

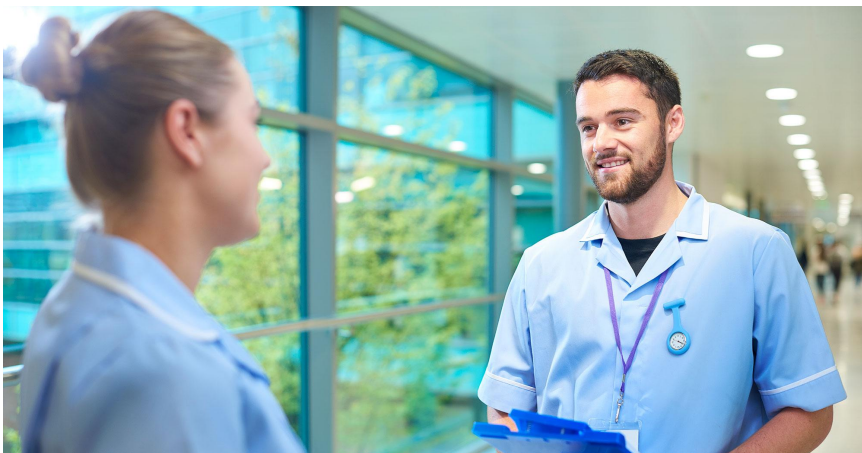
**Pillar four: Maximising  
personal and professional  
growth**

The fourth pillar is about maximising personal and professional growth to ensure that all internationally recruited staff can fully realise their potential.

Research shows that a common driver for international nurses to migrate to the UK is career progression. However, analysis reveals that progression is slower and less frequent for international nurses than for domestic nurses at all bands. The WRES 2022 report also highlights that just 44.4 per cent of BME NHS staff (which may include internationally recruited staff) believe their trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion.

Your retention strategy should focus on enabling all international staff to achieve their career aspirations. Their ongoing personal and professional development will also lead to job satisfaction and in turn a feeling of being valued by their employer. International staff should have access to the same personal and professional development opportunities as your UK workforce and should be tailored to each individual's preferences and career aspirations. As part of this process, they should be offered an annual personal development review and a personal development plan should be agreed.

## How to maximise personal and professional growth



## **For international staff**

### **Career conversations**

Line managers should hold regular career conversations with international staff to understand future aspirations and how they can be supported through clear career pathways. Holding career clinics with groups of international staff can widen their understanding of available career pathways, where to find roles, how to access education and successfully applying and interviewing for roles in the NHS. Also consider how to use interview feedback to support future applications.

### **Leadership programmes**

Some organisations run leadership programmes to support career progression for international staff and to increase the number of those moving into management positions.

In 2022, NHS England provided funding through its Accelerated Development Transformation Fund to support trusts to scope and develop innovation and transformation projects that focus on ways to recognise prior experience of internationally educated nurses and midwives; provide ethical opportunities to directly recruit into Band 6+ roles; and to accelerate the development of international nurse/midwife talent identified within the workforce. 22 trusts and systems across the country successfully bid for this funding and are delivering these projects throughout 2023. Insights and case studies will be shared via NHS England Futures platform (log in required).

### **Ongoing health and wellbeing support**

Looking after the health and wellbeing of your international staff should extend beyond their induction. Continue to signpost international staff to your health and wellbeing offer. Staff networks, forums or diaspora groups will play an important role in supporting the wellbeing of your overseas staff and can also support professional development.

In addition to trust-led health and wellbeing initiatives, NHS England has launched a coaching offer, Looking After You Too, for international nurses. It provides a safe space to focus on wellbeing and any pressures or challenges they may be facing. It aims to develop practical strategies in

relation to their situation and is individually tailored and confidential. Coaches are from ethnically diverse backgrounds and can support people with a variety of challenges. For example, action planning, steps to support integration into the UK and the NHS, adjusting to a new role, decompressing, debriefing, difficult conversations, home pressures, interpersonal issues, workload pressures and stress. Having these conversations away from managers, peers or family members can help to offer a safe, non-judgemental space.

