

Oxford Health Foundation Trust People Plan 2024-5

1. Introduction

This paper explains how the Oxford Health People Plan was developed and how this aligns with the overall strategic direction of the organisation. In addition, it highlights the high-level objectives and articulates where there have already been successes.

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) operates in a wide geographical area covering Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire alongside specialist Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Bristol Swindon and Wiltshire and Forensic services across the Thames Valley. **(Slide 1)**

Key demographic headlines:

- As at the end of December 2024, the Trust has a budgeted establishment of 736.53 WTE and a headcount of 7334.
- Our workforce is diverse both in terms of nationality and ethnicity and currently broadly reflects the population we serve, although this does vary across the different counties we operate in.
- We aim to attract clinicians into entry level roles and work closely with a range of universities including Oxford Brookes University, Coventry University, University of West of England, University of Plymouth for specialist podiatry roles and Birmingham City for Speech and Language Trust roles. We have an excellent apprenticeship and learning and development offer (rated Good by Ofsted in 2022) and offer a wide range of programmes and courses to support continuous professional development at our Education Centre in Oxford.
- As such our age distribution reflects this with the highest number of staff aged between 26-30 and an average age of 42. We are mindful also that 18% of our staff are over 55 and the challenges this poses in relation to future vacancies and strategies to recruit staff.
- The largest professional group in the Trust are nurses (25%) who work in a range of employment settings including inpatient settings in our Mental Health wards and Community Hospital wards, and also in range of community settings.

2. Shaping our People plan (Slides 2-4)

The People Plan for the Trust is informed by a number of internal and external programmes of work, national publications and the system we operate in. We have summarised the main ones here:

a) Oxford Health Strategy 2021-26

Oxford Health's Strategy was published in 2021 and runs to 2026. It focuses on the delivery of four Strategic Objectives:

- Delivering the best possible care and health outcomes – this includes maintaining and improving our services to offer the best possible care and to address healthier lifestyles – while also addressing health inequalities.
- Be a great place to work – we want to maintain, support and develop a high quality workforce which is compassionate and caring, where all staff can perform at the best of their abilities and work as a team in a safe environment.
- Make the best use of our resources and protect the environment – this includes maximising efficiency and maintaining financial stability whilst reducing our environment impact.
- Be a leader in healthcare research and education - placed as we are near to a number of universities we want to be a Trust that promotes research and education and maximise opportunities for staff to be become involved in research and its application.

b) Oxford Health Annual Plan for 2024-5

Oxford Health's annual plan is developed by staff across the Trust, to bring to life our vision of outstanding care delivered by an outstanding team. Within the plan, our strategy delivery plan provides the framework for the Trust, setting out principles of how we work and identifying the large-scale programmes of change across the organisation.

Within this, the People Plan is the core programme delivering our strategic objective of 'being a great place to work'. As well as programme delivery by the HR team, directorates set out how they will support the people strategic objective.

The strategic programmes are monitored via the Trust's Strategy Delivery Group, to ensure programmes are working to deliver our strategic objectives. In addition, the annual plan is tracked and monitored, to understand progress and allow for adjustment of priorities as required. A review is shared with the Board twice a year. The outputs of the reviews are used to continually refine our strategic approach, and

ultimately to inform the upcoming refresh of our strategy, as the current strategy reaches the end of its tenure in 2026.

Each Directorate owns a version of their People Plan. Progress against these plans is regularly reviewed by our People, Leadership and Culture Committee and Board.

c) The NHS Long Term Plan (published 2023) – national programme of change

The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan is a comprehensive strategy aimed at addressing the current and future workforce challenges within the NHS.

Published in June 2023, the plan focuses on three main themes: Train, Retain, and Reform. It aims to recruit and retain thousands more staff over a 15-year period, improve staff experience, and enhance patient care. The plan includes a significant investment of and emphasises the importance of education and training expansion, retention strategies, and working differently to meet future requirements.

