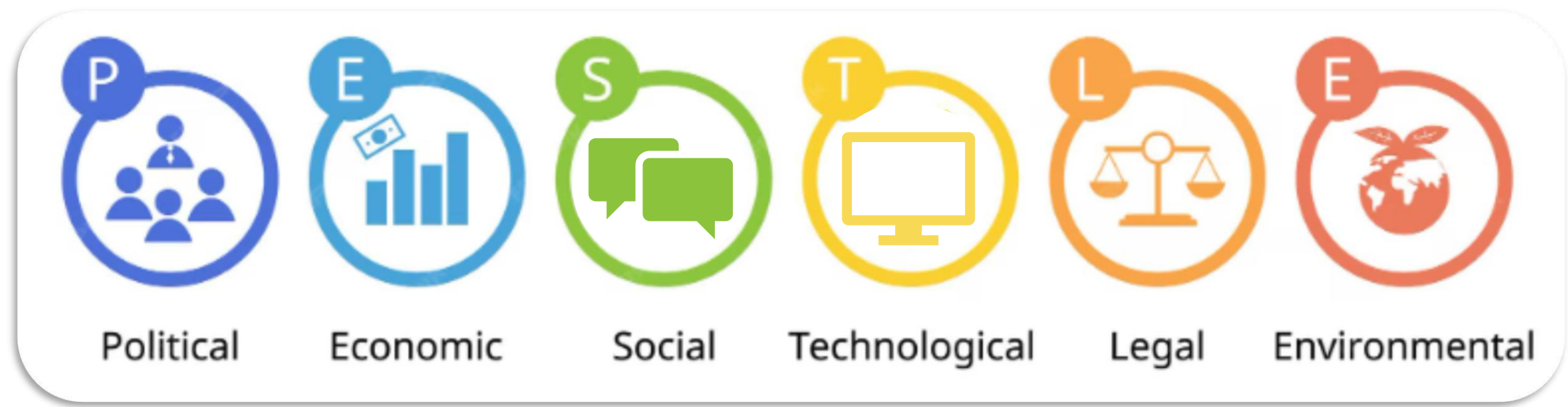




PESTLE for People Management: Anticipate, Adapt, Achieve

PESTLE provides a fundamental approach to successful strategic workforce planning, impacting organisational strategies and influencing key business decisions (CIPD, 2025).

The PESTLE tool is a simple framework that reviews six macro-environmental factors: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental. Analysing these factors, allows organisations to anticipate external risks and opportunities that could have an impact on the work undertaken by people management professionals, such as workforce stability and compliance with employment legislation.

Conducting PESTLE alongside a SWOT analysis is recommended as it will also provide an assessment of the organisation’s internal factors (CIPD, 2025). Only when you have clear visibility of the internal and external factors impacting your organisation, will you be able to identify the external drives for change and how well equipped the organisation is able to respond.

Social Change Drives Workplace Change – Be Ready!

As a healthcare provider in a rural location, a large proportion of the workforce within Hywel Dda also live within the health boards catchment, resulting in similar social impact across both the population and workforce. A social factors causing a significant impact on the organisation is the aging population, with 25% of the population reported as being aged 65 and above in 2023 (Government, 2023).

Hywel Dda’s Annual plan (2025a) outlines the added pressures on hospital services within the organisation, which is exasperated by an aging population causing a rise in long-term conditions. While the estimated increase of the current aging population is a concern, it is the complexity of the chronic health conditions, cognitive decline and frailty that place further strain on the organisation, resulting in an increase in long-stay patients and wards that reach full capacity (Shreya et al., 2025).

In line with increased demand, Hywel Dda have a significant proportion of services experiencing inflated sickness rates and exceeding the health board target of 6.6% (Hywel Dda, 2025b). Additionally, the highest proportion of the sickness taken across the last 12 months is due to stress/anxiety, depression. The annual staff survey highlighted 30.6% of the workforce across Wales felt burnt out due to work pressures, with only 18% agreeing the organisation adopted a proactive approach to promoting health and wellbeing (NHS Wales, 2024).

Strengthening collaboration between health, social care and third sector, while also adopting a multi-disciplinary team approach could result in a reduction in admissions, leading to better patient outcomes, ensuring less work pressures and enhance job satisfaction for teams (Withers et al., 2024).

In addition to the aging population, 36.5% of the workforce across Hywel Dda are aged 51 and above, putting them at risk of potential retirement in 5-10 years (Hywel Dda, 2025c). Furthermore, 11% of the current workforce are aged 61 and above putting them at immediate risk of retirement based on an average retirement age of 62.52 across the health board (Hywel Dda, 2025c). Creating a talent pipeline, promoting training and development opportunities support younger employees to feel motivated, while offering phased retirement to those looking to leave, may encourage them to stay in the organisation for an extended period, resulting in increased stability for our workforce (CIPD, 2015).

According to CIPD, studies show a stronger preference for phased retirement rather than continuing in full-time employment until retirement age (Taylor and Perkins, 2021). Furthermore, by supporting flexible working, employers are more likely to attract talent within an aging labour market, strengthening experience and expertise (Taylor and Perkins, 2021).

Technological Change Starts Here – Are You Ready?

The Covid pandemic marked a pivotal shift towards embracing digital and data-driven approaches, demonstrating that they are not only tools but are vital to redefine how the future of health and care should be delivered, leading to a healthier Wales (Government, 2023).

Hywel Dda launched their ‘Digital Transformation Programme’ this year, which is due to be implemented across 2025/26 as part of a 10-year transformation partnership, further supporting the Governments focus on improving digital capabilities by delivering patient-focused systems that enhance clinical efficiency, while ensuring organisational resilience (Hywel Dda, 2025a). The intention of implementing the digital strategy across Hywel Dda is to support improved patient flow and enhance the organisations adaptability to mitigate against ongoing challenges (Hywel Dda, 2025a). However, CIPD note that implementing new technologies can pose significant challenges for organisations and impact groups of employees (Taylor and Perkins, 2021). Additionally, CIPD data reveals a limited training offer to sufficiently equipped the workforce with the essential skills required to navigate new technologies (CIPD, 2020).

To ensure successful implementation of the different phases set out in Hywel Dda’s transformation programme, it is essential the organisation adopt a proactive approach. Providing sufficient training, meaningful dialog and continued support to employees will encourage a more confident workforce that are better prepared to adapt to anticipated change (CIPD, 2020). As part of the Welsh Government’s strategy, they also recognise the importance of providing relevant training to re-skill the workforce, as well as promoting digital literacy to support patient access (Government, 2023).

Following the launch of the Mental Health Strategy (Government, 2025) aimed at improving poor mental health, an All-Wales approach has been implemented to improve access to psychological interventions, which is timely, flexible and offers diverse access (Hywel Dda, 2025d). As targets for psychological interventions were consistently breached the service introduced a way to reduce growing waiting lists by providing digital interventions, resulting in a consistent increase in uptake and 97.2% compliance, exceeding a target of 80% (Hywel Dda, 2025b).

While the implementation of digital therapeutic interventions has led to improved compliance, it has also changed the way the workforce interacts with patients and resulted in increased remote working requests. Although remote working is supported by the Health Board, it does pose questions around data security and safeguarding measures to mitigate against risk relating to the sharing of patient data (Government, 2025). Digital tools are still evolving, and Organisations are learning along the way. It is vital Hywel Dda maintain patient trust by ensuring they address concerns relating to data security (Sinha, 2024).

Want to know more?

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Or scan the QR code for details



