

Health Workforce Directorate
Health and Social Care Workforce Planning and
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Scottish Government
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Dear Colleagues,

THREE YEAR WORKFORCE PLANS: DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATED PROCESS

Purpose

1. This letter highlights recent developments with regard to two practical workforce planning issues.
 - The first issue – requiring your action - is the **review of three year workforce plans** – covered in paragraphs 2-10 below.
 - The second issue – primarily for information at this stage - concerns **quantification of local workforce need**, and is covered at paragraphs 11-13 below.

Review of three year workforce plans

2. Scottish Government guidance to NHS Boards and HSCPs on three year workforce plans was set out on 1 April 2022 in DL 2022 (09) [DL\(2022\)09 - National Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy: Three Year Workforce Plans \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)
3. Paragraph 10 of DL 2022 (09) asked NHS Boards and HSCPs:
 - to review and update their workforce plans annually in the years between publication of full three year plans, to reflect progress on actions and workforce planning assumptions; and
 - to submit annual revisions to the Scottish Government WFPPMO@gov.scot, with updated plans published on organisations' websites by the end of October each calendar year.
4. Colleagues in NHS Boards have sought clarification on these requirements, following Scottish Government guidance circulated in February 2023 on Annual and Medium Term Development Plans (ADPs). This guidance includes sections requiring responses from NHS Boards on local workforce planning issues.



5. To streamline reporting, and rather than separately submitting annual workforce plan revisions to the Scottish Government under the DL requirements above, NHS Boards are therefore asked to use the ADP process to update the Scottish Government on their workforce plans and to work with HSCPs to provide comprehensive updates on workforce planning.
6. The Health Workforce Planning and Strategy Unit will consider the ADP sections on workforce planning as part of the overall ADP process, responding as appropriate to NHS Boards and HSCPs on revisions to three year workforce plans.
7. This development is part of an ongoing process to evolve planning arrangements for service, finance and workforce so that they can be considered together within a more effective integrated context.
8. To sum up, we are therefore requesting that:
 - NHS Boards use the ADP process instead of the DL guidance to respond as they undertake the annual review of their workforce plans;
 - HSCPs undertake a collaborative approach, with the NHS Boards in their areas by feeding into their workforce plans.¹
9. In addition to what is asked within the ADP, we ask that NHS Boards and HSCPs set out in their ADP responses:
 - how they are measuring against their actions set out in their three year workforce plans;
 - what are the main/new and emerging challenges to their workforce and objectives of their three year workforce plans.
10. For the first point, Boards and HSCPs should outline progress toward the actions they advised they would take in their three year workforce plans. For the second point, Boards and HSCPs should advise of the main challenges as well as any unforeseen and emerging challenges they are facing that were not included in their three year workforce plans. We ask that answers to these two points are provided within the workforce section in the ADP which is **due for return 8 June 2023.**

Quantification of workforce supply/demand needs

11. Scottish Government feedback in 2022 to individual Boards on their three year workforce plans identified that further work would be required to accurately quantify levels of anticipated workforce need, particularly given continuing financial challenges. More quantified information will be key to informing future decisions on workforce planning, particularly where that involves investing in workforce capacity where it is most needed.
12. We believe Boards and HSCPs would welcome further support to undertake this quantification more effectively and consistently. We are working in partnership with

¹ The ADP guidance requires Delivery Plans to be developed in a complementary way, with clear reference to IJB Strategic Plans and priorities, including reference to workforce plans; and to demonstrate local partnership working across IJBs and Local Authority Partners, as well as joint deliverables.


colleagues in NES and the Centre for Workforce Supply to see how supply and demand challenges can be helpfully represented and modelled.

13. Good progress is being made in constructing a modelling tool which can be used both nationally and at local level. Prior to introducing this tool, further discussion, presentation and testing will be required first with regional and national groups with involvement in workforce planning. We are embarking on this process now.

Further guidance

14. As set out in this letter, we are striving toward a more integrated approach to reporting on workforce planning. We are considering this further with colleagues, and will update you in the Summer on future reporting processes.

Yours sincerely



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