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Cymru (AaGIC)  
Health Education and  
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

# HEIW Strategic Pharmacy Workforce Plan

## Autumn 2023 Newsletter



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# Introduction

Welcome to our first Pharmacy workforce plan newsletter. This newsletter starts our ongoing communication and engagement with all our stakeholders and partners as we move into implementation of our pharmacy workforce plan.

We have been extremely grateful for the positive engagement to date from everyone, but now we all need to commit to play our part in making the plan come to life for the whole of our hard-working pharmacy teams.

We also want to hear from all of you about how you are taking forward some of the actions within the plan.

**If you would like to contribute or share what you have been doing in line with the strategic pharmacy workforce plan, please email:**

**[heiw.pharmacyworkforce@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:heiw.pharmacyworkforce@wales.nhs.uk)**

You can read the full Strategic Pharmacy Workforce plan here:

[heiw.nhs.wales/files/strategic-pharmacy-workforce-plan](https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/strategic-pharmacy-workforce-plan)

You can view a summary of the 31 Actions here:

[heiw.nhs.wales/files/strategic-pharmacy-aims](https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/strategic-pharmacy-aims)

Follow our progress via the HEIW website here:

[heiw.nhs.wales/workforce/strategic-pharmacy-workforce-plan](https://heiw.nhs.wales/workforce/strategic-pharmacy-workforce-plan)

Or on social media:

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**Professor Margaret Allan, BPharm (Hons) FRPS,**  
Pharmacy Dean



# Story so far

The pharmacy workforce is critical to NHS Wales. Pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy assistants make sure people can access and use their medicines safely.

The Strategic Pharmacy Workforce Plan was recognised as an urgent priority for HEIW in 2022 to

- ❏ prepare for regulatory changes in pharmacist training,
- ❏ improve poor workforce wellbeing in all sectors of pharmacy,
- ❏ maintain access to pharmacy services for the public,
- ❏ drive service transformation, and
- ❏ improve pharmacy workforce planning

Because medicines are the most common health intervention made by many clinical practitioners, the pharmacy workforce plan is relevant to most people working in or using NHS Wales services. It took 12 months to develop the plan, in partnership with over 900 people.

At our launch event, on 30th June 2023 at Cardiff City Stadium, we published the 31 Actions which stakeholders identified must be implemented over the next 2 years. We hosted 114 participants from 43 organisations across Wales, with 58 more online.

The ambitions in the plan are for radical improvement in how the pharmacy workforce is developed, valued, and supported to take up clinical leadership roles. This is as an integral part of multi-professional teams, wherever people are using medicines.

We have already received 61 written pledges that people will continue to work with us during implementation of the 31 Actions. The benefits of implementing the plan are to safeguard high quality care for people taking medicines, provide a sustainable pharmacy workforce and ensure prudent use of medicines across all our NHS Wales organisations and service providers.

Image: Strategic Pharmacy Workforce Plan Launch Event, Cardiff City Stadium



# Clinical Services Review



In 2022, the Welsh Government commissioned the pharmacy professional leadership body the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), to undertake an independent review of the provision of hospital clinical pharmacy services in Wales.

The purpose of the review was to consider the current provision of clinical pharmacy services in hospitals and how they aligned to the priorities and changing needs of NHS Wales.

The RPS Wales review, '[Prescribing progress: Transforming clinical hospital pharmacy in Wales for enhanced patient care](#),' published on 21 September 2023, made a total of 36 recommendations covering areas including patient-centred care, prescribing, use of technology and workforce development.

The Welsh government's response to the review, also published on 21 September 2023, committed to 61 "strategic actions" that it says will provide a blueprint for transforming hospital clinical pharmacy services to meet the ambitions set out in the RPS's long-term vision for pharmacy in Wales.

## [Welsh Government - Independent Review of Clinical Pharmacy Services at NHS Hospitals in Wales](#)

Since publication of Welsh Government's response, HEIW have been working through the 61 strategic actions to ensure any over-laps with the Strategic Pharmacy Workforce Plan have been captured and are considered during prioritisation and planning activities.

This comprehensive approach will ensure where there are crossovers exist that goals, outcomes and resources are aligned to avoid replication of activity.

We have used this exercise to help prioritise our activities over the 3 next months and these are captured in our "[Quarter 3 2023/2024 Priorities](#)" further below.

Image: Emma Brierly and Dhimant Patel, two faces of the HEIW '[TrainWorkLive](#)', [Campaign for Primary Care and Community Pharmacy](#)

# Progress to date

## Strategic Pharmacy Workforce Plan Implementation Cycle



## The Seven Strategic Themes



### Theme 3

#### Action 12

Agree and implement a Consultant Pharmacist Strategy Wales

#### Status

Feasibility

#### Update

HEIW are developing a high-level strategic document with our stakeholders for use by Executives, Directors and senior service leads in Welsh Health Boards and Trusts.

