

## Recruitment and Retention - Strategic Intentions 2018-2022

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## 1. Message from the Director of Human Resources

Thank you for reading this 2018-2022 Recruitment and Retention Strategy. It is a key document that draws together a wide variety of approaches the Trust takes to meet our strategic priorities in a sustainable way.

The entire Board recognises how many colleagues work above and beyond the call of duty every day. We also recognise the great pride people feel about their team, their local functions and the NHS as a whole.

Our absolute intention is to develop an ever improving culture for us all to work within, where we can all find coming to work rewarding, empowering and indeed, enjoyable. If we work together we can make AWP an ever more attractive place to work and to stay. Our commitment to Listening

When compiling strategic intentions, it is important to not get carried away with actions. It's also important to be ambitious, but also realistic about what can truly be turned into reality with the capacity and capabilities that are likely to be available.

Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust has not had a formal recruitment and retention strategy for a few years. The time is now right for a refreshed view of how these two crucial elements of an effective Trust can be taken forward.

Strategies do not have to be bland. They can be a reflection of what an organisation is like to work in. The intention of this document is to give the reader a flavour of how we intend to collectively improve how we recruit and retain our staff.

AWP is moving confidently towards being a Trust where inclusion, support and constructive challenge at the heart of how we operate. Debate is welcomed, engagement is paramount and making it worth coming to work every day is critical.

“Reality checks” are used at times in this strategy as they reflect one of our five values, that of integrity, whereby we are open, honest and straightforward. These checks can remind us where we really are in the increasingly sophisticated world of recruitment and retention.

Thank you for your time.



Julian Feasby

April 2018

## 2. Introduction

A great many NHS strategies highlight that we are going through a time of enormous pressures and change. Indeed, society generally and organisations the world over are experiencing similar challenges. Whether it be changes in technology, demographics or the attitude of the public as services users or employees, nothing seems to stay still for very long.

Like many NHS Trusts, AWP is totally dependent on having a workforce which is motivated, stable, service user focussed and effective. Having the right skills alone is no longer sufficient. Attitudes and behaviours are also key to ensure sustainable and compassionate care, within the financial constraints that face all organisations in the NHS.

Patterns in the working population can't be ignored. Whether that is an ever increasing expectation of up to date technology at work, or the massively changing attitude of having several careers and employers rather than a job for life.... AWP needs to move with the times and embrace the strengths that exist, the realities that face us and the constraints within which we operate.

Three crucial dimensions remain:

- We need to attract and recruit new colleagues but remembering that it is no longer a buyer's market. The mental health market is particularly challenged, now and over the coming years.
- We need to motivate, engage with and include our colleagues to increase the chance that they will chose to stay with us
- All staff need to play an increasingly active part in both recruitment and retention. Improvements will not come if it is seen as "someone else's job"

Any recruitment and retention strategy needs to provide direction to a wide range of professions and circumstances, and this one does not therefore focus on any one in particular. Clearly there are particular pressure points with hard-to-fill-roles, which will continue to see dedicated focus over time.

### 2.1 Links to Corporate Objectives

AWP has recently developed and launched its five-year strategy and it is important that supporting strategies like this one align closely, to keep us all heading in the same direction.

Corporate perspective

<b>Corporate perspective</b>	<b>Recruitment and Retention perspective</b>
<b>Purpose:</b> "Working together, living our best lives."	<b>Purpose:</b> "Working together, doing our best work."
<b>Vision:</b> "To give you the best possible care in the right place, at the right time, to help you recover and live your best life."	<b>Vision:</b> "Giving the best care and attention to future, current and past colleagues to ensure we attract good people and keep them too."
<b>Principles:</b> "We will support our service users and carers" "We will engage our staff" "We will be sustainable"	<b>Principles:</b> "Inclusive line managers are critical" "We will not over-commit ourselves and plans will be locally flavoured and owned" "We will express pride in working for AWP and embed an attitude of "candidate-care"

### 3. Why we need a strategy

In the mental health arena it is often stated that there is a shortage of applicants with the right skills, abilities and experience in their relevant professions. This, as well as AWP's geographical footprint, coupled with many societal changes notably around worker expectations, retirement, and public finances, has led to a very challenging situation around workforce stability.

