



North Central London  
Health and Care  
Integrated Care System



# Accelerating the Change



**People Strategy  
Annual Review 2024/25**

**May 2025**

# Contents



**Foreword**

**2**



**Introduction**

**4**



**Our Strategy**

**6**



**Celebrating and recognising our  
successes**

**10**



**Spotlight on programmes**

**11**



**Looking ahead to 2025/26**

**37**



**Conclusion**

**39**

A photograph of two women in a modern office hallway. The woman on the left is a white woman with brown hair and glasses, wearing a red patterned top. The woman on the right is a Black woman wearing a beige hijab and a red and white patterned top. They are both smiling and looking at each other. In the background, two men are walking away from the camera. A large blue rounded rectangle is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

# Foreword

# Foreword

Looking back on the past year, we have further strengthened the foundations laid in year one delivery of our North Central London Integrated Care System (NCL ICS) People Strategy and gained momentum through year two delivery and 'accelerating the change'. This Annual Review celebrates the progress we have made together and the milestones that mark our shared journey.

I am immensely proud of our collective efforts to reimagine our workforce model in line with our ambition to improve population health and reduce health inequalities. Our achievements reflect the dedication and resilience of our people, despite ongoing operational and financial pressures and unprecedented changes to the way health and care is organised.

While the broader context of health and care remains challenging, I am confident we are well positioned to respond to the 10-Year Health Plan and the Darzi shifts – from hospital to community, from treatment to prevention, and from analogue to digital.

The collective strength of the assets we have in north central London, together with the talent and commitment of our people, gives us significant opportunity to add value and improve health outcomes for our residents. As we enter the third year of delivery, our 'one workforce' will continue to be pivotal in driving health and care reform, and I look forward to seeing the ongoing positive impact our extended partnerships will bring.

Above all, I want to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has contributed to this year's progress. Your commitment has made this journey possible, and I hope you enjoy reading our Annual Review and seeing the impact you have made.



**Frances O'Callaghan**  
Chief Executive Officer  
North Central London ICB



A man with long, curly brown hair and a beard is smiling broadly while talking on a silver smartphone. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. The background is a blurred city street scene.

# Introduction

We are delighted to share this Annual Review which provides an overview of the achievements and progress over the past year in delivering our ICS People Strategy. As we reflect on 2024/25 and the second year of delivery, it is clear that we have successfully accelerated our integrated approach, bringing partners together across the system to drive innovation in workforce supply, development, and transformation programmes. In doing so, we have combined our role as innovative thought leaders with the delivery of practical initiatives that are already generating positive outcomes for both local communities and staff.

Our strategy set out how we would develop an integrated approach to building a 'one workforce' across health and care providers, with the overarching ambition of creating a model focused on sustainable population health improvement. Over the past year, we have made significant strides toward realising this vision, driving forward practical solutions that address both current and future workforce challenges.

Despite ongoing pressures, our collective focus on improving health outcomes and progress towards reducing inequalities has remained strong. The work delivered across the system met key milestones building on the foundations laid in year one so that we accelerate the change for meaningful impact.

This review outlines the tangible outcomes achieved so far, including the following highlights.

**Creating workforce opportunities:** apprentice starts across NCL trusts grew by 26% during 2024, across a wide range of clinical and non-clinical apprentice roles and all providers saw an increase in their apprentice numbers.

**Generating healthy workforce cultures:** by March 2025, over 300 staff, including 23 trainers, had completed Restorative and Just Culture training<sup>1</sup>. This has ensured that the skills needed to enhance employee wellbeing and increase psychological safety are embedded throughout NCL in a sustainable way.

Looking ahead, maintaining this momentum and commitment will be essential to further embed improvements and ensure a resilient, responsive health and care system that meets the needs of local communities.

Unless stated, data correct as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Sources: ESR, Staff Survey 2023/24, Trust returns, Training Hub, NLPSS, WorkWell MI.

---

<sup>1</sup> (Nursing and Midwifery colleague, Royal Free NHS Foundation Trust - Restorative Just Culture Overview Workshop)

A photograph of a man and a woman looking at a tablet together. The man, on the left, has grey hair, a beard, and glasses. The woman, on the right, has dark skin and dreadlocks. They are both smiling and looking at the tablet. The background is a blurred indoor setting with white curtains.

