



England

NHS Estates & Facilities Workforce

Hospital Caterers Forum

2nd April 2025

Presented by:

Lucy Rowe, Senior EFM Workforce Lead, NHS England

NHS EFM Workforce



84k Headcount directly employed staff
6% of the NHS workforce
Circa 40k outsourced workforce



68% staff band 2
(NHS average 15%)
80% - Soft FM
20% Hard FM



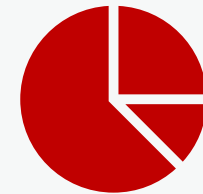
An Aging Workforce
4% of EFM staff are under 25
41% over 55 years old



Gender:
56% of EFM is female
63% Band 2
47% Band 3
22% Band 5
28% Band 8a - 9 (grouped)



Low declaration rates in EFM
19% Disability undisclosed
26% Sexual orientation undisclosed
7% of EFM staff ethnicity 'unknown'



Ethnicity:
23% of EFM is BAME
26% Band 2
18% Band 3
11% Band 5
14% Band 8a - 9 (grouped)

Age profile comparison

Age profile in EFM and NHS (Sep 25)				
Age Range	EFM Workforce %	NHS Workforce %	Private UK & IE EFM company, (c38k Headcount)	England's Working Age Population*
Under 25	4%	5.3%	20%	12%
25 - 34	12%	25%	16%	23%
35 - 44	18%	25%	19%	22%
45 - 54	24%	23%	20%	21%
55 - 64	33%	18%	19%	18%
65 and over	8%	3%	4%	4%




Key takeaways:

● Lack of Young Talent – Only 4% under 25 vs. 20% in private sector EFM and 12% in England's working age workforce.

⚠ Aging Workforce Risk – 33% of NHS EFM staff are 55-64, risk of retirements, much higher than 18% in NHS overall, posing succession challenges.

📉 Weak Early-Career Pipeline – NHS EFM struggles to attract 25-34-year-olds at 12% vs. 23% national working age, impacting long-term sustainability.

Solutions?

-  Boost apprenticeships & graduate pathways
-  Improve retention & succession planning
-  Enhance attraction strategies for under-35s

*Source: [Age in the NHS 2019 \(NHS Employers\)](#)