The NHS England Next Steps on the Five Year Forward View sets out associated challenges and focus from a national perspective. This strategy intends to outline our response to some of the key resourcing challenges.

AWP's vacancy rate has remained very static for some years at around 15%, with around 550 vacancies being either filled by transient bank staff, or expensive agency staff. This undermines our intention to give high quality care in a sustainable way.

The average turnover of staff choosing to leave our organisation has also remained static at around 15% per year. This is in line with NHSI reported benchmarking of other similar Trusts, but is still at odds with our intentions.

AWP's recent staff survey indicators show that only 47% would recommend us as a place to work.

The Trust is at a significant risk if it cannot attract, recruit and retain a motivated and skilled workforce particularly in professions with notorious challenges including registered mental health nurses and consultants.

### 4. Recruitment and Retention by 2022 – Examples of good practice which informs our future direction

- It is 2022. Jenny keeps hearing from friends, colleagues and her social media feeds, that AWP is a friendly, inclusive and enjoyable place to work, and that it is a good place to develop a career.
- She also meets a few people who have enjoyed work experience at a number of AWP sites.
- She encounters a number of staff from AWP at events and professional on-line discussions and one day is sent a personalised invitation to apply for a relevant job.
- She is impressed by the enthusiastic language of the job advert and reads equally appealing and up to date material (videos, blogs, case studies) on AWP's web site, social media feeds and job pages.
- Jenny takes up an offer to video-call with the recruiting manager before applying. Angela is friendly, informative and considerate, so Jenny applies.
- When Jenny turns up to an assessment centre, she is greeted by a friendly receptionist and her name is on a screen behind the desk with a welcoming message.
- The assessment process is interactive, enjoyable and allows Jenny to show her strengths, and she leaves desperately wanting to work with the people she met.
- Angela calls that evening to offer Jenny the job. (Other candidates who weren't successful this time were given helpful feedback over the phone, and some were asked if they would consider working in one of our other teams without having to re-apply. They are impressed)
- References and existing training records are sorted out quickly, and Jenny is invited to a number of team events to get her up to speed before she starts. She is also invited to join an on-line social media group for new starters, to make contacts before she starts.
- Day one is a pleasure. The right technology, a week-long pre-filled diary of meeting people,

and some time to browse AWP systems. She even got taken for lunch. Jenny feels useful straight away and her allocated 'buddy' and the local senior manager drop by.

- Over time, Jenny has regular one to ones with engaging managers and professional colleagues and is supported to gain new skills and to reflect on her behaviours, to help her spot and secure future career opportunities. Internal moves are easy and sometimes process-free.
- Jenny becomes an enthusiastic sales-person for AWP and manages to help dozens of people to know about the Trust, to get jobs in the Trust, and to develop their own careers too.
- When, some years later, Jenny decides that a new adventure is due, her leaving is made painlessly and with care. She embraces the chance for an exit interview.
- Jenny joins the Trust's on-line alumni group and keeps in touch through occasional professional webinars and newsletters. She knows that if she wants to return, it will be easy.
- When Jenny does rejoin AWP, she is made to feel as welcome as when she first joined. She actively hosts the pre-retirement workshops for those who are planning to draw their pension, but still want to work. Most do.
- Jenny also gets involved in the "itchy feet" discussions, where staff who are thinking of leaving, can talk to an experienced member of the management team, to talk about what might encourage them to stay. As an inclusive manager now, she is also a 'Bullying and Harassment Champion', trained to help nip tricky situations in the bud.

