



WA Health Workforce Retention Framework 2012-2015

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Message from Director General



WA Health is in the middle of the most ambitious and widespread health system reform ever undertaken in Western Australia. Underpinned by system-wide clinical services planning set out in the *Clinical Services Framework 2010-2020*, our hospitals and health services are being reconfigured in response to the State's growing and ageing population, the increased burden of disease, the need for more appropriate and accessible Aboriginal health services and the overall higher demand for health services.

Some changes include the building of the Fiona Stanley Hospital as the major tertiary hospital in the south, a new children's hospital, and a new Midland campus to be built and operated through a public-private partnership. Other priorities have been the development of clinical service redesign models, improved partnerships between the health and tertiary sectors and an increase of numbers of Aboriginal Health professionals working in WA Health.

In an environment of such major reform, delivering quality health services to the community and maintaining an appropriately sized and skilled workforce are of paramount importance for WA Health. Each of the more than 40,000 people, who make up our workforce play a vital role in our success as an organisation. Many of our employees are nearing retirement age, skills shortages are increasing and the labour market is competitive. In this climate, maximising employee retention is a priority.

The WA Health Workforce Retention Framework 2012-2015 outlines a number of essential strategies aimed at retaining skilled and valued employees and contributing to WA Health being a great place to work. These strategies are focused around six key elements which articulate the most important themes for effective workforce retention.

This Framework has been prepared following extensive consultation with employees from across WA Health. Such a collaborative approach is needed to guarantee its success. It is crucial that the strategies presented here are embraced and implemented by all WA Health employees. We can then look to the future with confidence in our ability to best provide for the health and wellbeing of the community.

I commend all of those who participated in the development of the Framework.

Kim Snowball
DIRECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WA

29 September 2012

1. Introduction

WA Health provides a quality health service to the Western Australian community. To enable this to happen, we need appropriately skilled and engaged employees who feel they are valued, are working in a safe and supportive environment and have the opportunity to develop to their potential.

Focusing energy and attention on workforce retention is important as it has a direct, costly and significant impact on the capacity of WA Health to deliver its quality services.

The ability to retain an appropriately skilled and engaged workforce impacts on all employees with regard to their sense of safety, support and value, and ultimately their motivation to come to work and be part of the WA Health team.

Current environmental factors such as the ageing population, the increase in competition in the labour market and the skills shortage in the health sector mean that the need for WA Health to focus on improving retention levels is more critical than ever.

Improving retention levels is a goal that every leader and manager within WA Health can and must contribute to on a daily and ongoing basis.

Effectively improving retention requires a long-term perspective and acceptance that real change will take time and requires collaboration among all stakeholders.

The development of the Workforce Retention Framework was identified as a priority by the State Health Executive Forum and included as a deliverable in the WA Health Operational Plan 2011–2012.

The Framework will contribute to building the capacity and capability of WA's public health system by assisting to retain sufficient workforce numbers to meet current and future health needs.

The Framework is aligned to the WA Health Strategic Intent 2010-2015 pillar "Supporting Our Team".

2. Purpose of the Framework

The purpose of the Workforce Retention Framework (the Framework) is to identify the essential strategies WA Health needs to have in place to ensure that employee retention is optimised.

3. Our Vision for the Framework

WA Health employees feel valued and motivated to work on the WA Health team, are working in a safe and supportive environment and can develop to their potential.

4. Developing the Framework

The development of the Framework involved extensive consultation within WA Health and included the formation of a project group with representatives from:

- Child and Adolescent Health Service
- Department of Health
- Health Information Network
- Health Corporate Network
- North Metropolitan Health Service
- South Metropolitan Health Service
- WA Country Health Service.

In addition, the following research, strategic documents and reports have informed the Framework:

- literature review of contemporary best practice workforce retention trends and strategies
- review and analysis of retention strategies used by organisations in the public and private sectors
- WA Health strategy and policy including the WA Health Strategic Intent 2010-2015, the WA Health Clinical Services Framework (CSF) 2010-2015 and other relevant documents
- analysis of data from WA Health exit surveys and the WA Health Staff Climate Survey 2009
- workforce profile information and workforce planning publications from the WA Public Sector Commission.

