

Purpose

This paper provides members of Adults, Health and Active Lifestyles Scrutiny Board with an update on the overall workforce challenges impacting on health and care service delivery in Leeds, including capacity and resourcing pressures and how partners are working together to address these as well as addressing the key strategic priority of reducing health inequalities.

The paper:

- Summarises key changes to the workforce challenges over the last 6 months;
- Provides an overview of the Leeds Health and Care Partnership's (LH&CP) response to current challenges;
- Considers the progress and impact of the Leeds Health and Care Academy (LHCA) in relation to shared workforce priorities;
- Updates the key work programmes and interventions led by LHCA and by partners to tackle health inequalities now and for the future;
- Provides a Leeds partnership focus on Carers and the Third Sector workforce outlining challenges, opportunities and successes;
- Considers collective actions required to sustain momentum

1. Summary

The Leeds Health and Care Partnership has continued purposeful activity to develop and sustain One Workforce in Leeds for health and social care, building on common goals, shared priorities and effective partnership working. Whilst the strategy remains steady, the last six months has seen increasing inclusion of the wider workforce across children's services, public health and those involved in supporting the wider determinants of health. There has long been recognition in Leeds that our health and care system will only work effectively for our population through supportive infrastructures and practices and a workforce which is motivated and enabled to work together across organisational boundaries. The commitment to work together to provide opportunities for skills, jobs and wealth creation, engaging and recruiting those in our most disadvantaged communities and inspiring the next generation health and care workforce remains at the cornerstone of our work.

The current refresh of the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Healthy Leeds Plan has provided an excellent opportunity for workforce partners to reflect, re-align and re-energise the shared ambition and approach to One Workforce in advance of our development of the next One Workforce Strategy in 2024.

The Leeds One Workforce Strategic Board, chaired by Dr Sara Munro, Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust, continues to provide essential guidance and challenge to our partnership working with a focus on advancing quality, amplifying impact, accelerating progress and driving efficiency. The environment remains challenging however, through the work of the LHCA and partners, there are encouraging indicators of progress across city-wide workforce priorities, and the relentless focus on reducing inequalities is delivering some tangible and much welcomed results.

In terms of measurable impact, our collaborative work to better integrate the health and social care workforce in Leeds is a long term approach and is tracked over time. The last year has demonstrated some key areas of growth and improvement but also some systemic issues which will take some time to resolve. Workforce capacity remains challenging but collective actions around

recruitment, development, retention and staff well-being are maintaining a stable city-wide position. Key indicators include:

- Overall vacancy rates reducing but some critical services still challenged. Financial pressures impacting recruitment strategies.
- Unplanned absence remains slightly higher than target across the majority of services
- Contingent staffing mechanisms are in place and operating effectively across the city
- Staff engagement and well-being remains a key focus following the impact of the pandemic and in the context of cost of living pressures and national industrial action
- Overall turnover is slightly higher than targeted but broadly stable, with identified pockets of high turnover
- Student numbers remain lower than required to meet demand for registered professions

Notable areas of progress include:

- The Talent Hub continues to increase recruitment of local residents into health social care jobs and training (>470 in 2022 with a 30% increase targeted for 2023). Consistently achieving over 90% retention rate after 12 months in post shows the added value of this approach relative to direct recruitment.
- The Talent Hub focus on narrowing inequalities has supported a wide diversity of candidates, 42% of whom were unemployed and 60% who were from ethnically diverse backgrounds.
- The number of new roles in primary care has increased from 386 to 425 over the last year as GP practices strengthen the multi-professional approach to services.
- The new city health and care T Level qualifications started in 2021 with 34 students and by 2023 have nearly doubled to 67, with increasing numbers of placements in settings outside acute nursing.
- In the last 12 months there's been a 25% increase in Apprentices participating in the city-wide programmes and the launch of two new collaborative apprenticeships.
- This year has seen a 22% increase in staff accessing Academy training (c1,100 to 1,350 employees), with participation from all parts of the sector
- Over 2000 employees from all parts of the sector have accessed the new digital learning portal since it was launched in April.