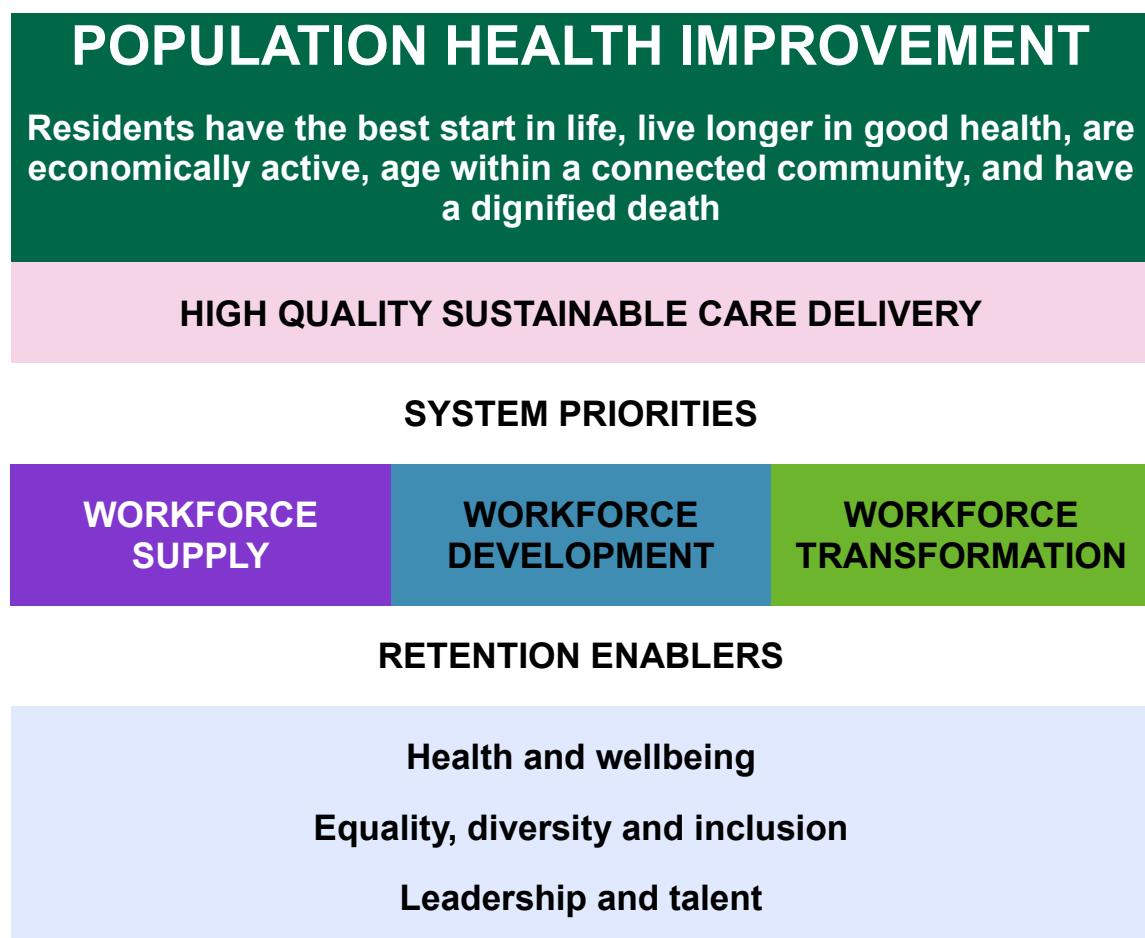
# Our Strategy

# Accelerating the Change – Year 2 progress

[The People Strategy](#), a companion to the [NCL Population Health and Integrated Care Strategy](#), remains central to what we are working to achieve. Our approach to developing a high-quality, sustainable care system is rooted in the creation of a 'one workforce' across primary and secondary care, social care, and the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector delivering joined-up, preventative, and person-centred care for north central London.

In year two, the focus has been on accelerating change and continuing to identify, build on, and expand the work happening across the system, while actively seeking opportunities to scale up. We have provided direction and clarity by consolidating our priorities for this acceleration through a series of co-design workshops. Partners from the NCL supply, development, and transformation boards worked closely with us to determine where we should focus our collective energy for maximum impact.

Although the broader context of health and care has remained challenging, we have made great progress against our priorities (shown below) and seen meaningful impact across all areas.





# Our aims and priorities

Our aims for 'one workforce' are to:

- reduce fragmentation and encourage collaboration
- improve skills and capabilities of staff
- optimise talent, working at the top of their skillset
- create a flexible and dynamic workforce
- be adaptable to meet local needs
- continually deliver high quality sustainable care
- contribute to wider social determinants of health
- provide meaningful career opportunities
- streamline and innovate – improve productivity and efficiency

Our year 2 and 3 priorities across the supply, development, and transformation pillars are as follows.

## ● Year 2 and 3 Workforce Supply Priorities

- Leveraging data modelling intelligence to drive workforce supply and productivity
- Reviewing workforce gaps and opportunities for 'good work' across sector boundaries to support future skills and training models
- Oversee successful delivery of the WorkWell Partnership Programme, maximising opportunities to learn from the pilot
- Develop innovations to enable NCL to be a great place to work

## ● Year 2 and 3 Workforce Development Priorities

- Provide system leadership and facilitate collaboration on long-term workforce plan ambitions, ensuring that NCL can deliver for the future workforce
- Improving capability through education and development for health and care staff. Identifying roles that could unlock care. Ensuring best practice is shared and enhanced supervision explored
- Improving flexibility through system integration for health and care staff, aiming to streamline processes and encourage the sharing of best practice across organisations

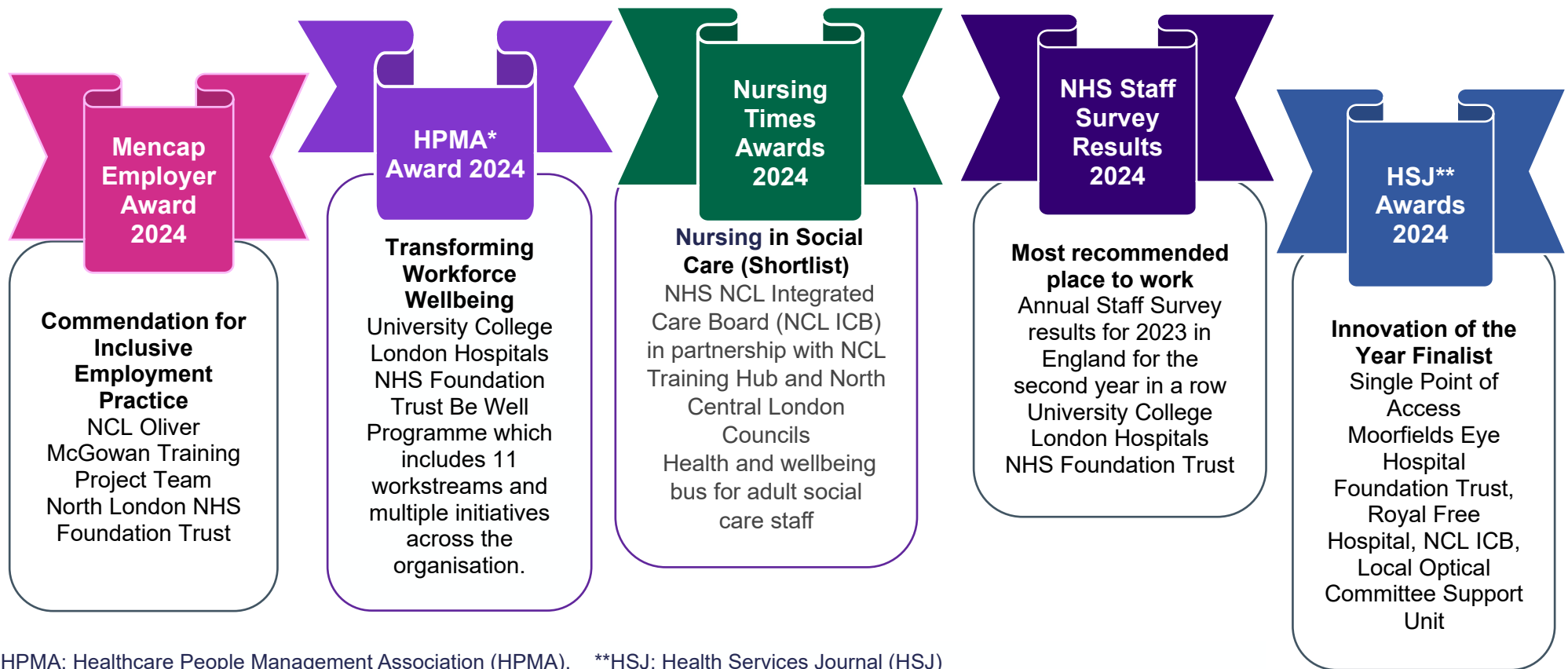
## ● Year 2 and 3 Workforce Transformation Priorities