## 5. Intended outcomes of the Strategy

We will:

- be a confident and engaging communicator, internally and externally, with a consistent focus on attracting candidates
- have a low vacancy rate and a high level of retention
- manage talent effectively with the right staff and skill mix to give high quality care and deal with change
- have reduced rates of issues concerning bullying and harassment
- spend considerably less money on agency workers
- have staff who work effectively and efficiently and find work enjoyable and rewarding
- have staff who do not leave due to failings in their working relationships or conditions
- support and engage with staff and deal quickly with those who do not, or will not perform
- have effective and motivational line managers at all levels

## 6. Attraction

Research shows that at best only around 25% of those in the employment market are actively looking for a job. This means that we only have access theoretically to a minority of the market if we remain passive in attraction. Similarly, over 80% of adults in the UK now use the internet on a daily basis to search for goods, services and potential jobs. Modern employers develop and sell the reason people would want to work for them before they actively job hunt.

## 6.1 Creating the right reputation / brand

Having a positive external (and internal) image is crucial to become an employer of choice in the mental health arena, and needs the collective effort of communications professionals, but also a wide range of eloquent, positive and engaged staff in all professions to enact a brand development strategy.

## 6.2 Key requirements of AWP's attraction activity will include:

- Step up in our approach to communications, with a new team which actively leads on developing a modern, engaging and inclusive Brand Development Plan which reinforces the values of AWP.
- Allocation of reasonable funding to attraction, which will offset agency spend in the longer term.
- Clear ownership and leadership of locally / departmentally owned attraction / recruitment and retention activity.
- Simple guidelines for all colleagues on what good attraction entails.
- Developing and evolving an appealing suite of job advert templates and posting adverts which are intriguing and attractive to an outside candidate.
- Whilst still using the NHS jobs site, also use wider and appropriate marketing of roles in other mediums and within local communities.
- Ensure the AWP Web site has motivational content with real staff stories, to promote working here.
- Improve the quality and presentation of recruitment materials and develop professional literature to use at local (and where appropriate, national) recruitment events and open days, on a par with other organisations.
- Ensure exemplar activity in respect to employment law and support activity, so that HR support adds value to the process of attraction and recruitment.
- Partner with appropriate external stakeholders to further enhance our reach, including Job Centre Plus, other local Trusts, academic institutions and schools.
- Ensure senior leaders are regularly active in the promotion of AWP as a successful, evolving and rewarding place to work.
- Develop an efficient and effective temporary staffing service which meets the needs of the organisation, and actively avoids expensive agency use.
- Enact modern ways of ensuring potential candidates are sent details of job vacancies directly, and that our selection experience is a sales opportunity in itself.
- Refresh and re-launch the employee referral scheme. Employees should be the greatest advocates AWP has.
- Embrace the expertise of external recruitment organisations and similarly, take opportunities to introduce permanent expertise in recruitment into the HR service.

## 6.3 Reality Check

- The services we provide are very well received and successful, and where we have attempted highlighting the breath and success we have, it is powerful and attractive.
- There are a handful of active staff who use social media to showcase the work we are

involved with.

- We have a great many people who have worked for the NHS, and indeed for AWP, for many, many years, and are incredibly passionate and knowledgeable about it.
- Our approach and attitude to attraction has not been up to date. We have been passive in brand management and sometimes old fashioned in our communication practices.
- Managers, on the whole, have not seen attraction as a crucial pro-active part of the recruitment process, and can often not find the capacity to challenge the status quo.
- There is minimal Human Resource expertise or capacity in anything other than administrative handling, and limited opportunity to commit additional resource in the current financial environment.
- Our external-facing channels have been considerably out of date for some time, and not maintained.
- We spend almost nothing on attraction activity and where we are present, our supporting material is increasingly old fashioned.

## 7. Recruitment and selection

### 7.1 Introduction

Whilst attraction is a crucial element to letting people know that the organisation exists and that it is an exciting and rewarding place to work, it is imperative that the nuts and bolts of the recruitment and selection processes ensure the right skill mix is secured and maintained.

AWP continues to be committed to professional and responsive recruitment processes, but needs to make step-changes to compete in the modern market-place.

