

June 2017

## BRIEFING

# WORKFORCE SUPPLY – ATTRACTING AND RETAINING LOCAL TALENT

This briefing for HR professionals in the NHS highlights the changing context and policies designed to encourage more investment in the skills of the UK population. It illustrates the various elements that contribute to a sustainable workforce supply strategy and provides examples and signposts to help you get started. For further information about the examples, please email [workforcesupply@nhsemployers.org](mailto:workforcesupply@nhsemployers.org).

At the end of this briefing you will find discussion points which are designed to encourage reflection, discussion and action, both in local organisations and with partners across each local economy.

## BACKGROUND

Since the UK's EU referendum vote in June 2016 there have been many discussions in the media, in parliament, in health and care organisations and with the public about the impact of leaving the EU on workforce supply.

The decision to leave the EU has the potential to impact on the workforce of many different industries and the health and social care sector is no different. We have a valued and talented workforce made up of colleagues from the UK, the European Economic Area and around the world.

The health and social care sector wants and needs to be able to continue to attract talent from outside the UK. 35 national social care and health organisations from across the UK are currently working together as part of the Cavendish Coalition, to ensure that the views of the sector are represented and known to those making decisions about the UK's withdrawal from the EU, including securing certainty for our current workforce and ensuring access to a future workforce pipeline.

However, it is also essential that we all consider what can be done differently to enhance and extend our local attraction and retention activity. NHS Employers has a range of programmes designed to help employers look differently at attracting and retaining a talented and diverse workforce.

These include:

- practical support and information around using [apprenticeships](#)
- advice on engaging with [diverse groups](#) within local communities
- support to engage with young people via our [ThinkFuture campaign](#)
- connecting employers to the Armed Forces community through the [Step into Health programme](#)
- support to improve performance on diversity in the workplace through the [Diversity and Inclusion Partners programme](#)
- [briefings](#) to encourage and support a range of employment practices, for example improving employment for people with a mental health condition.

Alongside this need to increase the skills base within the UK, the political narrative around managing and reducing migration has also intensified.

It is important that we reflect on this, consider what this means for our sector and what we can do to be proactive in what is a very competitive UK labour market, in most parts of the country.

The apprenticeship levy and immigration skills charge are just two policy decisions which are aimed at encouraging employers to offer recognised training, development and employment opportunities to an increased number of people.

They seek to place responsibility and accountability on employers, across all industry and public service, to ensure that the UK-based population has the opportunity to achieve its potential, enhance the level of skills within the UK and in turn support the growth and productivity of the UK economy.

The government places the role of employers in investing in skills, training and nurturing talent as central to achieving that goal.

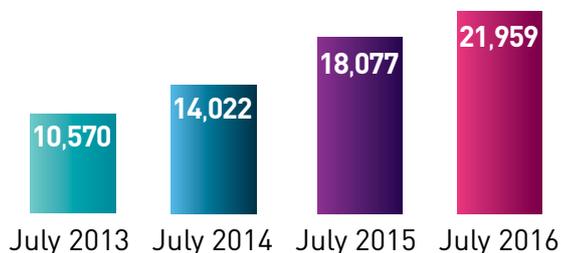
Within the sector, we face a set of challenges around how we overcome some long-standing workforce supply issues and deliver health and social care differently within our communities for the future.

This briefing is designed to help with the conversations and decisions we know are happening in each organisation across the country.

### The NHS workforce in numbers

- The majority of NHS staff in England are British (around 88 per cent).
- Around 12 per cent of NHS staff in England report a non-British nationality (almost 132,000). Of these staff, almost 59,000 are nationals of other EU countries and over 73,000 are nationals of non-EU countries.
- 21,000 EU nurses are employed in the NHS in England, 36 per cent of them work in London.
- 10,000 EU national doctors work in the English NHS, and almost 7 per cent of the medical workforce are from other EU countries

### Rising demand for nurses from the EU:



An additional 11,500 EU nurses are now working in the NHS in England compared to 3 years ago.

Source: NHS Digital

It is useful to look at national numbers and trends, however we know we have significant geographical variations. In terms of local decision making, it will be important to be aware of your own current workforce profile and what the workforce flow and trends have been in recent years. How does this compare to your projected future demand both as an individual organisation and across your local patch?

## WORKFORCE SUPPLY STRATEGY

There will be various components to your workforce supply strategy. We know many employers have already prioritised the work they undertake within their local community to:

1. improve access to employment for new talent
2. retain existing talent by improving staff experience.

The diagram below reflects some of the key activities you can focus on to ensure you have the workforce required to deliver quality services to your communities. As you review your current activity and any future strategy it's important to consider how your existing workforce are engaged and how your brand is communicated and viewed within your wider community.

