

Human Capital Challenges in the NHS: Recruitment Perspective
An HRM Strategic Analysis and Evidence-Based Recommendations

Module Details

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Group Members:

●Prahar sunilbhai shah	-	2528026
●Manpreet singh mehra	-	2522997
●Navin kumar jayakumar	-	2506813
●Neel manishbhai korat	-	2523741
●Jeel bhratbhai anghan	-	2522449

Submission Details

Lecturers: Eno Amasi Maycock

University: UWTSD

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Introduction to the topic

- ❑ The NHS workforce has a critical human capital challenge that is recruitment.
- ❑ Staff shortages are also a considerable issue in ~~lead~~ to service quality and patient outcome (NHS England, 2023).
- ❑ The HR strategies should not be independent in terms of recruitment and long-term workforce planning (NHS Digital, 2023).
- ❑ Evidence-based recruitment practices are critical towards sustainability (Health Foundation, 2022).
- ❑ NHS is also considered to be one of the largest employers in the world but it has a problem with attracting and retaining competent professionals (NHS England, 2023).
- ❑ Thus, HR leaders should devise strategic recruitment strategies that integrate workforce planning, policy enhancements, and new hiring strategies in order to make workforce sustainable in the long term.



Current Recruitment Challenges

- ❑ There is a high rate of vacancy in various NHS departments.
- ❑ Recruitment is influenced by the presence of the competition of the private healthcare organisations.
- ❑ Time consuming hiring procedures scares away candidates (Omiyi et al., 2025).
- ❑ There is a constraint on expansion of recruitment due to budget restrictions.
- ❑ There is also the issue of financial constraint which limits the ability to hire thus the NHS cannot be able to hire enough personnel to satisfy the increasing health demands.



Recruitment and Workforce Planning

- ❑ Workforce planning- Workforce planning fits the future staffing requirements with the future healthcare requirements.
- ❑ Strategic forecasting - This is to determine staffing demand trends.
- ❑ It is a process of predicting future staffing requirements on the basis of the demographics, health care demand and trends in employment.
- ❑ Recruitment becomes rather reactive not strategic without good workforce planning.
- ❑ Adequate planning will help the NHS to be able to predict the problem of workforce shortage, create focused recruitment plans, and have the sustainable workforce that will be able to address the future healthcare demands (Phiri et al., 2022).
- ❑ Poor planning results in a reactive hiring practice (Phiri et al., 2022).
- ❑ Planning helps in the stability of the workforce in the long run (Alkan, Cushen-Brewster, & Anyanwu, 2024).



Policy-Related Recruitment Challenges

- ❑ International recruitment is influenced by the immigration policies.
- ❑ Hiring processes are slowed by the regulatory requirements (Ajemba et al, 2024).
- ❑ The limitation of government funding limits the growth of recruitment.
- ❑ The inconsistency in the policy brings about the uncertainty in the workforce planning (Evans et al., 2023).
- ❑ Immigration policies have an impact on the recruitment of foreign healthcare personnel, which are needed to solve shortages of the workforce.
- ❑ The complicated procedures involved in the regulation frequently slacken the process of hiring, and government-based funding limits the growth of the working force (Evans et al., 2023).
- ❑ The discrepancies in the policies and evolving workforce policies also pose uncertainty in the recruitment planning that may not allow HR managers to apply the long-term solutions.



Organisational Recruitment Barriers

- ❑ Bureaucratic recruitment delays the hiring process (Owolabi et al., 2024).
- ❑ Lack of employer branding makes it less attractive.
- ❑ Low HR digitalisation impacts recruitment performance (Hammond et al., 2022).
- ❑ There is a lack of communication with the candidates.
- ❑ Poor utilization of digital recruitment strategies also delays the recruitment (Hammond et al., 2022).
- ❑ Communication in the recruitment process is poor and this puts the applicants off hence modernisation of HR practices.



Cultural and Leadership Challenges

- ❑ The leadership styles have an impact on effectiveness in recruitment.
- ❑ Culture at the workplace influences attractiveness to the employer.
- ❑ Unfavorable views drive off applicants.
- ❑ Inclusive Leadership enhances the results of recruitment (Habib, 2026).
- ❑ High levels of stress and low level of career advancement are negative factors that deter potential applicants to the NHS.
- ❑ Unsupportive and unengaging leadership styles may also decrease the effectiveness of recruitment.
- ❑ Exclusive leadership behaviour and a favourable organisational culture, however, can make a massive positive contribution to the attractiveness of the employer and facilitate effective recruitment strategies.