One of the key dimensions is the rapid elevation in the importance with which line managers across the Trust view recruitment and selection. They are the key stakeholders who drive the pace, quality and candidate experience, with the professional support, guidance and challenge of Human Resource teams. Some basic good practice is currently absent from normal recruitment work. An early quick win will be the compilation and sharing of simple good-practice guides

### 7.2 Assessing for potential

AWP's current approach to assessment is mostly predicated on carrying out a formal, competency based panel interview. These focus heavily on historical achievements, paying little attention to potential, or helping the candidate to be at ease. This is notoriously un-engaging to all concerned.

Research shows that there are three key steps to facilitating successful selection:

1. Being very clear in advance what is being sought as far as both skills and future potential - not always looking to replace what has historically been in place
2. Intellect and direct experience is important but is not the whole picture.
3. Behaviours are as important to consider as skills and qualifications.

Values based selection has typically been the next step from competency based. However, it is proposed to evolve our approach to one of strength-based and potential-based selection as it is more likely to help candidates shine, and to instil an overall sense of engagement and a positive, memorable experience. This is critical to the strategic intent to make 'candidate care' a brand development tool.

### 7.3 Assessment Centre Approach

Assessment centre type approaches to appropriate roles will be explored whereby a wider range of factors can be evaluated. These can include psychometric testing, numerical and verbal reasoning, prioritisation exercises, group discussions or walk-about assessment.

Such approaches come at a cost, mostly of time, but have consistently been proven to be a far more reliable way of ensuring the right fit to a role, which can enrich the candidate experience, and also reduce turnover in the first year of employment.

To undertake assessment well, and to escalate its attention in AWP, it must become a key priority for managers. Commercially it can be justified given the cost and impact of poor selection decisions. Successful organisations see managers committing a number of days a month to support selection.

### 7.4 Enhancing recruitment practices

There are a great many actions that would enhance the current recruitment experience. It is important to commit to those which will provide the greatest impact in the most efficient way. Indicators of strategic intentions in this regard include:

- Specific focus on the selection of those becoming line managers
- The development of succession planning tools and techniques
- More frequent reviews of key performance indicators
- Injection of AWP values into more stages of recruitment
- Develop and deliver an easy to access e-learning package for those leading recruitment
- Establish a system to utilise good candidates who were not appointed – fast tracking them to other vacancies.
- Ensure that jobs are better designed, innovative, attractive and realistic
- Enhance our ability to run generic recruitment campaigns throughout the year to ensure a regular supply of potential candidates to fill anticipated / regular vacancies.
- Establishing a regular suite of apprenticeships into AWP, making full use of the levy
- Growing our own – notably developing further opportunism for Health Care Assistants to progress towards becoming Registered Mental Health Nurses
- Enhancing our ‘return to practice’ for those who have not worked in the NHS recently
- Reinvigorate wide-spread use of work experience. This can be a fruitful way of not only introducing young people to mental health work, but also their families and associates too

AWP will also take part in appropriate streamlining exercises and pilots which occur locally, across STPs, regionally, or nationally. These will, however, be selectively chosen to avoid over-commitment to multiple, often competing initiatives.

### 7.5 Engaging local communities

AWP is aware that a workforce which is representative of its local community can build trust and confidence amongst service users and provide better quality care, especially in a Trust which is so geographically spread.

We will seek opportunities to develop initiatives locally which encourage local residents to come to work or support the work of the Trust. This is particularly important in order to shift the perception that only clinical roles exist in the NHS, and there are a wide range of roles available.

## 7.6 Engaging with Academic Institutions

AWP will deepen its engagement with local (and where possible regional and national) academic institutions. This includes schools, colleges and universities where there are opportunities to attend career fairs, speaking events and to take part in student skill development, such as practice interviews.

Existing relationships with nursing-training institutions will continue to embed and extend with us offering rewarding work placement opportunities to students. We will explore the development of proactive provisional job offers to those that show good potential and meet the minimum criteria.

## 7.7 Linking with Job Centre Plus

We will develop local relationships with Job Centre Plus to tap into schemes relating to the long term unemployed, including those who perhaps suffer stigma due to mental health challenges, as they can add crucial lived experiences to our delivery.