2. Background

The demands on health and social care services across the whole city remain high. Despite the incredible work of colleagues from every part of the system to improve access to services and reduce waiting lists, there continues to be very significant health and care challenges resulting from Covid-19 and the cost of living pressures. The summer months have provided opportunity for some recovery activity, but as we now prepare for the next winter period, the pressures on workforce are expected to remain higher than pre-Covid and this once again brings risks around wellbeing, retention, and capacity for longer term planning and improvement. The end of universal Covid vaccination programmes has relieved a little of the added pressure in the system, however the Autumn vaccination campaigns for selected groups will commence again shortly.

A tight labour market continues to create a competitive recruitment environment, however this is now exacerbated by significant financial pressures across all health and care services. These financial pressures are translating into restrictions on recruitment, reductions in funding available for education and training, and in some organisations, structural reorganisations. Many of our services in Leeds have also been directly affected by national Industrial Action which, despite collective work to mitigate, has had a significant impact on the capacity and pace of key services for the people of Leeds.

In more positive developments, the long awaited NHS Long Term Workforce Plan was published in June 2023 and provides some real opportunity for advancing our city's collaborative work around

retention, training and transformation. It was encouraging to see the close alignment with our One Workforce strategy, and Leeds partners have already started to explore how it can help enhance our activity in Leeds, not just across NHS partners but for the whole health and social care system. In April 2023, the Department of Health and social Care published the Next Steps to put People at the Heart of Care which builds on the 2021 White Paper, and provides a clear focus on carers and careers in care. Whilst there is still no national workforce strategy for health and social care, Leeds has been closely involved in the development of a regional strategy across Yorkshire and Humber, and the synergies across sectors are being actively progressed.

Workforce across the health and care sector remains one of the key risks to sustainable service delivery. Whilst this is not unique to Leeds, our large and diverse city also provides specialist clinical services for a much wider geographical footprint and subsequently is balancing additional, competing demands. Although accountability for workforce risks sits with organisational boards, the Leeds One Workforce Strategic Board ensures that we continue to assess workforce risk collectively across the city and take joint approach to managing it effectively, focussing on the best possible outcomes for our citizens.

3. Developments across the Leeds Health and Care Partnership in response to current challenges

Existing work across the seven shared strategic workforce priorities in Leeds has created a strong foundation for responding and adapting our approach to the changing environment affecting our workforce. Over the last six months there have been particular areas of focus which have enabled us to progress some key ambitions.

1. **Integrated Workforce Design** has focussed on collaborative work to increase new roles in Primary Care, and agreed a city-wide approach to more effective joint workforce planning.
2. **Growing and Developing Registrants** has expanded three key programmes, diversifying Clinical Placements, growing collaborative Clinical Apprenticeships and engaging more Leeds higher education students into our core workforce.
3. **Working Across Organisations** has expanded staff benefits across the city's workforce; opened up better access to flexible working; and continued to grow our city's Talent Hub which supports partners to recruit candidates more effectively.
4. **Preventing ill health** has continued to support health and social care organisations through free collaborative training in health promotion and primary prevention.
5. **Narrowing Inequalities** has seen increasing impact through the Careers in Communities programme, and the award of additional external funding to expand and develop careers innovation through developing new, person-centred technology.
6. **Learning together** is a longer term plan for education and development which has seen some key milestones in the last six months, including the completion of our first collaborative T-Level programme with a national award for one of our Leeds learners, and continued success and expansion of our Apprenticeship programmes.
7. **Improving Health and Wellbeing** has remained a key focus of activity with improved communications and additional funding to better support employees from our smaller organisations, for example VCSE.

