

**Pillar three: Building
belonging**

Pillar three focuses on building belonging. This relies on cultural sensitivity and an awareness of how it feels to be working and living in a different country.

Research shows that having English as a second language can impact on an international nurse's sense of personal and professional belonging. Accents, abbreviations, local turns of phrase and conversational speeds can result in international staff feeling left out of workplace small talk or deskilled despite years of professional experience (University of Huddersfield (2022) International nurses and their initial integration into NHS England's healthcare workforce: a population analysis). Enabling your international staff to build social networks, to share stories and solutions to these challenges can help to reduce feelings of isolation and support them to bring their passions, culture, and personality to their role. You should also consider the role of leaders, managers and the wider workforce and what support or training they will need to raise awareness and support their international colleagues with these challenges.

How to build belonging



For international staff

Safe spaces

Establish active shared decision-making councils, international recruit forums or staff networks to listen to the voices and experiences of international staff. These safe spaces can become a driving force for change and improvement as international staff feedback on their experiences and develop solutions to any barriers or challenges they may be facing.

Integration

Some overseas staff arrive in the UK with their families so will need further support and signposting to increase integration into the wider community. Identifying and building relationships with local faith leaders, schools, colleges and local services to provide support will be key to making the transition to a new culture easier for the whole family.

Additional support

Consider signposting staff to support available from the relevant professional regulators, professional associations and trade unions, such as the RCN, the BMA, UNISON, and Unite.

For leaders, managers and the wider workforce

Cultural awareness training

It is important that existing staff and managers are aware that overseas staff will be used to different English terminology and cultural norms. Where possible they should undertake learning about the cultures of their colleagues. This could be through a social event or more formal training.

NHS England is currently developing online training for the line managers of internationally recruited staff, due to launch nationally in May 2023. This will give them a greater awareness of different cultures enabling local leaders to support their international staff, increase understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion, and build stronger relationships with colleagues from different cultures to their own.

Celebrations

Acknowledging cultural holidays and events celebrated by international staff or celebrating their achievements can help to build a sense of belonging and connection to your organisation and enables them to share their culture and traditions with colleagues.

Health and wellbeing conversations

Line managers should have regular supportive wellbeing conversations or check-ins with their international staff to listen and understand their specific needs at a given time and signpost to the appropriate support. See the health and wellbeing section of the Improving Staff Retention Guide for more information on supporting workforce wellbeing.

Good practice examples

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust shares guidance with new recruits to support them with terms and dialect – both clinical terms that they may not be familiar with (for example nil by mouth), and a basic A to Z of medical terms, times and units. New overseas staff are also provided with some examples of local dialect to help overcome language barriers with other staff and patients as much as possible. Examples include things like 'brew' for cup of tea, 'nowt' for nothing and 'ta' for thank you.

The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has introduced cultural awareness training for leaders and managers of internationally recruited nurses. The training is designed to raise awareness of the importance and impact of culture in creating a sense of belonging as well as how this awareness can bring about positive outcomes. This training is delivered in conjunction with race equity masterclasses offered to nursing leaders and managers across the trust.

York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

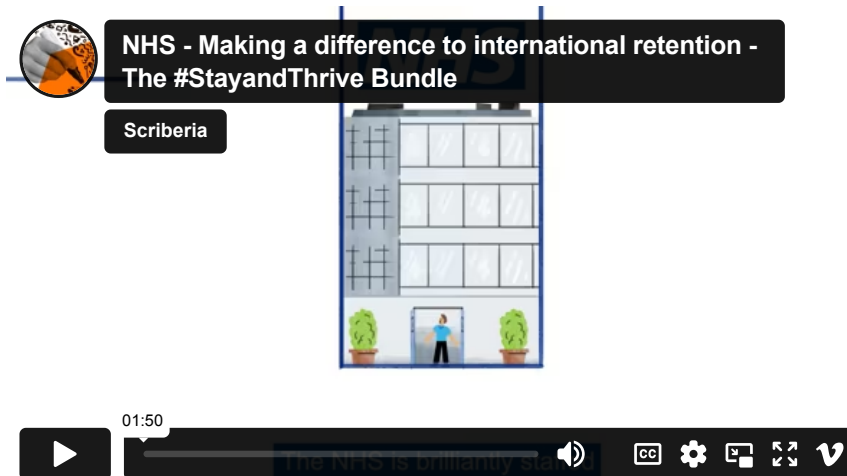
York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust held a week of culture event that featured cultural dress, dance, food, poetry and art. It brought the workforce together to celebrate the Internationally educated staff that play such a key role in the organisation.

#StayAndThrive

#StayAndThrive is a research in action programme which began as a pilot in the North East and Yorkshire and South West regions and launched nationally in November 2022.

Through a series of learning events, a community of action was formed with a collective mission to create the conditions where internationally educated colleagues feel a strong sense of belonging, can thrive in their personal and professional lives while progressing in their careers. The programme has had a positive impact across the two regions and as a result, the community is retaining more international recruits (leaver rates are below national average, January 2022).

Making a difference video



Tools and further reading

- NHS Employers' health and wellbeing web pages have a variety of supportive materials around wellbeing.
- See NHS England's NHS Health and Wellbeing Framework to support you in creating a wellbeing culture in your organisation and also information on supporting our NHS people.
- Keep up to date with interventions and practical solutions on NHS England's retention hub.
- This resource is designed to help nurses, midwives and nursing associates recognise and challenge racial discrimination and by doing so, it supports staff wellbeing, physical and psychological safety. It also supports those in leadership roles to be inclusive leaders.
- Watch Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's video (below) to see how the trust supported its internationally recruited staff

with dedicated training.

How will you play your part?

Reflect on what you have read and consider how you or your team will play your part.

I/we will...