- Workforce Review: Align workforce growth and productivity gains, and also right size and right skill our workforce and accelerate our strategic ambitions
- Identify, develop, and implement the workforce elements of the Digital Strategy and influence a system-wide culture change which enables grassroots to develop and grow our innovation pipeline
- Fostering connection and agreeing principles of collaboration to influence a system-wide culture change

## ● Year 2 and 3 Retention Enabler Priorities

- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Enabler: Accelerate our approach to addressing workforce inequalities and promoting equality of opportunity across the system
- Leadership Enabler: Ensuring that NCL has strong system leadership capabilities through skills development, programme design, and by strengthening networking and partnership working opportunities across the system
- Talent Enabler: To have a system view of talent across NCL and how we engage system partners to develop NCL wide talent management approaches
- Health and Wellbeing Enabler: Ensuring a consistently high standard of health and wellbeing support for our people through our Work and Health Strategy. Improving work-life balance through increased access to flexible working

# Celebrating and recognising our successes



\*HPMA: Healthcare People Management Association (HPMA). \*\*HSJ: Health Services Journal (HSJ)

A woman with long, dark braids is seated in an office, working on a laptop. She is wearing a yellow and black patterned top, a green and yellow patterned headband, and glasses. She has a white smartwatch on her left wrist. The background shows an office environment with other desks and chairs.

Spotlight on  
programmes



# Supply

## Leveraging data modelling intelligence to drive workforce supply and productivity

### Strategic Workforce Planning

The size and shape of the NHS workforce needs to change to meet patient need now and in the future. As demand for our services grows, we strike the difficult balance between employing the optimum number of staff with the right skills and in the right place, while maximising productivity and efficiency for taxpayers.

We have supported strategic workforce planning at a system level through exploring workforce planning and controls processes across the system and identifying areas of good practice. We have shared this across the system and have worked to build access to and utilisation of workforce data through our 'single version of the truth'. This work has been helping us plan services that have the scope and capacity to respond to the needs of our population.

As a result of our combined efforts and an accelerated focus on the reduction of higher-cost temporary staffing, by January 2025 we had secured a reduction in the use of temporary staffing across six of our eight providers. We were also able to achieve a financially balanced plan across the system for the third consecutive year.

#### Non-Substantive

Period: Jan-25

ICB	Actual (WTE)	Plan (WTE)	Variance (#)	Variance (%)	Actual (£000's) YTD	Plan (£000's) YTD	Variance (£000's) YTD	Variance (%) YTD
NCL	5,419	5,128	291	5.7%	£306,509	£311,770	-£5,261	-1.7%
GOSH	355	383	-28	-7.3%	£23,077	£24,173	-£1,096	-4.5%
MEH	276	324	-48	-14.8%	£19,069	£20,210	-£1,141	-5.6%
NLFT	747	761	-14	-1.8%	£46,980	£43,070	£3,910	9.1%
RFL	2,047	1,902	145	7.6%	£120,288	£126,844	-£6,556	-5.2%
RNOH	133	136	-3	-2.2%	£7,472	£7,489	-£17	-0.2%
TaviPort	28	28	0	0.0%	£1,659	£1,774	-£115	-6.5%
UCLH	1,079	807	272	33.7%	£52,827	£51,750	£1,077	2.1%
WHT	754	787	-33	-4.2%	£35,137	£36,460	-£1,323	-3.6%

# Reviewing workforce gaps and opportunities for 'good work' across sector boundaries to support future skills and training models

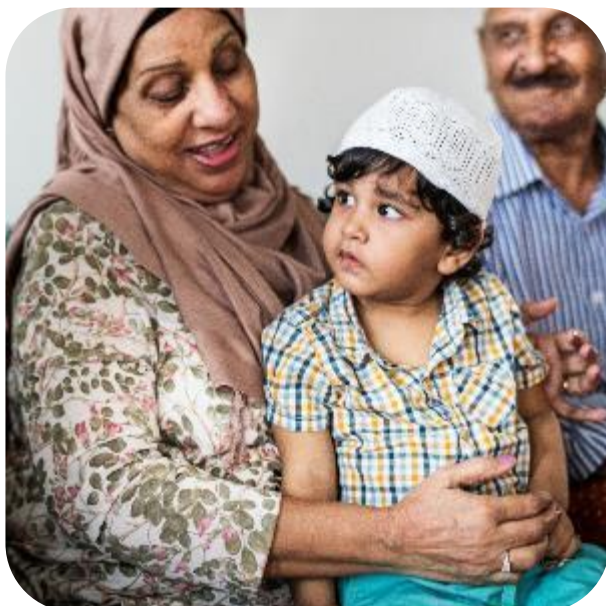
## ICS Careers Hub

Over the past year significant strides have been made in supporting people into 'good work' and mobilising service integration across work, health, and skills. These efforts are being channelled into the creation of an ICS Careers Hub, building on the success of our Workforce Management Service and Local Authority Employability work.

Our work so far has raised the profile of NHS careers to local communities through career events and webinars, offering one-to-one NHS careers advice, CV writing support, interview techniques, and application support. The outcome of this has been to place 294 local residents into work through the [Reservist Programme](#), with 109 reservists working each week in 2024/25. This provided 12,662 hours to NHS trusts and saved over £306,000 by avoiding the use of agency staff. We have also successfully retained 250 staff from the COVID-19 vaccination programme, placing them into permanent roles in primary and secondary care.

## Multi-sector collaboration supporting routes into health and care jobs

The Mayoral Academies Programme brought together multi-sector partners across the system to support local residents into work via our NCL Health and Social Care Academy. Partners included North Central London Health and Social Care Academy, local authorities, and Barnet and Southgate College. The initiative involved seven voluntary sector organisations who were funded to work with unemployed and underemployed residents to receive support and connections to entry level job opportunities across the sector. Over 55 residents benefited from the programme.





## Supporting care leavers into work

We have continued and built on our work initiated as part of the Care Leavers Covenant Pilot in which we developed a 'Care Leaver's Offer'. The work has involved co-designing with the NCL Care Leavers Group an infrastructure that provides a sustainable care leavers pathway into health and care jobs. In collaboration with local authorities, the voluntary sector, primary care, and social care partners we have created pathways into good jobs, apprenticeships, and work opportunities for over 50 care experienced young people. As a result, 11 individuals have successfully secured employment.

