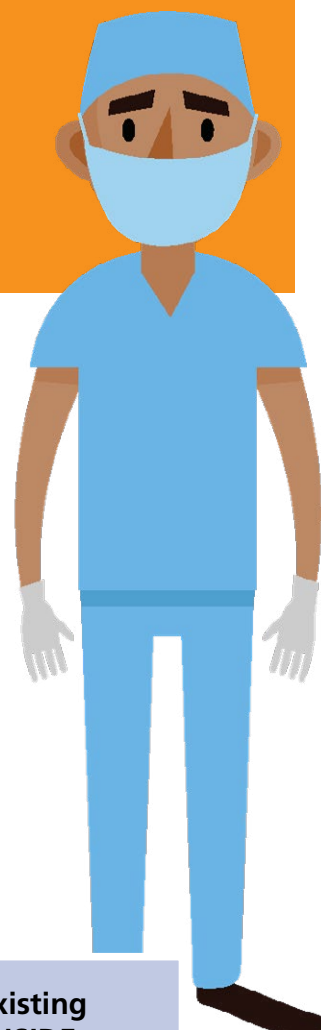


AHP support workforce – grow your own workforce strategies



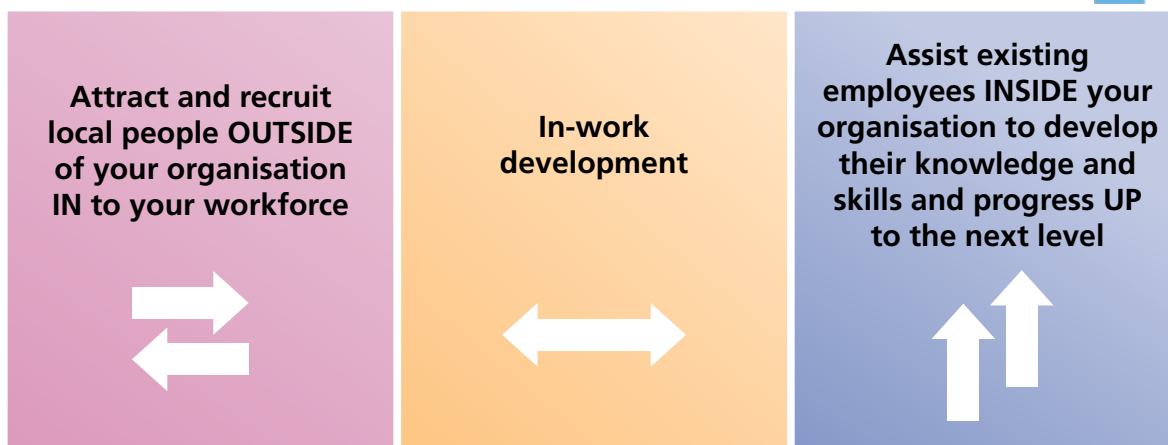
Introduction



This Guide provides an overview of workforce strategies designed to attract, train and retain the allied health professions' (AHP) support workforce.

This has been published to support [HEE's AHP Support Worker Competency, Education and Career Development Framework](#). The Framework is one element of HEE's AHP workforce strategy, which aims to build capacity and capability across the professions and secure the future workforce nationally, regionally and locally.

Effective implementation of the Framework will be supported by a Grow Your Own (GYO) approach to workforce planning, deployment, and development for the support workforce.



A GYO approach has three linked elements:

1. The first element is described as **Outside/In**. This seeks to recruit people from local communities directly into health and social care support roles. This approach will mean, for example, that the ethnic diversity of local populations will be better reflected in the current and future AHP workforce.
2. **In work development**. Once in employment, GYO approaches seek to ensure that staff can work safely within the remit of their role and ultimately at the top of their scope of practice, supported by appropriate education programmes.
3. The third element, for those staff who are able and wish to, is to create clear opportunities for them to progress their careers, including into pre-registration degrees. This element is described as **Inside/Up**.

Benefits of implementing a Grow Your Own workforce strategy for the AHP support workforce

Together these three elements help support the creation of a sustainable pipeline of talent and ensure staff in-post have the right knowledge, skills and behaviours for their role.

The benefits of GYO strategies:

- Creates a stable workforce
- Supports a more diverse workforce, better reflecting local populations
- Reduces turnover
- Improves job satisfaction and morale
- Reduces recruitment costs
- Builds workforce capacity
- Supports community wealth (through local employment) and helps reduce health inequalities
- Builds collaboration with local skills systems, which will lever expertise and resources
- Creates pipelines into registered professions
- Improves services' user experience.

