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# Swansea Bay University Health Board

## People Strategy 2024-2029



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We will strive to be diverse and inclusive, ensuring all voices are heard

**How will we deliver this strategy together?**

Through our new [People Promise](#) and our existing values and behaviours:

**caring**  
for each other

in every human contact in all of our communities and each of our hospitals.

**working**  
together

as patients, families, carers, staff and communities so that we always put patients first.

**always**  
improving

so that we are at our best for every patient and for each other.

# INTRODUCTION

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## Why have we developed this strategy?

*“Welcome to our five year People Strategy. It is a strategy that reflects and addresses what you told us during Our Big Conversation. It has been written in collaboration with a broad range of partners and it aligns with our new, ten year Health Board vision to become a high quality organisation. That vision sees us put our patients and service users at the heart of everything we do.*

*You, our people, are pivotal to delivering our ambitious vision and this People Strategy enables us to collectively focus on what is important to you, creating an environment where you feel empowered and able to flourish.*

*We want to thank you for everything you are doing to make Swansea Bay University Health Board a great place to work and receive high quality care.”*

Richard Evans, Interim CEO;  
Debbie Eytayo, Executive Director of Workforce and OD;  
Gary John and Nigel Hill, Chair and Vice Chair of Staff Side

**Our people are important to us**  
We employ almost 14,000 people and are supported by over 300 volunteers. We want to ensure we provide you with a great experience of our Health Board by promoting equality, diversity and belonging in everything we do. We also want to ensure you are skilled, motivated and passionate about delivering high quality care to the communities we serve.

**Our patients and service users are important to us**  
Our people strategy aligns to our ten year vision to become a high quality organisation and our ambition to become a leading health system for our communities.

**Our environment is changing**  
Our strategy is also aligned to national workforce strategies which recognise that we are facing challenges and changes ahead. We need to ensure we equip and support you to meet these challenges both now and in the future.

**We need to work together to deliver a great experience for our people**  
Every one of us is responsible for providing our people, which includes our volunteers, with a great experience of our Health Board. Communicating a shared vision and a set of high level actions is the first part of our journey to enable us to achieve this vision together. These actions will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant and are aligned to our Health Board priorities.

## Where are we now?

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**Engaged, Motivated and Healthy:** Our Big Conversation engagement programme took place in October 2022 and provided us with rich feedback from over 1,400 of our people. This feedback has been used to inform the actions within our new 10 year One Bay Way vision document and the actions within this people strategy. As we begin to deliver this strategy, we will be measuring for improvements in engagement levels by, for example, reviewing the feedback from the NHS Wales staff Survey due to close in November 2023. We would also expect to see a reduction in our 12 month leaver rate (10.4% as of August 2023) and our sickness absence rate (6.78% for the month of July 23).

**Attract and Recruit:** We are committed to promoting our career opportunities within the Health Board. From April 23 - Oct 23, we held 12 events attended by approximately 1000 people from schools, colleges and ethnic minority groups. We also launched our new attraction branding and bilingual recruitment website in 2023 to increase interest in Swansea Bay as an employer of choice. In 2022/23 the Health Board (HB) introduced a Central Resourcing team (CRT) to support Nursing and Health Care Support Worker recruitment. The additional support saw recruitment timelines reduce from 78.7 working days (HB average) to 50.5 working days (CRT average) and an improvement in candidate experience (e.g. in March 22, there was a 100% communication score with CRT support, compared to 35% without).

**Well Planned:** As of August 2023, our Health Board vacancy rate was reported as c.10%. However this figure only provides a snapshot in time and does not take into account live recruitment. The CRT and the Medical Recruitment Team's continued efforts to fill vacancies has started to see our expenditure on temporary people (e.g. agency staff) reduce, with a predicted reduction of £10m for this financial year. However more planning is needed to ensure we have sustainable sources of skilled people through, for example, our annual education commissioning process, and that our people are working on the right things.

**Digitally Ready:** We are currently working with Health Education Improvement Wales to promote a new digital readiness self-assessment tool, which will provide the Health Board with anonymised data on what our people need to become digitally ready. However as of March 2023, our response rate as a Health Board was very low and therefore we need to do more to promote this tool so we can review the digital needs of our people and introduce different supportive initiatives.

**Excellent Learning & Education:** As of September 2023, our Health Board is meeting our target for 85% of our people to have completed all 14 core competencies via statutory and mandatory training modules (86.2%), however there is still variation across different staff groups, which would need to be improved.