## 7.8 International Markets

AWP experience in non-local campaigns has been quite limited to date. We will continue to learn from other Trusts who have been more active in this arena, and to take opportunities as they arise. Experience from other Trusts indicate that campaigns can be fruitful, but often at a high cost. Mental Health Trusts have typically been more judicious in international commitments as whilst non-English clinical staff can pass language assessments, their ability to apply nuanced interpretation English is challenging.

## 7.9 Reality Check

- ✓ AWP is ahead of many other Trusts by having a formal, work-flow based recruitment system already in place – TRAC.
- ✓ TRAC facilitates considerable pre-planning by recruiting managers in terms of clear short listing criteria, panel-short-listing, and the capture of consistent scoring of applicants.
- ✓ TRAC also provides a considerable suite of performance indicators for all stages of the recruitment process, which aids process improvements and comparative reporting.
- ✓ The recruitment function has been subjected to a “Lean Process Review”, corroborated by an external consultancy as part of the Financial Improvement Programme, to ensure that processes and practices are as efficient as possible.
- ✓ Our average time to recruit is much reduced, with most delays during the gaining of authorisation to recruit, and also the short listing process.
- ✓ We have introduced regular quality checks of individual vacancies, to identify where both the HR team and also the line manager could have improved the experience for all concerned. This includes a more rigorous challenge to poorly worded job adverts or missing crucial detail for applicants.
- ✓ Case studies – the Recruitment team have introduced the provision of good / poor proactive examples to be shared as widely as possible, to help embed a continuous improvement approach to recruitment and selection.
- Line managers are still wary of embracing recruitment as one of the most important parts of their job.
- Training in good recruitment practice is not yet effective and many managers have not attended any training at all.
- Line managers tend to be drawn into a great many clinical situations, rather than allowing team members to resolve them. This reduces the time available for managerial activity.

- TRAC is perceived to be an opaque, user-unfriendly system with unpalatable guidance.
- It is not always clear to managers just how many vacancies they have, hence there is often a delay in getting active.
- There are a number of complex but necessary employment checks required before contracts can be released.

## 8. Retention

Retaining good staff is an equally critical part of the resourcing jigsaw, but unlike attraction and recruitment, does not have such clear cause and effect levers. It is an amalgamation of culture, perspective, workload, satisfaction, personal circumstance and the sense of engagement.

During 2017, AWP had a consistent turnover rate of 15%, which benchmarks with many other mental health trusts. It should be noted that modest employee turnover does benefit the organisation and rates do not always reflect the culture of the organisation. Low turnover can reflect stagnation.

### 8.1 Retention Support Programme

AWP has recently signed up to the NHSI facilitated programme which shares good practice and data between co-operating Trusts with regard to good retention practices. This is a one year programme which will help refine our plans.

### 8.2 Listening into Action and Engagement

The Trust has been taking part in this inclusive and dynamic approach to employee engagement since 2017. It is a long term adjustment in the way that a culture of ownership for resolving local issues can be enacted.

Engagement is centred on creating opportunities for staff to connect with their colleagues, managers and the wider organisation. It is about creating an environment of empowerment and a desire and to go the extra mile to provide excellent service.

AWP must remain focussed on developing and enhancing staff communications at all levels and in a wide variety of ways. These could be through “chats with the chief”, to regular webinars or innovative feedback mechanisms. The use of story-telling is a very effective way to share good practice and will be promoted wherever possible.

