

Practical approaches to operational workforce planning

A guide for adult social care providers

December 2021



Contents

Introduction	3
Operational workforce planning: what is it and why is it important?	4
What is a workforce plan?	4
Why workforce plan?	4
What are the key assumptions of operational workforce planning?	4
Have you got the right people involved in every stage of the process?	5
The workforce planning process	6
Using the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS) to understand your workforce	7
How does operational workforce planning fit with strategic workforce planning, shaping and commissioning?	8
What does a good workforce plan need to be?	9
The process of operational workforce planning - how do you do it?	
Analyse	
Plan	

Introduction

Operational workforce planning is an essential part of ensuring that you have the right people with the right attitudes, behaviours, values, skills and experience providing the personalised care and support your organisation offers.

There are constant changes taking place within adult social care that affect the way we need to work both now and in the future. It's therefore more important than ever for organisations of all sizes to plan ahead for their future workforce needs.

Truly successful organisations recognise that their workforce is their most important asset. Motivated, skilled and knowledgeable workers support people to lead their lives in a way that supports their wishes, needs and aspirations and will help your business thrive.

Workforce planning ensures that your workforce will make your business plan a reality, and that any changes you need to make, either now or in the future, take your entire workforce into account.

This guide and associated templates are intended to support providers of all sizes and is part of Skills for Care's workforce planning, shaping and commissioning offer. They will support you with a clear way to develop your workforce plan and help you to anticipate how your workforce needs to change to meet future demands and as new business opportunities present themselves.



Operational workforce planning: what is it and why is it important?

What is a workforce plan?

A workforce plan sets out your future workforce needs to meet the objectives in your business plan.

Why workforce plan?

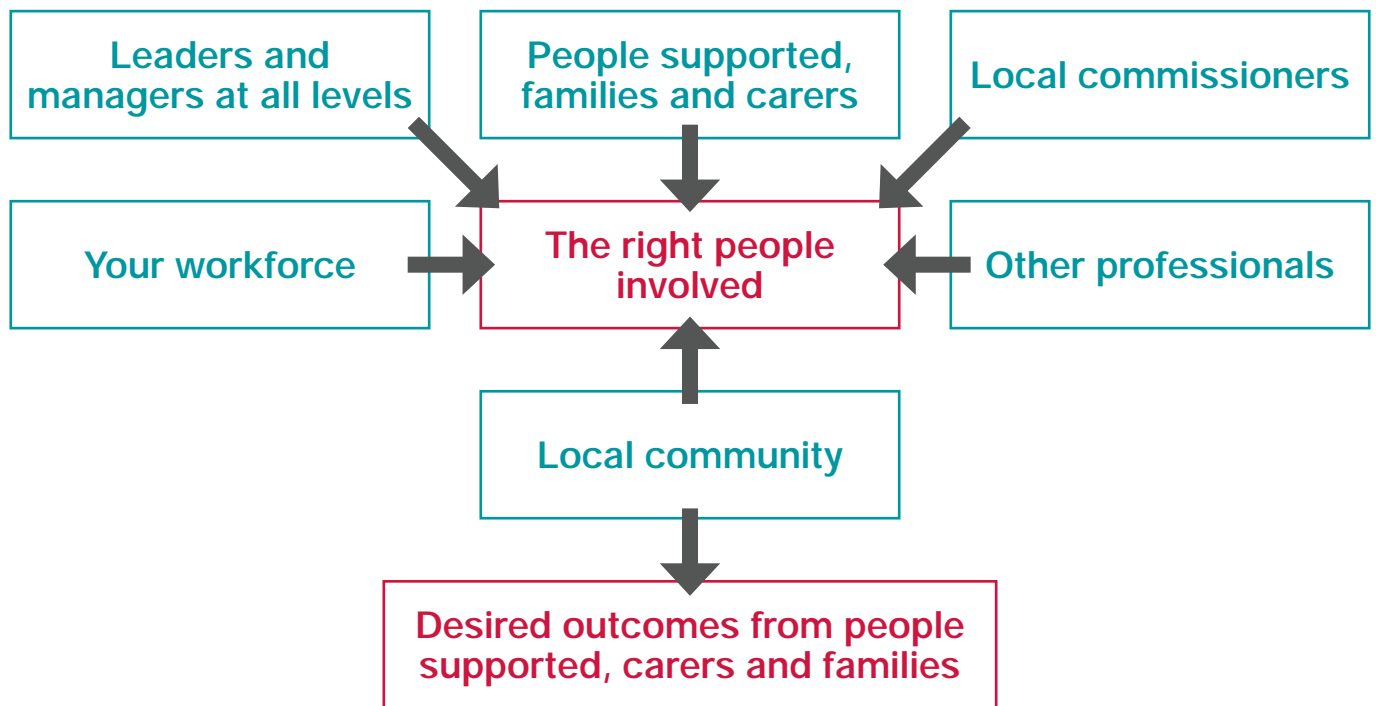
Effective workforce planning ensures that you have a workforce of the right size with the right attitudes, values, behaviours and skills doing the right thing, in the right places within the available budget. This underpins the delivery of quality, personalised and safe services meeting the wishes, needs and aspirations of the people you support.

