



DIGITAL HEALTH AND CARE WALES STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING 2024 - 2025

Agenda Item	5.3i
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Name of Meeting	SHA Board
Date of Meeting	26 September 2024

Public or Private	Public
IF PRIVATE: please indicate reason	N/A

Executive Sponsor	Sarah-Jane Taylor, Director of People and Organisational Development
Prepared By	Joanne Jamieson, Senior People Business Partner, Sarah Brooks, Organisational Development, Culture & Engagement Lead
Presented By	Helen Thomas, Chief Executive Officer

Purpose of the Report	For Noting
Recommendation	SHA Board is being asked to
NOTE the update on Strategic Workforce Planning 2024-2025.	

WC:
APP:
TOTAL:

1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

STRATEGIC MISSION	Be the trusted strategic partner and a high quality, inclusive and ambitious organisation
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CORPORATE RISK (ref if appropriate)	N/A
QUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ref if appropriate)	N/A

<u>WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT</u>	A Healthier Wales
If more than one standard applies, please list below: A Resilient Pace, A more Equal Wales, A Wales of Cohesive Communities,	

<u>DHCW QUALITY STANDARDS</u>	ISO 30415
If more than one standard applies, please list below: BS 76000	

<u>DUTY OF QUALITY ENABLER</u>	Workforce
<u>DOMAIN OF QUALITY</u>	Effective
If more than one enabler / domain applies, please list below: Efficient, Safe, Timely, Person-Centred	

<u>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT STATEMENT</u>	Date of submission: N/A
No, (detail included below as to reasoning)	Outcome: N/A
Statement: EQIA is not applicable	

IMPACT ASSESSMENT	
QUALITY AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS/IMPACT	Yes, please see detail below Ensuring we have the right resources with the right skills to deliver a quality digital service/products to improve patient care for the citizens of Wales.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/IMPACT	No, there are no specific legal implications related to the activity outlined in this report.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATION/IMPACT	Yes, please see detail below To develop, grow and upskill our people, a dedicated training budget is required.
WORKFORCE IMPLICATION/IMPACT	Yes, please see detail below The right people with the right skills in the right place to deliver our Digital Strategy.

SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPLICATION/IMPACT	Yes, please detail below
	Developing our people and recruiting our future diverse pipeline of talent has an impact on the communities we serve and our workforce
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IMPLICATION/IMPACT	Yes, please see detail below
	Continuing to benchmark, work with academic partners and external consultants/training providers to learn, innovate and ensure DHCW is delivering best practice and continuous improvement

2 APPROVAL / SCRUTINY ROUTE

Person / Committee / Group who have received or considered this paper prior to this meeting		
PERSON, COMMITTEE OR GROUP	DATE	OUTCOME
Shikala Mansfield	13 th August 2024	Approved
Sarah-Jane Taylor	13 th August 2024	Approved
Weekly Executive Directors	14 th August 2024	Approved
Local Partnership Forum	5 th September 2024	Noted
Management Board	12 th September 2024	
SHA Board	26 th September 2024	

Acronyms			
DHCW	Digital Health and Care Wales	SHA	Special Health Authority
SWP	Strategic Workforce Planning	TOM	Target Operating Model
BOF	Building our Futures	AI	Artificial Intelligence
DDaT	Digital, Data and Technology	P&OD	People and Organisational Development
WIDI	Wales Institute of Digital Information		

3 SITUATION / BACKGROUND

3.1 Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) is about proactively shaping DHCW's future by anticipating needs and trends, ensuring we have the right talent and skills to achieve our strategic goals. This process aligns seamlessly with our Building our Futures (BOF) programme and People and OD Strategy, reinforcing Mission 5 of our Integrated Medium-Term Plan: to become a trusted strategic partner and a high-performing, inclusive, and ambitious organisation.

3.2 By forecasting workforce needs and emerging trends, DHCW positions itself to anticipate and mitigate risks related to talent shortages, technological advancements, and health and social care needs. Identifying skill gaps and critical roles allows us to proactively recruit and strategically re-skill or upskill our people, driving forward the People and OD Strategy with particular regard for grow your own, and further supporting our resourcing, talent management and retention strategies.