5. Key Drivers of the Framework

The WA Health CSF 2010-2015 provides the foundation for both broad clinical planning across Western Australia and more extensive and detailed planning to be undertaken by individual Area Health Services (AHS). It also provides the high-level policy framework to assist local AHS planning and informs workforce planning.

The Framework is driven by the need for WA Health to:

- meet its current and future service delivery requirements as detailed in the CSF
- deliver a high quality service to clients
- develop a consistent, sustainable and strategically aligned approach to employee retention
- manage the effect of changing demographics influenced by the ageing workforce and impending skill shortages
- recognise the different needs of a very diverse workforce.

6. Key Information about the WA Health Workforce¹

Did you know that at April 2012:

- The paid Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)² number of employees was 34,429.9 FTE, with a headcount of 41,605³.
- Women comprised 77.2% of the workforce. Women and men had the same age profile (median age: 44.7 years)⁴.
- Twenty percent of employees worked in regional areas (FTE).
- Nearly half the workforce was aged 45 years and over (49.4%) while the proportion of those aged 55 years and over was 22.7%⁵.
- Stakeholders within WA Health have estimated an overall turnover rate for all paid FTE of approximately 10%.
- Research shows that the average general rate of employee turnover in large Australian organisations is 12.6 %⁶.
- An abundance of research has determined that to replace a typical employee lost to turnover costs an organisation up to 150 percent of that person's annual salary⁷.

Measuring Employee Turnover in WA Health

WA Health employs over 40,000 people in a diverse range of occupations.

There is a significant amount of movement within the entities that comprise WA Health (often referred to as “churn”). This churn is a hidden component of employee turnover as it is often recorded as an employee separation and new start as an employee migrates from one individual health area to another.

Determining an appropriate measure of employee retention in WA Health is difficult and has been identified as a high priority retention strategy in this Framework.

A more comprehensive measure of turnover will be a critical requirement for establishing employee retention.

¹ WA Health workforce data is provided by the Workforce Data and Modelling Branch, Department of Health.

² FTE is calculated as the monthly average FTE and is the average hours worked during a period of time divided by the Award Full Time Hours for the same period. Hours include ordinary time, all leave categories, public holidays, time off in lieu, workers compensation.

Paid FTE includes all current permanent, fixed-term, sessionals, trainees, others and only casuals who were paid in the last pay period of the respective month.

³ Headcount based on Paid FTE method. WA Health employees can be employed across multiple sites but in this instance, are only counted once. Excludes Mental Health Commission but includes Drug and Alcohol Office (as reported in April 2012 Monthly FTE Report).

⁴ Based on Headcount by WA Health Id

⁵ Based on Headcount by WA Health Id

⁶ Australian Human Resource Institute, 2008, HR Pulse “Love 'Em don't Lose 'Em” – Identifying Retention Strategies, vol. 2, no. 1

⁷ Australian Human Resource Institute, 2008, HR Pulse “Love 'Em don't Lose 'Em” – Identifying Retention Strategies, vol. 2, no. 1

7. Components of the Framework

The Framework contains six key elements which drive workforce retention strategies. They are:

1. Attract, select and engage the right people
2. Provide and encourage a positive, safe and healthy workplace
3. Encourage and expect good performance
4. Support and develop leadership
5. Strengthen the capability of our people
6. Maintain accurate, consistent and reliable information.

The elements are broken down into workforce retention strategies which are priority initiatives and activities designed to optimise employee retention. The elements are described in more detail on the following page.

While attraction is not the focus of the Framework, it is acknowledged that attracting the right people is an important determinant of effective employee retention.

Standards

Quality assurance and accreditation of health services is currently assessed against two sets of standards:

- Australian Council of Healthcare Standards (ACHS)
- National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards.