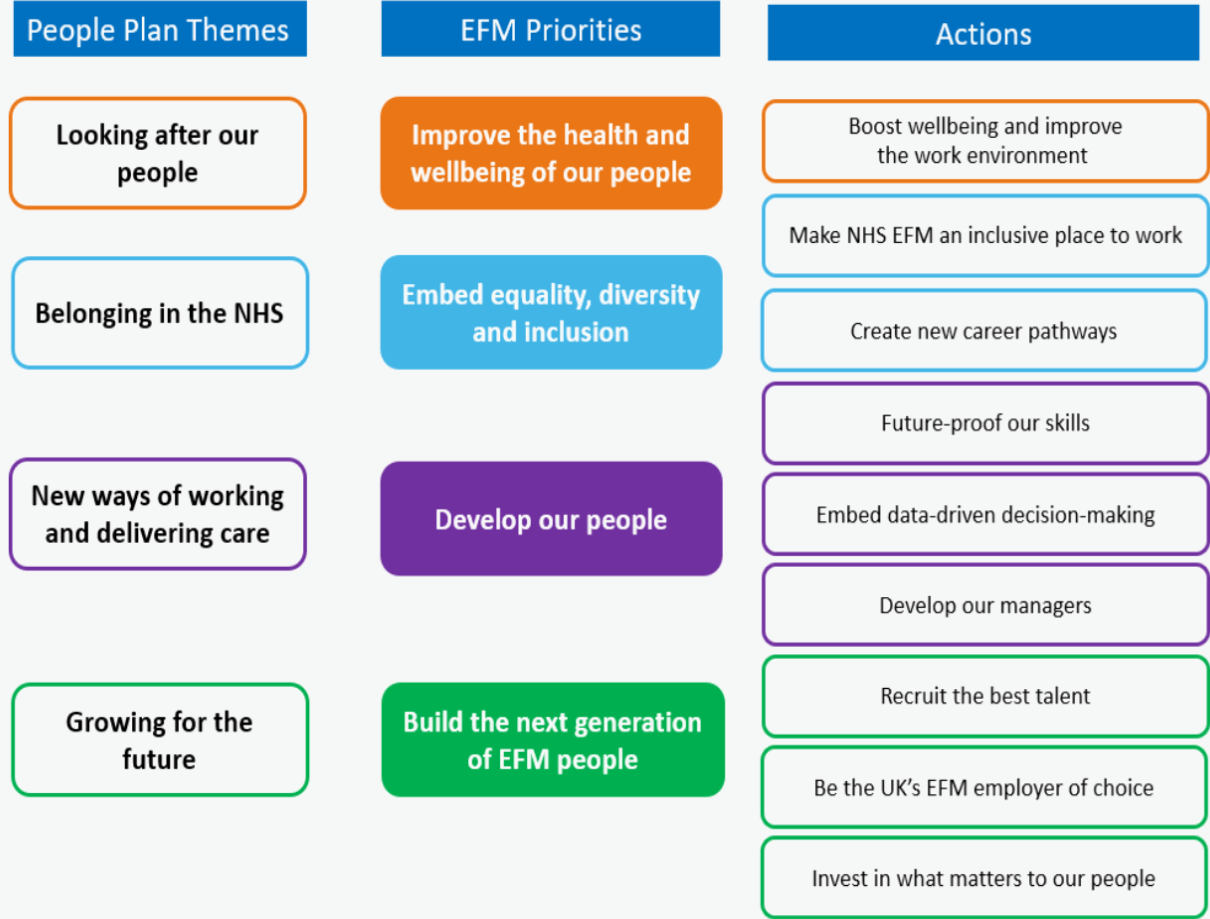
The EFM Workforce Action Plan

Classification: Official
 Publication approval reference: PAR292



Estates and Facilities Workforce Action Plan
 Building, developing and engaging our people

15 June 2022



Aligns with national NHS workforce priorities:

[NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#)

[Darzi Report](#)

[People Plan](#)

[People Promise](#)

[National ED&I Improvement Plan](#)

[ICS Infrastructure Strategies](#)

[NHS estates and facilities workforce action plan](#)

Two (and a bit) years on... in numbers!

1 EFM Apprenticeship Toolkit

15 careers days attended by national team and c4000 young people engaged

3300 people downloaded the Apprenticeship Toolkit

12 national conference EFM Workforce presentations including NHS Confed

17 EFM workforce newsletters

10 national strategic NHS workforce programmes with EFM representation

4 Interns employed in National Team
2 Junior Energy managers funded

5 EFM social media Live sessions with staff

550 members of the EFM workforce network

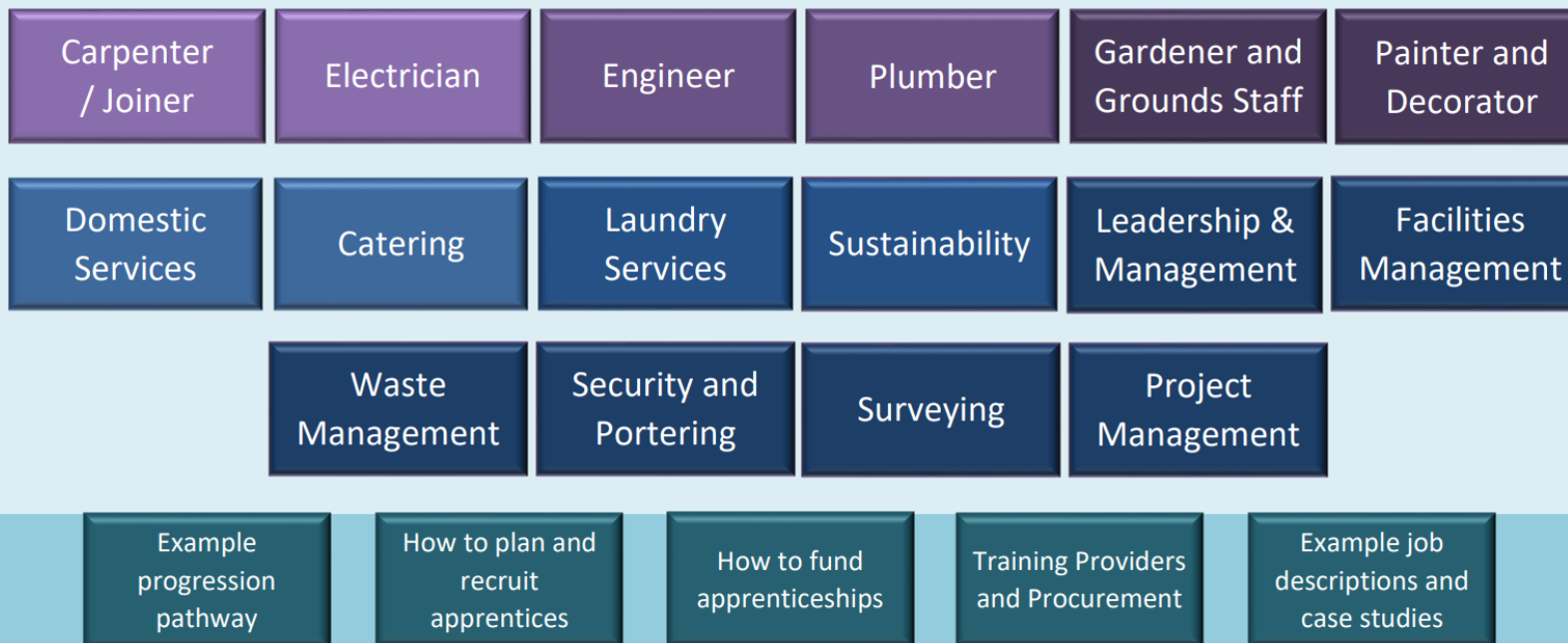
14 new case studies on NHS Health Careers Website



