

# The future of cancer care in Wales: Policies and workforce plans

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## Executive summary



# Policies and workforce plans

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death in Wales accounting for over a quarter of all deaths annually. With an ageing population, the number of cancer diagnoses is expected to increase, placing significant pressure on the healthcare system. The survival rates for certain cancers in Wales have historically lagged behind other UK nations, highlighting the need for targeted improvements. Previous cancer strategies, such as the 'Cancer Delivery Plan for Wales (2016-2020)', laid the foundation for improving cancer care but faced challenges in implementation.

The two policy documents that will most inform the future of cancer care is the 2021 'Welsh Government Quality Statement on Cancer' and 'A Cancer Improvement Plan for NHS Wales 2023-2026'. These documents outline the overarching policy aims, themes and direction of travel for cancer care for the near future, with many provisions outlining the aims of cancer care in 2030. The 'Quality Statement on Cancer' is a short statement on cancer which sets out a direction of travel for the future of cancer care in Wales.

The quality attributes from the 'Quality Statement on Cancer' then feed into 'A Cancer Improvement Plan for NHS Wales 2023-2026'. This plan was produced in collaboration with all stakeholders and sets out the ambition for Wales to improve cancer patient outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

Some of the key themes set out in the plan are an emphasis on prevention, early diagnosis, equitable access to care, patient-centred care, workforce development, innovation and research with particular focus on optimising digital health and AI, collaboration and integration, and ultimately improved outcomes.





While the workforce of NHS Wales has been growing, the workforce still is not large enough to cover demand. The latest Royal College of Radiologists clinical oncology workforce census revealed that there is a 12% shortfall of clinical oncologists. In June 2021, NHS Wales invested over £25mn in new imaging equipment to enhance diagnostic services across the country. We expect there to be an increase in service capacity in the near future, given the provisions towards new equipment in the UK Autumn Budget.

There are three key publications regarding workforce plans in NHS Wales: the workforce plan segment of 'A Cancer Improvement Plan for NHS Wales 2023-2026', 'National Workforce Implementation Plan: Addressing NHS Wales Workforce Challenges', and 'A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care'.

'A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care' sets out seven key themes and 32 actions that aim to improve the state of the NHS and Social Care workforce by 2030. This document provides a roadmap for NHS Wales' workforce development, highlighting key priorities and outcomes by 2030. The key themes are: an engaged motivated and healthy workforce, attraction and recruitment, seamless workforce models, building a digitally ready workforce, excellent education and learning, leadership and succession, and workforce supply and shape. The plan has faced some criticism for providing little detail beyond the workforce commitments made in HEIW plans.

## Want to read more?

Email [hello@lshubwales.com](mailto:hello@lshubwales.com) to get the full report, accessing key insights, statistics and know-how about the Welsh cancer landscape.

## About Sector Intelligence

Our team gathers and analyses insights on market trends, customer needs and the wider industry landscape. This shapes strategies, identifies risks and finds new growth opportunities. Commissioning organisations include SMEs, health boards, Welsh Government, academia and SMEs.

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## About Life Sciences Hub Wales

We drive the development and adoption of life sciences innovation in health and social care in Wales. We're a dynamic interface, connecting life sciences innovators with research partners, funding opportunities, end users and frontline health and social care teams to support well-being and ultimately generating growth, jobs and prosperity across Wales.

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## How we can help you

Find out how our support can help your innovation reach the frontline by emailing [hello@lshubwales.com](mailto:hello@lshubwales.com).

[lshubwales.com](http://lshubwales.com)



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