What are the key assumptions of operational workforce planning?

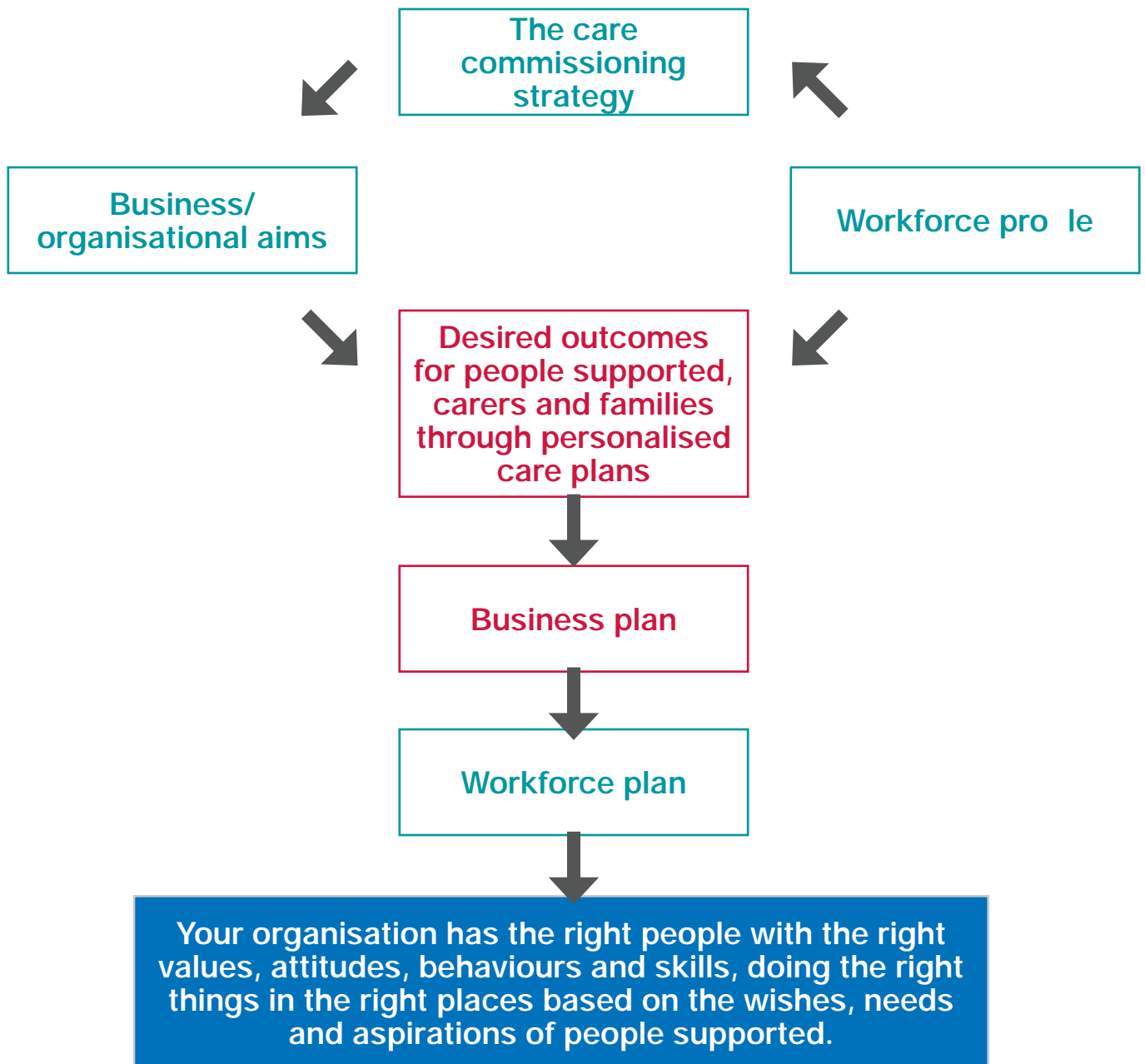
This approach to workforce planning is underpinned by some key assumptions to help create the right conditions to achieve success.

