



**NHS WALES**

## **NATIONAL SUCCESSION STRATEGY**

**2017-2027**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The NHS Wales National Succession Strategy sets out the ambition to deliver a pipeline of talent of NHS staff at local and national levels, underpinned by a technical solution through ESR.

This strategy is designed to be utilised within local NHS organisations to better support consistent mechanisms for succession planning and inform senior level succession planning across both NHS Wales.

Planning for what is needed now will ensure there is effective capability and capacity in the future. This will support NHS Wales to identify, develop and fully utilise the potential of NHS staff in the delivery of a world-class health service for the people of Wales.

### **2. DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this document, and to provide clarity, the following definitions of talent management and succession planning are used.

*Talent management is a set of integrated workforce processes designed to attract, develop, motivate and retain productive, engaged employees. The goal of talent management is to create a high performance, sustainable organisation that meets its strategic and operational goals and objectives* (Kings Fund, 2015)

*Succession planning is the process of identifying critical positions within each organisation and across NHS Wales and assessing current staff members who might be able to fill these positions.*

### **3. CONTEXT**

Talent management and succession planning is good practice in any organisation. The focus across NHS Wales has been triggered by an emerging crisis in the recruitment of senior and executive leaders, and the increasing number of roles held by individuals on an interim basis. This situation creates instability across

organisations, impacts on the morale and workload of existing staff and ultimately affects organisations' ability to achieve their objectives.

There is a considerable body of evidence to suggest that a vibrant blend of talent management and succession planning provides an important dual function within an organisation. It lifts individual performance beyond the impact of conventional programmes of learning and at the same time provides an assurance of quality and capability at the point of recruitment into business critical roles.

In addition to this, the evidence suggests that 'home-grown' talent, when undertaken effectively is one of the distinguishing features of world class top performing organisations.

#### **4. VISION**

Our vision for NHS Wales is to refresh our national approach to talent management and succession planning to ensure a future pipeline of outstanding performers across services within NHS Wales.

The implementation of the strategy will deliver a systematic and planned strategic effort across NHS Wales to attract, retain, develop and motivate high-performing staff who meet the short, medium and long-term needs of all organisations. The strategy is based on equity of opportunity, will widen access to support and promote opportunity, resulting in a diverse leadership.

There are a number of elements to this strategy, many of which are already in place or in development in individual NHS organisations across Wales. This strategy has been developed, to ensure a consistent overview approach across NHS Wales that meets the needs of all organisations but takes account of local differences in specific processes related to talent management and succession planning.

Evidence shows that when investment in individuals is valued and demonstrated, organisations see improved outcomes, better financial results and an engaged workforce and adaptable workforce which will ensure public confidence.

#### **5. THE OUTCOME**

This strategy is designed to enable talent to be identified and nurtured at an early stage in the careers of those with potential to be senior leaders. In this context an effective succession planning approach implemented across Wales will bring the following benefits;

This will result in

- Talent identified at all levels and embedded into organisational processes including PADR/appraisal/job planning processes.
- Improved staff retention at all levels in NHS Wales
- Availability of candidates that can deliver against strategic objectives

- Increased creativity and innovation to solve organisational challenges
- Attractive career pathways within NHS Wales, to support recruitment and retention in line with the Train.Work.Live campaign
- Increased diversity in senior manager positions
- Lower turnover at Chief Executive and Executive levels
- At least three shortlisted NHS Wales applicants for every Board level position by 2025.

## **6. THE OUTPUT**

The output of this work is to facilitate a managed process in relation to the deployment of people within the local talent pipelines and between NHS Wales organisations and wider public services and private sector.

The potential for route transfers between streams of management eg functional managers into general management and vice versa etc could offer an extra opportunity for job enrichment in what could be a very long career.

Implementation of this strategy will be supported by a framework and toolkit, which will describe how we identify, select, develop, deploy, support and evaluate talent within NHS Wales. In the first instance this will be developed to facilitate Senior Succession Planning, but will also support a mechanism to identify potential talent earlier in the talent pipeline at local levels.

## **7. THE CASE FOR CHANGE**

NHS Wales cannot currently answer key questions related to succession planning:

- Which positions are without 'Ready Now' candidates
- How many 'Ready Now' successors do we have?
- Who are the 'Ready Now' candidates?
- Who are the high potential leaders for the short, medium and long term?

Traditionally, there has been a reliance on individuals taking responsibility for their own development and career progression, with managers developing individuals in the context of current roles, rather than taking an organisational or NHS Wales perspective.