### **Case Study: Supporting care leavers through collaboration with Middlesex University Clinical Skills and Simulation Department**

System collaboration with Middlesex University Clinical Skills and Simulation Department created an opportunity for Care Leavers to gain insight into health and care careers. This offered care leavers different opportunities to explore NCL health and care settings, access training, and enable development in a clinical simulated environment.


The offer included:

- the opportunity for interactive experiences in a simulated healthcare environment, notably basic life support, nursing skills, and virtual reality care delivery.
- creating the opportunity to network with professionals and learn about careers in health and care
- receiving personalised support to develop employability skills
- access to live vacancies in the NCL ICS, with support to complete applications to encourage them into health and care professional roles

In addition to the interactive experiences, there were professionals from a range of disciplines including mental health, community diagnostics, and administration. The NCL Health and Social Care Academy also attended to offer employability support and CV development, or the opportunity to connect after the meeting for one-to-one ongoing support.

Feedback from care leavers was overwhelmingly positive. Several of the young people commented on how much they enjoyed themselves. One Care leaver commented that *"the event was very inspiring listening also to care experienced staff who are now Directors and managers in the NHS"*

Another care leaver said *"more events like this would be great"*



# Oversee successful delivery of the WorkWell Partnership Programme, maximising opportunities to learn from the pilot

## Supporting people into work through the WorkWell programme


We know that good work has a positive effect on physical and mental health, while unemployment and long-term sickness can often have a harmful impact. However, long-term sickness has been the biggest factor in the rise of economic inactivity since the start of the pandemic which nationally is now around 490,000 higher than the pre-pandemic level. We know that reversing this trend cannot be achieved by services acting in siloes; it requires an integrated whole-system approach at a local level.

In May 2024 we were successfully selected as one of 15 WorkWell vanguard sites working with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health and Social Care. WorkWell has been developed to support people with long-term health conditions, including mental health challenges, to find work, thrive at work, or return to work after a period of absence.

Our WorkWell programme has focused on borough-level place-based partnerships with local authorities, NHS organisations, and voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to influence, coordinate, and advocate work and health initiatives. Our aim has been to maximise the impact of work and health initiatives and ensure they continue to meet local need, while enhancing support through offering work and health coaching alongside specialist advice and support to stay in work or to seek work.







Key to our WorkWell programme is our partnership with the Shaw Trust who have been directly supporting individuals back into work and supporting employers to create the right environment so that people with long-term conditions and mental health needs can stay well in work. In the first six months of the programme our partnership with the Shaw Trust has meant that WorkWell supported over 900 people in NCL which is 100% of our target. NCL is one of only two vanguards to achieve its six-month target.

*“The assistance I received from the WorkWell Work and Health Coach made a significant difference in my life. I was unable to immediately access support through my GP for my mental health. WorkWell provided the help I desperately needed, with access to therapy that has been instrumental in my recovery. I feel the Coach provided me with dedication and commitment to my wellbeing.*

*“With the support of WorkWell, I have successfully returned to work, and I no longer feel the overwhelming stress that once hindered my ability to perform my job effectively. The positive impact on my mental health and overall quality of life has been profound, and I am truly grateful for the guidance and encouragement I received during this challenging time.”*

Experience of WorkWell Participant in Barnet



### Transforming the Work and Health landscape

To secure a whole-system approach to work and health, we have collaborated with subject matter experts from the Institute for Employment Studies to generate a system-wide Work and Health Strategy. The approach to developing the strategy has heavily focused on co-design with local councils, the voluntary sector, local residents, wellbeing experts, and local employers to support system leaders to maximise opportunities to join up the employment and health agendas.

The three pillars of the strategy are as follows.

- **Return to work** – helping people to find and retain employment
- **Support employers** – to recruit and retain people with disabilities and health conditions
- **How we improve** – to support people to work in partnership, share information, and focus on outcomes

The emerging strategy is being aligned with the Get Britain Working White Paper and has already generated valuable conversations about how we can join up employment, skills, and health across the system.

## Develop innovations to enable NCL to be a great place to work

### International Nurse Development and Retention Programme

A new clinical lead for the NCL International Educated Nurse (IEN) development and retention programme was appointed at the end of June 2024 and has led collaboration to support the second cohort of IENs to take part in the programme. 17 IENs were selected to take part from seven different NHS trusts across the system and representing seven different countries.

Aligned with the CapitalNurse Career Framework, this programme provides Internationally Educated Nurses with a structured pathway to develop their careers across the four pillars of nursing practice. It is designed to empower nurses to achieve their professional aspirations, enhance patient care, and drive service improvements.

## Development

Provide system leadership and facilitate collaboration on long-term workforce plan ambitions, ensuring that NCL can deliver for the future workforce

### Empowering nurses and midwives to drive change

The NCL Clinical Academic Nexus is a pioneering initiative designed to empower, support, and elevate the voices of nurses and midwives across our system. It contributes to our aspiration to attract and cultivate a vibrant community of professionals who are empowered to drive change, advocate for best practice, and champion the holistic wellbeing of the people we care for.

By investing in professional development and fostering a culture of lifelong learning, the Nexus is paving the way for a brighter, more inclusive future for nursing and midwifery in north central London.


Priorities for 2024 included:

- Preparing and Transitioning Future Nurses and Midwives
- Advancing Practice for Registered Nurses and Midwives
- Transforming Practice through Research and Innovation
- Developing and Embedding Restorative Practices

### Beyond Words: Mental Health and Communications Training

To help Emergency Department staff confidently and safely manage challenging behaviour, a new one-day training course called Beyond Words was piloted. The course, developed in collaboration with Middlesex University, teaches communication and de-escalation skills, using classroom learning, facilitated reflection, and virtual reality simulations.





Staff trained in the pilot reported increased confidence in handling challenging situations and improved success rates in de-escalating incidents. These positive results were sustained at follow-up and are being evaluated further as the training offer is revised and aligned with the Capital Nurse Mental Health Passport during 2025.

## Improving capability through education and development for health and care staff. Identifying roles that could unlock care. Ensuring best practice is shared and enhanced supervision explored

### Supervision in primary care

The NCL Training Hub has developed a new support offer aimed at improving practice engagement in education and professional development, with a specific focus on enhancing clinical supervision within multi-disciplinary primary care teams.

This initiative builds on findings from a recent supervision survey which examined clinical supervision practices within general practice teams across the system. The primary objective of this offer is to develop confidence in effective supervision, increase primary care participation in educational programmes, and strengthen the infrastructure resilience of practices and Primary Care Networks.





## Oliver McGowan (autism and learning disability) mandatory training

The Oliver McGowan mandatory training equips staff with the knowledge to better support individuals with learning disabilities or autism in health and care services. Training pathways for both patient-facing and non-patient-facing roles have been established as well as NCL-based training teams who are experts by experience.