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Labour Market Shortages

- ❑ The health care labour market is experiencing international skills deficit.
- ❑ The demand of healthcare professionals is higher than the supply.
- ❑ The recruitment problems are augmented by competition between employers (Hammond et al., 2022).
- ❑ International migration has an effect on the availability of workforce.
- ❑ The world faces a shortage of health professionals especially nurses and specialised doctors.
- ❑ This scarcity gives rise to high competition amongst the healthcare organisations, both government and non-government.
- ❑ The trends in international migration also affect the availability of the workforce since there are several healthcare professionals who want better working conditions in other countries (Hammond et al., 2022).



Training and Education Pipeline Issues

- ❑ Lack of training capacity has an impact on the supply of workforce.
- ❑ Long education postpones the entry into the workforce.
- ❑ The cost of training is a deterrent to career (Omiyi et al., 2025).
- ❑ The weaknesses in workforce planning cut down competencies.
- ❑ Healthcare careers take a long time to be trained thus postponing entry of workers (Omiyi et al., 2025). The lack of training capacity in the universities also limits the supply of skilled personnel in a labour market.
- ❑ Also, the cost of training is very high and it does not attract people to become health care professions. Mismatch of skills demand and supply is also a result of workforce planning gaps as it causes long-term problems in recruiting.



Impact of Employer Branding

- ❑ The reputation of an employer determines the success of recruiting.
- ❑ Bad perceptions decrease the application interest.
- ❑ Good branding gets talented candidates (Ghimire et al., 2024).
- ❑ HR marketing enhances the results of recruitment.
- ❑ Nonetheless, recruitment outcomes can be enhanced through effective employer branding strategies that emphasize career enhancement, organisational principles and social contribution.
- ❑ HR marketing programs are thus important in the attraction of competent healthcare professionals (Phiri et al., 2022).



Psychological Contract Theory

- ❑ Psychological contracts influence the expectations of the employees.
- ❑ Recruitment has an impact on perceived organisational obligations.
- ❑ The disappointment of expectations decreases job attraction (Evans et al., 2023).
- ❑ Open communication builds on recruitment confidence.
- ❑ When these expectations are failed, organisational attractiveness will reduce (Evans et al., 2023).
- ❑ In the case of the NHS, the issue of recruitment is partially associated with the perceived discrepancies between expectations and reality.
- ❑ Psychological contracts can be enhanced with the help of transparent communication and realistic job previews and will increase the success of the recruitment process.



Human Capital Theory

- ❑ The human capital theory places an emphasis on investments within the skills of workforce.
- ❑ Recruitment assists in growth of organisational capability.
- ❑ The shortages in skills lower organisational performance (Morgan, 2022).
- ❑ Investment in the workforce enhances long-term rate of recruitment.
- ❑ It decreases the performance of organisations and healthcare delivery in the NHS since skills professionals are understaffed (NHS Digital, 2023).
- ❑ Organisational training and education, as well as personnel development, can be used strategically to enhance recruitment and reinforce organisational capacity in the long term.



Resource-Based View (RBV)

Key Point	Explanation
Workforce skills provide a competitive organisational advantage	The experienced employees are a good strategic resource that enables organisations to perform and deliver better services.
Recruitment ensures access to valuable human resources	Good recruitment enables organisations to obtain talented staff that will lead to the success of the organisation (Health Foundation, 2022).
Skilled employees improve service quality	Well-trained employees increase patient care, efficiency and effectiveness of organisations.
Strategic recruitment supports organisational sustainability	Long term recruitment planning assists organisations to have a stable and competent workforce.

Equity and Diversity Challenges

- ❑ Diversity hiring is also a strategic concern (Le, Bishop, & Macrae, 2024).
- ❑ Discrimination during the hiring activities compromises equity.
- ❑ Inclusive hiring enhances the representation of workforce (Khan, 2023).
- ❑ Diversity boosts innovation in an organisation. Workforce representation and organisational fairness can be enhanced by inclusive recruitment policies, which favour equal opportunities (Khan, 2023).
Moreover, different workforces lead to better innovation, decision-making and quality of patient care, and thus diversity recruitment is one of the main HR goals.