4. Leeds Health and Care Academy Progress and Impact Report

The Leeds Health and Care Academy continues to be a key driver for collaborative workforce solutions and, working under the guidance of the city's Leeds One Workforce Strategic Board, has progressed some key areas of work over the last six months. These areas of focus were specifically

selected in the context of the changing pressures outlined above. Direct access to the projects and webpages outlined below can be accessed through our website [Home - Leeds Health and Care Academy](#)

- A review of the capacity and variety of **clinical placements** across the city has informed a refreshed partnership project sponsored by Steph Lawrence, Leeds Community Health Trust. This project has established plans to increase potential placements across private, independent and voluntary organisations; improve the leadership and culture for supporting more diverse placements; and develop alternative methods of delivery including virtual placements and simulated learning.
- Research into the employment and volunteering opportunities for Leeds Higher Education students has led to a proposal for strengthening pathways into part time health and social care roles to boost our current workforce capacity and support future **career pathways** from wider academic disciplines.
- A focussed partnership project between **Forum Central and LHCA** started in April 2023, to improve reach and benefits for staff in the Third Sector in Leeds. Tailored communications, co-located working, shared research and workforce insights, a newly formed HR Network Group and specific resources to enable VCSE organisations to make the most of the partnership benefits, have all led to measurable increases in VCSE employees and volunteers' participation in training, access to wellbeing services, use of the Talent Hub for recruitment and involvement in collaborative workforce projects.
- Over the spring and summer, **Leeds City Resourcing Group** has shifted its focus from addressing short term capacity pressures to addressing some underlying challenges that affect employers across the city. These include improving access to flexible working (>1k users since June), launch of a shared health and social care careers website (>2.5k users since January), an integrated plan for international recruitment across and health and social care nursing, and extending staff benefits across the wider sector (>650 users since April) . This work continues to be underpinned by improving workforce data and insights which is also being used to inform longer term joint workforce planning.
- LHCA has secured additional funding to enhance our **health and wellbeing support** for staff across the partnership which is being used to recruit a Welfare Officer to support staff and volunteers from smaller organisations e.g. VCSE, and to strengthen our research and evaluation of health and wellbeing support to ensure continuous improvement of both impact and sustainability.
- A collaborative project to engage young people with a **person-centred approach to careers** in health and social care has started. This work is developing innovative technology combined with community-based co-design to create an exciting resource for our city's schools, colleges, universities and youth support groups. The result will be easier navigation of the diversity of our health and social care careers, supported by clear and accessible routes to education and employment.
- LHCA is **working in partnership with Carers** Leeds to extend its offer of training and development to the c 70,000 unpaid carers in Leeds- specifically:
 - reviewing the inclusivity of language and access for carers to the Learning Portal. A group of Carers are being asked to work through the portal and provide feedback on both navigation and relevance of content
 - work is also underway to curate and signpost carers to the most relevant training and support from the Academy offer- three key areas have already been identified:
 - Training related to personal care (e.g. Pressure Ulcer Prevention)
 - Condition-specific information (e.g. Long Term Conditions)
 - Navigating the system (e.g. assertiveness, finance, how the system in Leeds works, personal wellbeing)
- Carers have also been signposted to the Talent Hub as they explore opportunities to utilise their skills and experience in a paid health and social care setting.

The main Leeds One Workforce Programme (attached) continues beyond these specific areas of focus and the recent appointment of an Embedded Researcher and additional data capacity is improving our capabilities for evaluating methodologies and impact, and developing a powerful evidence base to support learning and improvement across the city and beyond.

At the heart of this work, the voices of patients, services users and carers is providing an increasing opportunity for us to tailor our contributions better around some key service priorities, and the support of Healthwatch Leeds has been invaluable. Unpaid carers in particular are an essential part of our health and care system and whilst the One Workforce approach includes carers and the Academy offers training, wellbeing support and career opportunities, there is much more work to do, to ensure these opportunities are accessible and add value for those who are not 'employees' or 'professional volunteers'.