Learners, who are all health and care staff, have shared very positive feedback about the training including the following.

*“This was one of the most interesting and insightful training courses I have done. It was great to hear first-hand lived experiences from autistic people and those with a learning disability”*

*“Very good. Made me realise how much knowledge I already had and gave me a different perspective on these individuals”*

Capacity to train 22% of all NCL NHS staff in 2024/25 has been created which will expand further into 2025/26 and beyond. The NCL Oliver McGowan delivery team was commended by Mencap in September 2024 for their contribution to inclusive recruitment.



Photo of NCL Oliver McGowan Training

## Embedding a Restorative and Just Culture

The Restorative and Just Culture programme is a culture change programme focused on enhancing employee wellbeing, increasing psychological safety, and encouraging staff to raise concerns and find solutions, and, in so doing, improving patient safety. The initiative has produced innovative blended learning resources designed for widespread implementation across system partners.

The value of the training has been highlighted through evaluation feedback, such as the following.


*“The whole workshop was great, informative and worth it. Hearing from colleagues across the NHS, their experiences and thoughts made it more worthwhile” (Admin and Clerical colleague, North London NHS Foundation Trust)*

*“This framework can be applied to many situations” (NCL Locum GP colleague)*

*“I believe NCL ICS has run the lessons very informatively and has raised awareness of restorative just culture which prior to this afternoon’s lesson I was not aware of”*

Nursing and Midwifery colleague, Royal Free NHS Foundation Trust

By March 2025, over 300 staff had completed training, including 23 trainers which will make sure the learning is embedded across the system to create a sustainable and long-lasting impact. Ongoing support will be offered to trainers to continue learning and to measure the impact of this training.



# Improving flexibility through system integration for health and care staff, aiming to streamline processes and encourage the sharing of best practice across organisations

## Staff passporting

Multiple initiatives are underway to foster flexibility and contribute to build our 'one workforce', including the healthcare support worker competency passport and preparation for the NHS Digital Staff Passport and core skills training reform. The programmes intend to develop a consistent level of competency in support worker development and mandatory training, allowing for increased portability across the system.

The Digital Staff Passport will also improve staff experience when moving between organisations, especially for medical rotations where colleagues frequently move organisations. A key milestone in this work is that all NCL NHS trusts have signed up to the new London-wide staff movement agreement which was expanded to social care and voluntary sector organisations.

### **Case study: The Royal Free experience using the London-wide staff movement agreement**

*"The London Staff Movement Agreement has been highly beneficial for both staff and services across the Royal Free Hospital, streamlining the process for staff moving between NHS trusts while maintaining essential employment checks.*

*"This has been particularly valuable within the Royal Free Hospital's Liver and Digestive Health Division, where the agreement has enabled a more efficient deployment of skilled professionals, ensured continuity of care and reduced administrative delays. Staff have reported increased satisfaction, finding the process more seamless and transparent, allowing them to focus on their roles without unnecessary hurdles.*

*"Most importantly, patients have experienced improved care delivery, with quicker access to experienced staff and reduced disruption to their treatment, ultimately enhancing the overall patient experience."* Royal Free Workforce Lead



# Transformation

## Workforce Review: Align workforce growth and productivity gains, and also right size and right skill our workforce and accelerate our strategic ambitions

### Right sizing our workforce through transformation

In tandem with strategic workforce planning, we have been working with our NHS trusts to respond to increased demand on services in an innovative way. The Workforce Review Programme was established in June 2024, chaired by the Chief Executive of an NCL NHS trust and encompassing a multi-partner multi-professional board who came together across the system to focus on workforce transformation opportunities.

The aim of the programme was to right size and right skill our workforce while aligning workforce growth with productivity gains and accelerating our strategic ambitions. Over 200 workforce transformation opportunities were reviewed and those expected to have the greatest impact were identified. These areas are:

- Corporate Transformation
- Pathways Transformation
- Digital Transformation
- e-Rostering Optimisation
- Job Planning

Work towards realising the benefits these opportunities offer has begun, with the greatest progress made across corporate transformation, pathways transformation, and digital.





### Corporate Transformation

It is important not to under-estimate the essential role of communications, human resources, facilities, and business support services in enabling clinical services and the NHS as a whole to function effectively. As we continue to develop as an integrated care system, there is significant opportunity to develop system-wide shared corporate services that improve efficiency and quality of existing provision. In 2024/25 we have built on progress made towards corporate transformation in previous years through continuing our work to develop a centralised investigations resource, expanding the use of robotic process automation within our shared recruitment service, and work towards piloting a chatbot for routine HR queries.

### Pathways Transformation

Most providers across our system have seen elective care activity exceed pre-pandemic levels through relentless work to transform multiple care pathways. New care models are emerging, aligned with our core priorities: [Start Well, Live Well, age well](#). This work has included a strong focus on improving waiting lists, enhancing care quality, and driving the [‘left shift’ – hospital to community, treatment to prevention, and analogue to digital](#).

We are now building on this success by partnering with the [National Clinically-Led workforceE and Activity Redesign \(CLEAR\) Programme](#) to accelerate the adaption and adoption of a proven model of care across the healthcare system. This exciting programme will support best practice in ear, nose, and throat care to be scaled across the system and to develop an innovative workforce model to support this.



# Identify, develop, and implement the workforce elements of the Digital Strategy and influence a system-wide culture change which enables grassroots to develop and grow our innovation pipeline

## Workforce elements of the digital strategy

The value in technology is what it can do for people – expediting workflows and improving patient experience. This value is inextricably linked to enabling people to realise its potential, therefore as part of the work to define our digital ambitions, we have been developing our Digital Workforce Plan. This plan will support delivery of the crucial human factors associated with large-scale digital transformation.

To date this work has focused on consulting multiple NHS, primary care, social care, voluntary sector, and community representatives to shape our priorities and workforce requirements. We also held a People Board Digital Seminar to bring partners together to co-design our approach to supporting the workforce elements of digital transformation.