Additional elements to support retention which will be explored and enacted over the 5 year period include:

- Better understanding of the reasons staff leave, especially within their first 12 months
- Supplementing exit interviews with “itchy feet” discussions to avoid leavers
- Agreeing and monitoring locality-level retention targets
- Development and roll-out of a good practice retention guide for management teams
- Refreshing the line manager’s development toolkit
- Offering staff the opportunity to move sideways more easily
- Developing easy to read ‘career pathways’ with career workshops to highlight them internally
- The launch of “Bullying and Harassment Champions” to provide a safe sign-posting service
- Maximising learning and development opportunities for all where feasible
- Ensuring that opportunities for project work are fairly advertised and there is equal opportunity

- Promoting rotational contracts between sites and functions
- Hosting “pre-retirement workshops” which may well help people to remain working with us

### 8.3 Leadership behaviours and Link Directors

It is increasingly important that there is a deeper and more interactive link between those in senior leadership roles and the rest of the organisation. AWP will continue to embed the Link Director approach, but this needs extending to a wider range of senior staff taking part in engagement activity on a more regular basis.

### 8.4 Staff Networks

The presence of staff networks, with the active encouragement of senior leadership, can help a great many people develop an affiliation bond. In turn this has been shown to give a great sense of “employee voice” alongside those of Trade Unions. Examples found commonly across the public sector are Disability, Women’s, LGBT, BAME and carer’s networks.

### 8.5 Mentoring and reverse mentoring

Whilst professional mentoring is relatively normalised in AWP, there is much scope to further develop our existing mentoring and coaching offering to more staff. This kind of support can help with identifying potential career pathways, or to inspire those being mentored to stay with the organisation.

A newer approach to this is reverse mentoring, where a more senior member of staff spends time learning from someone at an earlier stage in their career. This can provide a fruitful source of front-line perspective to senior staff.

### 8.6 Promotion support – first line managers

Being promoted into your first line management job can be an exhilarating but isolating challenge. This can be all the more difficult if you are asked to line manage the team you were recently a part of.

A mutual support group will be set up for those who are new to line management, to provide a safe space for honest reflection and learning, and to help gather a better understanding of what line managers are really there to do. Good line management is a linchpin for staff retention.

### 8.7 Flexible working

The promotion of flexible ways of working can help attract and retain staff, as long as the impact of supporting them does not hinder the delivery of excellent quality care. The aspiration should be to assume all jobs can be approached in this way, rather than assuming full time is the only option.

Typical examples, which already exist to some degree are: Part time working; Job sharing; Compressed hours; Annualised hours; Career breaks; Term time contracts.

### 8.8 Development Opportunities

Staff development should be actively encouraged at all stages during everyone’s time with the Trust. We need to collectively make this as straightforward and accessible as possible, and to develop the understanding that development does not only mean attending a classroom based training course.

### 8.9 Change and Transformation

There will continue to be a great many programmes of change affecting a large number of staff. Change is never easy, but can be a prompt for resignations if handled haphazardly or unfairly.

Managers need to be committed to following good practice guidelines when planning and implementing change, and the Trust will continue to develop line manager capability and style when it comes to leading change. It will also continue its commitment to close, collaborative working with our Trade Unions.

### **8.10 Working conditions and Staff Health and Well-being**

Everyone has the right to work in an environment which is conducive to effective and safe working, where they can remain healthy and motivated. The following focal points will be important to the delivery of retention improvements:

- Continuous improvements to the physical environments for staff and service users
- Regular monitoring of sickness rates and reasons, addressing trends actively when they arise
- Increasingly understand the control of working hours linked to roster policies in particular, ensuring compliance with the European Working Time Directive.
- Involving staff as a matter of course in initiatives which will impact them
- Full and active support towards the delivery of our current five year Staff Health and Well-being strategy

### **8.11 Strategies for Professional Groups**

Whilst there are many common themes, recruitment and retention challenges within AWP are often profession and location specific. In order to address this, we will look to professional leads to tailor their own strategies with the support of corporate functions.

