

Our strategy continued



3. Investing in our workforce

Recruit, retain and develop great people.

With the shortage of clinical staff across the healthcare sector, we aspire to attract, retain, train and develop the most talented people to our business.



Our goals

- Sector-leading colleague satisfaction
- Sector-leading consultant satisfaction
- Sector-leading private hospital apprenticeship programmes

Highlights and priorities

Highlights of 2023

- Brought our recruitment service in-house to improve attraction and efficiency, saving £0.5 million
- Launched a new Speak Up training module from the National Guardian's Office
- Welcomed a new cohort into our nurse apprenticeship programme
- Held our first colleague survey champions' day

Priorities for 2024

- Develop our new reward framework
- Refocus our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy
- Focus on the employee experience as part of our external employer brand
- Continue to develop networks to support colleagues

Creating a positive working environment

As a healthcare service provider, we recognise and value the hard work and dedication of all our colleagues. That's why investing in our workforce is at the heart of the group's strategy, and why when we say we're here to make a positive difference to people's lives, we include our own people in that.

Given the well-documented shortage of skilled healthcare staff in the UK and internationally, the need for wellbeing, inclusion, and a positive, rewarding working environment has never been greater. More than that, we recognise that we have a vital role to play in addressing the shortage of clinical staff, not just in our own organisation, but also across the nation's healthcare system. We aim to develop, support and protect our colleagues within a welcoming culture that is characterised by openness, respect, collaborative working, a focus on clinical safety, and a spirit of continuous improvement. That's how we create value for our colleagues, our business and the whole health sector.

Bringing recruitment in-house

Our workforce is a critical enabler to deliver our strategy, but resourcing remains the most significant barrier to building capacity across our services. Vacancies are a continuing challenge across the healthcare sector, notably for specialist clinical roles. That's why we brought hospital recruitment in-house early in the year, and this has led to a tangible improvement to the filling of vacancies and a reduced cost per hire – as of September 2023, the average cost per offer is 41% lower – and the project saved £0.5m in 2023. We are attracting talented people to join our teams, while we continue to actively promote people to new roles from within Spire Healthcare.

Agency costs remain an issue for us and all healthcare providers, and rates for specialist skills are higher, but we are controlling them well and costs are down. We now have a single agency booking system, with a master agreement in place. This helps us to manage our agencies and see all costs up front. We are still in the process of digitising our bank and agency staff recruitment, but a single platform will bring future efficiencies.

Our strategy continued

We also continue to develop the way we portray our employee experience to potential recruits. Building on work in 2023, we will develop use of social media, events and advertising to reach new colleagues in 2024.

Valuing and rewarding colleagues

With the ongoing cost-of-living pressures, high interest rates, and impact of high inflation, our colleagues want clarity and certainty about their pay. That's why for all eligible colleagues we prioritised a 5.5% salary increase from September 2023. This built on our 5% increase last year and means that most colleagues will have seen a rise of over 10% in salary since September 2022. We have also been developing a new reward framework with our hospital directors and senior leaders to provide our colleagues with a simple structure and clarity on role progression to support their careers.

Engaging with colleagues

We want our colleagues to have a great work experience at Spire Healthcare, and if they feel engaged they can perform at their best. We use a range of two-way communications channels to communicate and engage with colleagues. These channels include our Ryalto colleague communications tool, which is used to build employee communities, publish key information and videos to colleagues from our chief executive officer, Justin Ash, and members of the executive committee every month.

In April we held our first-ever colleague survey champions' day at our head office, getting people together from all our hospitals and central functions to discuss what matters most for our teams. Key themes from the meeting included the importance of getting the basics right, particularly around personal development and growth. The group also reviewed our activity since last year's colleague survey: since the survey, we have launched Justin Ash's monthly colleague and consultant update, encouraged and supported managers to carry out half-year performance reviews with their teams throughout July, highlighted the importance of regular 1:1 meetings between managers and colleagues, and held our first topic-specific colleague call to get colleagues behind our new multimedia brand campaign.

We also established a new workforce committee in July that reports to our executive committee and is dedicated to strategic workforce matters. We held further colleague listening sessions with the executive committee and our non-executive directors – including a session with Justin Ash on Freedom to Speak Up.