How to design an Outside/In Grow Your Own workforce strategy

Outside/In approaches to workforce supply aim to raise awareness of and interest in AHP careers, primarily through engagement with local labour market and skills system partners. Partnership working is in fact key to the success of Outside/In strategies.

Community partners include:

- schools, colleges and universities
- local authorities
- voluntary organisations and volunteers, including St Johns Ambulance
- Job Centre Plus
- Local Economic Partnerships
- places of worship and faith-based organisations
- prisons
- community centres, youth groups, Scouts and Girl Guides
- leisure and recreation centres
- veteran organisations.

Connecting with these institutions, groups and agencies will provide links to other community partners (such as agencies, like The Prince's Trust, that provide employment support for disadvantaged groups), as well as access to expertise and resources.

The NHS Long Term Plan points to the importance of the NHS as an 'anchor institute' in communities. In many parts of the country, NHS and social care organisations are the largest employers in a locality. AHP workforce stakeholders should engage with locality Integrated Care System People Boards to assess whether there is existing activity seeking to attract more local people into health and social care employment. It may be, for example, that there is already engagement with local schools to highlight careers, but that this does not currently include the range of AHP opportunities. Where these links do not exist, AHPs can work together and with others to develop Outside/In strategies.



Outside/In can also apply to individuals already working for a health or social care organisation who might be interested in moving from one occupation, such as portering, reception or nursing health care assistant, to a different one within the NHS. Providing clear careers information, advice and guidance and pathways for internal “career changers” is an important but underdeveloped aspect of Grow Your Own. Providing internal career-change opportunities can reduce turnover for existing staff who wish to progress their career beyond their present occupation.

Interventions associated with Outside/In workforce strategies include:

- role models, including for underrepresented groups
- career events
- work-related learning
- mentoring
- work experience
- enterprise activities
- job shadowing
- reading partners in schools or colleges
- recruitment skills, such as assisting with job applications
- recruitment assistance
- workplace visits
- traineeships
- guaranteed interviews
- job brokerage
- supported employment programmes, such as Supported Internships
- volunteering
- work and health programmes.

These activities can help ensure that AHP workforces reflect the rich diversity of many communities. However, it is important that the barriers faced by some groups, including ethnic minorities, are addressed. For example, ensuring that career talks and career events include staff from underrepresented groups, and that mentors are from or can relate to these groups.

Developing an Outside/In workforce strategy

The table below sets out a series of considerations for assessing and planning implementation of an Outside/In GYO workforce strategy. The answers to these questions will determine next steps. For example, if no links have been made with local colleges, then contact should be made (not every college, including the nearest one to an employer, will provide health-related courses¹).

Question	Response
1. Have links been made with local further education colleges?	
2. Have links been made with Job Centre Plus offices locally?	
3. Have links been made with local authority economic development, skills and employment teams?	
4. Is health and/or social care represented on the local LEP or equivalent?	
5. Do ICS People Board workforce plans include Outside/In?	
6. Is career information, advice and guidance about health careers provided to schools and colleges?	
7. Does local careers information include and involve AHPs?	
8. Is there clear and comprehensive data on the AHP support workforce?	
9. Are community partners (such as Job Centre Plus) aware of AHP workforce requirements?	
10. Are there clear widening participation pathways into local university AHP degrees, where applicable?	
11. How familiar are workforce stakeholders, such as HR directors, with Outside/In strategies and is training needed to raise awareness?	
12. What interventions are delivered to support Outside/In strategies?	
13. Are Outside/In strategies inclusive and do they recognise the diversity of local communities? (For example, is there activity to support people with disabilities into work or the long-term unemployed?)	
14. Are Outside/In strategies connected to Inside/Up ones? For example, are entry-level apprenticeships aligned with vocational qualifications such as Technical Levels or BTECs?	
15. Have links been made to volunteering programmes?	

¹ Remember also that there will be students on non-healthcare college courses, such as STEM ones, that might be interested in AHP careers, if they were aware of them.

Supporting people most distant from the labour market into work

A specific element of an Outside/In GYO approach is creating supported employment opportunities for people who might experience barriers to work.

The NHS Long Term Plan sets an aspiration for the NHS to provide more of these opportunities, including for people with disabilities, pointing out for example that 65 per cent of people with a secondary mental health issue are currently employed. Only 17 per cent of people with a learning disability or autism are in paid employment.