There must be commitment, support, participation and collaboration from everyone

Have you got the right people involved in every stage of the process?



The workforce planning process



At Muscliff Nursing Home, we found that workforce planning has numerous benefits to the business. It's helped us to ensure that we have the right number of people in place and that they have the right skills to deliver a high standard of care. It also helps us to improve communications and makes staff feel closer to the decision making process. It's also helped us to prepare and plan for changes within our sector. We really feel that good workforce planning gives us a competitive advantage over other care providers.

Dedrey Charles, Manager, Muscliff Nursing Home, Bournemouth

Using the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS) to understand your workforce

The ASC-WDS is a data collection service, commissioned and funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. It is the leading source of intelligence for the adult social care workforce and helps providers to manage their teams, while also providing crucial information to key decision makers across the sector.

To help with workforce planning at a national and local level, Skills for Care anonymise the data that social care employers' input into the service and use it to better understand the issues affecting the sector. The government applies this analysis to develop policy to help address the challenges faced by adult social care providers.

Workforce leads, local authorities and Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) use the data to gain insight on the local labour market, future demand for care and support services in their areas, and trends and patterns in workforce issues such as turnover and pay rates.

ASC-WDS is used by approximately 20,000 care providers and managers to store and access key information about staff in one place, access the Workforce Development Fund (WDF), record training and qualifications data and understand how their business is performing.

[Find out more](#) 

How can ASC-WDS help with workforce planning?

The ASC-WDS can help you to understand who makes up your workforce and what it will need to look like to support future business plans. It provides key evidence required to make informed decisions regarding your workforce plan.

It also allows you to collate all your staff training and qualification records into a 'Training report'. The report identifies, at a glance, which staff need training or have training that may soon expire. You can set which training is mandatory for each job role, so the records are customised to your needs. This helps you to identify any current or potential skills gaps in your workforce which is vital when looking to develop staff or consider succession planning.

Skills for Care's workforce intelligence can also help if you're looking for information to help with future business and workforce planning. Reports and interactive visualisations provide a detailed analysis on a national, regional or local basis. They cover topics including the size and structure of the workforce, types of employment, recruitment and retention issues, workforce demographics, pay rates and the prevalence of qualifications and training.

Sophie Chester-Glynn, Managing Director of Manor Community shares her thoughts in this [short video](#) on their use of ASC-WDS to inform their workforce planning.