3.3 This strategic approach enables DHCW to remain agile and responsive to the evolving needs of our NHS Wales partners, effectively manage unexpected changes, ensure business continuity, and solidify our reputation as a trusted strategic partner and a digital employer of choice. Through robust strategic workforce planning and a flexible workforce, DHCW can swiftly adapt to new priorities from the Welsh Government and the Health Sectors nationally across Wales.

3.4 The SWP exercise conducted in 2023 identified three critical areas for upskilling in alignment with DHCW's Digital Strategy: Agile (foundation, practitioner level), AI and machine learning (foundation, practitioner level), and Software Development and Testing Practitioner. As a result, bespoke training programmes were developed through DHCW's partnership with WIDI, and the rollout is currently underway.

3.5 Investment in re-skilling will flow from DHCW Digital Strategy and SWP is an essential enabler that underpins the re-skilling strategy at DHCW. It is as much a mindset as a formal process and line managers will be provided with the skills and time to think deeply and systematically about the workforce to execute the DHCW strategy in an efficient and effective way.

3.6 According to the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2023, *80% of current jobs are likely to be transformed by Gen AI, with 19% seeing up to 50% of tasks automated or augmented and potential productivity gains of up to 30% by 2027*. It is imperative that DHCW adopts a forward-thinking reskilling strategy to ensure we have the right capabilities to meet our strategic objectives and thrive in the evolving landscape.

4 SPECIFIC MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THIS MEETING (ASSESSMENT)

4.1 Strategic Workforce Planning 2024/2025

In April 2024, the annual Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) process was launched, enabling all Directorates to reassess their critical roles and pivotal team members that hold a vast amount of organisational knowledge and memory for succession planning. This process also focuses on identifying skill gaps and re-skilling opportunities, ensuring alignment with DHCW's strategic objectives as outlined in the DHCW Digital Strategy.

4.2 Product Approach – linking in heavily with the Building the Future Programme

DHCW is currently transitioning the operational and delivery areas to align the team design with the Product Approach. This requires focused effort in terms of restructuring the Target Operating Model (TOM) processes and training teams where skill gaps are identified. One of the long-term benefits, aside from productivity and efficiency gains will ensure that SWP is more manageable, efficient, and aligned with DHCW's goals. DHCW can create a more robust and adaptable SWP process, which will foster a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration, and data-driven decision-making. The key skills identified for the team set-up for Product Approach methodology can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

4.3 Workforce Data

Since the establishment of DHCW as a Special Health Authority, the headcount has grown significantly, by 59%. As of June 30, 2024, the current headcount is 1273, with a detailed breakdown available in [Appendix 1](#). Despite forecasting 152 vacancies from Q2 to Q4 of 2024/25, it is anticipated that resource absorption from concluding time-limited projects will stabilise the headcount.

As of June 2024, the average employee turnover within DHCW stands at **6.5%**. The P&OD Team will continue conducting both Stay and Exit interviews to identify key trends and prevent the loss of critical roles and skills. According to Gartner's *Fast-Growing Digital Skills 2023* report, software development—including agile methodologies—and programming languages such as Python, SQL, and C# remain in high demand. Our analysis indicates that Software Developers typically leave after 2–3 years of service. Stay Interview data highlight's purpose, flexible working, and opportunities to acquire new skills as the main reasons for retention within this job family. By leveraging coaching, mentoring, and the introduction of DDaT career pathways through the *Building Our Future* programme, we aim to retain and reskill talent in these critical areas.

The average turnover for the industry sector of Professional, Scientific and Technical is **29.5%** for 2023, (Benchmarking employee turnover: What are the latest trends CIPD, June 24), which is three times higher than DHCW and it is important that this is maintained.

Welsh language skills are a key focus for each Directorate, with the goal of increasing proficiency across DHCW. Currently, 10% of DHCW employees have assessed themselves as Level 3 (fluent Welsh speakers), compared to 29% of the population in Wales. The Welsh Government's strategy, *More Than Just Words* (2022–2027), aims to grow this number to one million Welsh speakers by 2050. To support this objective, DHCW will continue to promote Welsh language skills by integrating the DHCW Bilingual Skills Strategy into the DHCW People & OD Strategy.