Estates and facilities apprenticeships in the NHS

Did you know there are dozens of apprenticeship qualifications that can be used for roles in estates and facilities? You can use these apprenticeship qualifications to train new talent and upskill your existing workforce.

Click on the boxes below to explore some example apprenticeship routes that you could use in your own workforce



FEATURED APPRENTICE - CONNOR GUTSELL

LEVEL 2 PRODUCTION CHEF

Meet Connor Gutsell,
a Production Chef apprentice at
West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust.

What apprenticeship are you studying and what does the study involve?

I am studying the Level 2 Production Chef apprenticeship.

How did you get into your current career?

I have worked in the NHS from leaving school. My neighbour, who also worked as a chef in the NHS, originally recommended the NHS, working in the kitchens as an NHS catering assistant. I was a catering assistant for four years, also working through COVID-19. Then an opportunity arose on the chef side within the trust and I jumped at it as I have always cooked. During COVID-19 especially, I cooked a lot at home. I joined the apprenticeship programme and have not looked back!

What's a typical day like?

On a 06.30 - 14.30 shift I do a lot of 'mains' work. I will come in and set the breakfast (e.g. porridge) out and get all my ingredients ready for evening meal. I will cook then serve lunch. While the porridge is being served I will start to cook using a bratt pan (large pan, almost the size of a table - to serve 250 - 300 portions). Then I will do a special evening meal, we do specials everyday of the



[Connor Gutsell,](#)

FEATURED APPRENTICE - HARRY SANDY

LEVEL 2 PRODUCTION CHEF

Meet Harry Sandy,
a Production Chef apprentice at
West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust.

What apprenticeship are you studying and what does the study involve?

I am studying the Level 2 Production Chef apprenticeship.

How did you get into your current career?

I first started off as a pot washer at my local pub. I was there for about a year. Then I moved to another pub and worked there for just less than year. From that I moved to the Chef side of the workforce, but then COVID-19 hit and so that stalled things on the cheffing side a bit. From there I moved to the NHS catering department. I didn't know I was going to be a chef until I got into working at the pub. From there my mum, who also works in the NHS within mental health services, encouraged me as did the NHS manager who saw that I done a few chef related duties.

What's a typical day like?

Timing is so key - in the sweet bay for example. The belt needs to run at 11.15 so we need the food ready on the belt at 11.00. I find it challenging when people sometimes criticise your food on an apprenticeship, you have to learn to take it on the chest!