It will describe the prudent application of consultant pharmacist roles in the multi-disciplinary team and will some of the key questions about the roles:-

What is the consultant pharmacist role?

What is their contribution to the multi-professional team?

What is the difference between the consultant pharmacist and other pharmacy roles like chief pharmacist and advanced pharmacist?

How do the roles fit into pharmacist career pathways?

How do we succession plan for roles?

How do roles map to the HEIW Enhanced, Advanced and Consultant level framework?

The work seeks to improve the understanding of the business need and added value of these roles which is timely considering specific NHS challenges around: -

- ❏ finance, (medicines are the highest NHS expenditure after staffing)
- ❏ a growing aging population using larger volumes of complex, personalised medicines,
- ❏ implementation of e-medicine technology,
- ❏ pharmacy workforce shortages.

Consultant pharmacist posts often result from innovation in challenging times. 38% of current roles came from re-purposed monies from medical vacancies, and 23% were funded from collaborative investments between partner organisations or networks in response to specific service need assessment.

The Strategy will help to enable organisations and networks to have informed conversations around, 'how many?' 'where?' and 'how?'

You can access [our engagement slides here](#).

## Theme 4

### Action 13

Commission a digital pharmacy project to complete a horizon scan of technological advances that will impact pharmacy workforce roles

### Status

Planning

### Update

HEIW completed a 6-month project in August to conduct a horizon scan of technological advances in Health and Social Care, and the implications they may have on Pharmacy training and the workforce over the next 5-10 years.

Examples were collected across Educational, Information, Biotechnology, Robotics, AI and Virtual and Augmented Reality. A follow-up project is under development to consider the impact and education and training.

## Theme 5

### Action 19

Work with partners to develop proposals for the inclusion of genomics and advanced therapy medicinal products within the education and training of the pharmacy workforce

### Status

Feasibility

### Update

HEIW has established a group of genomics experts to develop a Strategic Workforce Plan for Genomics.

The team includes a Clinical Lead – Pharmacogenomics, who will be producing a specific plan for the development of the genomic knowledge and skills of the pharmacy workforce.

They will work closely with pharmacy as they develop pharmacy input to the overall Genomics workforce plan.

For anyone who wishes to start developing their genomics skills, HEIW already fund several Genomics modules. The pharmacogenomics module offered by Bangor University (BU) maybe of specific interest.

**The module has its own webpage within the Short Courses section of the BU Website:**

**English:** [www.bangor.ac.uk/courses/other-courses/pharmacogenomics-and-stratified-healthcare](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/courses/other-courses/pharmacogenomics-and-stratified-healthcare)

**Cymraeg:** [www.bangor.ac.uk/cy/courses/other-courses/ffarmacogenomeg-a-gofal-iechyd-haenedig](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/cy/courses/other-courses/ffarmacogenomeg-a-gofal-iechyd-haenedig)



## Theme 7

### Action 27

Improve access to workforce information and ensure visibility of pharmacy data and outcomes in the HEIW Education to Employment Pipeline

### Status

Action

### Update

HEIW has secured a dedicated pharmacy resource in Data Analytics. We now have good visibility and capability to interrogate GPhC, NHS and general practice pharmacy workforce trends. Work to overcome concerns, and capture community pharmacy workforce data are essential to complete the picture for planning and training.

Our new skills have been used in practice to inform the recent independent review of acute hospital pharmacy services, 'Prescribing Progress: Transforming Clinical Hospital Pharmacy in Wales for Enhanced Patient Care an Independent Report Commissioned by the Welsh Government.' Available at: [www.rpharms.com/hospital-review-wales](http://www.rpharms.com/hospital-review-wales)

Internally a prototype of a Pharmacy Workforce Dashboard is being compiled.

In the absence of a single source of data for the multi-sector pharmacy workforce we have completed a manual pharmacist vacancy survey for August/September 2023 reporting a headcount of 192 pharmacist vacancies.

We have been tracking performance of our training programmes by recording numbers of 'completers' and 'leavers,' and importantly, how many trainees we, 'Supply into Wales' and are retained by employers delivering NHS services.

Email us for more information [heiw.pharmacyworkforce@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:heiw.pharmacyworkforce@wales.nhs.uk)

## Theme 7

### Action 32

Report on the feasibility of a wider range of 'supply' options into the pharmacy registrant workforce.