Throughout this briefing you will find examples of some of the activities taking place within NHS organisations.

Pathways around workforce supply:



### CASE STUDY

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, in conjunction with the Nottingham Post and Nottingham Express Transit, came up with a quirky, high-profile initiative designed to celebrate and raise the profile of the city's nurses and midwives. The public and staff are invited to nominate an individual for a nurse or midwife of the year award, which culminates in a special celebration ceremony. The overall winner also has a tram named after them for the year.

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## STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

Here are some possible options you may wish to explore with your team.

### The professionally qualified, clinical workforce

NHS organisations may wish to consider working with local higher education institutions to increase the capacity for training more nursing and allied health professionals. This could be done as an individual organisation or as a shared activity across a group of employers.

You may also wish to explore higher level apprenticeships. As the range and diversity of higher level apprenticeships currently available, or being developed increases, the perception of degree apprenticeships is also changing. Higher level apprenticeships that lead to qualifications at degree, masters and postgraduate levels, can appeal to those who may not have seen university as a viable option and can attract talented people into professional roles they would not have otherwise considered. Frameworks already exist for the roles of healthcare science practitioner and associate, registered nurse, data analyst and associate ambulance practitioner, among others. Frameworks are in development for roles including apprenticeships for physiotherapists, occupational therapists and paramedics.

### CASE STUDY

Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust have a cohort of Chartered Management Institute level 6 management degree apprentices.

## Diversifying the workforce

Engaging with and recruiting from less well represented groups in your community is another, often unconsidered, supply route. Working in partnership with third party organisations such as [Jobcentre Plus \(JCP\)](#) allows you to engage with parts of your local community that your current recruitment practice may miss.

Third party organisations you may wish to work in partnership with to target community groups in your local area:

[Nacro](#) provides free expert advice to help employers considering recruiting someone with a criminal record.

[The School of Hard Knocks](#) is a sports charity that prepares people from disadvantaged groups, including those who grew up in care, to become work-ready, matching candidates and employers.

[Crisis](#) supports homeless people into meaningful, sustainable employment, by building partnerships with organisations and through its recruitment service.

[The Prince's Trust](#) supports 11 to 30-year-olds who are unemployed or struggling at school on their journey towards getting a job through a range of initiatives in partnership with employers, education providers and training providers.

[Project SEARCH](#) is an international training programme aimed at supporting young people with learning difficulties into paid work placements.

[Mind](#) employment support is a service designed to assist people with mental health problems to find work and live independently in the community.

### CASE STUDIES

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust works with Jobcentre Plus to offer a 12 week pre-employment programme. The programme offers users of JCP services the opportunities to get back into the workplace through structured learning and vocational experience.

MedEx summer school is a scheme offered by Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Imperial College London medical school. The scheme offers four-day work experience to year 12 students. The MedEx programme is aimed at students from under-privileged backgrounds who show talent and interest in medicine.

Public Health England (PHE) uses the Project SEARCH initiative. Their own programme supports young people with learning disabilities or who are on the autistic spectrum by providing a ten-month rotating work experience opportunity, together with bespoke coaching and on-the-job training.

## Working with the Armed Forces

Step into Health is an access pathway for colleagues leaving the Armed Forces, or their family members, to connect with the NHS. To find out more or sign up to the programme, visit [www.nhsemployers.org/stepintohealth](http://www.nhsemployers.org/stepintohealth).

### CASE STUDY

Following the concept developed by Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Step into Health became a partnership between Health Education England, The Royal Foundation, Walking with the Wounded and five NHS organisations across England:

- Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

The programme focused on information days, work experience placements, employment opportunities and veteran awareness.

Step into Health was evaluated in September 2016 and showed that 401 members of the Armed Forces community attended 29 information days, with 137 work placements established and 78 of those transferring into either employment, further education or external employment.

## Local schools engagement

A simple way of engaging with your local schools and colleges is to send a health ambassador to talk about their career and role in health. Health ambassadors are people who work in healthcare who volunteer to share their experience and knowledge with young people in schools, colleges and local communities. Health ambassadors can make contact with local young people in several different ways including giving career talks, facilitating workshops, delivering presentations or becoming a mentor.

Find out more about health ambassadors in our [ThinkFuture HR toolkit](#).

[ThinkFuture](#) Inspiring the Future is a charitable organisation that helps to match schools and colleges with volunteers from the world of work:

- Volunteering for Inspiring the Future is free, and volunteers only need to commit one hour per year.
- There are over 1000 NHS volunteers signed up to Inspiring the Future, engaging with local schools and colleges.

## CASE STUDIES

The Aspire programme at Birmingham Children's Hospital supports young people in getting the skills, knowledge and confidence to enter the world of work. Opportunities include apprenticeships, e-mentoring and internships. The programme has 27 partners from 11 organisations to help make the programme possible.