We have used this Long Term plan to shape our People Plan with an additional focus on Temporary Staffing which has been identified as an area of improvement for the Trust.

d) Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care System

We work closely with our partner Trusts in the BOB system in relation to people issues – collaborating on joint priorities and supporting each other in situations where we require mutual aid or exchange of specialist skills and knowledge in relation to HR and learning and development.

3. People plan – High level objectives (Slide 5)

Taking into account the staff views that contribute to the Annual plan and then overlaying the national priorities in relation to the NHS Long term Workforce Plan, we have identified high level actions under the heading of Train, Retain, Reform and Temporary Staffing. In relation to the last area we work closely with the South East Temporary Staffing (SETS) Collaborative who drive efficiencies and savings in relation to temporary staffing across all the Trusts in the South East region. We also take into account the most recent Staff Survey analysis which provides insight to help managers focus their attention.

a) Train: Providing a comprehensive training offer to support continuous professional development

- Optimise supply for each profession; identifying entry route and having clear career pathways particularly for locations and professions where we have high numbers of vacancies.
- Increase education and training capacity to support 'growing our own' through apprenticeship routes for nursing and other Allied Health Professions including a comprehensive medical education model for our resident doctors who want to progress to consultants.
- Continue our work on expanded, enhanced, advanced & associate roles to offer modernised career pathways.
- Defining our leadership and management framework through 'Our Leadership Way' and designing a programme that supports all staff in their leadership of multi-disciplinary teams.

b) Retain: Deliver a range of interventions with the aim of reducing turnover and retaining colleagues

- Continue work on making the NHS People Promise a reality for our staff and using the NHS People Promise as a means for driving change and improvement.
- Continue to deliver on NHS Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Plan published in 2023 and in particular focus on embedding the High Impact Actions.
- Increase flexible working options at all career stages, from new starters to those considering retirement (including pension reform).
- Continue our focus on the wellbeing of our staff, providing additional ways of supporting our people to support their physical and mental health needs.

c) Reform: Changing how we work in relation to new roles in multidisciplinary teams and using digital and technology change to support services

- Reform how we source and acquire the best talent in a competitive market.
- Develop a plan for future technologies to support development of new skills
- Continue our focus on data quality and systems to support decision making and improve efficiency, particularly in relation to reducing the number of bespoke and legacy systems and preparation for roll out of national models in the next 3-5 years.

d) Temporary Staffing: Safely reduce our reliance on agency workers by having a Bank First approach underpinned by strong recruitment strategies

- Commission an independent review of temporary staffing arrangements from the South East Regional NHS Team to understand where we can make improvements to reduce our reliance on agency staff while also maintaining safe staffing levels.
- Focus on bringing rates in line with the South East rate card together with transitioning agency and bank staff to substantive roles to retain talent.
- Continue to improve the fill rates for bank shifts via our partner – NHS Professionals so that we have a fully embedded Bank First Approach.

4. Successes (Slides 6 – 9)

a) Train: Providing a comprehensive training offer to support continuous professional development

- Functional Skills training is focused on supporting staff to gain entry to higher education programmes, particularly in relation to Maths and English.
- Allied Health Professionals apprenticeship pathways in Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Dietetics, Speech and Language Therapists and Podiatry.
- In addition to well established Nursing apprenticeships & Nurse cadet programme to support local people to become health care professions – 35 colleagues have graduated as Nurse Associates and we have a further 58 colleagues in training with another 22 due to start at the end of January 2025. Colleagues who graduate as Nurse Associates can train on the job with us to do a degree nurse top up programme to become registered nurses and 18 colleagues have graduated from this programme with a further 56 in training.
- We run a Masters module programme in collaboration with Oxford Brookes University for experienced nurses to extend their professional development.
- Well established Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner apprenticeship programme – the most successful in the country with over 70% distinction rate which supports our Talking Therapy services.
- We have been commissioned to deliver the Level 6 & 7 Mental health wellbeing practitioner course to support implementation and rollout of new roles in the South East region.