5. Collective focus on narrowing inequalities; now and for the future

The Leeds One Workforce approach to narrowing inequalities was co-designed in 2021 building on the innovative partnership approach already visible in the city. The programme is geographically targeted, focusing on working with communities within the 10% most disadvantaged wards. With a long term ambition, Leeds partners developed and established the Connecting Communities with Health and Care Careers programme which, in its first 18 months has demonstrated some really positive impact across its primary goals. Between January and August 2023, we have supported 622 candidates, 42% of whom were unemployed and 60% of whom were from minority ethnic communities. Many of these people brought with them a wealth of experience from unpaid caring roles and the values-based recruitment approach has allowed them to showcase their skills and knowledge in a different way.

Destinations have included 145 into education or training, 105 into employment and 100 referrals to specialist services for learning and employment support. Two very encouraging indicators of long term impact are that 114 people have achieved an accredited qualification during this period and that 95% of people who secured a job, are still employed after 12 months. This far exceeds direct recruitment processes for similar roles across any communities.

In February 2023, Leeds One Workforce partners reviewed the impact and organisational commitment to the programme and unanimously agreed to embed this as a permanent programme into the Academy's Talent Hub, as a core part of our city's commitment to narrowing inequalities. The programme continues to attract national interest around research and additional funding to extend and adapt into different settings.

An ambitious three year business plan for the development and growth of the Talent Hub was presented and approved by Leeds One Workforce Strategic Board in April. Designed to be person-centred, the Talent Hub actively disrupts traditional recruitment processes across the partnership, promoting values based recruitment, improving candidate's recruitment experience, improving retention rates and delivering efficiencies. Fundamentally, the Talent Hub is designed to narrow inequalities through engaging with the experience of individuals and communities, intervening to remove historic barriers and supporting individuals to gain the abilities, motivation and opportunities to succeed. A key benefit to this has been the opportunity to engage unpaid carers in career conversations, exploring how their skills and experience can provide a platform for future training, volunteering and careers.

Ensuring that our shared approach to narrowing inequalities is fully embedded across employers, educators and community groups in the Leeds Health and Care system, the city has a partnership steering group which includes expertise from the Third Sector and is committed to driving systemic change, evaluating impact and providing support and challenge to tackle the root causes. Our next

area of focus is on prevention and early intervention to narrow the gap, and supporting organisations to strengthen support for individuals to thrive in rewarding, long term careers.

