

## Mental healthcare

### Practical support for trusts

[Mental Health Core Capability Framework](#): Guides role development and service planning.

[Customised career frameworks](#): Defining skills, roles, and pathways to support workforce developments.

 **CASE STUDY:** Health Education & Improvement Wales applied the Mental Health Core Capability Framework and workforce planning to create clearer roles and career pathways, improving recruitment and retention in mental health services. [Read more](#)



## Effectiveness and experience of care

Findings point to the need for workforce models that can adapt to evolving patient needs and feedback while maintaining high standards of quality. Aligning roles, skills, and training with both clinical outcomes and patient experience priorities helps create the foundation for care that is effective, responsive, and future-ready.

### Practical support for trusts

[Evidence-led evaluation](#): Identify service impact, reduce skills gaps, and review roles to build a future-proof workforce plan.

[Data-driven insights](#): Improve organisational intelligence to inform decisions and maximise workforce capabilities across the system.



**CASE STUDY:** Scottish Ambulance Service used a quality assurance review of its Incident Response and Command Course to identify skills gaps and redesign training, ensuring staff capabilities aligned with service requirements and patient needs. [Read more](#)

## Patient safety

Fluctuating demand, seasonal pressures, and workforce availability impact safe, reliable care delivery. Scenario modelling, capacity planning, and proactive workforce design can help trusts build the resilience needed to maintain high standards of patient safety.

### Practical support for trusts

[Six Steps workforce planning checklist](#): A practical, step-by-step tool that helps organisations plan their workforce effectively.

[Service & role design](#): Helping organisations translate planning into defined roles that support safety, capacity, and productivity.



**CASE STUDY:** Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust introduced an Advanced Practitioner role through service and role design, using a competence-based framework to define responsibilities, support multiple professional groups, and improve patient safety while enabling career progression. [Read more](#)

## Finance and productivity

In an environment of ongoing financial pressures alongside rising demand for services, workforce redesign and evaluation are increasingly essential levers for trusts to maintain service quality under budgetary constraints.

### Practical support for trusts

[Six Step Methodology to Workforce Planning](#): A structured, evidence-based approach that guides organisations through stages of workforce planning.

[Evaluation & workforce analytics](#): Using data to measure impact, improve workforce productivity, and guide investment decisions.



**CASE STUDY:** Oxford University Hospitals used the Six Steps Methodology to develop a 5-year integrated workforce plan: engaging clinical, service and finance leads; refining data and tools; and aligning workforce planning with service development. [Read more](#)

## People and workforce

Performance across all domains ultimately depends on the people delivering care. Ensuring high-quality services means having the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles, now and for the future.

This is where we lead. People and workforce development sits at the heart of everything we do, from strategic workforce planning and role design to capability frameworks, leadership development, and evaluation. We bring deep expertise and proven approaches to help NHS organisations build, develop, and retain a workforce that is skilled and resilient.

We can help you with:

- Strategic workforce planning & role design
- Career & capability frameworks
- Leadership & organisational development
- Evidence-based evaluation & workforce analytics

Speak to an expert



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