b) Retain: Deliver a range of interventions with the aim of reducing turnover and retaining colleagues

- A programme of work focused on the new starter experience has improved reducing turnover of staff with less than 12months' service (early turnover). This has involved a new corporate face to face induction; better planning of how staff complete their statutory and mandatory training and guidance to teams about local induction. We have seen turnover reduce from 13.38% in December 2023 to 11.74% in December 2024.
- Through a greater focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, we have closed the turnover gap between white and ethnic minority colleagues for overall turnover as well as early turnover (those who leave within 12months of starting).
- Ethnic minority colleague representation has improved overall, however we are still seeing under-representation in senior posts which requires ongoing attention.
- We have promoted our Flexible working policy that was written to support the national NHS 'Flex for the Future' initiative. This initiative is about embedding flexible working practices, and to implement it at scale. The project involved 93 NHS Trusts and organisations and is the largest ever flexible working change project within the NHS.
- We have prioritised staff wellbeing in a range of ways to support retention – this includes a new specialist psychological support service within our Occupational Health service; an additional annual leave day to all staff to support wellbeing and implemented a partnership with Salary Finance to support financial wellbeing in particular.
- Development of 'Trauma Risk Management (TRiM)' into the Trust way of working to support staff who experience trauma in the workplace. TRiM is a structured process designed to help organisations support their employees after traumatic incidents, ensuring early identification and support for those at risk of psychological trauma.
- Redesigned how staff engage with managers for their annual appraisal process and we have now reached c98% compliance rates for this for the last two financial years.

c) Reform: Changing how we work in relation to new roles in multidisciplinary teams and using digital and technology change to support services

- A system transformation programme, 'The People Systems Development Programme' has been approved and is now in progress across the Trust. The aim of this programme is to simplify and reduce the range of systems in use that challenge staff and prepare for the rollout of a national system in the next 3-5 years.
- We have focused on digitising the most common processes used by staff in relation to onboarding and ensuring that leavers are processed correctly. We have supported inpatient units to use technologies more efficiently to achieve an 80%+ roster compliance rate.
- We have supported a cultural transformation programme – Restorative, Just and Learning Culture (RJLC). This programme has been used in a number of Trusts across the NHS and seeks to place a mediated approach at the centre of how people issues are approached and addressed. We have updated our Disciplinary policy in relation to this and will be addressing our Grievance Policy next to help reduce formal employee relations cases and to instead find an informal and mediated approach wherever possible.
- Moving toward a proactive talent acquisition model in our resourcing function. Whilst talent acquisition and recruitment share the same goals to fill vacancies, talent acquisition is more focused on longer term strategy, anticipating future staffing needs and those harder to fill roles.
- We have prioritised promoting our career opportunities to local residents and have delivered the following:
 - Recruitment Roadshows – we have held roadshows in Oxford, Banbury, Aylesbury and Swindon, showcasing our services and career opportunities to local communities. Over 400 people have attended these to date.
 - Oxford Job Fair – we attended this event in July and November 2024 to promote our opportunities.
 - We have held events at Didcot Hospital aimed at recruiting registered nurses which resulted in 9 successful hires.
 - District Nurses – we have run events in Islip Village Hall, Blackbird Leys, Bicester Hospital and Banbury Longford Park to attract new District Nurses resulting in c50 new colleagues joining the Trust.

d) Temporary Staffing: Safely reduce our reliance on agency workers by having a Bank First approach underpinned by strong recruitment strategies

- We commissioned an independent report from the South East Temporary Staffing Collaborative to help us identify the best approach to reduce our reliance on agency workers whilst also ensuring safe staffing levels.
- This report has made a number of recommendations which we are implementing.
- We have seen agency spend reduce considerably this financial year and we are promoting a Bank First approach.
- We have been particularly successful in attracting agency workers to transition to join us substantively or to become a bank worker and nearly 90 staff transitioned in the 2024 calendar year.

e) Supporting the People change in relation to the Community Transformation Programme

The Community Transformation Programme launched in Autumn 2023 to support delivery of the Community Services Strategy ([Oxford Health Community Services strategy development - Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust](#)) that works to achieve its ambitions aligned to the system wide agreed principles ([Final-community-services-strategy-principles.pdf](#)).