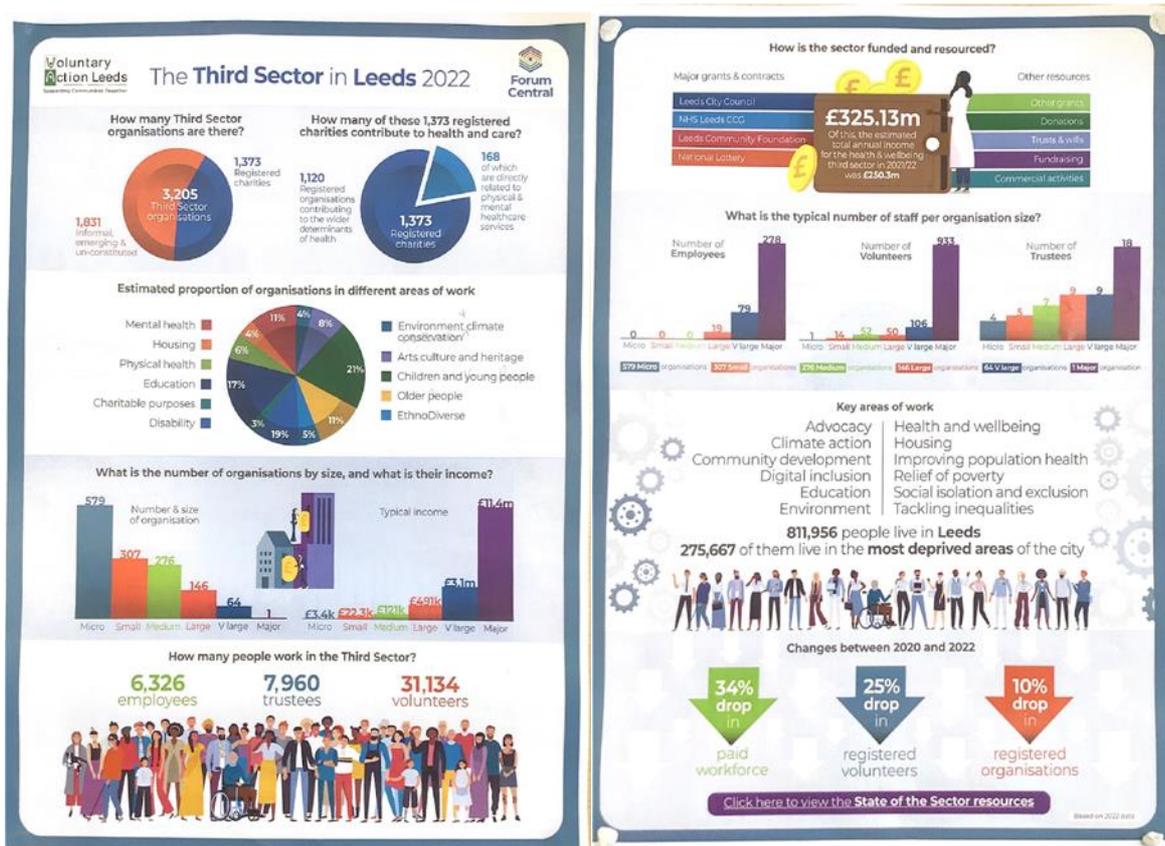
There remains considerable opportunity to strengthen connectivity between training and education opportunities and widening participation initiatives, as well as building on links with volunteering and the experience of carers to improve access into future health and social care careers. The collaborative partnership demonstrates the power of place based leadership of anchor institutions to support the wider health and prosperity of local communities.

6. Collective focus on Carers and the Third Sector workforce; working in partnership - challenges, opportunities and successes

The Third Sector is an integral part of the Leeds Health and Care system and is committed to its role in the leadership, governance and delivery of services across the city. The ambition to better integrate and strengthen the Third Sector workforce remains a priority and key Third Sector representatives are active members of the Partnership Executive Group, the Leeds One Workforce Strategic Board, and many committees and steering groups supporting collaborative working.

This is however not without challenge. Issues and concerns regarding the vulnerability of Third Sector have been increasingly raised in recent months across a number of Leeds Health and Care Partnership meetings, and Forum Central are currently reviewing the partnership's responses in the context of the West Yorkshire March [Harnessing the Power of Communities ICB Paper](#). The relationship with Third Sector Leeds (the city's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) assembly) and also the Third Sector Partnership is strong and ensures that we are tackling our challenges together.

The 2020 State of the Sector (SOTS) report, which explored Third Sector resilience, has recently been refreshed using 2022 data and insights, and reveals a concerning loss of Leeds health and care Third Sector capacity. As VCSE organisations have a key role in reducing health inequalities, this reduction in capacity has directly impacted on system partners' ability to take early action and limit the scale of increasing inequalities. The report highlights that key workforce challenges over the last 6 months have included a lack of digital support and capacity; increased operating costs; and escalating recruitment due to the loss of staff seeking greater security and better conditions due to on-going uncertainty around funding. This is creating instability and increased financial vulnerability across the sector.



One of the significant collaborative responses over recent months has been the prioritised development of the Third Sector HR Network which builds on the connection with Leeds One Workforce Strategic Board, and takes practical steps to work towards “Team Leeds”. Supported by the LHCA and Forum Central, the HR network helps organisations with workforce issues across the whole employee lifecycle as well as identifying opportunities to share resources and leverage combined purchasing power to drive efficiencies through economy of scale. Initiated in 2022, from an un-resourced start, the network now has 67 members with 14 new members joining in the last 3 months. Initial impact has been very positive, connecting new organisations with the Talent Hub, increasing access to staff benefits and health and wellbeing support, and making training and education more accessible for staff in this sector.