Many people can face barriers to employment, such as care leavers, ex-offenders, and armed forces veterans. Aiding them not only provides another supply route into NHS and social care employment, but also helps address one of the key social determinants of health inequalities: lack of paid employment. Addressing unequal economic opportunities will help address local population health inequalities. In many cases there is government funding and support available to help disadvantaged people into work, often accessed through links with local authorities and job centres – underlining again the importance of local partnerships and collaborations.

Additionally, HEE supports several national initiatives:

- **Project Choice** (for young people aged 16-24 years old with disabilities, learning disabilities, difficulties and/or autism)
- **Movement to Work** (preparation for work)
- **Step into Health** (supporting military personnel and veterans into AHP roles)
- **The Prince's Trust** (assisting young people aged 16-30 into NHS employment)

As with the wider Outside/In strategies discussed above, there are a range of interventions associated with supported employment:

- careers information, advice and guidance (including to Special Education settings)
- work experience
- mentorship
- traineeships
- supported internships
- inclusive apprenticeships
- employability programmes.



Case study: pre-employment interventions – the example of North West London ICS

The North West London Integrated Care System, has strategic workforce objectives:

- to recruit more local people into NHS and social care employment
- to provide career pathways for existing support staff, including into pre-registration degrees.

Local further education colleges are critical partners in meeting these employment and skills aspirations. There are six colleges delivering care programmes across the ICS, (which covers a population of 2.3 million residents): Harrow and Uxbridge colleges, West London College, College of Northwest London, Barnet and Southgate College, West Thames College, and Stanmore College. A systems-wide group (called the Health Skills Partnership) brings the six colleges and employers together with other partners, such as Skills for Care and local councils. The group oversees a range of activities designed to build workforce capacity and capability, improve recruitment and retention, and develop future supply pipelines – including into AHPs:

1. With employers, Career Clinics have been organised by the colleges to provide unemployed adults with work experience and bridge knowledge and skills to help them enter health or social care employment. This includes taught elements of the Care Certificate.
2. Preparation for the introduction of Health Technical Levels, including industrial placements.
3. Led by West London College, the creation of an apprenticeship Talent Bank to allow apprentices on non-health apprenticeships to be redeployed into care (or other) roles if they have the necessary skills (such as customer services).
4. Partnership to deliver supported employment opportunities for young people in colleges and schools with SEND in five NHS trusts.
5. Interventions, including Career Fairs, to increase the number of college students studying healthcare qualifications entering NW London NHS and social care employment.

Colleges, council representatives, universities and the ICS also meet as a group across the system addressing a range of employment and skill needs including functional skills and progression into pre-registration degrees.

Maximising the contribution of existing support staff



Another element of a Grow Your Own workforce strategy is ensuring that, once employed, existing staff members' contribution to care is maximised within their role.

This is done by:

1. Effective workforce design linked to service need.
2. Clear role boundaries that allow staff to work safely and to the maximum scope of their practice, following appropriate training.
3. Access to relevant education, linked to appraisals and personal development.
4. Wider supportive human resource strategies, such as flexible working.

Full guidance on this is provided in the [AHP Support Worker Competency, Education and Career Development Framework](#).



Designing Inside/Up GYO workforce strategies

Inside/Up GYO strategies explicitly seek, based on service need, to help staff identify their career pathways. They are inextricably linked to appraisals and Personal Development Plans and require a clear understanding of current and future workforce needs, and knowledge of education and training opportunities (some of which will be 'in-house'), as well as departmental and organisational objectives. They also require clear and consistent Job Descriptions and Personal Specifications, and access to relevant education programmes.

Working with other services at a regional or ICS level will create the opportunity to review job design, using this Framework to ensure that they are consistent and support standardisation and transferability.



Developing an Inside/Up GYO workforce strategy

The table below sets out a series of considerations for assessing and planning implementation of an Inside/Up GYO workforce strategy. HEE's [readiness toolkit](#) will help you to develop this work further.

Question	Response
1. How much data is there on the current support workforce: numbers, qualifications, working hours, age, turnover rates and functional skills?	
2. Are Job Descriptions and Person Specifications up to date, consistent and appropriate (in terms of National Job Evaluation Profiles)?	
3. Where are support workers primarily recruited from (for example is it from local labour markets or schools and colleges)?	
4. What issues do support workers face in terms of education and development (could discussions be organised with them to ascertain their views, for example)?	
5. Are there contracts in place with education providers to deliver level 2, 3 and 4/5 apprenticeship standards?	
6. What proportion of the apprenticeship levy (if applicable) is allocated to AHP support worker education?	
7. How do existing AHP support staff access education, including in-house training?	
8. How transferrable is the learning that AHP support staff acquire (for example, do services recognise each other's Care Certificate training)?	
9. What processes are in place to ensure the safe delegation of tasks?	
10. What processes and procedures are there locally for supervision and appropriate delegation of tasks?	
11. Are there clear processes for support staff with the necessary qualifications to apply for local AHP degree courses, if they wish?	
12. Are there clear progression pathways to help staff plan their careers, including through apprenticeships?	

