

Strategic Workforce Forum 2026

Day 1 – Tuesday 13 October 2026

Please note: All sessions will take place in the Banqueting Suite unless otherwise stated.

- **10:00 – 11:00am**
Registration and exhibition
- **11:00 -11:30am**
Leading with you - my first thoughts as NHS Employers' new CEO
Ben Morrin, chief executive, NHS Employers
- **11:30am –12:15pm**
Leadership challenges and opportunities for the future of the NHS
Lord Victor Adebawale, chair, the NHS Alliance
- **12:15 – 12:45pm**
NHS College of Leadership and Management
Steve McManus, interim chief executive, NHS College of Leadership and Management
- **12:45 - 1:45pm - Lunch and exhibition**
- **1:45 – 2:30pm - The future of NHS leadership: best practise sharing and preparation for panel discussion**
Facilitated by Caroline Waterfield, director of workforce supply and employment practice, NHS Employers
- **2:30 – 3:15pm - Panel discussion: The future of NHS leadership**
Ben Morrin, Salma Yasmeen, Lord Victor Adebawale and Steve McManus
- **3:15- 3:45pm - Break and exhibition**

3:45 – 4:30pm - Breakout sessions with event partners (attend one of the following)

Option 1 - Common ground (Banqueting Suite)

Get 45 minutes that feels and hits differently. No slides full of data, no pitch, and no logos doing the talking. Just space for peers to be honest about what's hard, learn, draw strength and celebrate the collective talent and potential from the people who really get it.

Salary Finance

Facilitated by Tom Beaumont, Commercial Strategy, NHS & Sales Director

Option 2 - From staff survey to better working lives (Conference suite 3)

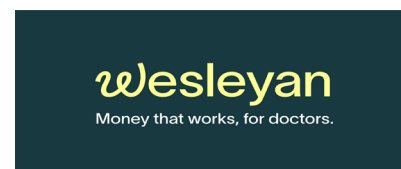
With the 2026 NHS Staff Survey underway, organisations are investing enormous effort in hearing from their people. Turning those responses into better working lives is the next challenge: understanding where to focus, what needs to change and whether action is making a difference. This session will explore the opportunity to better understand staff experience and strengthen the connection between listening and improvement.



Simon Courage, Vice President, Strategic Market Solutions

Option 3 - From workforce cliff edge to managed transition: Retaining NHS expertise through financial wellbeing, flexible careers and retirement confidence (Conference suite 4)

This session will explore how financial wellbeing, retirement confidence and informed financial decision-making can support workforce sustainability, strengthen retention and enable more flexible career pathways. As portfolio careers and phased retirement become increasingly common, organisations have an opportunity to retain valuable expertise through clinical practice, leadership, education, mentoring and service improvement.



Alec Collie – Head of Medical Division at Wesleyan
Sir Pali Hungin – Emeritus Professor at Faculty of Medical Sciences, Newcastle University
Dr Patrice Baptiste – Portfolio GP Professional, NHS clinical entrepreneur & founder of Medschool Xtra
Bina Mistry – Specialist Financial Adviser at Wesleyan

- **4:30 - 5:30pm - Courage and creativity: using improv to empower leadership in complex times** Neil Mullarkey, communication expert and improv performer
- **5:30 – 5:45pm - Summary, reflections and close** Ben Morrin
- **7:30 - 8.00pm - Drinks reception, followed by dinner at 8pm**

Day 2 – Wednesday 14 October 2026

- **8:30 – 9:15am - Breakfast sessions, exhibition and networking**

Option 1 - Building the case for recruitment automation: Driving productivity and transformation (Conference suite 3)



Shared Business Services

Automation has the potential to unlock significant efficiencies by reducing administrative burdens, freeing up time for patient care, and enabling a greater focus on strategic operational initiatives. However, simply automating existing processes is not enough. To support organisations and systems in moving towards the national Transforming People Services target operating model, and to achieve the 2 per cent productivity improvement mandate, trusts must first build a compelling business case for change. From there, attention can shift to the critical elements of process redesign and cultural readiness, without which transformation efforts are unlikely to succeed.

Join this interactive breakout session to hear how Bristol NHS Foundation Trust is transforming its recruitment process through automation, and the impact this is having. You'll gain practical advice that can support with building a successful business case for automation, understand the key considerations for implementation, and have the opportunity to ask questions of our expert panellists.

Sophie Dilworth, Head of Programmes – People Transformation, Bristol NHS Foundation Trust
Sarah Reed, Head of Consulting People Capability, NHS SBS
Andrew Sims, Product and Solutions Director, Employment Services, NHS SBS
Kerry Morgan, Automation Consulting Manager, NHS SBS

Option 2 - Neuro-inclusive workforce: Beyond the adjustment conversation (Conference suite 4)

Neuro inclusion has often centred on individual disclosure, reasonable adjustments and reactive support. These remain important, but they are only part of the solution. How can NHS people leaders shape environments, systems and cultures that help neurodivergent colleagues flourish while improving working life for everyone?



This interactive 45-minute workshop explores a stepped approach to neuro inclusion: creating inclusive conditions for all, offering personalised support where needed, and drawing on specialist expertise when appropriate. We will consider how organisations can make support accessible without relying solely on colleagues disclosing a diagnosis or repeatedly explaining their needs. Through practical examples, creative activities and shared discussion, participants will explore everyday opportunities for change, including clearer communication, more flexible working practices, thoughtful meeting design and supportive conversations. Curious questions and simple interventions can help teams move beyond assumptions and find what works for different people.

We will also attend to the needs of managers supporting neurodivergent colleagues. What helps them feel confident, supported and clear about their role? We will explore practical tools, advice pathways and opportunities for reflection. Participants will leave with fresh perspectives and achievable ideas to embed neuro inclusion into everyday NHS culture, creating the conditions for colleagues, managers and teams to flourish together.

Amy Hobson, Chief Executive, The Wellbeing Collective

- **9:15 - 9:30am Welcome and opening session**
Ben Morrin, chief executive, NHS Employers
- **9:30 – 10:30am - The power of 7: A story of transformation**
Martine Wright MBE, Paralympian and inspirational speaker
- **10:30 – 11:00am - Break and exhibition**
- **11:00 – 12:45 Court room drama: The transformation of NHS People Services**
Tom Simons, chief HR and OD officer and Claire Gore, director of the transforming people services programme, NHS England
- **12:45 – 1:30pm - Lunch and exhibition**
- **1:30 – 2:00pm - NHS reform agenda: where next?**
Sir Ciarán Devane, chief executive, the NHS Alliance
- **2:00 – 3:15pm - Make it happen, make it better, make it count**
Daniel Mortimer, director general for people, DHSC
- **3:15 - 3:30pm - Summary, reflections and close**
Ben Morrin, chief executive, NHS Employers