**Leadership that Lives our Values:** We currently have a number of leadership development programmes available to support our people, which were attended by over 1,000 leaders between April 22 & March 23. However, feedback from Our Big Conversation engagement programme in October 22 suggested that leadership behaviours was one of the areas that our people still felt needed improving so we recognise we have more work to do to support our leaders to embed the learning from these programmes into their everyday roles.

**Equality, Diversity & Belonging:** We currently have staff networks in place to support our people. For example, the aim of our BAME staff network is to celebrate ethnic and cultural diversity and the aim of our Calon network is to promote an inclusive and equitable place for all, irrespective of sexuality or gender identity. However our people data needs improving. As of March 22, data was missing for almost a third of our people for some protected characteristics (e.g. 19% missing data on ethnicity, 27% for religion and 28% for sexual orientation).



## Theme 1: Engaged, Motivated and Healthy

We want our people to feel valued, fairly rewarded and supported

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### Why are we focussing on this?

We know that a great experience of work and high levels of wellbeing, results in great patient and service user experience. We want our people to feel proud of the care we provide, feel valued, recognised and fairly rewarded for their contribution and to feel connected to the Health Board and the teams they work within.

Note the feedback we received from our 2022 Big Conversation engagement programme has helped to inform the actions within this strategy.

### How will we achieve this?

We will:

- **deliver the recommendations from our Big Conversation engagement programme**, through our new People Promise and compact with our Trade Union Partners
- develop and deliver actions which will support us to **retain our people**, such as **reviewing our flexible working practices**
- deliver a **people recognition programme** so every person feels valued
- **focus on the wellbeing of our people** with timely access to Occupational Health and Wellbeing support, providing relevant training and information and extending our wellbeing champions network
- **continue to listen** to our people **and take action** when they speak up
- embed a **positive volunteering culture** and inspire more to participate
- **review our people (HR) processes** to align with best practice and a learning culture

### How will we measure our progress?

We will review our attendance, leaver rates and responses from engagement surveys and exit interviews and we will review how we implement our people (HR) policies to ensure we are placing our people at the centre.



## Theme 2: Attract and Recruit

We want to be recognised as an employer of choice

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### Why are we focussing on this?

We need to ensure we can attract and recruit the right people, with the right skills, at the right time, to meet the healthcare needs of our communities.

We are committed to supporting our communities by widening access to healthcare careers and facilitating local recruitment. In addition, our ambition is to become an employer of choice in a competitive national and international market.

### How will we achieve this?

We will:

- **widen access to healthcare careers** by increasing our work experience, apprenticeship, graduate and clinical observation opportunities, particularly from underrepresented groups
- introduce **Gateway Academy Programmes to develop career pathways** for hard to fill roles
- continue to **promote our Health Board** as a great place to work/volunteer
- **provide resourcing support** to services to recruit to their medical and clinical people gaps
- continue to **ethically recruit some of our nursing and medical people from overseas**, expanding to other professions where appropriate
- **improve the recruitment experience** of our candidates, for example, by increasing our training offer for recruiting managers

### How will we measure our progress?

We will measure the number of career opportunities we offer to our communities, how many we fill and the impact this has on our diversity profile. We will also review the time it takes to recruit our people, our candidates' experience and our vacancy rates.



## Theme 3: Well Planned

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We will aim to have the right number of skilled people working on the right things

### Why are we focussing on this?

We cannot deliver our services without our people. Planning and delivering co-ordinated healthcare services with appropriately skilled people, is essential to improving outcomes for our patients and service users.

Therefore we will need to build our capability in planning our people and identifying innovative solutions, sometimes with the help of our partners, to overcome our people challenges. We will also need to embrace new ways of working by placing our teams around our patients and service users.

### How will we achieve this?

We will:

- **improve skills in workforce planning and use of people data**
- identify the people we need and how we will design, develop and deliver them to address any immediate or emerging people risks/gaps
- **develop great teams**, in less hierarchical structures and across multi-disciplinary boundaries, **focussing on patient/service user outcomes**
- work with our regional partners to **support collaborative workforce planning across systems**
- continue to review and update our people systems to **improve the accuracy of our people data**
- **review our people (HR) practices** so they facilitate change
- design our workforce and roles **to support the decarbonisation/ climate change agenda**

### How will we measure our progress?

We will measure our vacancies; impact on quality and how much money we spend on temporary people to fill gaps. We will review our people (HR) practices to ensure they are timely and achieving their desired outcomes. 6



## Theme 4: Digitally Ready

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We want to ensure our people feel ready for our digital future

### Why are we focussing on this?

It is important we develop our people to feel confident using digital tools and technology to help improve access to our services, support us to work more efficiently, provide more effective treatments and provide better services for our patients and service users overall.