The core accreditation program for health services is the ACHS Evaluation and Quality Improvement Program (EQuIP). This program guides organisations through a four-year cycle of Self-Assessment, Organisation-Wide Survey and Periodic Review to meet ACHS standards. The current EQuIP version, EQuIP5 includes three main topic areas, these being Clinical, Support and Corporate. Workforce retention strategies have been cross-referenced with the relevant EQuIP5 Corporate and Support criteria. A copy of the EQuIP5 criteria is provided at

<http://www.healthissuescentre.org.au/documents/items/2012/02/405534-upload-00001.pdf>.

The primary aims of the NSQHS Standards are to protect the public from harm and to improve the quality of health service provision. They provide a quality assurance mechanism that tests whether relevant systems are in place to ensure minimum standards of safety and quality are met, and a quality improvement mechanism that allows health services to realise aspirational or developmental goals. Workforce retention strategies have been cross-referenced with NSQHS Standard 1 'Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Service Organisations'. NSQHS Standards can be accessed at

[http://www.transfusion.com.au/sites/default/files/NSQHS%20Standards%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.transfusion.com.au/sites/default/files/NSQHS%20Standards%20(2).pdf).

Key elements of the Framework

1. Attract, select and engage the right people

Attracting and selecting the right people who have the values, skills and competencies required to work for WA Health is critical. If the right people are quickly integrated and settled into their new environment, they are more likely to fit in, perform their best and stay longer.

2. Provide and encourage a positive, safe and healthy workplace

Every employee is entitled to work in a positive, safe and healthy environment which supports teamwork and trust, and builds collaboration and transparency into decision making. This requires the efforts of WA Health as well as each individual employee.

3. Encourage and expect good performance

A performance based culture encourages employees to strive to achieve their best. It provides employees with a fair, consistent and transparent environment within which to achieve both their individual goals and those of WA Health.

4. Support and develop leadership

Sustaining a workplace where people are motivated to work requires strong and confident leaders and managers who guide employees while providing them with opportunities to feel challenged and empowered to be high performers.

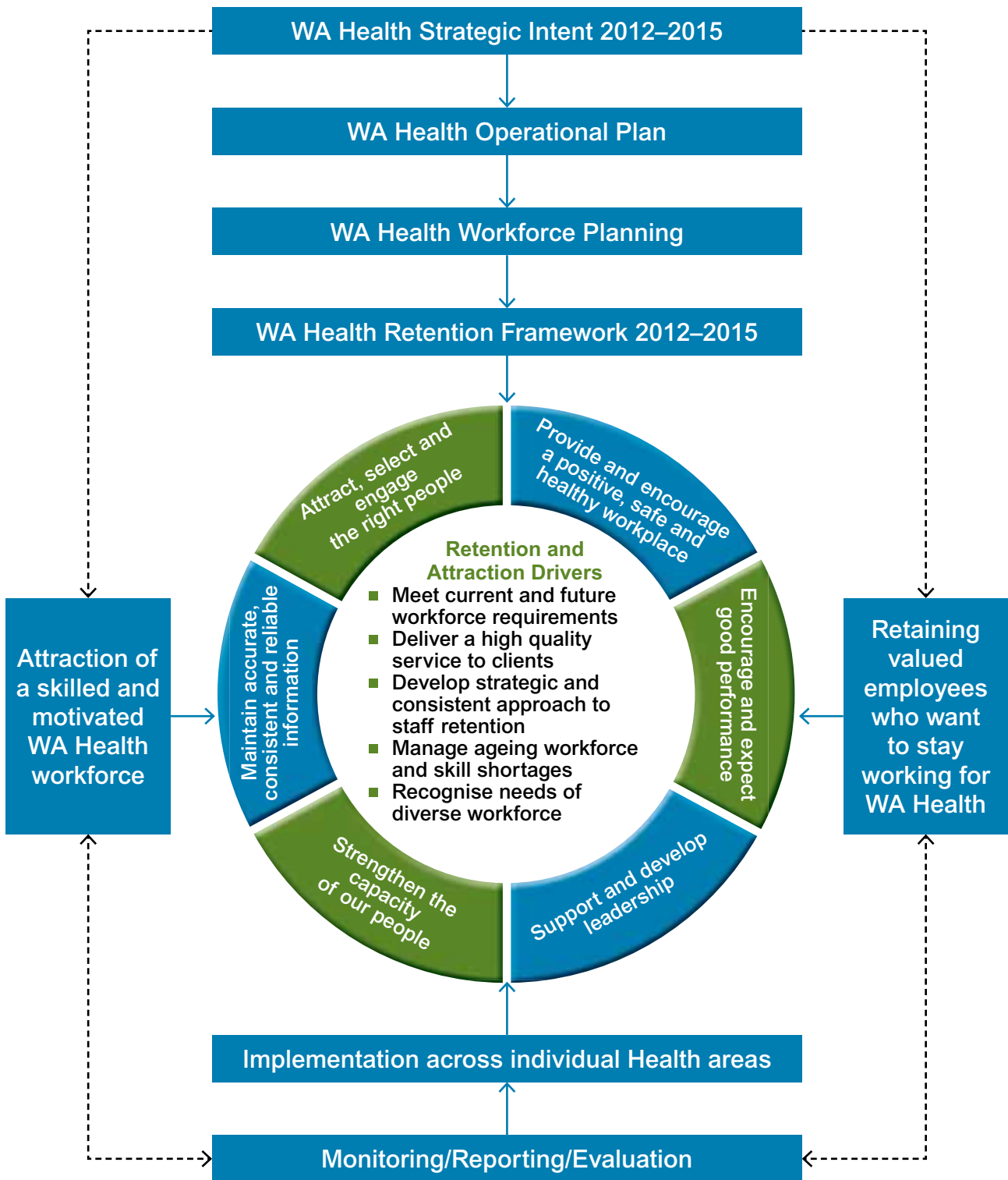
5. Strengthen the capability of our people