### Status

Feasibility

### Update

Initial feasibility assessments are under way and have identified the following activities for further consideration:

'Access To' programme - providing access to GCSE equivalent qualifications via the workplace for those unable to meet the entry criteria for HEIW Pre-registration Pharmacy Technician course. For more information email [HEIW.PT@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:HEIW.PT@wales.nhs.uk)

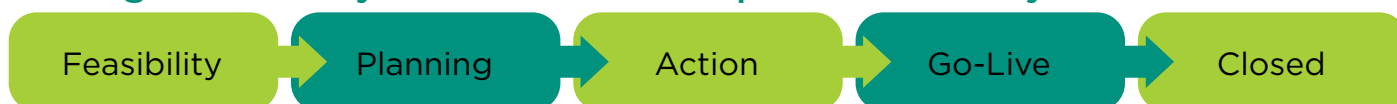
Non-apprenticeship routes for Pharmacy Technicians - There is wider HEIW activity currently underway in relation to 'Return To Practice programmes' for pharmacy registrants, Degree Apprenticeships, International Recruitment and Displaced & Refugee status pharmacy registrants.

Widening Access - HEIW funding for a project led by Cardiff School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science, 'From Bench to Bedside' to encourage applications to study a pharmacy degree from those in rural and Welsh speaking communities.

If any of this work interests you, then you can email us at: [heiw.pharmacyworkforce@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:heiw.pharmacyworkforce@wales.nhs.uk)

# Priorities & Next Steps

## Strategic Pharmacy Workforce Plan Implementation Cycle



## The Seven Strategic Themes



### Theme 2

#### Action 7

Develop bespoke solutions to improve attraction and recruitment into pharmacy roles in areas where rurality is a specific challenge

#### Status

Feasibility

#### Update

Initial discussions started in October 2023 on this complex Action.

The Action is supported by research completed earlier this year by the HEIW Foundation Training team to review challenges identified with Foundation Pharmacists placements in certain locations.

Scoping activities and gap analysis with external stakeholder groups will start in December to expand this research across Wales to ensure population density and current vacancy rates are included.

A number of potential solutions/activities have been captured and these will be reviewed with the wider stakeholder group during this engagement.

### Theme 4

#### Action 14

Develop consistent generic digital skills, competencies and behaviours within the pharmacy workforce using the HEIW Digital Capability Framework

#### Status

Feasibility

#### Update

The development of a programme of activity started in October 2023, adopting a 2-phased approach.

Phase 1 will assess current engagement with Digital Capability framework, and associated outcomes, by Pharmacy Team Members.

Phase 2, over a 12-month period, will look to improve engagement, create pharmacy specific pathways and signposting, and the development of any complimentary training needs within HEIW training programmes. We expect wider stakeholder engagement to commence in December 2023.

## Theme 5

### Action 19

Work with partners to develop proposals for the inclusion of genomics and advanced therapy medicinal products within the education and training of the pharmacy workforce

### Status

Feasibility

### Update

We will be collaborating with a Clinical Lead – Pharmacogenomics and the Genomics team within HEIW, to support and contribute to the development of the Genomics workforce plan. We expect wider stakeholder engagement within the Pharmacy Workforce to commence in January.

## Theme 1

### Action 2

Develop pharmacy job planning guidance and a toolkit which bring the right balance of service delivery, personal development of self and others, leadership, research, and innovation when implemented by employers.

## Theme 2

### Action 9

To support consistent implementation of career development frameworks across all NHS services areas, all job descriptions for pharmacy roles are mapped to the skills and competencies of recognised national pharmacy career frameworks (e.g., Royal Pharmaceutical Society)

## Theme 5

### Action 20

From 2026 all new pharmacists' registrants in Wales will be supported to follow the Royal Pharmaceutical Society Foundation, Advanced and Consultant level framework

### Action 21

Improve access to central resources which support career development frameworks for all roles in the pharmacy team

### Status

Feasibility

### Update

An assessment is underway to establish the viability of addressing all 4 Actions concurrently, under the same programme of activity. We hope to be in a position to share this assessment by the end of December 2023.

## Theme 6

### Action 24

Establish tailored access routes for each pharmacy staff group to engage with the compassionate and collective leadership tools and resources available on Gwella

### Action 25

Develop and deliver clinical and professional leadership solutions aligned to the Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care that reflects the pharmacy workforce requirements

### Action 26

Deliver and develop professional leadership solutions that align to the leadership strategy for health and care in Wales and reflect the pharmacy workforce requirements

### Status

Feasibility

### Update

The development of a programme of activity to combine and address these 3 actions started in October 2023. The programme will contain existing projects already underway, supported by additional activities identified during our gap analysis. We expect wider stakeholder engagement to commence in November/December 2023.



We appreciate the ongoing efforts and commitment from all individuals and organisations involved in activities that contribute to the realisation of both the Strategic Pharmacy Workforce Plan and the Welsh Government's response to the Clinical Services Review.

Your contributions are invaluable in shaping the future of Pharmacy in Wales. If you are actively engaged in such initiatives and would like to share information about the work you are undertaking, we welcome your insights and updates.

**Please feel free to reach out to us via email at:**

[heiw.pharmacyworkforce@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:heiw.pharmacyworkforce@wales.nhs.uk)

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