4.4 Digital Skills and Re-skilling Requirements

According to the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2024, the fastest-growing roles are driven by technology, digitalisation, and sustainability and it is estimated that **44%** of workers' skills will be disrupted in the next five years. In digital organisations, technical roles typically account for 60% to 70% of the workforce, while non-technical roles comprise the remaining 30% to 40%. At DHCW, this distribution is reflected by 60% of roles falling under the Digital, Data, and Technology (DDaT) job family, with 40% classified as non-DDaT. A detailed breakdown by directorate and band is provided in **Appendix 1**. Efforts are currently underway to further define the "DDaT Plus" category, which will include roles like Cyber and Clinical Informatician, currently classified as non-DDaT.

The move to agile methodology will enable DHCW to more effectively adapt to changes in customer requirements, technology, and workforce dynamics. See **Appendix 1** for Product Approach transition, and skills mix required to support this new way of working. It is anticipated that new roles will be created, and as a result, a re-skilling plan is being developed.

WIDI developed a bespoke digital training programme for the top three courses in late 2023 and early 2024. The Agile Foundation e-learning was successfully launched in May 2024, with the first cohort for the Agile Practitioner course beginning in July 2024. The AI and Machine Learning e-learning module has been developed, with a pilot scheduled for September 2024 before wider implementation. Discussions on the Software Development modules are also set for September 2024. The POD Team collaborated with Directorates, Senior Leadership Teams, and Heads of Profession during this year's SWP exercise to pinpoint the top five technical and non-technical training needs, many of which will be addressed through the WIDI training programmes. See the table below for details:

Top 5 Technical Skills Training Identified 24/25	Top 5 Soft Skills Training Identified 24/25
1. WIDI Agile & Scrum Foundation 2. ITIL v4 3. Google Cloud Platform (GCP) 4. SQL 5. Python Data Engineering	1. Management of Portfolios 2. ILS Training 3. How to write a Business Case 4. Principles of Project Management 5. Prince 2 Project Management – Foundation

The Skillsoft Precipio platform is well-equipped to address many of our technical re-skilling needs. To maximize its impact, it's vital to continuously evaluate usage and return on investment for e-learning licenses, ensuring they are allocated to the right people at the right time, with dedicated time for learning. Currently, all 225 licenses are assigned to individuals within the Operations Directorate. Additionally, free online learning resources for GCP and SQL are available through Udemy.com, providing further opportunities for skill enhancement.

ITIL training is an ongoing requirement for our teams and this training will require additional funding and outsourcing to an expert training provider. **Appendix 1**.

During 2023/2024, the King's Fund were commissioned to co-design and deliver a senior leadership development programme for senior leaders in Band 8C to Band 9. This programme focussed on cultivating a bold, visible, innovative, values-driven, and empowering digital leadership culture, which is essential for DHCW to continue to attract and retain talent in the competitive digital landscape.

4.5 Critical Roles and Pivotal Team Members

The 2024 SWP exercise required all Directorates to re-affirm their critical roles (with critical skills) and key pivotal team members. According to Gartner (2024), *Critical Skills for Digital Organisation's*, identifying critical skills is a strategic imperative that supports alignment with organisational goals, enhances talent management, mitigates risks, drives innovation, and improves cost efficiency. Approximately **10%** to **20%** of employees in digital organisation's are recognised as possessing the critical skills necessary for achieving strategic goals (Gartner).

Currently, 34% of the workforce across the Directorates has been identified as critical, marking a significant increase from 13% last year. The criteria used to assess these critical roles and key team members are based on Gartner's guidelines, as detailed in **Appendix 1**. To ensure the accuracy and relevance of these identifications, the Executive Directors will review and approve the criteria, which will then be reapplied to the workforce data. Following this validation, targeted workshops will be conducted to plan and implement effective succession strategies.

4.6 Architects and Software Developers

Within DHCW, 46% of Architects are aged 50 years plus with only 14% being under 40 years of age. The career route to become an architect is likely by graduating in software development or a computer science degree, and then acquiring post qualification experience. It takes time (3-5 years post-graduation) and it is highly recommended as a key focus for an internal career pathway within the DDaT framework. **Appendix 1**

The role of Enterprise Architect does not yet formally exist within DHCW, but the expertise is already present among our Architects at band 8C and above. As this role is recognised within the DDaT family, it's a strategic consideration for the future, tapping into the potential we already have.