The success of our organisation depends on our employees. Providing employees with opportunities for development is critical to keeping them engaged and motivated.

6. Maintain accurate, consistent and reliable information

Wherever possible, the most current and accurate evidence is required to inform workplace decisions about workforce retention. This means ensuring employees have timely access to accurate, consistent and reliable information to enable them to do their jobs well.

WA Health Retention Framework 2012–2015



Our values: Care | Respect | Excellence | Integrity | Teamwork | Leadership

8. Implementation of the Framework

The State Health Executive Forum has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the strategies in the Framework will take place. The Framework is supported by an overall implementation guide that was developed by the Department of Health Workforce Directorate in consultation with health services.

Health services⁸ within WA Health are responsible for developing workforce retention action plans incorporating the key elements and essential strategies contained in the Framework. As retention strategies may vary across individual health services depending upon their specific needs the number of strategies already in place, each area will determine the priority strategies to be actioned each year. This will also depend upon the availability of resources.

Local workforce and human resource areas are responsible for coordinating strategies in their respective health areas and providing advisory support. To minimise duplication, some strategies may require coordination across individual health areas.

9. Monitoring and Reporting on the Framework

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the Framework will enable WA Health to assess whether strategies are appropriate, achievable and effective. The following reporting and assessment framework exists to support the evaluation of the Framework.

- **WA Health Operational Plan:**

Health services report on the implementation of the Framework in the WA Health Operational Plan on a quarterly basis, commencing in the first quarter of the 2013/2014 Operational Plan. Monitoring achievements against the relevant operational plan target is undertaken by the Performance Reporting Branch of the Department of Health and reported to the Director General.

- **Analysis of Turnover Rates:**

Internal workforce profile information is collected and analysed and employee perceptions in exit surveys are monitored. In addition, the WA Public Sector Commission regularly provides WA Health with agency workforce profile information including separation rates.

- **External Monitoring and Reporting:**

WA Health reports annually to the Public Sector Commissioner on the extent to which the objectives of the Strategic Directions of the (WA) Public Sector 2009 – 2014⁹ have been met. One of the objectives is ‘retaining valued employees’.

⁸ For the purposes of the Framework, ‘health services’ is a collective term used to refer to the different areas within WA Health, these being Child and Adolescent Health Service, Department of Health (DoH) (Royal Street), Health Corporate Network (HCN), Health Information Network, North Metropolitan Area Health Service, South Metropolitan Area Health Service and WA Health Country Health Service.