Since reorganisation of NHS Wales in 2009, Health Boards and Trusts have been taking action at local levels to identify effective talent management/succession planning arrangements. Consequently, organisations are at different stages of implementation with most investing in their own leadership programmes at various levels. Some organisations are starting to translate the output of these programmes into a process of identification of talent to address and identify appropriate individuals at various levels.

There are currently national development programmes which could form part of the development platform of a succession planning system, however whilst these elements

can be building blocks in the overall approach, these are not sufficient to meet the need. Research on senior leader recruitment suggests that on the job experience is the primary defining quality and individuals should be given the opportunity to learn how to lead when in highly visible roles (Harvard Business Review Sept 2012). In addition, recent research by Anders Erickson from Florida State University and supported by leadership expert Malcolm Gladwell, suggests that it takes 10,000 hours of quality effortful practice or 10 years of quality experience to become expert in a leadership role.

## **8. THE APPROACH**

There is a considerable body of evidence to suggest that a vibrant blend of talent management and succession planning provides an important dual function within an organisation. It lifts individual performance beyond the impact of conventional programmes of learning and at the same time provides an assurance of quality and capability at the point of recruitment into business critical roles. In addition to this, the evidence suggests that 'home-grown' talent, when undertaken effectively, is one distinguishing feature of world class, top performing organisations.

The National Succession Strategy will be delivered through a managed seven step process. A supporting framework and toolkit will describe the specifics of each of the steps, and how they should be adopted at local and national level to create effective talent management and succession planning processes for NHS Wales and allow transfer between the local and national pathways. The seven steps are as follows;

- Step 1 Identify staffing needs
- Step 2 Create talent pools
- Step 3 Identify succession pool candidates
- Step 4 Develop successor candidates
- Step 5 Utilise national reporting capability
- Step 6 Identify candidates for vacancies from talent pools
- Step 7 Evaluation

This will involve organisations releasing their identified top performers to work across the whole system during a time of increasing challenges within local services.

The implementation of the strategy will be managed in two distinct ways. The process for tier 1 and 2 roles, will be managed nationally, through the National Succession Manager post. All other tiers will be managed in local organisations, through a local approach to detailed succession planning. Staff who are appointed into Tier 3 positions will be included within the nationally managed network for succession to Tier 1 and 2 posts.

This strategy is designed to enable NHS Wales talent and succession approaches to deliver against the following key principles;

- Ensuring future leaders have experience of the whole system;
- Ensuring broader sector experience, especially social care services

- Facilitating hands-on experience, especially social care services as part of a top leader's portfolio;
- Acknowledging the importance of being identified from within organisations and supported, mentored and sponsored to succeed.

## **9. EVALUATION AND MONITORING**

This strategy will be adopted across all organisations, however specific implementation of these principles will be unique to meet the demand of each individual organisation. The performance monitoring will therefore be designed to capture what the organisations are doing rather than how they are doing it.

Organisations will therefore be asked to report on an annual basis as a minimum

- Whether the organisation have a consistent mechanism in place for succession planning.
- At what levels of the organisation the mechanism is actively functioning.
- What outcomes the organisation is anticipating and to what extent these are materialising.
- How many leaders are currently in the process.

## **10. GOVERNANCE**

The Succession Strategy at National Level will be sponsored by the Director General of NHS Wales and the lead Chief Executive for Workforce and Organisational Development. Operational implementation of the national level (tiers 1 and 2) will be managed through the National Succession Manager, who will report to the Director of Workforce and OD lead for this workstream. Ownership at local level for the delivery of this strategy will be through the Executive Director of Workforce and OD in each local organisation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Refreshing our national approach to succession planning is a vital step towards ensuring a future pipeline of outstanding leaders in senior roles across NHS Wales. When investment in individuals is valued and demonstrated, organisations demonstrate improved outcomes, better financial results and an engaged workforce, that is adaptable to shifting conditions with organisations ensuring public confidence in their future.

An implementation framework and supporting toolkit will support NHS Wales in delivering this strategy. This will ensure synergy between the national and local pipelines and to enable a system that creates the cross organisation and cross sector deployment opportunities NHS Wales needs future leaders to have.

Planning for what is needed now will ensure there is effective leadership capability and capacity and will support NHS Wales to identify, develop and fully utilise the potential of our staff as leaders in the delivery of a world-class health service for the citizens of Wales.