East and North Hertfordshire NHS Foundation Trust is raising the profile of roles within health and social care through a careers expo and building close links with local schools and higher education institutions.

📄 **Health Careers**, part of Health Education England, runs an annual competition for school children in years 8 and 9. This competition encourages participating children to choose an NHS career that interests them and create a job description and an advert to tell their friends and other young people about the role they have chosen.

Engaging with your local schools through health ambassador programmes and the Health Careers schools competition can provide the opportunity to change young people's perceptions about the roles available to them in the NHS, and encourage them to see the NHS as a potential future employer.

For further insight into young people's perceptions of the NHS, see:

📄 **Report: *Recruiting young people in the NHS***, ThinkFuture

📄 **Blog: *Men are doctors and women are nurses. Right? Of course not, but is this what primary school kids really think?***, Health Education England.

## CASE STUDIES

York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has taken steps to develop a more age diverse workforce. The trust's summer placement scheme was implemented in 2015 and is helping students to gain paid work experience.

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust has introduced a work experience programme for 16-24 year olds in their local community, giving young adults the opportunity to increase their employability.

## Return to work

Returning nurses to practice could form an important component of a workforce supply strategy. To find out more about the national Health Education England (HEE) return to practice nursing programme, contact the HEE regional lead or visit the [HEE website](#).

## Flexible options

One of the clearest ways that an organisation can improve access to employment and demonstrate their commitment to being an employer of choice in the community is by providing flexible working opportunities. Find out more about flexible working on [our website](#).

### CASE STUDY

Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust provides training for all staff on effective flexible working options, and provides managers with guidance about handling requests for flexible working and case studies of good practice.

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## STRATEGIES TO RETAIN EXISTING TALENT

Staff who are well engaged, valued, developed and rewarded are more likely to stay in the organisation; retention is an outcome of good employment practice. See our guidance on developing a [workforce retention strategy](#).

### Review your current employment offer

With continued pay restraint and public sector pension reforms, it's more important than ever for organisations to ensure that staff understand and appreciate their overall reward package. By taking a strategic approach to reward, it will provide the opportunity to clearly demonstrate the entire scope and value of the employment offer. Find out more on our [reward web pages](#).

### CASE STUDIES

Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust has recruited a network of staff, known as benefit champions, to communicate information about rewards and staff benefits across the organisation.

East London NHS Foundation Trust undertook a review of its reward offer to aid recruitment and retention challenges and to ensure the offer reflects what staff want and value.

### Look at career development opportunities for all

Providing education and training opportunities for all staff is another way of making the workforce feel valued, supported and professionally fulfilled. Creating a clear career pathway for progression will also incentivise staff to remain in the organisation and skilling your workforce can be a strategy to help manage workforce gaps. Find out more on our [workforce supply web pages](#).

### IN SUMMARY

The wealth and breadth of examples we've highlighted in this document demonstrate the range of activity already in place in the NHS. However, the current political and policy landscape means it is crucial to undertake a thorough review of our current domestic activity and what we need to take decisions on now to ensure that we:

1. remain an attractive and competitive employer in the years ahead, and
2. can access the skills and talent we need to provide the health and social care services to our local population.

Our role is to work with you as this work progresses. We encourage you to continue to share your feedback and examples of your own local activity.