⁹ For more information, go to <http://www.publicsector.wa.gov.au/document/strategic-directions-public-sector-workforce-2009-2014>

10. Review of the Framework

The Framework operates from 2012 to 2015. During this time, the Framework may be revised or updated to reflect changes in strategic direction. All recommendations to revise or update the Framework should be forwarded to the Director Workforce (DoH). Following approval from the Executive Director Resource Strategy, major amendments to the Framework will go through a consultation process and be referred to the Director General for endorsement.

11. Retention – Key Elements and Essential Strategies

Key Element 1: Attract, select and engage the right people

[EQulP5 2.2 (Support); NSQHS Standard 1]

	Essential Strategies	Responsibility	Priority
1.1	<p>Review the attraction and selection cycle, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ advertising and marketing campaigns ■ classification parity ■ guideline for effective job description forms ■ candidate care protocols/guidelines ■ selection panel training ■ attraction and retention initiatives ■ international and interstate recruitment ■ innovative recruitment ■ joint or co appointments. <p>The development of this strategy will be project based and managed by the DoH Workforce Directorate in consultation with health services and the Health Industrial Relations Branch.</p>	<p>Executive Director, Resource Strategy, Department of Health (Lead)</p> <p><i>in conjunction with</i></p> <p>Area Executive Directors/Directors Workforce and equivalents</p> <p><i>and</i></p> <p>Director, Health Industrial Relations Service</p>	High
1.2	Develop on-boarding strategies ^a when employees enter the organisation.	Area Executive Directors/Directors Workforce and equivalents	High
1.3	<p>Develop and adequately resource retention/ attraction strategies for relevant identified priority groups, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ occupational groups ■ generational groups ■ geographical groups ■ Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)^b groups ■ people returning to the workforce ■ secondary and tertiary students as the future workforce. 	Area Executive Directors/Directors Workforce and equivalents	High
1.4	Develop and implement Aboriginal employment action plans in accordance with national and state government set targets ^c .	Area Executive Directors/Directors Workforce and equivalents	High
1.5	Develop a whole of Health orientation and induction policy.	Executive Director, Resource Strategy, Department of Health	Medium
1.6	Promote WA Health both for its achievements and as a great place to work through an internal and external marketing strategy.	Executive Director, Resource Strategy, Department of Health	Medium

See footnotes on page 15

Key Element 2: Provide and encourage a positive, safe and healthy workplace

[EQulP5 1.2 (Corporate); 2.2 (Support); 2.4 (Support); NSQHS Standard 1]

	Essential Strategies	Responsibility	Priority
2.1	<p>Promote a respectful and supportive workforce culture, with a focus on WA Health core values^d including the implementation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ education initiatives to support positive workplace relationships ▪ regular, timely and two way communication strategies ▪ cultural learning frameworks incorporating cultural practices. 	Chief Executives	High
2.2	<p>Provide a safe working environment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identification, assessment and management of hazards ▪ employee health and wellbeing programs ▪ awareness raising of mental health issues in the workplace ▪ allocation of appropriate workloads ▪ policies and procedures on managing aggression and violence. 	Chief Executives	High
2.3	<p>Support managers and employees to achieve a healthy balance through the use of flexible work and leave arrangements, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identification of the uptake of flexible work arrangements ▪ advertising positions as full time and part time in line with operational requirements ▪ access to resources about innovative and equitable flexible work practices ▪ adopting a phased approach to retirement ▪ review of industrial agreements to ensure any impediments to retention are removed. 	Chief Executives	Medium

Key Element 3: Expect and encourage good performance
[EQulP5 2.1 (Support); 2.2 (Support); NSQHS Standard 1]

	Essential Strategies	Responsibility	Priority
3.1	Encourage an environment where regular feedback and recognition of employee performance is provided formally and informally in an open and supportive culture aimed at organisational improvement.	Chief Executives	High
3.2	Support performance management/development with all employees, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ improved participation in performance management processes ▪ effective management of poor performance ▪ increased staff awareness. 	Chief Executives	High
3.3	Provide appropriate recognition, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reward and recognition programs for employees ▪ the encouragement of peer to peer recognition. 	Chief Executives	Medium