However we recognise that for some of our people, this is scary, so we all need to play a role in supporting and building confidence to embrace our digital future.

### How will we achieve this?

We will:

- **encourage our people to complete the national digital readiness self-assessment** to help us understand what our people need, implementing **supportive action** where required
- develop more **robust plans when integrating new digital solutions** to ensure the impact on our people has been fully considered, including any cultural change required to embed them
- **develop guidance on how our people can look after their wellbeing** while using digital tools and technologies
- **expand our Office 365 Digital Champions Network** to provide more digital support
- **provide training for digital and data solutions**, working with our Trade Union partners to source funding where required
- keep **horizon scanning** for new or enhanced technologies

### How will we measure our progress?

We will review feedback from our people on what they need, on our training events and the impact of new digital solutions, where possible. We will also keep an eye on our people wellbeing metrics, including responses to engagement surveys.



## Theme 5: Excellent Learning & Education

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We will strive to develop the skills and capabilities our people need

### Why are we focussing on this?

Research confirms that investing in our people's development has a key role to play in engagement and wellbeing, as well as recruitment and retention. In addition, enhancing certain skills, such as use of the Welsh language, is linked to improved patient and service user experience and higher quality healthcare.

We are committed to supporting our people to reach their full potential as a fundamental part of our people promise and organisational culture, with our values being at the heart of delivery.

### How will we achieve this?

We will:

- **improve learning opportunities for our people**, especially within their first 12 months of employment e.g. through buddying arrangements
- **improve awareness** of Welsh Government initiatives that **increase professional skills and boost careers**, including apprenticeships
- introduce **pilot schemes** for our people to **learn and use Welsh**
- **continue to promote learning via statutory and mandatory training**
- **review and evaluate the content** of our education and learning programmes to ensure they meet our people's needs and remain aligned to our vision
- ensure we **effectively plan our education requirements** working with external stakeholders such as Health Education Improvement Wales
- **transform** our coaching and mentoring opportunities to increase accessibility for all our people
- **develop our education strategy**

### How will we measure our progress?

We will review access as well as numbers of staff completing training and their evaluation feedback. We will also evaluate the effectiveness of our coaching and mentoring initiatives.



## Theme 6. Leaders that Live our Values

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We want all our people to role model collective and compassionate leadership

### Why are we focussing on this?

It is well documented that Leadership has the biggest impact on a team's culture and performance. This was also highlighted as an area requiring improvement from 'Our Big Conversation' feedback.

Our leadership philosophy is based on building great multidisciplinary teams with a common vision, empowered to deliver high quality care for our patients and service users.

### How will we achieve this?

We will:

- **review and refresh our existing leadership development programmes** to include collective and compassionate leadership principles
- **design a suite of new leadership development initiatives** for all levels of clinical and non-clinical leaders that supports us to embed our values, behaviours and deliver our One Bay Way 10 year vision
- continue our **Talent Management and Succession planning work** and expand it to align with our appraisal processes
- **develop a people SharePoint site** for our people to access and engage with our people (HR) policies and processes, as well as innovative best practice standards

### How will we measure our progress?

We will measure access and numbers of staff on our leadership programmes and review evaluation feedback. We will review feedback relating to leadership, management and appraisals from surveys. We will also review data from our people (HR) processes and from concerns raised<sup>9</sup> through our speaking up safely processes.



## Theme 7: Equality, Diversity & Belonging (EDB)

We will strive to be diverse and inclusive, ensuring all voices are heard

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### Why are we focussing on this?

We want to promote a compassionate culture that is inclusive and equitable, thrives on diversity and one which actively addresses inequalities. We also recognise from Our Big Conversation that a sense of belonging is important to our people.

We need to meet our legal responsibilities outlined in the Welsh Language Standards (enabling us to provide service user/patient centred care) and also the Equality Act 2010. We also have objectives to meet, such as those in the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and the Workforce Race Equality Standards (WRES).

### How will we achieve this?

We will:

- **improve the quality of our people data** in order to develop intelligence to create inclusive work environments and release the benefits of diversity for our people
- to further support a sense of belonging, develop and expand the existing **cultural conversations** to other staff groups, including identifying and supporting **Cultural Ambassadors**
- develop and deliver **cultural competency awareness sessions**
- **review recruitment practices to eliminate bias and address barriers**
- **champion diversity and belonging** by raising awareness of support available (e.g. staff networks) for our people who may have one or more protected characteristics (e.g. relating to age, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc.)
- **continue to listen to our people and take action when they speak up**

### How will we measure our progress?

We will review our people engagement scores against protected characteristics, our people data, and work with our staff networks to monitor the impact of our EDB initiatives.