Processes

Strategic workforce shaping and commissioning is used by the directors of adult social services (DASS) working in partnership with people being supported, families, carers, social care providers, the voluntary sector, health and wellbeing boards, health, housing, leisure and others; to assess and predict the demand for the current and future workforce mapped against supply and the needs of the local population. It identifies priorities and plans and secures the workforce needed and regularly reviews requirements through workforce planning.

Operational workforce planning is the system and process used by everyone including leaders, owners, managers and people employing their own care and support, to ensure they have identified and planned for the workforce to meet their business objectives and personal care plans.

Workforce development is the mechanism to equip workers with the education, skills, values, knowledge and behaviours they need to effectively deliver and improve services, both now and in the future. It aims to support the service by providing workers with the right skills.

Outputs

A **workforce strategy** sets out the long-term objectives, usually 3-5 years and how in broad terms, an organisation aims to accomplish those objectives. It gives the overview and vision.

workforce strategy implementation plan sets out the actions that will need to be taken to implement the workforce strategy.

workforce plan is where your plans are recorded and can be shared with everyone and then used for review and evaluation.

workforce learning and development plan outlines annual learning and development needs across an organisation and how these will be delivered, who for and by whom.

What does a good workforce plan need to be?

A good workforce plan needs to be:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Timely

A good workforce plan helps you effectively find, keep and develop workers and:

- ensures you are doing what you need to do to stay in business and that the future is affordable

- is informed by your Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS)

- demonstrates resources invested in staff development

- takes account of Care Quality Commission (CQC) standards, the law, regulation and requirements of commissioners (where appropriate).

The process of operational workforce planning – how do you do it?

This guide features useful hints and tips with recognised business tools and templates to take you through a practical approach to operational workforce planning.



Analyse

Understanding the national vision for adult social care, integrated care services, employment initiatives and legislation

Do you know and understand the latest government thinking on adult social care and integrated care and support services?

How will government trends and legislation affect you in the future?

To find out more about the vision for social care visit:

[Skills for Care](#) 


[Department of Health and Social Care](#) 

[National Voices](#) 

[Think Local Act Personal \(TLAP\)](#) 

[Kings Fund](#) 

Also consider the Care Act 2014, Integrated Care Systems, the drive for apprenticeships, employment law changes, immigration and employment initiatives.

You might want to consider doing a 'PESTLE analysis' - see [Resource 1](#) 

Organisation/business priorities

Have you considered your current business plans and identified your vision, values and priorities?

What are the significant internal and external opportunities and challenges that will affect your business in both the short and long term?

How would your organisation deal with the changing expectations of people you support, their family, carers and employees?