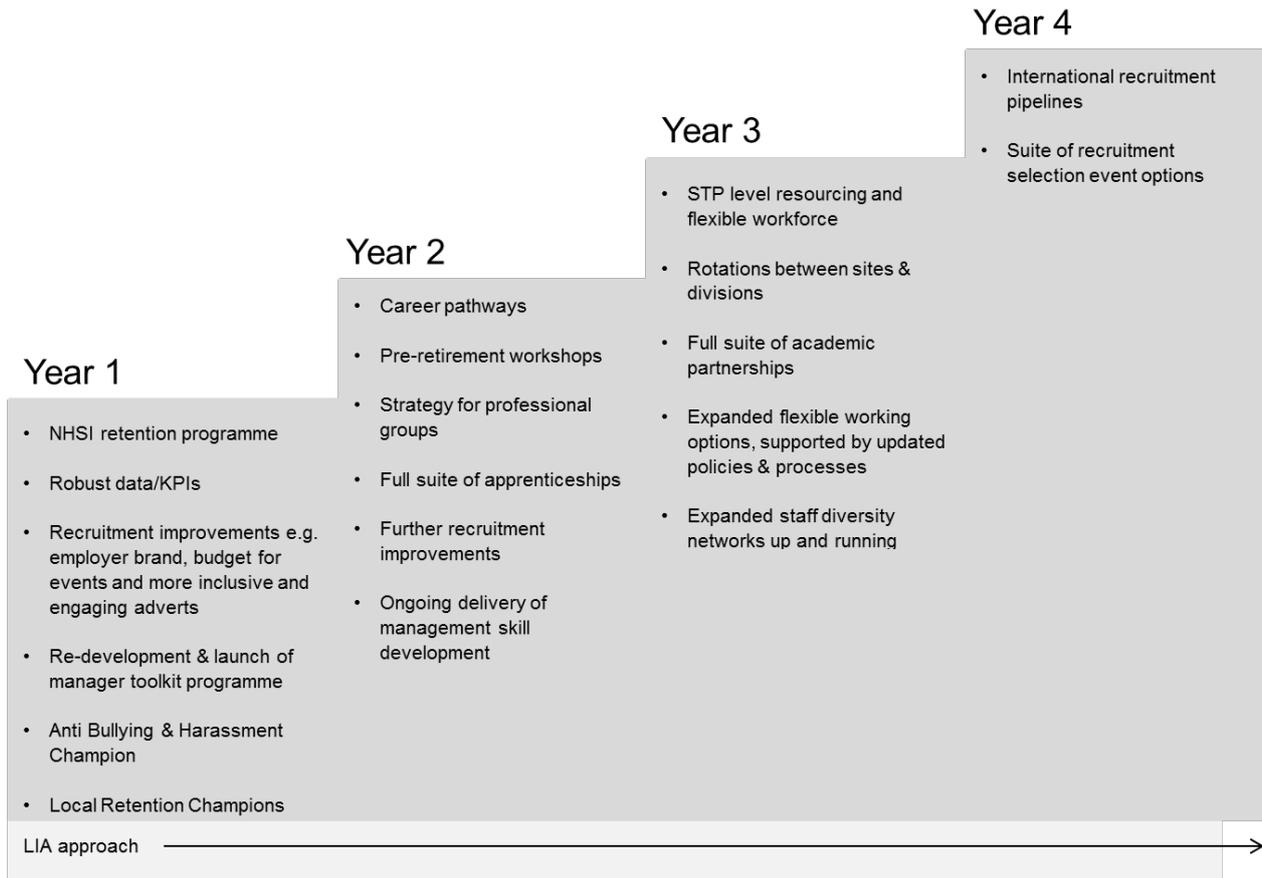
## **9. Implementation and Monitoring of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy**

This is clearly not just a strategy for the Human Resources department – it will require considerable commitment and active input and ownership from the whole organisation, particularly those in leadership positions at all levels. A high level implementation plan is provided below.

On-going development of the strategy and any associated action plans will be carried out on an annual basis in consultation with a range of staff, managers and representatives.

The overall strategy is sponsored by the Director of Human Resources, who will oversee the development of its delivery alongside with the support of the Strategic Workforce Group. A suite of measures will be used to monitor progress, and updates will be provided via the Executive Committee to the Trust Board.

## 10. HIGH LEVEL PHASED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



## Version History

Version	Date	Revision description	Editor	Status
1.0	14 November 2018	New strategy	JF	Approved