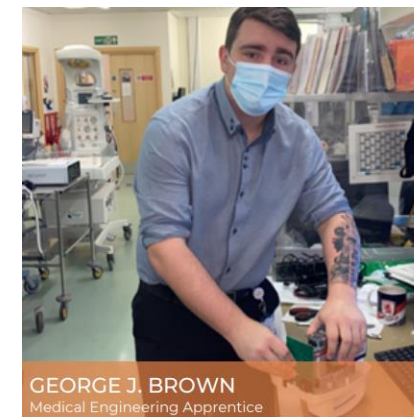


[Harry Sandy](#)

Resources

A range of resources including 11 new case studies have been created on HASO Estates and Facilities page – 1,626 page views

- [Estates and Facilities Toolkit](#)
- [Facilities and Estates - HASO \(skillsforhealth.org.uk\)](#)
 - [Facilities and Estates \(Hard\)](#)
 - [Facilities and Estates \(Soft\)](#)
 - [Facilities and Estates Management](#)
 - [Facilities and Estates Sustainability](#)
- [Estates and facilities | Health Careers](#)



An overview of our programmes

Priority 1

Building the next generation of EFM people

Expanding EFM apprenticeships & early careers

Ongoing attraction work with NHS Health Careers team and relaunching the NHS ambassador programme with new resources

Working with entry careers team on 'workforce' supporting 2 and 3 into EFM careers

Growing national T-Level placements, including national EFM T level working group.

Priority 2

Develop our people

Creating a national EFM competency framework

Piloting the National Engineering Graduate Programme.

Engaging in NHS Leadership Academy and Graduate Trainee Schemes

Understanding EFM need to grow digital skills

Priority 3

Improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Increasing representation of women & BAME staff in senior roles.

Embedding EDI in workforce & ICS infrastructure plans.

Priority 4

Improve the Health and wellbeing of our people

Influencing policy (e.g., LTWPv2, Infrastructure Strategies, pay review processes).

Understanding and utilising staff survey results to inform future programmes.

Supporting national retention initiatives

Key Challenges NHS EFM Workforce



Low market profile



Competition



Recruitment processes



High leaver rates



Engaging young people



Career opportunities



Diversity and inclusion



Staff experience and engagement

The National EFM Workforce data picture

Vacancies in EFM

-  In January 2025, the NHS vacancy rate stood at 6.7% and the combined Estates and Admin vacancy rate at **7.7%**
-  There is a **lower success rate in NHS Job applications** for EFM (30.5% of adverts lead to an offer compared to 34% national average)
-  EFM roles have a **readvertisement rate of 57.6%** compared to a national average of 34% across other staff groups

Leaver rates in EFM

- The overall NHS annual leaver rate in January 2025 decreased to **7%**.
- However, the national leaver rate for Estates is **7.8%**, up from 7.4% in January 2024, a 0.4% increase in 12 months
- All EFM professions have leaver rates above the national average

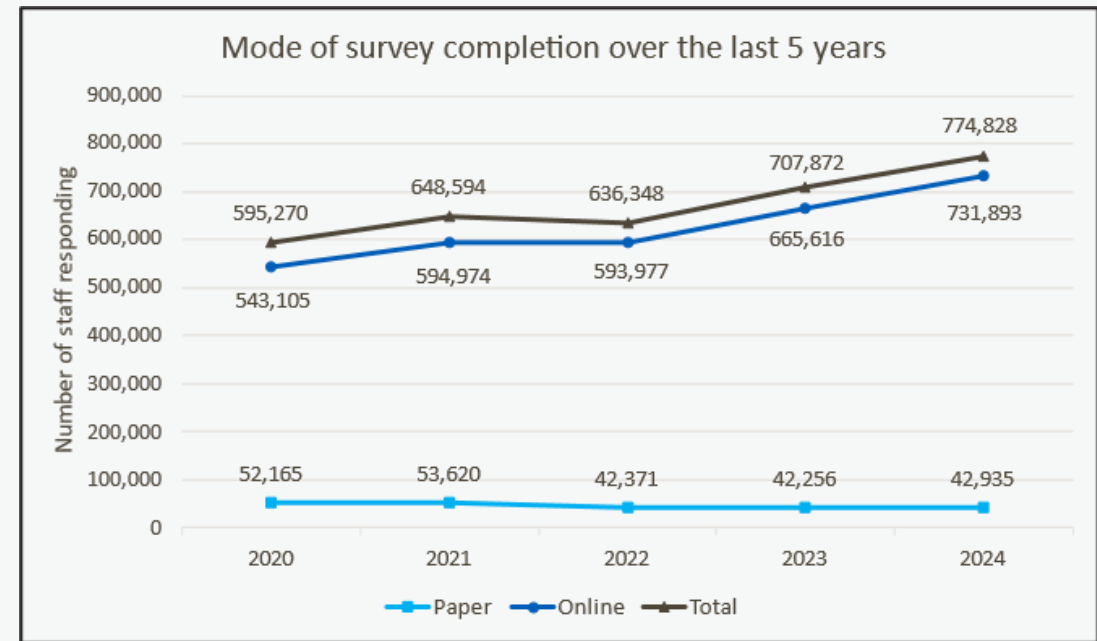
Role	Leaver rate
Maintenance / Engineer	7.8% - 8.9%
Electrician	10.7%
Cleaner/Domestic	7%
Chef/Cook	8.7%
Plumber	9.7%