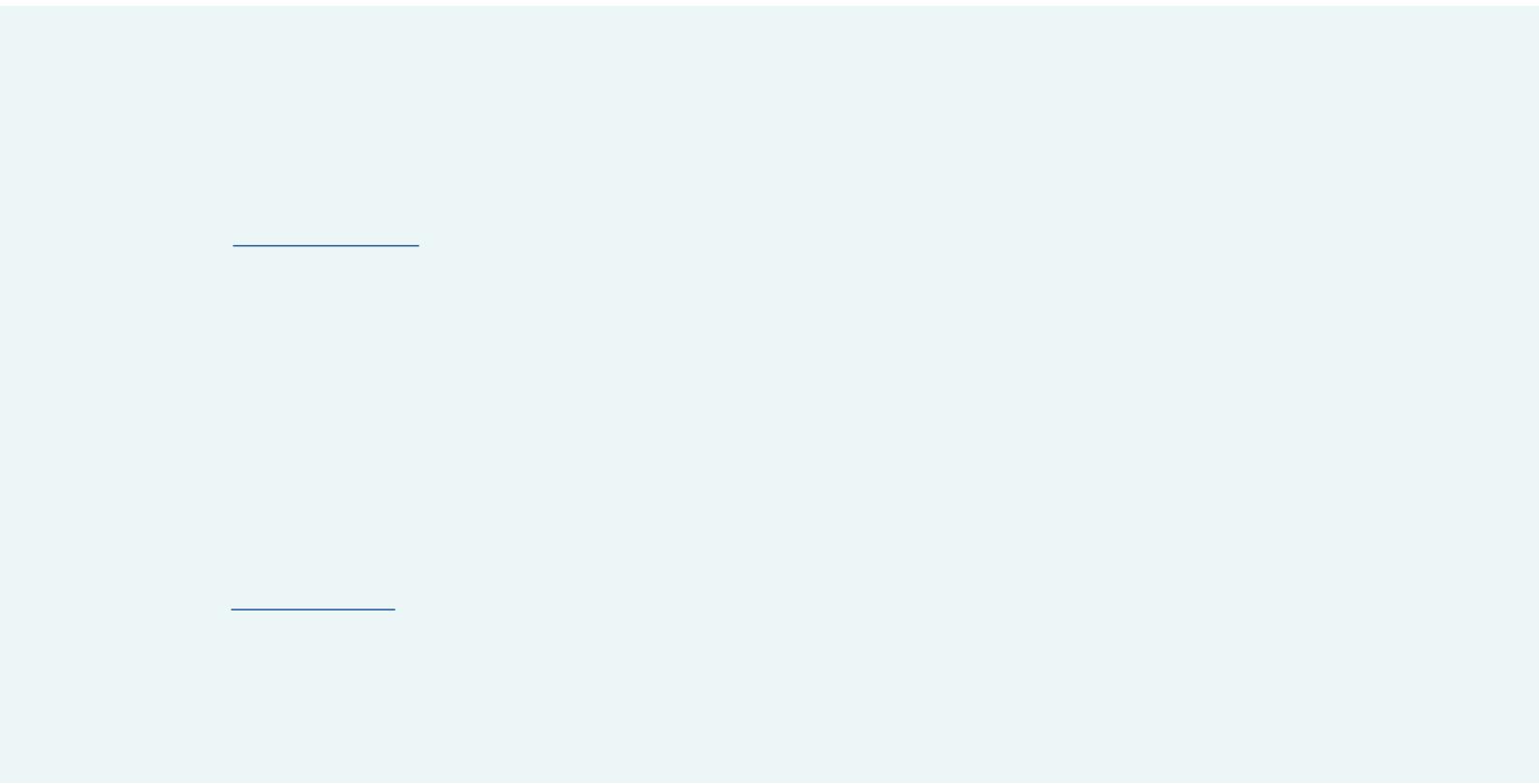
How would your organisation deal with increasing demand for support as the population ages, and as care moves closer to home, becomes more integrated, and new models emerge?

How will changes in technology enabled care, artificial intelligence and robotics impact on the way health, care and support is delivered?

What does this mean for the digital leadership and skills of your workforce?

You may wish to revisit your business plan to think about the answers to these questions.

[Find out more about digital technology, skills and leadership](#) 




Analysing what this means for you

How does this information impact on your current business planning?

What changes do you need to make?

What attitudes, behaviours, skills, values and knowledge might they bring to the quality of your service?

You could use a 'SWOT analysis' to do this – see [Resource 2](#) 

Recording where you are now

You may wish to record what you have discovered so far.

Use the 'Analysis recording template' to record where you are now - see [Resource 3](#) 

Plan

What is it you need to consider?

Are you clear about where you would like to position your organisation to meet your identified needs?

Is this in your business plan?

Is this financially viable?

Are your proposed changes manageable?

Which current services are going to be affected and what timescales do you want to achieve this by?

Following your analysis, you may wish to revise your business plan, taking account of costs including workforce costs. This plan can be short, medium or long term.

What does your workforce need to look like in the future

What are you going to do differently?


What new roles and new ways of working will be needed for the future?

Do you have a clear picture of what your organisation looks like currently and what the future functions and workforce should look like?

Will this include volunteers or freelance workers? What impact will this have on your current staff?