Impact of Recruitment Challenges on Service Quality

- ❑ Recruitment shortages are directly related to the quality of healthcare services.
- ❑ Staff shortage leads to workload and inefficiency of care (Lorenc et al., 2023).
- ❑ Staffing is a low factor contributing to longer waiting time of patients.
- ❑ Employee turnover lessens organisational performance (Am, Dong, Kularatne, & Rashid, 2025).
- ❑ Consequently, waiting time of patients is prolonged and the quality of service provision can be poor. High vacancy rates also lead to workforce instability which impacts on organisational performance and long term planning (Lorenc et al., 2023).
- ❑ The issues of recruitment should thus be addressed not only to ensure the sustainability of the workforce, but also to sustain the high-quality healthcare services and better patient outcomes.



International Recruitment Dependence

- ❑ The gaps in recruitment raise the level of stress at work.
- ❑ Overwork has an impact on mental health.
- ❑ The work-life balance is complicated to keep.
- ❑ The health of employees has an implication on organisational output (Khan, 2023).
- ❑ Ineffective employee well-being will ultimately influence productivity, quality of service, and retention rates.
- ❑ It is thus necessary to deal with recruitment issues to promote the health of employees, as well as the sustainability of the workforce.



Ethical Challenges in Recruitment

- ❑ Ethical issues are present in global recruiting activities.
- ❑ The hiring of the developing nations can result in the shortage of labour forces (Waheed, Rehman, & Mehmood, 2025).
- ❑ Fair recruitment policies are a guarantee of ethical sourcing of the workforce (Khan, 2023).
- ❑ Ethical recruitment enhances organisational image (Ghimire, Qiu, Neupane, & Ghimire, 2024).
- ❑ The process of hiring medical workers in the developing countries can be a source of workforce deficiency in these areas. The balance of the workforce needs achieved through ethical recruitment policies is to prevent adverse effects worldwide (Khan, 2023).
- ❑ By enacting sound hiring procedures, the organisations likely to increase its reputation and ensure the sustainability of its labour force. Ethical issues thus play a crucial role when planning strategic recruitment (Lorenc et al., 2023).



Technological Solutions for Recruitment

- ❑ The online recruitment sites enhance efficiency in recruitment.
- ❑ There are AI-based systems that facilitate the screening of candidates.
- ❑ Technology saves on processing time of recruitments (Lorenc et al., 2023).
- ❑ Online technologies improve the quality of workforce planning.
- ❑ Online recruitment sites will make the hiring mechanisms more efficient and enhance contact with the candidates.
- ❑ AI applications assist in screening and selection of candidates, and as a result, shorten the recruitment processes.
- ❑ The use of technology also helps in workforce planning because it would give the right data to predict staffing needs.
- ❑ Application of digital solution in recruitment strategy is a move that can greatly enhance workforce management and organisation efficiency (Maclaren et al., 2022).



Need for Integrated Recruitment Strategies

- ❑ Recruitment will have to be synchronized with HR functions.
- ❑ Strategic approaches enhance the stability of the workforces.
- ❑ Teamwork improves the effectiveness of recruitment (Joshi, 2023).
- ❑ The whole HR is effective in promoting organisational success.
- ❑ The cooperation of the HR leaders, policymakers, and healthcare managers improves the effectiveness of recruitment (Joshi, 2023).
- ❑ The organisation should use holistic methods of recruitment in order to achieve long-term organisational success and sustainable workforce development.



Strategic Recruitment Planning Solutions

- ❑ Long-term workforce planning enhances more effective recruitment.
- ❑ The analytics of data helps in effective forecasting of staffing.
- ❑ Proactive recruiting minimizes the risks of vacancies (Phiri et al., 2022).
- ❑ Strategic planning provides sustainability of the workforce.
- ❑ Long term planning would help organisations plan their staffing needs according to the demographic trends and trends in the demand of the health care services (Phiri et al., 2022).
- ❑ It is possible that data analytics will assist in making accurate predictions of the workforce, and such decisions will enable HR leaders to set proactive recruitment strategies.