2024 NHS Staff Survey results

Introduction

- The NHS Staff Survey is an official statistic run to the highest standards of quality and accuracy. It is the world's largest annual workforce survey.
- 2024 **774,828** (51%) of our NHS people took part nationally, the largest response to date.
- Since 2021 the questions in the NHS Staff Survey are aligned to [the People Promise](#) and two themes, staff engagement and morale.
- Provides a consistent and standardised framework to understand, measure and improve employee experience.
- All results are available through the [Survey Coordination Centre website](#) and the new intersectional and interactive staff survey [dashboard](#) to see results at National, ICS, regional and local levels.

27,003 (32%) responses (up from 24,228 last year) from the occupational group category, Maintenance / Ancillary, housekeeping, domestic staff, maintenance, facilities and estates



Overview of National Average scores 2022-2024 and Trust Type Averages 2024

Promise Element/ Theme	2022 National Average	2022 Maintenance and Ancillary National average	2023 National Average	2023 Maintenance and Ancillary National average	2024 National Average	2024 Maintenance and Ancillary National average
We are compassionate and inclusive	7.23	6.97	7.30	7.05	7.28	7.05
We are recognised and rewarded	5.80	5.73	5.99	5.93	5.99	5.88
We each have a voice that counts	6.68	6.52	6.72	6.55	6.69	6.56
We are safe and healthy	5.93	6.49	6.13	6.60	6.14	6.62
We are always learning	5.39	4.95	5.64	5.13	5.67	5.18
We work flexibly	6.09	6.03	6.28	6.17	6.31	6.18
We are a team	6.69	6.22	6.80	6.35	6.80	6.40
Staff Engagement	6.79	6.71	6.89	6.80	6.85	6.77
Morale	5.74	6.06	5.95	6.20	5.96	6.21

Green numbers show where M&A scores are higher than the 2024 National Average.

Red numbers show where M&A scores are lower than the 2024 National Average.

We are a team

Measure	2022 National Average	2023 National Average	2024 National Average	2022 Maintenance and Ancillary National average	2023 Maintenance and Ancillary National average	2024 Maintenance and Ancillary National average
We are a team (Element score)	6.69	6.80	6.80	6.22	6.35	6.40
Team working (sub-score)	6.61	6.70	6.69	6.29	6.41	6.45
Line management (sub-score)	6.77	6.89	6.91	6.16	6.30	6.35

Green numbers show where M&A scores are higher than the National Average for that year.
Red numbers show where M&A scores are lower than the National Average for that year.

Green boxes show where the National Average is higher than the previous year.
Red boxes show where the National Average is lower than the previous year

People Promise exemplar programme

- A key ambition of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan is increased retention, and the People Promise sets out what will most improve that working experience and make the NHS the workplace we all want it to be.
- The People Promise [exemplar programme](#) involved **23** organisations in first cohort implementing a range of interventions (from a possible 28) to improve retention.
- The results are promising, with the retention of **4,465** full time equivalent staff and reduced agency costs faster than non-exemplars.
- These savings demonstrate a positive return on investment by retaining staff, while improving staff experience. The programme has now expanded to a further **116** organisations including primary care, mental health, and community trusts.



Examples of interventions to improve staff experience at exemplar sites

1. Implement the [NHS Culture and Leadership programme](#)
2. Line managers access a mentoring program so the organisation builds capacity to listen inclusively to diverse voices
3. Active promotion of inclusive recruitment and promotion practices to improve the representation of underrepresented protected characteristics, with a focus on BAME, at every level of the organisation.
4. Roll-out pension awareness seminars on the basics and bust myths about how the NHS Pension Scheme works.
5. Offer 1:1 and group seminars to staff groups affected by pensions tax on pensions and flexible retirement.
6. Adopt good practice guidance from NHS Employers and other sectors on mitigating the risk of pension tax and flexible working.
7. Leaders access and complete new bitesize learning resources from the NHS Leadership Academy.
8. A minimum of 25% of permanent roles are advertised with clear flexible working options outlined.
9. Register for and implement the new digital staff passports. Train users and monitor adoption.