Our clinical, operational and support staff are key to its success and over the last year we have achieved the following in relation to the change programme:

f) Integrated 0-19 Healthy Child and Young Person Public Health Service

- A more sustainable delivery model for the 0-19 healthy child and young persons' services bringing together the wealth of experience and commitment of the Trust's existing teams into co-located locality facing teams accessed through a single point of access (SPA) team.
- Key aspects of the new service include health visitors, community public health nurses and community public health associates who work with children up to eight years old where there are known concerns or vulnerabilities, and the introduction of a new universal four-year health and development review.
- Implications for staff involved a formal consultation regarding introduction of hybrid working arrangements for admin SPA, considering flexible working options, training on SPA systems and new processes and recruitment of vacancies in the team.

g) Developing a new North City Hub (Murray House)

- Significant preparatory work to co-locate a range of community health services teams and clinics at a new site, a North City Hub at Murray House, Jordan Hill Business Park, Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 8EJ that will be operational from Spring 2025.
- The aim is to support integrated working across services including Children and Young People (CYP), Population Health and Specialist Services, Locality Therapies and Nursing Teams (Preventative and Planned Care), Community Dentistry, Intensive Community Care (ICC) and Directorate Quality Team.
- Staff in scope were consulted on about the proposals to move to Murray House which concluded in December 2024 and are now working on the final practical arrangements of how we want to operate from the building including sustainable travel options as part of our commitment to the Trust's and NHS Green Plan.

h) Launched a Community Urgent Care Model

- Implementing a model to deliver one seamless community urgent care pathway 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week that can be accessed by health care professionals through one single telephone number and single point of access (SPA) care co-ordination centre.
- Teams involved include urgent community response (UCR) and falls team, community same day emergency care (SDEC) units, primary care out-of-hours, community (district) nursing, community therapy services, our existing SPA team and other home visiting teams.
- There was engagement with staff and feedback was received which supported the co-design and implementation plan. The model commenced delivery in November 2024 as part of the system wide Winter preparedness plan.

i) Enhanced Locality Team Links with District Nursing

- The District Nursing Service moved from locality-based duty desks to a centralised approach in November 2024 to increase clinical capacity to meet patient demand and co-locate with the community urgent care model to support flexible home visiting response for on the day demand.
- This model involved engagement with staff including Triage Desk Administrators and Triage Desk Clinicians. Advertising and recruiting to the designated roles, developing shared operating procedures and training to support the transition.

j) Planned refurbishment works at Witney Community Hospital and The Fiennes, Banbury (GP out-of-hours and urgent care centre) clinic and staff space

- Working closely with staff we have been preparing for some small refurbishment works to improve the clinical environments as well as patient accessibility to the existing areas for the range of services that operate from these sites. The various staff groups that use these spaces have worked closely together to optimise the design requirements and are all now looking forward to works commencing from Spring 2025.

5. Looking forward

We continue to work on delivering our People Plan objectives as we move through Q4 of this financial year. We will refresh our objectives as part of the annual planning cycle for 2025/26 and engage staff within the Trust. Focus will remain on reducing agency spend down further; ongoing work to support staff wellbeing; embedding the new proactive recruitment model and responding to the results from the 2024 staff survey when they are released in February 2025.

Report author(s):

Charmaine De Souza, Chief People Officer

Amelie Bages, Executive Director of Strategy & Partnerships

Zoe Moorhouse, Head of HR