Bringing it together



A Grow Your Own workforce strategy will bring together interventions designed to raise awareness of, and interest in, careers with recruitment and selection strategies, workforce development and career progression pathways.

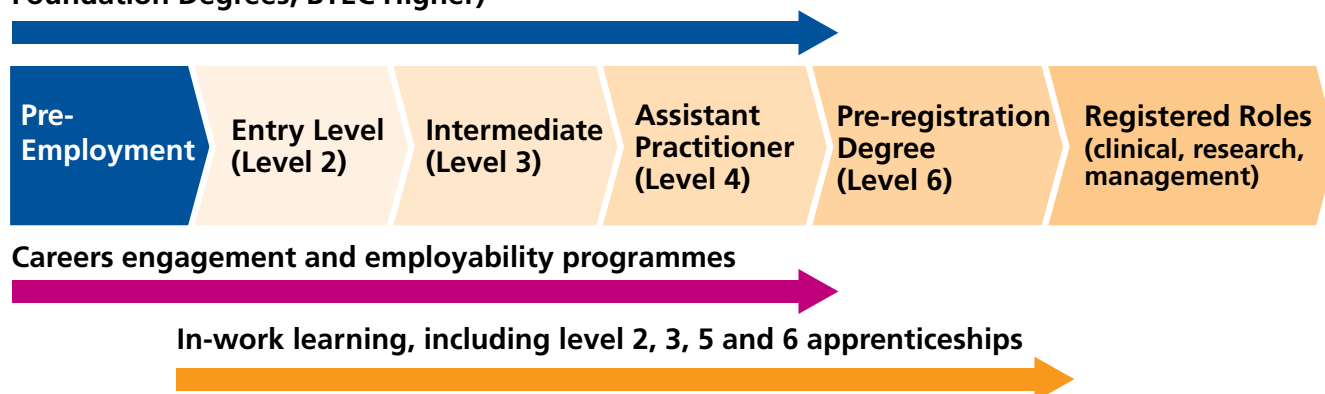
By nature, Grow Your Own is locally focused, either on an organisation or an area (such as that covered by an ICS). It has much to offer AHPs, including the opportunity to raise awareness of careers people may not be familiar with and to create local partnerships.

The Figure below shows how Grow Your Own, based on the Framework and taking an “end-to-end” approach, would work in practice. At each stage there would be clarity and consistency about qualification requirements. There would also be a supply route for those requiring employment support to enter AHP roles. For already employed staff, there are progression routes from one stage to the next, as well as clearly defined role boundaries linked to competences. These routes include progress into pre-registration degrees but also steps into support roles for individuals who do not complete all their AHP degrees.

It should be stressed that the Framework is not meant to imply that all staff will or need to progress. Many will wish to pursue their career within a particular role, although even if support staff do not move from one stage to another, they should still have access to appropriate learning. Support staff should be able to develop themselves within jobs and be valued for doing so.

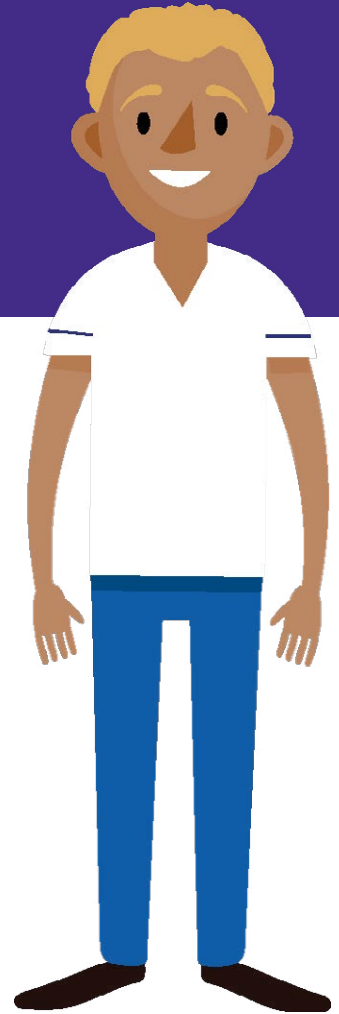
Figure 2: The Framework

External qualifications (for example A and T Levels, Foundation Degrees, BTEC Higher)