## Accelerating Digital Innovation

Alongside developing our Digital Workforce Plan, we have already seen multiple digital innovation pilots developed to improve patient experience and release staff time to care. An example of this is the Great Ormond Street<sup>2</sup> ambient voice AI pilot which has enabled staff to spend more time on direct patient care during outpatient appointments.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Case Study: Great Ormond Street Ambient Voice AI Pilot:* [GOSH pilots AI tool to give clinicians more quality-time with patients | Great Ormond Street Hospital](#)

*Dr Maaïke Kusters, Paediatric Immunology Consultant, who took part in the trial at GOSH said: “The patients I see in my clinics have very complex medical conditions and it’s so important to make sure I capture what we discuss in our appointments accurately, but often this means I am typing rather than looking directly at my patient and their family.*

*“Using the AI tool meant I could sit closer to them face-to-face and really focus on what they were sharing with me, without compromising on the quality of documentation.”*



## Case study: Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in North London Partners Shared Services (NLPSS)

NLPSS use robotic process automation to automate high volume, manual, repetitive tasks. The RPA robot, better known as Speeds Things Up (STU), was programmed to automatically complete many of the tasks in the recruitment process.



Previously, pre-employment paperwork would be posted to applicants who would complete and post back the forms to the trust. The completed forms would then be uploaded to the computer system by someone in the recruitment team.

Now STU simply sends everything to applicants via email, who complete it online and send it back electronically, ready for STU to process directly onto the system.

Other RPA processes managed by STU are ID checks, right to work checks, and new-starter forms.

### Impact on quantity

- ✓ 22 WTE posts saved – approximately 25% of recruitment headcount
- ✓ Contributing factor in reduction of time to hire – from up to 35 working days to 18 working days for all NLPSS partners
- ✓ Reduction in working time (and so costs) per applicant: NHS recruitment average is 300 mins, NLPSS is 200 mins
- ✓ Improved data accuracy from 70% to over 99% (new starter e-forms)

### Impact on quality

- ✓ NLPSS Helpdesk – created increased capacity in assisting our candidates across five days per week 8am – 5pm, taking over 3000 calls monthly
- ✓ NLPSS Client Services and Account Managers – enabled expanded strategic account support, recruitment clinics, and training
- ✓ Improved recruitment candidate experience – for example, offer letter received hours after hiring manager's confirmation
- ✓ Employee – automated reminders for contract, maternity, and right to work expiry, same day references

# Fostering connection and agreeing principles of collaboration to influence a system-wide culture change

## Neighbourhoods and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams

Our People Strategy priority to create an integrated 'one workforce' model is crucial for the success of neighbourhood models of care. Building community assets and partnerships between voluntary sector, social enterprise, social care, primary care, and NHS organisations are key to creating the community-oriented workforce that is needed to deliver a neighbourhood-focused approach.

We have been collaborating with system partners to understand the critical success factors of these teams, including organisational development and culture, so that we realise their maximum potential. To date there has been a system workshop and an ICS exchange event with North West London to explore how these teams operate. We are also collaborating with City University and the Clinical Leaders Network to pilot an organisational development offer.

In pockets we are beginning to see a shift towards more proactive care that provides continuity and targeted support for residents with complex needs. We have seen particular success with the Long-Term Conditions Locally Commissioned Service (LTC LCS) and our emerging neighbourhood teams in Kentish Town East and Haringey Multi-Agency and Care Coordination Team.

However, we recognise that there is much more to do to realise our ambition for a neighbourhood workforce model where staff work together with a person-centred, joined up approach, that minimises bureaucracy and focuses on complexity







## Retention Enablers

### Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Enabler: Accelerate our approach to addressing workforce inequalities and promoting equality of opportunity across the system

#### An equitable and inclusive system

As a system we have continued our commitment to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination through creating an integrated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) network across all sectors to drive forward our ambition. The network includes leads from borough councils, education, and the NHS to learn about what is working well and provide peer support in navigating complex and sensitive equalities issues.

Together at a range of events we have explored what the priorities might be for a system-wide equalities framework, with priorities identified in the following areas.

**Career progression:** a commitment to provide access to shared leadership and development opportunities for groups under-represented in senior leadership positions.

**Inclusive recruitment:** participants saw an opportunity to improve the way employers use their Disability Confident Employer status to improve recruitment of people who are disabled and have health conditions.

**Learning and sharing:** attendees highlighted the potential to create a central portal for information sharing so partner organisations can learn from EDI approaches across different sectors



# Leadership Enabler: Ensuring that NCL has strong system leadership capabilities through skills development, programme design, and by strengthening networking and partnership working opportunities across the system

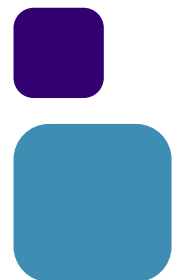
## Generating System Leadership capabilities

The System Leadership and Nursing Fellows programmes have seen 119 leaders across the health and care sectors complete their programme, alongside 72 more learners starting. Evaluation outcomes confirmed that senior nurses and midwives feel more confident, energised, and motivated through the nursing and midwifery system leadership learning framework.

Feedback from learners has been overwhelmingly positive, including:

*“I've been asked to lead a sector-wide piece of work – it has meant bringing together everyone to build trust and collaborate on budgets and work”*

*“Attending the programme has helped me to revolutionise the service I am in”*



To continue the legacy of the programme, a system leaders' alumni network has been created to bring together leaders from all professions to support each other through continued learning and collaboration.

# Talent Enabler: To have a system view of talent across NCL and how we engage system partners to develop NCL wide talent management approaches

## Growing our own workforce through apprenticeships

Apprentice starts across NCL NHS trusts grew by 26% during 2024 across a wide range of clinical and non-clinical apprentice roles, and all trusts saw an increase in their apprentice numbers.

An Apprenticeship Framework was developed, setting out the principles and high-level objectives for apprenticeship training, aligned with national priorities such as the NHS Long-Term Workforce Plan and Social Care Workforce Strategy.


A new apprenticeship leads network was created to increase oversight and collaborative working across the system. To ensure a consistently high standard of recruitment, the NCL ICS Workforce team engaged closely with policy leads to benchmark terms and conditions for apprentice recruitment. The ICS is also collaborating on expanding the range of placements to ensure Allied Health Professionals apprentices get sufficient experience across all settings.

Provider highlights include:

- the Royal Free London Foundation NHS Trust celebrated their 1000<sup>th</sup> apprentice
- North London Foundation NHS Trust launched a new Digital and Data Academy designed to build digital and AI skills across the workforce
- a unique partnership between Camden Council, the Rayne Foundation charity, and education providers including Middlesex University developed an innovative apprenticeship building clinical and digital skills into the level 3 Adult Care standard



*Photo of Royal Free 1000<sup>th</sup> Apprentice*



## Health and Wellbeing Enabler: Ensuring a consistently high standard of health and wellbeing support for our people through our Work and Health Strategy. Improving work-life balance through increased access to flexible working

### A strategic review of Occupational Health

Our strategic review aimed to redefine the future vision and offer of Occupational Health and Wellbeing (OHWB) services provided by North London Partners Shared Services to respond to the evolving needs of the NHS workforce and a shifting strategic landscape. By combining robust stakeholder engagement with horizon scanning of good practice, this review recommended bold and actionable priorities to drive long-term transformation, future-proof the approach and amplify impact.

