

Aspire Together.

The South West
Regional Talent Board



Nurturing talent goes to the heart of making sure the NHS develops the right leadership capability to serve future generations of patients and communities. It is also imperative to supporting NHS staff, ensuring they have the senior leadership they both need and deserve. Our vision is of an NHS workforce in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Our ambition for the first Regional Talent Board in the South West of England is that we can start to identify, develop, support and deploy leaders at all levels much more effectively. **Aspire Together** will help to deliver compassionate, inclusive leadership, which is key to a high quality and sustainable health and care system.

While the board itself gives impetus to the work, Aspire Together is very much 'by the region for the region'. Engagement is a huge part of our remit, and we will only get this kind of culture change right if we all work together in partnership.

As we reflect on 70 years of our amazing NHS, it is also right that we look ahead to how we best 'future-proof' our leadership capability for generations to come. We look forward to working with you to make it happen.

Ann James

CEO, University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust and
Chair of the South West Regional Talent Board

Our vision

Our vision is to create the conditions for our talented people in health and care to reach their individual potential. We will maximise our collective impact for improvement through inclusive, holistic approaches and embracing the diversity of opportunity within the South West.



Our ambition

The ambition for the South West Regional Talent Board is to enable a high quality, sustainable approach to identifying, developing, deploying and supporting leaders, at all levels, to produce a compassionate, inclusive leadership culture with patients, carers and local communities at its heart.

This will be achieved through embedding good practice, inclusive cultures and talent management interventions in all organisations. Talent management will be owned and valued by the whole system and coordinated by the Regional Talent Board. Organisations will embrace a collaborative approach, share real-time data on vacancies and demand and support regional talent pipelines.

This will be achieved by:

1. Shifting the culture to one of collaboration where Talent Management is valued and owned by the whole NHS – ‘by the region for the region’.

2. Boards and Governing Bodies see Talent Management as ‘business as usual’ and results are achieved through collaboration.

3. Agreeing a single and future-focused view of what we mean by excellent talent management practice.

4. Establishing a diverse, inclusive, quality assured talent pool from which board, governing body and other director posts can be filled.

5. Establishing a clear link between talent identification, development and deployment into post.

6. Ensuring all supporting processes have inclusivity, rigour, consistency and transparency as essential measurable components.

7. Gaining system level engagement to identify leadership challenges and deploy leaders more effectively to meet these challenges.

8. All organisations will share talent management data relating to both ‘demand’ (vacancies) and ‘supply’ (people) to support coherent succession planning at local, system and regional level.

9. Adopt a more systematic approach to how senior talent moves within the NHS – talent increasingly treated as a whole service asset as opposed to being owned solely at organisation level.

10. Ensuring good talent management practice can be evidenced and linked to individual, organisation and system improvement.

Why now?

1 in 2

organisations in the South West have had at least one board or governing body vacancy

(the national stat is 1 in 3 and we received an 80.7% response rate across the country)

50%

of current board level vacancies in Provider Trusts have been vacant for less than 3 months

80%

of the governing body vacancies in CCGs have been vacant for less than 3 months

23.1%

of the current board vacancies are filled on an interim basis

Only

4.1%

of Very Senior Managers (VSMs) in South Provider Trusts are from BME backgrounds (the national stat for this is 6.9%)

The case for change

A number of factors point to the pressing need for change – not least the difficulty we have in filling key positions with any level of confidence or certainty, the high vacancy rates at board and governing body level, an over reliance on interim staff and the poor diversity of our senior leadership cadre. It is fair to say that the current piecemeal approach to talent management is not serving our staff in the NHS or its patients as well as it could be.

Individuals are often unsupported in their efforts to build their career, with appointments made as the result of a 'market driven' process, where chance plays a large part in the outcome. The net result is that NHS organisations end up competing with each other for a talent pool they have very little visibility of.

We also know that when talent management is made a strategic priority within organisations, there are benefits to staff engagement, retention rates and patient care.

This is not simply a re-run of what has been done before; the Regional Talent Board wants to ensure there is alignment of our approach across the region. This is a commitment to embedding an enduring, high quality talent management approach as 'business as usual' for all organisations and staff to benefit patients, staff, organisations and systems as a whole.