Although in its infancy the HR network holds promise to further improving a number of the current and future challenges. Opportunities to build resilience have been identified but it is recognised that they will require additional resource and leadership capacity. These include:

- Expanding engagement with diverse VCSE organisations across health, social care and the wider determinants of health
- Involvement in the city’s collective workforce planning approach
- Input into the Leeds Learning Need Analysis and influence over how those needs are met
- Collective coordination of professional volunteers and student placement opportunities
- Further exploration of the city’s Staff Portability Framework to enable Third Sector staff to access the learning and development which is available.
- Insights and opportunities to influence pay constraints and subsequent disparity with the rest of the health and care system, both locally but also supporting Leeds to have a national voice
- Research into working carers, volunteering, sessional workers and the pipeline to employment into health and care

- Support for (small) organisations such as via information sharing to
 - improve managing staff across the employment lifecycle from recruitment onwards
 - improve efficiencies through organisational change, such as restructures, downsizing and merger

The HR Network model could shape the way we tackle other challenges across the sector together e.g. integrating the city's digital strategy across the third sector, including information governance and sharing. Given the funding challenges faced, it may also be appropriate to extend similar initiatives such as West Yorkshire Community Accounting Service led finance events and business support from SeeAhead.

The challenges facing the Third Sector workforce remain significant, but knowing what our communities are experiencing in terms of the cost of living pressures and the increasing demand for services means that partnership working is more important than ever.

7. Sustaining Momentum

Despite current and on-going challenges across the system, the Leeds One Workforce Strategic Board continues to provide essential guidance and focus to ensure that work across the partnership aligns to the core purpose, shared ambition and real impact of One Workforce.

Strengthening the Leeds Health and Care Partnership and supporting priority system work remains a core part of Academy's remit. Through reinforcing synergies with the Health and Well-being Strategy, the Healthy Leeds Plan and the Inclusive Growth Strategy partners are better able to identify what is best tackled together and what remains, rightly, an individual partner responsibility. Prioritisation and using evidence effectively to support innovation, is key to the continuing progress of the partnership, and the Academy supports partners to focus on work which explicitly advances quality, amplifies impact, accelerates progress and drives efficiency.

The Leeds Health and Care Workforce Partnership continues to work closely with wider partners to develop our long term strategy, optimise real opportunities and manage risk. Key partners include:

- The West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
- The Department for Health and Social Care through the Leeds Health and Social Care Hub
- The Leeds Academic Health Partnership
- The Leeds Learning Alliance
- The Leeds Anchors Network

Over the last six months the LHCA has had the opportunity to influence beyond Leeds with the Academy presenting at the Leeds Innovation Arc Showcase, NHS Workforce Conference South, Healthcare Partnership Network event, the NHS England EDI webinar and a health inequalities discussion with NHS Providers. In addition Academy colleagues have co-authored two academic papers relating to our city's work around narrowing health inequalities and deepening our understanding of strategic workforce planning in health and social care.

It is through these strong relationships that we continue to develop and improve our approach to One Workforce and tackle the challenges together.

8. Additional papers for context

An overview of the Leeds Health and Care Academy Annual report can be accessed here - [LHCA-ANNUAL-REPORT-2022-23.pdf \(leedshealthandcareacademy.org\)](#)

Leeds Health and Care One Workforce Strategy 2024 can be accessed here - ([Leeds Health and Care One Workforce Strategy- 2024](#))

Leeds One Workforce Programme can be accessed here - [Leeds One Workforce Programme - Leeds Health and Care Academy](#)

Academic Papers:

[Reducing health inequalities through skills training, support and removing barriers to employment - James Woodall, Susan Coan, Michelle Stanley, 2023 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

[Strategic workforce planning in health and social care – an international perspective: A scoping review - ScienceDirect - Claire Sutton, Rebecca Randell et al](#)