

A PESTLE analysis focuses on external factors that impact a business. It focuses on factors under specific headings of Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022). By regularly undertaking a PESTLE analysis trends and patterns can be recognised at an earlier opportunity, allowing actions to be taken to avoid risk and potentially provide a competitive advantage (Battista, 2024). Providing an internal-external analysis is carried out in a thorough way, a PESTLE reviewing external factors, coupled with internal analytic tools such as SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) supports strategic planning and decision making centred on evidence-based practice (Rees and French, 2023). Whilst the model is simple and seems clear cut, often the factors can interlink and cross each other. The main importance of the analysis is to critically evaluate the factors and their relationships along with the impact they have on the organisation (Buchanan and Huczynski 2016). The main advantages of a PESTLE analysis are the simplicity of the model and its use to understand the big picture. However, at times it can be oversimplified and as such either too much or too little data may be used leading to assumptions being unfounded (Battista, 2024).

Sociological

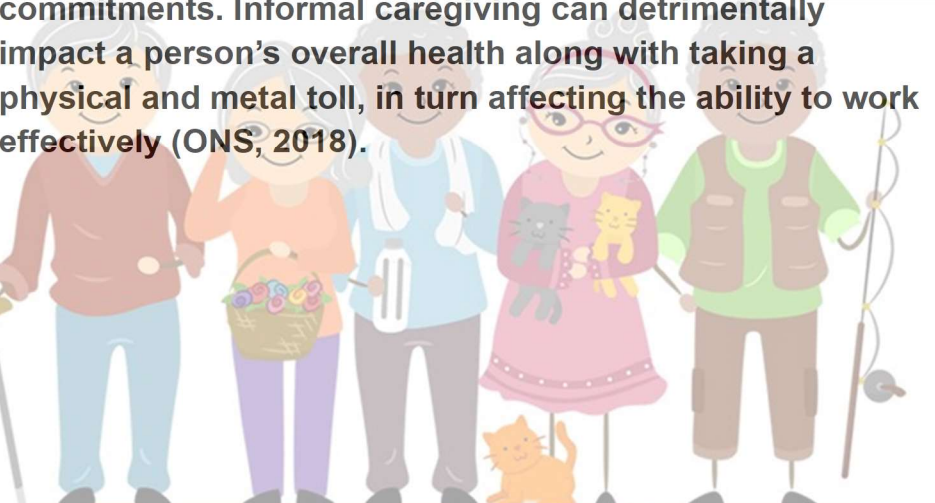
Social determinants of health (SDH) are defined by the World Health Organisation, WHO (2024) as ‘*non-medical factors that influence health*’. It is suggested that 30-55% of health outcomes are impacted by these factors (WHO, 2024). These influences may include factors such as living condition, behaviours, demography and income (Public Health Wales Observatory, 2017) which may be influenced by local, regional and/or national policies (The Health Foundation, 2022).

In Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB), as in other areas of Wales, there is an ageing population. In the three local authority areas of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire one quarter (25%) of people were aged 65 or over as recorded in the census information in 2021 (ONS, 2021).

This aging demographic places pressures on every part of our health board, whether through the challenge to recruit with less local resource of working age or retention as the workforce ages thus further reducing resource (Audit Wales, 2023). Both of these factors result in increasing strain on services and workforce as well as increased costs when covering through alternative means such as agency workers (Audit Wales, 2023).

Through A Healthier Mid and West Wales (AHMWW) strategy, there is focus on supporting patients with varying needs, including the sustaining of health and well-being in the older demographic that our health board serves (HDUHB, no date).

The impact of this on our workforce may also include our staff requiring a more flexible approach to working patterns in order to care for elderly dependants. If the health board does not support unpaid carers and flexible working they risk higher levels of turnover, increased stress within the workplace and lowered wellbeing overall. The CIPD (2020) research shows that twenty-nine per cent of working carers consider reducing their hours with twenty-four per cent considering leaving work due to these commitments. Informal caregiving can detrimentally impact a person’s overall health along with taking a physical and mental toll, in turn affecting the ability to work effectively (ONS, 2018).



Environmental

The declaration of a climate emergency by the Senedd in April 2019 made it the first parliament in the world to do this. Since then, Welsh Government has set out strategies and legislation to make the public sector net zero by 2030 (Carbon Trust, 2021). The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 increases pressure on the NHS not only to consider environmental impact in day-to-day decision making but also to safeguard the health of future generations.

Challenges faced by Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) will be a balance between maintaining quality of services and care provided whilst working to support a future healthier more resilient and sustainable Wales (NHS Confederation, 2024).

Climate change can bring about both negative and positive impact on organisations. It can drive up costs if supply chains are affected. However, it can also encourage teams to think more innovatively thus potentially improving ways of working to enable carbon reduction (Coppola, Krick, and Blohmke, 2019).

NHS Wales has six main workstreams identified in the decarbonisation plan. These are grouped as carbon management, buildings, transport, procurement, estates planning / land use and approach to health care (Carbon Trust, 2021).

As outlined in the A Healthier Mid and West Wales (AHMWW) Our future generations living well strategy outlines one of the four major challenges we face is the delivery of care from older estate (HDUHB, no date). This challenge has been a major issue during the pandemic and as noted in the UK Covid 19 Inquiry (2024, 37.04) Glangwili General Hospital within HDUHB was the first hospital established in Wales under the NHS Act 1949. The current building was opened in 1959 and as such would not have been designed for current standards of care or with an aim for net zero. Many other areas in the health board also face challenges of aged estate and HDUHB (2024a) are aiming to support the route to net zero by 2030 through ‘disposing of low-performing, high carbon buildings’.

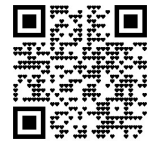
The health board has identified that a key improvement factor for carbon performance is in how and where our workforce work. This includes the design for administrative workspaces to be more open, collaborative and agile, promoting the hybrid model of working and supporting the rationalisation of estate (HDUHB, 2022).

Delivery within this ambitious timescale set by Welsh Government constitutes a risk for Hywel Dda especially given our status in targeted intervention. The uncertainty as to the route to net zero and the expectation of delivery within existing resources being outlined to the Hywel Dda Sustainable Resource Committee (SRC) (HDUHB, 2024b) will place additional pressures on an already strained workforce. This had earlier been highlighted through an internal report presented to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) in February 2024 which provided limited assurance based on lack of resource (HDUHB, 2024c) adding to the concern that additional pressures will be placed on an already strained workforce.

For further information and to view the policy supporting unpaid careers please scan



For Hywel Dda psychological well-being service please scan



To view the full findings along with management responses to the internal audit report scan

