

Planning Context

When developing plans, the following links provide useful wider context :

- [Health and social care: national workforce strategy - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2022/06/Health_and_social_care_national_workforce_strategy.pdf)

Planning Priorities

The Workforce Strategy Implementation Programme will continue to take forward key workforce reform in 24/25 designed to enhance staff and patient safety, improve working cultures, optimise workforce planning and staff deployment, and deliver sustainable improvement in conditions of service.

As spend on staffing continues to rise as a proportion of total portfolio expenditure, Boards are asked to set out plans to:

- Achieve further reductions in agency staffing use and to optimise staff bank arrangements.
- Achieve reductions in medical locum spend
- Deliver a clear reduction in sickness absence by end of 24/25

The NHS Scotland Planning and Delivery Board is considering the requirement for a national-level business services transformation. As part of this, Boards will be expected to establish clear trajectories for increasing efficiencies across administrative and support services.

In addition, all territorial NHS Boards have signed up to the national eRostering contract, is a key enabler for Health Boards when complying with and reporting on the duties in the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019. In readiness for reporting by April 2025, Boards will have received access to eRostering and will have 6 rosters built by November 2024/ Boards are asked to set out in their 3 Year Delivery Plan:

- An implementation plan for eRostering in 24/25 with a view to implementing across all services and professions by 31st March 2026.

Board specific improvement plans and targets will be developed and issued via the Planning and Delivery Board and progress will be monitored through, inter alia, quarterly returns.

Achieve further reductions in agency staffing use and to optimise staff bank arrangements.

Achieve reductions in Medical Locum Spend.

Nursing agency remains extremely low and Bank is optimised. Long term agency engagement is required in Medical Staffing and some AHP areas, e.g. Radiology, Pharmacy and Labs. Measures in place for agency control are:

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All agency engagement requires authorisation by Chief Executive and each period of engagement is limited to 12 weeks.

Continuing analysis and check of market to ensure most efficient and effective agency engagement in place.

Use of direct engagement for majority of agency staff.

Planned measures for reducing agency are:

- To help achieve reductions in medical locum spends, there is an ongoing plan in place to recruit into substantive Medical posts currently covered by locum staff. Recruitment campaigns continue to be adopted with utilisation of the British Medical Journal (BMJ) to attract candidates into long term employment opportunities.
- International recruitment.
- Review of Pharmacy workforce and increased use of apprenticeships to ensure registered staff are used for registered duties only.
- Advertisement of fixed term Locum appointments on terms and conditions.

Deliver a clear reduction in sickness absence by end of 24/25 and delivery of the NHS Western Isles Wellbeing Strategy.

- The target is to reduce sickness absence rate by 2%
- NHS Western Isles will continue to provide regular training for both managers and the wider workforce to re-enforce the roles and responsibilities when it comes to attendance management.
- We will have a sharper focus on 2024 on regular Short-Term absences across the organisation. This will ensure the NHS Scotland Attendance Policy is implemented where appropriate to manage these.
- Long-Term absence will continue to be monitored and managed, although the vast majority of these are already involved in formal Attendance Policy procedures, this will remain a key focal point for the Employee Relations and Occupational Health Teams.
- Increased reporting on absence metrics through Board Committees
- Performance monitoring of sickness absence with all Executive leads
- Increased communications on attendance management processes to staff explaining the attendance management process, triggers and staff responsibilities within that.
- NHS Western Isles has an agreed Employee Wellbeing Strategy. There is an associated Action Plan that is reviewed and updated regularly by our Wellbeing Group. This helps to ensure the appropriate initiatives for staff are in place at the point of need. A key pillar of this strategy is the Employee Assistance Programme offered to all staff and their families. Usage is monitored and communication of available resource to staff is continuous.
- Via the NHS Western Isles Wellbeing Group, support the provision of advice, support and training to employees on the cost of living and the impact it has on our mental and physical health. Employees are provided with training along with awareness sessions from local and national agencies that can provide support during cost of living crisis.
- Implementation of the women's health strategy from an employer perspective. This means continued availability of free period products and implementation of the Interim NHS Scotland Menopause Policy.

An implementation plan for eRostering in 24/25 with a view to implementing across all services and professions by 31st March 2026.

NHS Western Isles currently has 50% of Rosters operating through eRoster. 75% will be operational by 31 March 2025 and 100% by 31 March 2026. Risks to this are:

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- Interface with SSTS and Payroll meaning double entry of data. Capacity to continue with double entry continues to be an issue.
- Capacity within the Business as Usual Team who are undertaking eRoster duties alongside other substantive duties.
- Changes required to the system with implementation of a reduced working week. These will required to be manual adjustments for every employee and every Roster pattern.

Safe Care has been piloted in Acute nursing and will continue to operate.

Increasing efficiencies across administrative and support services.

- Review of all fixed term contracts.
- Hold and review of all vacancies.
- Implementation of IT Future State Plan to ensure efficient and safe IT system capability.

Planning and resourcing strategies

- NHS Western Isles remain involved with both national and regional recruitment programmes. These include:
 - International Recruitment – Regional collaboration with NHS Grampian leading. Focus on AHP workforce.
 - Armed Forces Talent Programme
 - Working with the North Region group to increase capacity
 - Participation in the Remote and Rural Healthcare Education Alliance (RRHEAL).
- Development and implementation of a new NHS Western Isles Learning Strategy and Policy that will complement the recently launched NHS Western Isles Turas Learning Site.
- NHS Western Isles new Strategic Workforce Group to continue supporting and driving the implementation of the Health and Care (Staffing) Act 2019. This group also ensures Workforce Planning activity is monitored.

Additional capacity building to enable recovery and growth in service demand.