The coaching programme provided participants with an opportunity to focus on their health and wellbeing and take actions that supported them with decision making and building confidence to make positive career, personal and life changes. The coaching provided clarity with decision making and ensured that individuals were able to either make a career change or return to their home country.

## **For leaders, managers and the wider workforce**

### **Role models**

Research shows that following successful career progression, senior international nurses use their positions to influence change and lead and inspire other international and domestic nurses to maximise their potential (University of Huddersfield). Sharing these career success stories on a regular basis will inspire new staff, provide an opportunity to hear about their experience and challenges and showcase the career pathways available.

### **Mentors**

A mentor can support your international staff to develop and take their next career steps, by providing access to their networks and championing on their behalf.

Watch the video of Jeni's story below to hear how, in her current role as international recruitment and ethnic minorities nurse adviser at NHS England, she has championed the ethnic minority workforce and been an inspirational figure for international recruitment.

# Good practice examples

## **Herts and West Essex Integrated Care System**

Herts and West Essex ICS identified that across the system, some international nurses were not progressing into higher banded roles or were unprepared for NHS recruitment processes despite having the necessary qualifications, skills, and experience.

Supported by NHS England funding, the ICS created a Band 6 development coach role to support the career advancement of international nurses. The purpose of this role was to ensure a holistic approach to the development of the international nurses' experience, to help them to achieve their full potential, wherever that may be.

The success of this role has led to the appointment of three further development coaches in Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes ICS, Suffolk and North East Essex ICS, and Norfolk and Waveney ICS. The coaches are all qualified domestic or international nurses or midwives who have worked in the NHS, and they provide coaching and mentoring support for international nurses at any stage of their career, including induction. They discuss career development and help to unblock career progression barriers such as a lack of confidence, writing job applications or interview technique, to support their career aspirations.

## **Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust**

Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust offers tailored career progression support for its international nurses. The trust listened to feedback from international nurses who were already working in the trust to understand why some were not progressing in their careers. For new international nurses joining the trust, it was important to understand their motivations and how the trust could support them to achieve their goals. Using this feedback, the team identified three areas of focus: skills, knowledge and showcasing capabilities to support career progression. Some activities include:

- promoting the update of CPD to build knowledge
- developing leadership skills through the trust's BME leadership programme, which is open to all staff groups across banding
- delivering career progression workshops to discuss what roles are available in the NHS and share lived experience and career stories from existing international nurses.

### **Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust**

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust developed a 'grow your own' programme for international nurses in late 2020. The aim is to reduce workforce vacancies, promote the trust as a great place to work and develop career pathways for existing international healthcare support workers. The programme is supported from board to ward and helps the international healthcare support workers to qualify as registered nurses in the organisation. Six have now received their registered nurse status with more planned for in 2023.

## **Tools and further reading**

- NHS England has developed a web page with links to resources and support to help international staff to plan their next career steps. Hear from six internationally recruited nurses at different stages of their career about how the NHS has supported them to achieve their ambitions.
- These resources are system-facing and can be used by NHS and local authorities to help support the retention of internationally recruited nurses.
- The Medical Workforce Race Equality Standard (MWRES) report 2021 identified that BME doctors have a poorer experience of medicine than their white colleagues, feeling less supported, less included and less able to prosper. NHS England has announced a First Five programme of priority domains intended to help tackle these racial disparities.

- Direct your international nurses to the CNO Nursing Professional Development Programme, which is a central repository and signposting platform for information on national and regional nursing professional development programmes for all nurses.
- The RCN offers members a careers service with information and resources to support professional development.
- The BMA offers overseas doctors a range of webinars, coaching courses, workshops and e-learning modules for professional development.
- UNISON offers members a range of courses and workshops to support professional development.
- Take a look at the Professional Development Guidebook produced by the CapitalNurse international recruitment consortium. You might find it a helpful resource to support the professional development of your international nurses.
- Use NHS Employers' health and wellbeing resources to support your ongoing health and wellbeing offer. This includes information on mental health in the workplace, burnout, stress management, menopause support, men's health guidance, personal safety and lone working, a communications guide and a wellbeing needs poster.

## 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...