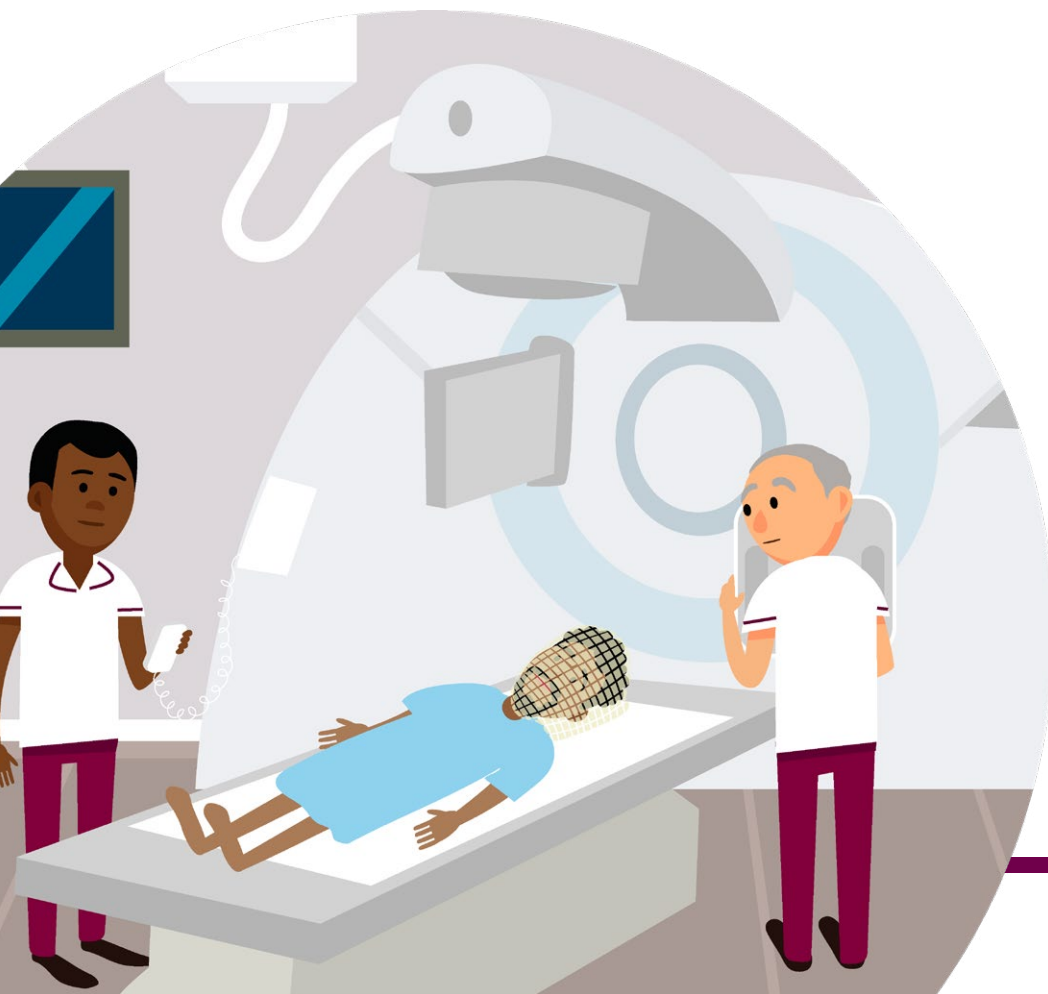
Further information

- Developing the role of AHP Support Workers: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/enable-workforce/developing-role-ahp-support-workers>
- Talent for Care and Widening Participation – HEE’s national support worker policy: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/talent-care-widening-participation>
- Project Choice: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/talent-care-widening-participation/supported-internships-project-choice>
- Preparation for work (including Movement To Work): <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/work-experience-pre-employment-activity>
- Step into Health: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/helping-ensure-essential-supply-ahps/making-step-health-case-studies>
- What Comes Next? HEE’s national framework for engaging with schools and local communities: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Strategic%20Framework%20-%20What%20Comes%20Next.pdf>
- Prince’s Trust, supporting young people aged 16-30 years old into NHS employment: <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/success-stories/success-story-nhs>



Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Professor Richard Griffin of King's College London for drafting this Guide.



Health Education England
www.hee.nhs.uk

 [LinkedIn](#)

 [@NHS HealthEdEng](#)

 www.facebook.com/nhshee