## Our People Promise

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What I can expect from the Health Board	What the Health Board expects from me
<p><b>A voice that counts</b> - feeling safe and confident to speak up. We will listen, act and respond.</p> <p><b>Compassion, inclusivity and belonging</b> - we will not tolerate any form of discrimination, bullying or violence.</p> <p><b>Leadership</b> that role models and acts as advocates for our Health Board values and behaviours.</p> <p><b>Every role feeling valued for their contribution</b> - we will recognise and reward excellent performance and share a simple 'thank you' for day to day delivery of services and care.</p> <p><b>Trust, autonomy and efficiency</b> - we will streamline key processes and systems that do not add value, create waste, delay and cause potential harm.</p> <p><b>Flexibility</b> - we will not sacrifice our health, safety and wellbeing. We will support flexible work patterns wherever we can and if we do need to take time off, we are supported to do so.</p> <p><b>Always learning</b> and support to reach our potential. We have equal access to opportunities. We attract, develop and retain talented people.</p> <p><b>Creation of purpose and direction</b> – to enable everyone to understand the principles, changes and intent we have to improve services.</p> <p>Working for our patients to deliver outstanding care and out the patient before the NHS and other organisational barriers and transcend this by working in partnerships.</p>	<p><b>Taking ownership and responsibility</b> holding myself and others to account for delivery of high quality, patient/service user-centred care, with clear delivery focused goals and always aspiring to make things better.</p> <p><b>Speaking up and raising concerns</b> respectfully, where we notice anything that will compromise staff or patient safety or quality.</p> <p><b>Working as a team across the system for our patients</b> -providing a seamless patient /service user journey and reducing barriers to access for all.</p> <p><b>Decision making</b> by those closest to patients/service users in partnership with and supported by managers.</p> <p><b>Kind, compassionate care and service delivery</b> in my daily interactions with patients, families, carers and colleagues, in line with our values, including being kind enough to have the tough conversations and to do these with compassion.</p> <p><b>Deliver evidence based harm free care</b> based on understanding key risks, in line with clear clinical outcomes that reflect the hallmarks of service quality.</p> <p><b>Work inclusively</b> with all colleagues and value difference, building a more inclusive place for our staff and patients.</p> <p>Work together across multi-disciplinary teams to set a vision, strategy and plan for your services to everyone is clear where you and your service is heading and how it supports the services patients receive.</p>

## Glossary

**Apprenticeships** – these combine practical training in a job with study

**Belonging** – when we feel happy or comfortable because we welcome and accept each other

**Champions** – our people who let colleagues know about services/relevant events

**Collective leadership** – when we all take responsibility, not just for our own jobs, but for the success of our team and our Health Board as a whole

**Compact** - a signed written agreement that binds you to do what you have promised

**Compassionate leadership** – creates an environment where there is no bullying, and where learning and quality improvement are part of our daily jobs

**Cultural ambassadors** – our people who represent or promote different cultures

**Cultural competence** – our will and actions to build understanding of different cultural perspectives & to strengthen cultural security & equality of opportunity

**Cultural conversations** – supportive discussions with our people regarding cultural differences

**Diversity** - refers to recognising, respecting and valuing the differences in our people

**Employer of choice** – when our culture, leadership style and people engagement initiatives are desirable to our potential and existing people

**Engaged** – when we feel enthusiastic and dedicated to our roles

**Equality** - providing equal opportunities and protecting our people from being discriminated against

**Ethical recruitment** - hiring workers lawfully, in a fair and transparent manner that respects and protects their rights

**Fairly rewarded** – when we feel appropriately recognised for the work we have done

**High quality** – timely, effective, efficient, safe, equitable and person centred

**Horizon scanning** - detecting early signs of potentially important developments

**Inclusion** - the extent to which we feel valued and included

**Innovation** - a new or improved solution

**Multi-disciplinary** – people from different disciplines who come together to achieve a common goal

**Partners** – different organisations working together to achieve a common goal

**Protected Characteristics** – Age, Disability, Gender Re-assignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or belief, Sex and Sexual orientation

**Retention initiatives** – how we keep/ retain our people

**Staff networks** - a safe space for our people who share one or more protected characteristics

**Strategy** - a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overarching aim

**Succession planning** – a process for identifying our critical positions and developing action plans for how we will fill those positions

**Underrepresented groups** - this can include (but is not limited to) people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, the LGBTQIA+ community and those with other protected characteristics

**Valued** – when we feel important and that we have done a good job

**Wellbeing** – refers to our mental, emotional and physical health and a healthy lifestyle

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