International Recruitment Strategies

- ❑ Ethical international recruiting deals with the workforce shortages.
- ❑ Workforce mobility is contributed to by global partnerships. (Evans, Burns, Mills, Bryce, & Hanks, 2023)
- ❑ Policy congruence enhances the effectiveness of recruitment.
- ❑ The international recruitment improves diversity in the work force (NHS Digital, 2023).
- ❑ Moral recruitment activities would guarantee that the sourcing of workforce is fair without directly affecting the developing states. Knowledge sharing and labour mobility across healthcare organisations are facilitated by partnerships in the global market (NHS Digital, 2023).
- ❑ There is also effective alignment of policies that enhance the effectiveness of recruitment by making it easier to obtain immigration. International recruitment leads to working diversity and healthcare service delivery (Health Foundation, 2022).



Strategic Workforce Planning Importance

- ❑ Workforce planning matches the recruitment with the future requirements.
- ❑ Forecasting based on data enhances the staffing decisions.
- ❑ Strategic planning avoids the shortage in the long run (Alkan et al., 2024).
- ❑ HR leadership facilitates a workforce sustainability.



Inclusive Recruitment Policies

- ❑ Diversity in workforce is encouraged through inclusive recruitment.
- ❑ Biased-free employment enhances good equality (Hammond et al., 2022).
- ❑ Diversity increases organisational performance (NHS England, 2023).
- ❑ Inclusive policies enhance reputation of the employer.



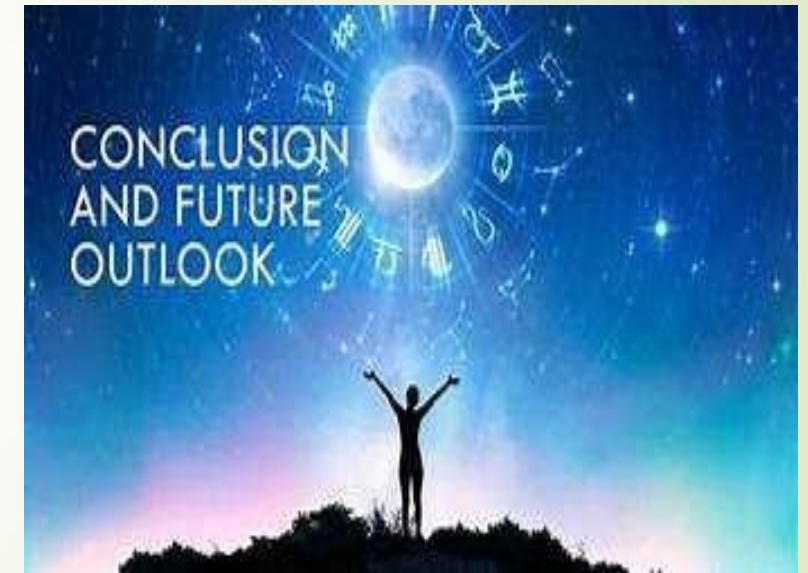
Role of HR Leadership in Recruitment

- ❑ The recruitment strategy is driven by the HR leadership (Evans, Mills, Burns, Bryce, & Hanks, 2023).
- ❑ Good leadership enhances workforce planning.
- ❑ The HR strategic decisions are favourable to the sustainability of an organisation.
- ❑ Leadership encourages innovation in the practices of recruitment (Maertens, Daniëls, Hondegheem, & Vandenabeele, 2025).



Conclusion and Future Outlook

- ❑ Recruitment is still one of the significant workforce challenges in NHS.
- ❑ Strategic HR solutions will enhance the results of recruitment (NHS England, 2023).
- ❑ Workforce planning is integrated, which makes it sustainable.
- ❑ Future innovation will be more effective in recruitment (Downing-Burn & Officer, n.d.).
- ❑ Workforce planning, digital transformation, and employer branding are some of the strategic HR solutions that can maximize the results of recruitment (NHS England, 2023). Sustainability requires integrated recruitment strategies in line with retention and workforce development.
- ❑ More effective recruitment will be further facilitated by the future advancements in technology and HR practices that will enable the resiliency of healthcare workforce (Khan, 2023).



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