*"OHWB is a multidisciplinary team of professionals, united by improving the health and wellbeing of our NHS people. They must have a voice at board level, who must engage with it to drive organisational decisions to realise value as a proactive, preventative, through to an advisory service that keeps our NHS workforce healthy and well."* Patricia Ighomereho, Head of NLPSS OH Clinical Services.





## Supporting employers in Primary Care settings to improve staff wellbeing

The NCL Training Hub has been working to strengthen the reach of health and wellbeing support into primary and social care, particularly in areas where there is limited provision. This work aimed to improve workforce wellbeing, support a culture of recognition, and help the workforce create safe spaces to reflect, connect, and feel equipped to improve their own wellbeing as well as that of their colleagues and team.

An [NCL Staff Health and Wellbeing webpage](#) which brings all wellbeing offers for staff into one place has been created to improve awareness of the support available locally and nationally. Created in 2023, the page currently has had over 2,570 views.

An NCL-wide Workforce Wellbeing Survey was developed to get an understanding of our wellbeing baseline. To incentive engagement and reduce duplication, the work was aligned with the existing Quality Outcomes Framework. The wellbeing survey received 987 responses from staff across 99 NCL primary care settings.

Detailed analysis reports were sent to individual practices to support their wellbeing planning. To support improvements, sessions were led by Quality Improvement experts who facilitated discussions about how QI methodologies could be used to improve wellbeing. The sessions involved a showcase of case studies to inspire other settings. A combined total of 97 people joined the sessions.

### **Case study: Facilitating data-led wellbeing improvements in Primary Care Networks (PCNs)**

Data collected as part of the NCL Workforce Wellbeing Survey has been instrumental in shaping targeted improvements at PCN and practice level. Structured peer support meetings with PCNs were held using their individual survey reports to guide discussions. These meetings provided PCNs and practices with the opportunity to analyse their own data, reflect on key insights, and identify actionable steps based on staff feedback.

By ensuring that the discussions were data-driven and locally relevant, PCNs were able to move beyond broad wellbeing strategies and instead focus on specific, high-impact interventions tailored to their workforce's needs. As a result of this work there have been a number of changes implemented to support staff.

#### **Changes reported as a result of the initiative**

- ✓ Storage space converted to rest space
- ✓ Coffee machine and healthy snacks made available
- ✓ Zero tolerance policy for aggressive behaviour reviewed and updated
- ✓ Improvements in break schedules for clinical team
- ✓ Scheduled team away days within year



### Menopause training for managers and staff

A training webinar was delivered to managers and leaders to help support staff who are experiencing the menopause. A total of 28 managers from across the five NCL boroughs joined and provided feedback on the session including: *"I will try to organise talks for our staff clinical and non-clinical regarding menopause", "Excellent sessions. Really helpful.", "Include all members of staff and maybe do a seminar F2F, with real people who are experiencing this. Thankyou"*

Further sessions are scheduled in March and April 2025 and will be opened up to all staff. The sessions will be led by a GP or menopause specialist and will provide a platform for discussions and Q&A on various menopause-related topics.

### Social care staff health checks (formerly Wellbeing Bus)

The NCL Wellbeing Bus hosted 19 sessions and supported around 436 staff health checks within care home settings. It has also either won or been nominated for a number of awards, including:

- Bronze winner in the Innovation category at the IESE Public Sector Transformation Awards
- [Shortlisted for the HSJ Patient Safety Awards for Staff Wellbeing Initiative of the Year](#)
- Shortlisted twice for the Nursing Times Awards in the Nursing in Social Care and Public Health Nursing categories

Further funding has been secured from the Burdett Trust for NCL ICB in partnership with C3 to sustain this work and adjust the model so that a larger number of staff can be targeted. This will happen through an interactive Health Kiosk which takes measurements such as blood pressure and BMI, and also allows people to explore areas like sleep, diet, exercise, and work-life balance. For two years, 30 care homes will have the Interactive Health Kiosk on site for a week each with C3 nurse support



## Recognising and celebrating success

The NCL Valued Awards celebrate and recognise achievements across primary and social care teams, giving teams and individuals a sense of recognition and appreciation. The awards have also facilitated the sharing of best practice and increased collaboration across teams. 60 guests attended the awards this year with 38 nominations from across the system.

### Case study: Celebrating staff through the NCL Valued Awards 2024

The NCL Valued Awards have been a powerful initiative in fostering a culture of recognition and appreciation across primary care. Staff who were nominated and celebrated at the event expressed how uplifting and motivating it was to have their efforts acknowledged in such a meaningful way.

Beyond individual recognition, the awards also provided a unique opportunity for attendees to gain insight into inspiring projects across different boroughs, allowing teams to share best practices, learn from one another, and feel part of a wider, supportive network.

By championing the hard work and dedication of staff, the NCL Valued Awards have strengthened morale and reinforced the message that every contribution to patient care and workforce wellbeing is truly valued.