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## DISCUSSION POINTS

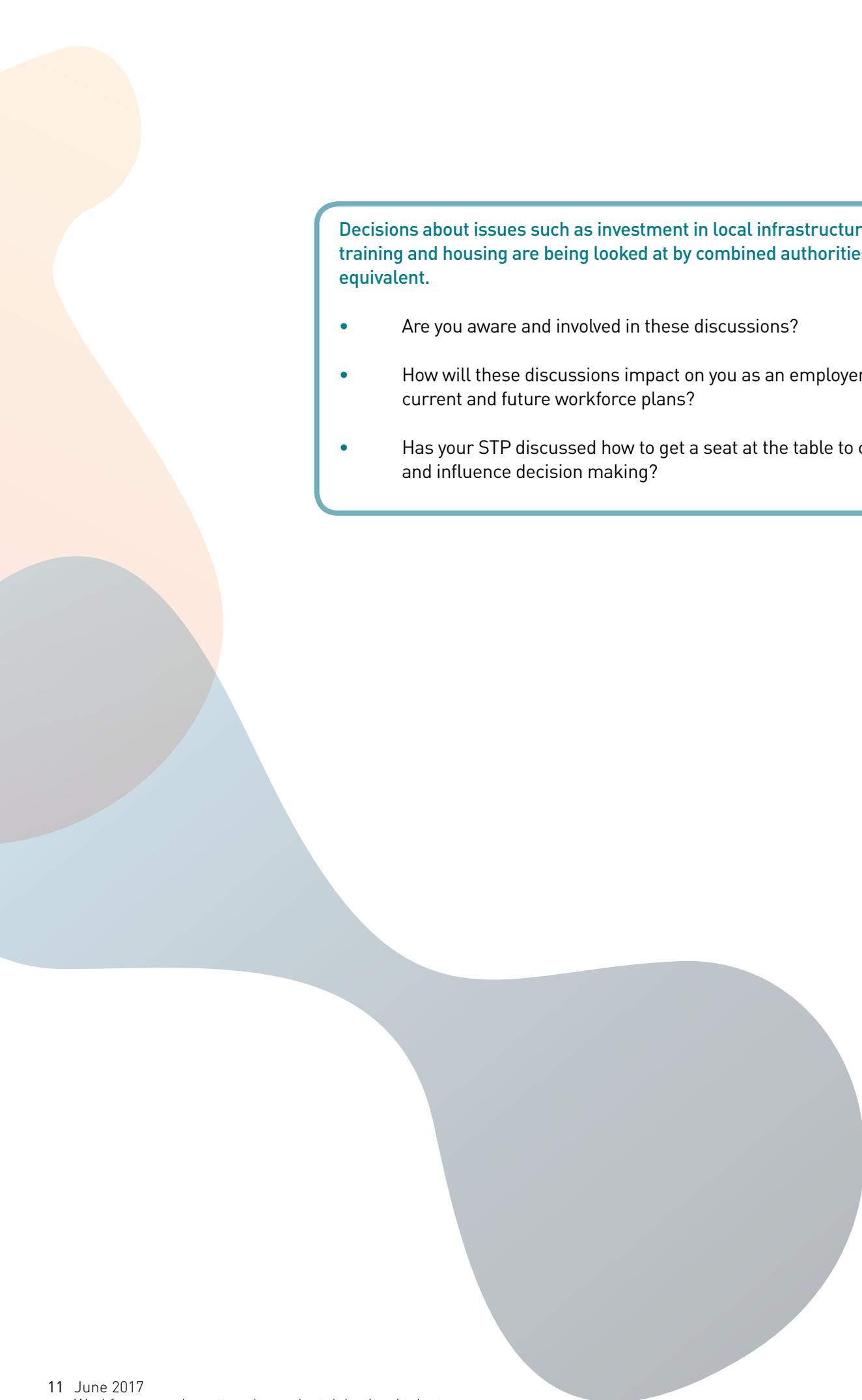
The following facts and questions could be used to provoke thinking with your teams. We hope they help kick-start a discussion about whether there are different or additional approaches you could consider as an organisation, and particularly whether working collaboratively with partners across your local economy could add value and impact.

### The NHS is often the largest employer in a local community.

- Do you know how your brand is perceived by your local population?
- Do all parts of your local community think of the NHS as an employer for them?

### Unemployment is low (1.54 million January – March 2017) and the UK labour market is competitive.

- Is your employment offer visible, attractive as well as realistic?
- Can your offer be enhanced by collaborating across your local area, either with other NHS organisations or partners in other public services?
- Have you established and developed relationships with different community groups in your local area to position your organisation and / or the sector as an employer of choice?
- Could recruitment or offers of training and employment be something that is delivered in collaboration with your local health partners?
- Has your organisation looked at what might be required to increase the domestic pipeline and reduce reliance on an overseas pipeline and is your board aware?
- Has your organisation assessed and agreed to invest in the infrastructure to deliver an enhanced workforce strategy?
- Have you engaged with recruiting managers and managers of people to ensure everyone is clear on the desired outcome and that candidates who require additional skills, training and development will get the support they need to make it a success?
- Have you looked at your future supply requirements for occupations such as nursing and the different the opportunities to increase training? Have you explored this with your board and with your local university? Is this something that can be delivered collaboratively with other providers of healthcare in your locality?



Decisions about issues such as investment in local infrastructure, skills training and housing are being looked at by combined authorities or their equivalent.

- Are you aware and involved in these discussions?
- How will these discussions impact on you as an employer, and your current and future workforce plans?
- Has your STP discussed how to get a seat at the table to contribute to and influence decision making?

## Keep in touch

We are always keen to share best practice. Let us know what you are doing to grow your future workforce so we can share this with colleagues.

✉ [workforcesupply@nhsemployers.org](mailto:workforcesupply@nhsemployers.org)

✉ [@NHSWorkforceSupply](https://twitter.com/NHSWorkforceSupply)

✉ [www.nhsemployers.org/workforcesupply](http://www.nhsemployers.org/workforcesupply)

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