How are you involving your staff to encourage ownership of the plan?

Do you have the right culture to take this forward?

Use the 'Analysis recording template' to add the information you've gathered - see [Resource 3](#) 

[See our examples of support for integrated ways of working](#) 

Access our [Culture toolkit](#) that explains what workplace culture is and how you can develop a positive one in your organisation.

For more information on the nursing associate role, a new role created to bridge the skills gap between care workers and registered nurses visit our [nursing associates section](#) of the website.


Measuring the achievements

How will you know that you've achieved what you set out in your plan?

How will you measure, monitor, review and evaluate your plan?

It will help to have a clear workforce plan at this point, saying what you plan to do in the short, medium and longer term.

When you implement your plan and monitor progress along the way, it will be clear to everyone involved what you have achieved and what still needs to happen.

You may wish to use the 'Workforce plan template' – see [Resource 7](#) 

Record the actions you are going to take

What actions are you going to take and with whom?

How are you going to do it?

What will it cost?

When are you going to achieve this by?

How will this be communicated?

How will you monitor progress?

This is still part of your workforce planning process and gives you an overview of what you want to do.

You can build on the detail in your 'Workforce plan template' – see [Resource 7](#) 

Resources

What resources do you have available?

What additional resources will you need?

Resources could include internal expertise and support from within or you may find specialised external support organisations or interested experts and volunteers.

You may be able to apply for money, such as the [Workforce Development Fund](#) to help towards the costs of vocational learning.

Skills for Care has other resources you may find helpful.

You can use the '[workforce transformation outcomes measurement framework](#)' - to define the outcomes, actions and measurement of any workforce change programme.

The '[principles of workforce integration](#)' - will help you to think through what is meant

Do

Develop and manage the workforce action plan

How will you coordinate the actions that everyone has planned and contributed to?

How will you make them happen?

Who will lead the actions?

What timescales have you given yourself?

**You may wish to develop more detailed sub-plans against each of your priority areas.
Record the ways you plan to make the actions happen.**

Monitor and review your plans

Are you reviewing your workforce action plan regularly with everyone it affects?

Is it on target?

What surprises have emerged?

Have any opportunities or barriers arisen from the review?

Are there any issues arising?

How are they being addressed?

Regularly review your achievements and communicate the progress to the appropriate people.

It can be helpful to schedule regular monitoring meetings.

You may wish to use the 'Workforce action plan monitoring template' – see [Resource 9](#) 

Adjust your plans if needed

Does your monitoring indicate that you need to revise your action plan?

You may wish to pay attention to and re-prioritise some areas if they are not on target. This could be due to policy changes, financial issues, a change in service direction, or your action is not meeting the needs of the people you support.

Regularly update your

'Action plan and monitoring template' - see [Resource 8](#) 

'Risk log' - see [Resource 6](#) 

Review

Results and impact

Did the changes you implemented achieve the desired results?

Did the new ways of working and new roles and skills help to meet your business plan priorities?

What are the outcomes of the workforce changes and is there an impact on the people supported by your service?

Celebrate success

How will you celebrate your achievements, reward where appropriate and put forward nominations for any local or national awards and share your success with others?

Hold your own celebrations or enter local or national care awards.

Rethink, refresh and redene




To continuously improve the quality of your service and sustain your organisation, use what you have achieved and learned and return to the analyse stage of the workforce planning process to rethink, refresh and redene your plans.

Resources for Analyse-Plan-Do-Review





Use the questions and templates to follow the analyse-plan-do-review process to start the process, create and implement your workforce plan.

Do

Analyse

1. [PESTLE analysis template](#) 
2. [SWOT analysis template](#) 
3. [Analysis recording template](#) 

Plan

4. [Identify priorities, gaps and areas of workforce redesign template](#) 
5. [Functions gap analysis template](#) 
6. [Risk log template](#) 
7. [Workforce plan template](#) 

DoWorkforce plan template