*Photo from celebration breakfast event in January 2025*



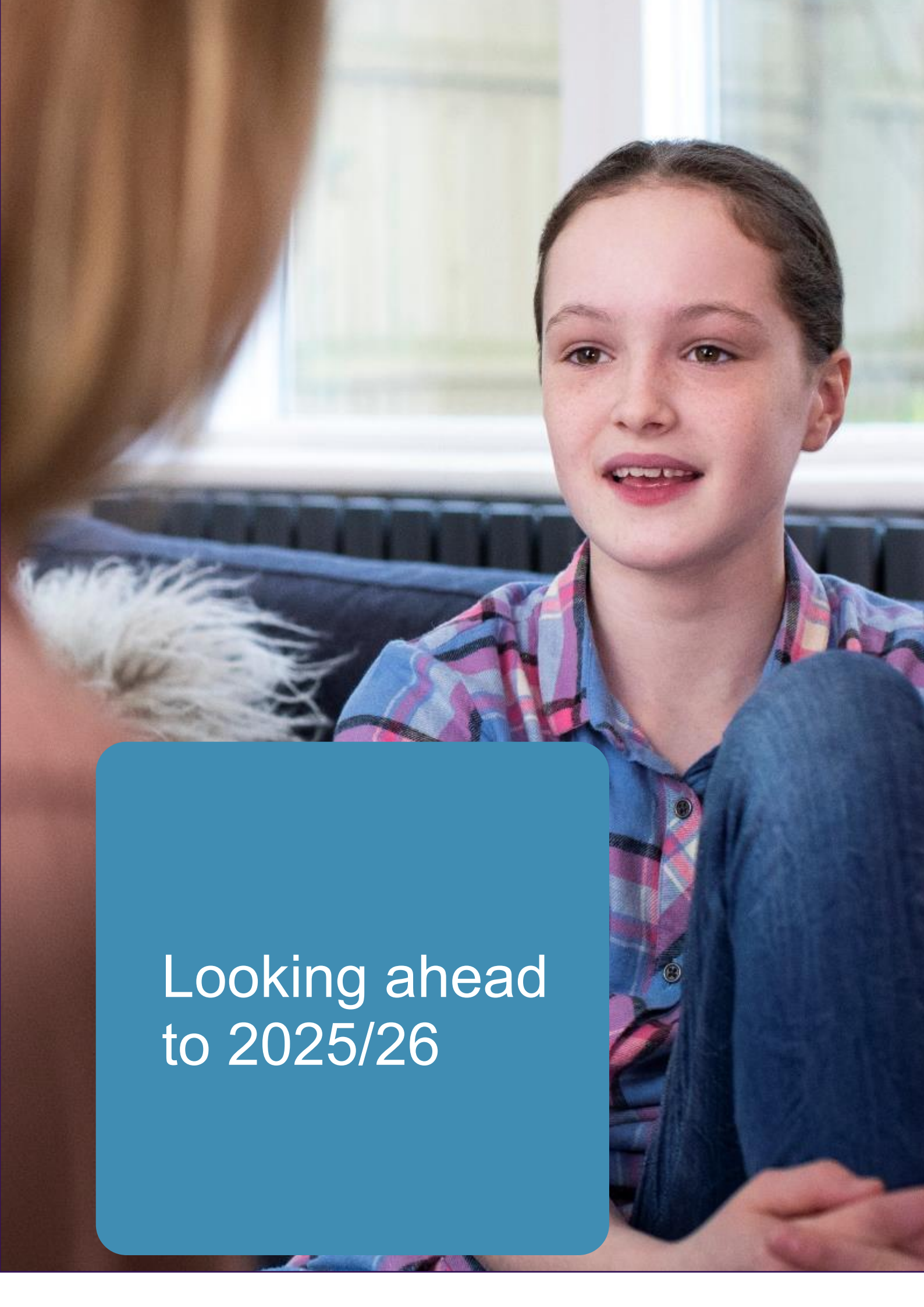
### Flexible Working 'Getting it right for your team' QI Project

ICS and CapitalNurse workforce improvement leads have collaborated to develop a programme to support ward and unit managers in implementing change for ward-based clinical teams where flexible working has been previously difficult to implement.

The programme was designed to equip ward managers with the necessary skills to effectively manage flexible working arrangements, ensuring smooth operations and optimal staff satisfaction. It comprised of six training days, action learning sets, and individual project work.

NCL ICS had participants on the programme from UCLH, Moorfields Eye Hospital, and GOSH. The programme concluded in early 2025 and had already realised benefits of flexible working in reduced sickness absence, turnover, and improved staff satisfaction.

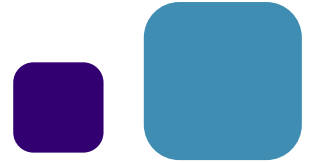




Looking ahead  
to 2025/26



# Accelerating the Change and Transforming Our Workforce



As we look forward into year 3 delivery of the People Strategy, we recognise that the wider context requires us to continue accelerating the change while ensuring long-term sustainability by incorporating priorities identified for the transforming our workforce phase. This brings the focus expanding pilot initiatives to deliver impact at scale across the system alongside delivering system efficiency and productivity benefits via targeted initiatives.

We continue to have significant ambitions for workforce supply, development, and transformation across 2025/26, with some of our priorities summarised below.

- Support our NHS Trusts in their work towards achieving their 2025/26 Operational Plans, including transformational workforce programmes such as Rostering Optimisation and CLEAR – **C**linically-**L**ed Workfor**C**E and **A**ctivity **R**edesign –to support operational planning efficiency measures.
- Collaborate with the ICB People Services Team to Implement the proposed [Model ICB Blueprint](#), ensuring alignment with the Population Health and Integrated Care Strategy and future system requirements
- Bring a system-wide approach to workforce development by embedding targeted learning, leadership development and capability mapping for new ways of working so that we empower staff at all levels to thrive and deliver on long-term system ambitions.
- Continue to work across system networks, equality diversity and inclusion, apprenticeships. and learning and organisational development to ensure collaboration as we respond to new priorities and challenge – sharing resources and creating a shared purpose.
- Supporting the co-design and implementation of neighbourhoods and integrated neighbourhood teams aligned to population health needs
- Strengthen place-based, multi-disciplinary working to improve outcomes, experience, and equity.
- Co-design sustainable workforce models that support integrated care and system collaboration for the 1.8million people across NCL.
- Continue operationalisation of the WorkWell Partnership Programme to meet our objective of supporting 3,000 people across NCL to start, return to, or stay in employment.
- Provide oversight and lead the Careers Hub programme of work by for example, widening participation activities – work experience, volunteering, creating equitable career pathways, and fostering collaboration across sectors to provide inclusive opportunities for under-represented groups.
- Support the NCL VCSE Network in co-designing a Volunteering in Health Framework to enhance community involvement in health and care services through volunteering.



A photograph of three people in a professional setting. On the left, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a grey blazer over a white shirt, is smiling. In the center, a woman wearing a white hijab, glasses, and a pink blazer is also smiling. On the right, the side profile of another person wearing glasses is partially visible. A large blue rounded rectangle is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the word 'Conclusion' in white text.

# Conclusion



## Progress in Year 2

The progress made in year 2 of delivering our ICS People Strategy demonstrates what is possible through strong collaboration, shared ambition, and a system-wide commitment to change. This year has seen us accelerate integration, expand innovative workforce programmes, and begin to realise the tangible benefits of aligning our efforts across north central London.

As this Annual Review highlights, much has been achieved by partners working across the system. The programmes and initiatives presented here reflect only a portion of the activity underway. They showcase the visible, collective work while we also recognise the significant contributions being made by teams across our many organisations.

In the year ahead our system and the health and care sectors will continue to face challenges and uncertainty. However, our shared purpose remains clear: to develop a thriving, inclusive, and resilient workforce that delivers high-quality, person-centred care and creates meaningful employment opportunities for our communities. Together, we are building a stronger, fairer, and more sustainable future for north central London.