A focus in DHCW over the last three years has been recruiting graduate software developers within the Operations Directorate. This is reflected within the age profile of this DDaT job family with 64% being under the age of 40. This provides assurance that DHCW will have sufficient skills for this critical role to meet the strategic objectives.

Retention is key, and the POD Team regularly conduct Stay Interviews with the existing Software Developers to inform a retention strategy.

The role of the software developer is expanding and becoming a more interdisciplinary role, requiring a blend of technical expertise, security awareness, agile practices, and strong soft skills to thrive in today's fast-paced digital landscape. (Gartner)

The Data Centre Move to Cloud adoption is expected to commence in 2026 with the closure of the first data centre. People working in these areas will be prioritised for reskilling. Detail of the reskilling plan will be provided in the next SWP update.

4.7 Succession Planning

DHCW continue to work with Silvermaple. In Quarter 3, DHCW will commence work on the succession planning approach which includes career conversations and a succession planning pilot for the critical and pivotal team members to support the SWP.

4.8 Growing Our Own

In Q2 of 2024, DHCW will recruit 4 new apprentice posts in Cyber, Analytics, User Experience Testing and Operations and the 3rd NHS Wales General Management Graduate trainee will join DHCW in September 2024. In 2024/2025, the focus will be on the internal undergraduate pipeline, several people (66) are actively pursuing higher education and academic qualifications (at levels 2-5, digital degree apprenticeships, masters and PhDs). These individuals are already familiar with DHCW's culture, processes, and objectives, which will support progression. A career development workshop based on DDaT role profiles will be organised to map their next steps on completion of the qualifications. A systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating how these newly acquired skills can be fully utilised will be implemented.

4.9 Talent Management

DHCW continues its partnership with Silvermaple to advance Talent Management initiatives. In 2023, the first phase saw the launch of the inaugural Talent cohort for Bands 6-8b, creating opportunities to accelerate careers and fulfil key commitments of the People & OD Strategy. The future programme can be found in **Appendix 1**

5 KEY RISKS / MATTERS FOR ESCALATION TO BOARD / COMMITTEE

5.1 Moving to a Product Approach will enable more effective Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) by introducing structured, iterative, and collaborative processes. Until then, some further information is required on the status of the skill gaps outside of the training identified in this years' SWP exercise. A full breakdown of the roles required for the Product Approach can be found in Appendix 1, highlighting where there is a skills gap to be addressed.

5.2 The strategic move to a multi-Cloud adoption will require re-skilling of the Data Centre employees and will be planned for the next 12 months, most of which can be completed without further cost. ITIL and User Design training will require funding and both have been raised as strategic skills requirements.

5.3 It is recommended that the SWP Plan on Page for each Directorate should become part of the business rhythm, subject to quarterly review. Examples of a few plans can be found in **Appendix 1**.

5.4 Once Heads of Profession (e.g. Chief Architect, are aligned with the DDaT job families, the Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP) process will be more precise, allowing future skills needed to achieve the DHCW Digital Strategy to be categorised under each job family (definitions in **Appendix 1**)

. This alignment will enable SWP to be more accurately targeted, establishing a consistent business rhythm for conducting gap analyses. As a result, DHCW can better identify the specific skills required within each job family and deliver focused training and development initiatives.

5.5 According to CRF's *Re-Skilling for Sustainable Growth* (2024), 63% of organisations use a learning platform. To maximise the impact of our re-skilling efforts, it is crucial that the Precipio Skills platform is fully utilised. The learning content must be relevant, and the resources should be intuitive, easily accessible, and straightforward to complete. To support this, we recommend establishing and communicating clear guidelines for providing protected time dedicated to developing critical skills. A communications plan will also be implemented.

5.6 There is an ongoing requirement to continue to invest, develop and deploy effective and timely SWP. It is recommended that this key skill is included in the Managers Programme and other management and leadership training and part of the core competencies agreed for managers.

5.7 Career pathways for critical roles such as Architects and Software Developers will be Prioritized with workshops during Qtr 3 and Qtr 4.

5.8 We trust that this report demonstrates the strong measures DHCW have in place to ensure success. As a learning organisation, we are committed to continuous improvement, actively seeking opportunities to evolve and enhance our processes further.

6 RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation	SHA Board is being asked to
NOTE the update on Strategic Workforce Planning 2024-2025.	