Retention tools and resources

1. NHS Employers Retention Hub

A [resource hub](#) that provides various tools and resources to support workforce retention. It includes case studies, best practices, and strategic planning resource.

[NHS Improving Staff Retention.pdf](#)

2. Influence leaders

This [board pack](#) for NHS leaders provides key facts and considerations to support strategic planning to retain your workforce.

3. Staff survey results

Another tool you have available to you is the annual staff survey. You can analyse the [survey results](#) and identifies the key workforce related issues and trends for your organisation.

4. Training and progression

The [staff development pathways guidance hub](#) contains information, infographics and good practice about supporting staff development, ultimately helping to retain them in your workforce.

5. The NHS people promise

[Staff experience in the NHS | NHS Employers](#) focuses on creating a compassionate and inclusive culture, which is crucial for attracting and retaining staff

6. Staff interviews– not just for leavers

Many organisations carry out **stay interviews** to better understand why current employees work in the organisation and what might cause them to leave.

7. The Do OD TEAM toolkit

If you want your team to work better, this resource is for you [Do-OD-Team-Toolkit_0.pdf](#)

8. Health and wellbeing framework

The [NHS health and wellbeing framework](#) defines the components of health and wellbeing to gain inspiration for what is possible for health and wellbeing within your organisation.

The EFM Workforce Team: Engage with us



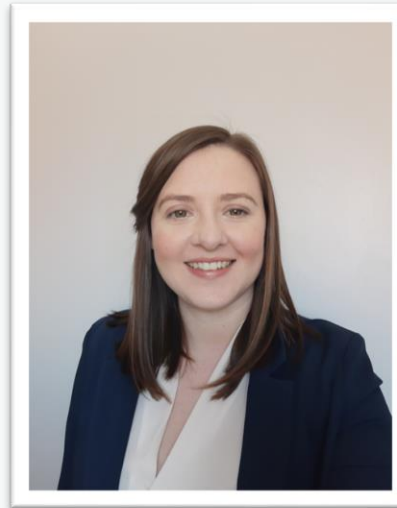
Lucy Rowe

Senior Estates and
Facilities
Workforce Manager



Kay Mulcahy

Associate Director of
Operations



Fay Lane

Senior Estates &
Facilities
Workforce Manager

NHS EFM Workforce contact:
england.efmworkforce@nhs.net

[NHS Estates Workforce Hub Link](#)

Dates of next Estates Workforce Forum:

- 2 April 2025 | 11:00 AM – Leadership
and Development
- 3 July 2025 | 11:00 AM – Attraction and
Widening Participation
- 9 October 2025 | 10:00 AM – Building
Career Pathways

Thank You



[@nhsengland](https://twitter.com/nhsengland)



[company/nhsengland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/nhsengland)

**NHS EFM Workforce contact:
england.efmworkforce@nhs.net**

References and Links

- [NHS workforce statistics - NHS England Digital](#)
- [Age in the NHS \(2019\)](#)
- [NHS EFM workforce action plan](#)
- [EFM Apprenticeship toolkit](#)
- [Connor Gutsell](#)
- [Harry Sandy](#)
- [Facilities and Estates - HASO \(skillsforhealth.org.uk\)](#)
 - [Facilities and Estates \(Hard\)](#)
 - [Facilities and Estates \(Soft\)](#)
 - [Facilities and Estates Management](#)
 - [Facilities and Estates Sustainability](#)
- [Estates and facilities | Health Careers](#)
- [NHS Vacancy Statistics NHS England Digital](#)
- [The People Promise](#)
- [Survey Coordination Centre website.](#)
- [NHS Staff Survey dashboard](#)
- [People Promise Exemplars](#)
- [NHS Culture and Leadership programme](#)
- [People Promise Exemplar Programme](#)
- [NHS Improving Staff Retention.pdf](#)
- [Retention in the NHS: board pack | NHS Employers](#)
- [The Programme and resources](#)
- [Staff development pathways | NHS Employers](#)
- [Staff experience in the NHS | NHS Employers](#)
- [Do-OD-Team-Toolkit_0.pdf](#)
- [NHS health and wellbeing framework](#)
- [NHS Estates Workforce Hub Link](#)
- [Programmes – Leadership Academy](#)