Making it happen

Talent management and development is a key part of the NHS Long Term Plan. Our work on **Aspire Together** took its lead from Developing People: Improving Care, the agreed framework for developing improvement and leadership capability in the NHS. This set out five conditions for success. One of these is to equip leaders to develop high quality health and care systems in partnership, collaborating with partners across boundaries to achieve system goals. Another is to ensure compassionate, inclusive and effective leaders at all levels.

The South West Regional Talent Board aims to bring these conditions to life, building on the work undertaken in the Midlands & East as the first Regional Talent Board to be established. The South West Regional Board first met formally in September 2018 and is the third Regional Talent Board to be established across the country. It has been developing **Aspire Together**'s programme of work.

We recognise that this kind of culture shift doesn't happen overnight and so we are starting in the areas of greatest need and where we think we can make the biggest impact. Our primary focus, in terms of new process, is establishing the **Aspire Together** talent pool and working with a range of colleagues including those in HR Director networks across the South West to enable this.

We will be working closely with organisations in each of our 7 STP/ICS systems to better understand and shape what talent management looks like at a system level.

In addition to the clear focus on Trusts and CCGs across the South West, the Regional Talent Board intends to support talent management approaches within Primary Care. To deliver this we are working with other Regional Talent Boards and colleagues working nationally on the primary care leadership agenda.

Creating the talent pool

Our initial priority is establishing a quality assured pool from which we can fill director level posts. The pool will over time contain both aspirant directors ready to take up their first board or governing body post, as well as existing directors keen to progress their careers. In both cases, the individuals will be assessed 'ready now' for senior roles.

A successful talent pool will deliver the following benefits:

- A collectively agreed and understood description of what good looks like at director level and how individuals within the pool are assessed against this benchmark.
- More diverse board, governing body and senior leadership shortlists – leading to a more diverse senior leadership community.
- A reduction in time to fill posts and a reduction in costs for those recruiting in the region – specifically a reduced use of commercial executive search firms.
- A clearer picture of the region's director and aspiring director level talent.
- An aspirant and existing director community whose career development and ambitions are supported in a much more systematic, effective and inclusive way.

We will be designing a rigorous talent pool approach, including a gateway assessment process and role 'success profiles'. The initial design will be informed by the views of system leaders across the region and beyond, and from national best practice across a range of sectors and industries.

The nomination process and gateway assessment process will take place on a rolling basis starting in 2019/20. We are working to ensure that the approach is responsive to the current landscape and pays attention to changes and likely future need.

Design and timeline

Aspire Together will ensure that the identification of director level talent is seamlessly connected to the posts we need to appoint to, and that we collectively own the process by which those career moves are made.



Engagement with the region continues to shape development of process

What about existing directors?

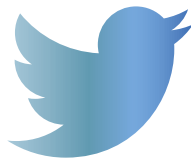
We are also working with the other regions and system stakeholders to co-design a streamlined approach that will enable established directors who are already in post and seeking a new role to enter the talent pool. We will share further details about this later this year.

Shaping the agenda – together

A number of key stakeholders across the system have already engaged with **Aspire Together** to shape the approach. To ensure that this is truly a solution which is co-designed across the region, we need to hear your views, insights and challenges.

We are grappling with some big issues relating to design, scale and culture, whilst recognising that we need to start somewhere for genuine change to become a reality. It's a big ambition, but we are confident we can achieve it, together.

There are several ways you can engage with the talent pool development and **Aspire Together** more broadly, please get in touch directly to share your thoughts:



Email: aspire.togethersouth-west@nhs.net

Join the conversation on Twitter: [#AspireTogetherNHS](https://twitter.com/AspireTogetherNHS)

<https://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/aspiretogether/>

Aspire Together.

Who's who

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Developing People: Improving Care Supporting Organisations:

Department of Health

NHS Improvement

Health Education England

NHS Leadership Academy

NHS Local Leadership Academy – South West

NHS England

Public Health England

National Institute for Health and Social Care Excellence

Care Quality Commission

Skills for Care

Local Government Association

NHS Providers

NHS Clinical Commissioners

NHS Confederation



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