- Support the establishment of the Acute Assessment Unit (AAU) as a substantive service within NHS Western Isles. This will reduce unscheduled admissions and offer alternative pathways.
- With Funding secured to install an MRI unit in Western Isles Hospital, Workforce Planning methodology implemented to support the Radiology department in staffing this. A Project Lead has been recruited to with ongoing work between HR and Finance on the development of this Workforce Plan.
- Mental Health redesign – Support the development of a Mental Health Workforce Plan to include review of Primary Care Mental Health. The workforce plan would consider nursing AHPs, psychology and psychiatry input.
- Support the approach to maximising use of digital innovation. This will include collaboration with Heads of Service and Head of IT, with particular focus on supporting delivery of:
 - e-Rostering
 - Hospital Electronic Prescribing Medication Administration (HEPMA) system
 - Turas Learn
 - M365 capacity

Shift to community-based health care

- Ongoing support in the delivery of the Hospital at Home Model which has reduced length of stay in our hospitals.
- The expansion of the Urgent & Unscheduled Care ANP / GP service to Uist and Barra

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- Direct recruitment of rural GPs for 2c GP Practices and Rural Hospitals.

Resourcing Strategies

- Developing flexible working practices within Domestic Services to ensure posts are more attractive. This will help ensure long term sustainability within this crucial service.
- Catering Services – Continue to cultivate the Apprenticeship model within Catering services after initial successful recruitment in 2023.
- Health Improvement – Development of a Modern Apprentice role within onward progression routes into being a fully trained Health Practitioner.
- Identify other areas within the organisation where utilisation of Apprenticeship Model would be appropriate.

Making use of new roles, training and development opportunities to support workforce diversification.

- Expansion of Band 2 to Band 4 roles within Nursing and Midwifery.
- Provide HR Support to the development of alternate Urgent and Unscheduled Care models. These include expanding the scope of ANPs to facilitate OOHs face to face appointments, historically seen by GPs.
- Continue to promote Band 2 to Band 3 development Medical Laboratory Assistant posts.
- Supporting transition of GP Practice into 2c Practice in Uist and Barra.
- Development of Neurodevelopmental pathway and the potential Neurodevelopmental Nurse Practitioner role across the lifespan to reduce waiting times and increase timely access to support.
- Best Start Maternity Plan. This plan is underway in respect of maternity services at Western Isles. The focus on continuity of care now sees all midwives carrying their own caseload.
- The Realistic medicine Lead works across all sectors in NHS Western Isles to help drive the principles of Realistic Medicine. Work is ongoing to plan a programme of training for appropriate staff. This training will be piloted with a number of the specialist teams to ensure the most appropriate support can be given to embed the learning from the online resources.
- Leadership & Management Development – NHS Western Isles will ensure that a Leadership & Management Development Programme is fully embedded across all areas of the organisation. After all current managers go through the programme; this will become a twice-yearly training programme for all new managers either promoted internally, or recruited to externally. This programme will provide them each with the tools to succeed as leaders.
- Change to the role of Sonographers within Radiology department to undertake Ultrasound and AAA Screening.

Enhancing local supply pipelines

- Continued development of the NHS Western Isles Apprenticeship Programme. This includes Modern and Foundation Apprenticeships, with current consideration for longer term Graduate Apprenticeship inclusion.
- NHS Western Isles currently link in with the NHS Youth Academy team to consider how we might develop better opportunities within schools for potential future employees of NHS Western Isles.
- Establish and nourish the ambition of pupils and students with local schools and the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI).
- We continue to grow our Work Experience Offering across all schools within the Western Isles. To support the development of valuable opportunities, particularly taking account of

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geographical challenges, more bespoke Work Experience opportunities are being catered for (i.e. rotating across departments, utilising digital provisions and providing longer term opportunities including afternoons and mornings each week).

- Active involvement in career fairs across the Western Isles to highlight opportunities and promote NHS Western Isles as an employer of choice.
- Future nurse programme continues to reach out to younger children (pre-school and primary age) to promote the role of our nurses. This is currently being re-launched nationally and NHS Western Isles have engaged with that to ensure we are involved in this re-launch.
- Utilise the NHS Western Isles Simulation Lab to enhance placement opportunities for students.
- The largest Secondary School in the Western Isles (The Nicolson Institute) have opted for a theme of “Health & Wellbeing” for their P7-12 transition. NHS Western Isles will be involved in this to showcase the career options within the NHS, and actively engage with the schools to share what it’s like to have a rewarding career within Healthcare.

Use of technology and automation to support increased efficiency

- Optimising Microsoft 365 licenses, products, and tools. The use of Microsoft Teams, Forms and continue to adopt Microsoft 365 apps across health and social care to support staff working across organisation boundaries to improve the user experience when working in multi-disciplinary teams.
- Increased use of Near Me video consulting platform that helps to offer video call access to health services.

Use of national and local workforce policies to maximise recruitment and retention

- NHS Western Isles continue to promote the Retire & Return option for staff ensuring we are able to retain valuable skills and experience, ensuring continued delivery of high-quality care to the people of the Western Isles.
- Develop and implement new NHS Western Isles Learning Strategy and associated policy. This will help to assist with embedding new Turas Learn learning site and encourage a culture of learning within the organisation.

Addressing and reducing barriers to delivering exemplary workforce practice.

- NHS Western Isles continue to focus on:
 - Flexible Working opportunities considered across the organisation
 - Enhanced data to support Workforce Planning
 - Recruitment innovation with harder to reach groups
 - Strategic Workforce Group working to respond to the Safe Staffing Legislation.
 - Ensuring greater links between Finance and Workforce Planning.