Key Element 4: Support and develop leadership

[EQulP5 2.2 (Support); NSQHS Standard 1]

	Essential Strategies	Responsibility	Priority
4.1	<p>Ensure that there is a well-articulated leadership development strategy that clearly differentiates and links leadership development across WA Health, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a preferred leadership competency framework for clinical and non-clinical occupations ■ appropriate and consistent development pathways for clinical and non-clinical occupations. 	<p>Institute for Health Leadership <i>in conjunction with</i> Chief Executives</p>	High
4.2	<p>Develop and implement a planned approach to succession management and identification of leadership potential across WA Health.</p>	<p>Institute for Health Leadership <i>in conjunction with</i> Chief Executives</p>	Medium
4.3	<p>Establish succession and leadership development strategies to address equity gaps in line with the principles of EEO^e.</p>	<p>Institute for Health Leadership <i>in conjunction with</i> Chief Executives</p>	Medium
4.4	<p>Identify and develop future leaders.</p>	<p>Institute for Health Leadership <i>in conjunction with</i> Chief Executives</p>	Medium

Key Element 5: Strengthen the capability of our people
[EQulP5 2.2 (Support); NSQHS Standard 1]

	Essential Strategies	Responsibility	Priority
5.1	Adopt targeted learning and development strategies for identified priority workforce groups and individuals, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ supervisors and managers ■ different occupational groups ■ different generational groups ■ different geographical groups ■ EEO groups.^f 	Chief Executives	High
5.2	Identify talent and provide opportunities for employees to develop capabilities.	Chief Executives	High
5.3	When establishing new health services and/or service delivery models, ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ development of the right skills to meet changing service needs ■ implementation of retention related recommendations identified in the WA Health Metropolitan Health Services Employee Intentions Survey Report ■ change management methodologies are used to manage the transition of services to new models/sites. 	Chief Executives	High
5.4	Design and implement learning and development initiatives using contemporary adult learning and development methodologies.	Chief Executives	Medium

Key Element 6: Maintain accurate, consistent and reliable information [EQuIP5 2.3 (Support)]

	Essential Strategies	Responsibility	Priority
6.1	<p>Develop a consistent whole of Health framework for collecting, analysing and reporting on turnover data.</p> <p>The development of this strategy will be project based and managed by the DoH Workforce Directorate in consultation with health services.</p>	<p>Executive Director Resource Strategy, DoH <i>in conjunction with</i> health services</p>	High
6.2	<p>Develop and implement strategies to collect and analyse information about employee satisfaction and intentions.</p>	<p>Executive Director Resource Strategy, DoH <i>and</i> Chief Executives</p>	High
6.3	<p>Identify the capacity of existing human resource information systems to provide a workforce demographics reporting system for capturing employee profiles relating to development needs, career aspirations, talent identification and leadership development.</p>	<p>Executive Director Resource Strategy, <i>and</i> General Manager HCN</p>	Medium

^a Onboarding strategies are processes that organisations use to enable, facilitate, and assure that each employee is successfully immersed into the company culture and operational systems.

^b EEO groups are identified as women (in management), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disabilities, people from culturally diverse backgrounds and youth (under 25 years). For more information, go to the WA Health Equity and Diversity Plan 2010 – 2015
http://www.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/circular.cfm?Circ_ID=12749


^c For more information on targets for Aboriginal employment, go to the WA Health Equity and Diversity Plan 2010 – 2015. http://www.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/circular.cfm?Circ_ID=12749

^d Refer to the WA Health Integrity and Ethical Governance Framework
<http://intranet.health.wa.gov.au/corporategovernance/home/framework.cfm>

^e For more information, go to the WA Health Equity and Diversity Plan 2010 – 2015
http://www.health.wa.gov.au/circularsnew/circular.cfm?Circ_ID=12749

^f For more information, go to the WA Health Equity and Diversity Plan 2010 – 2015
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