Colleague survey results

While we encourage regular feedback from our people formally and informally, our annual colleague survey is open to all colleagues and provides in-depth feedback from all parts of the business. We held our 2023 survey in November and achieved an overall response rate of 86% (77% in 2022), with 81% of colleagues saying they are proud to work for Spire Healthcare (+1 percentage point from 2022) and 84% of colleagues saying that they get personal satisfaction from the work they do, level with 2022. 86% of colleagues would be happy with the standard of care if their friends or family needed treatment at Spire Healthcare (up 3 percentage points from 2022) and 71% would recommend Spire Healthcare as a place to work (down from 72% in 2022). Following these results, teams are developing action plans to drive improvements such as learning opportunities, line management and variances between sites.

As part of our analysis of the feedback, we view the results of the survey by demographic to help us understand the needs and experiences of different colleague groups. 75% of respondents in the survey believe that we treat all people as equals, regardless of individual differences, up from 70% in 2022.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

We believe that diversity and inclusion are core to sustaining a successful business, and we aspire to create an environment where everyone is respected and cared for, and where difference is celebrated. We want to ensure that our colleagues feel confident to bring their whole selves to work, which in turn makes us stronger as a team and as an organisation. We were pleased to be listed in the Financial Times Statista Diversity Leaders index for another year; this is an index of companies considered to be Europe's Diversity Leaders, based on a survey of 100,000 employees across Europe.



Driving Clinical Excellence in Practice programme

We were pleased to launch our new Driving Clinical Excellence in Practice Programme this year. It is a bespoke educational initiative that covers a comprehensive framework of necessary competencies and skills for our registered nurses and allied health professionals. The programme encourages participants to engage with their peers to foster a deeper sense of community and reinforce pride in the profession. It will also support nurse revalidation, promote better patient outcomes, patient experience and promote better use of resources. The programme was launched at the beginning of November for our first cohort of registered nurses. The first education day was held

at Spire Manchester, with 27 registered nurses from 16 hospitals who work across wards, outpatients, recovery, theatres, eye centres and pre-operative assessment. The second education day took place at our head office and was attended by 44 registered nurses. The first cohort of registered nurses who complete the programme will be awarded their Driving Clinical Excellence in Practice badge and certificate at a graduation event to be held at our head office, where we will celebrate and acknowledge all of their hard work and commitment. This event is scheduled to coincide with International Nurses Day in May 2024. The second cohort of the programme is scheduled to begin in April 2024.

Our strategy continued

Our equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy is based on four commitments: (i) we recognise the value of diversity, (ii) we understand how it will help us deliver our purpose, (iii) we respect and appreciate each other for who we are, and (iv) we include diverse colleagues in our problem-solving to make better, faster decisions.

Our colleague networks are an important part of delivering our EDI strategy – we run regular meetings, lunch-and-learn sessions with external speakers and other activities to support colleagues and patients. Networks provide safe spaces for colleagues to discuss issues of relevance, raise awareness and competency of those issues, and influence change. For example, our Let's Talk LGBTQ+ network extended the network of trained champions to every hospital in 2023 and has held sessions on transgender awareness and HIV-positive living, in partnership with Manchester-based charity, George House Trust. The network produced three Spire LGBTQ+ podcasts, made available via our internal channels. These featured interviews with colleagues on adoption, career development and living and working as a transgender person. Vita Health Group runs an LGBTQIA+ network.

Our menopause colleague network is now in its second year and has trialled a menopause checklist to support and enable conversations between line managers and colleagues when reviewing adaptations in line with our menopause policy, and explored a new menopause-friendly uniform in 2023. Results from a second survey are expected in early 2024. The first survey showed colleague difficulties with insomnia, anxiety, low confidence and self-esteem.

Read about our race equality network, and more on diversity, in the sustainability report on page 45.

Development and apprenticeships

Supporting the development of our colleagues is crucial if we are to maintain the high standards of quality and care that we expect for our patients and pride ourselves on. Professional development is also an important part of our offer for attracting and retaining the very best people for our hospitals. We currently have over 430 apprentices across the

business in a wide range of clinical areas such as biomedical science, physiotherapy, medical laboratory technicians, as well as non-clinical disciplines, representing almost 4% of our permanent workforce. We welcomed another 12 nurse apprentices at 10 hospitals onto our nurse apprenticeship programme in late 2023. All 12 passed a rigorous assessment to join the programme, which is run with The University of Sunderland. They will each enjoy remote studying as well as placements in a range of nursing settings. Some of Spire Healthcare's 160 nursing apprentices graduated in November with high honours, delivering critically-needed nursing skills directly into the UK healthcare sector. Spire Healthcare was named Employer of the Year at the University of Sunderland and MTC Training Awards.

International colleagues

We continue to recruit overseas nurses, recruiting 115 in 2023. This recruitment not only adds valuable colleagues and capacity to the group, but also broadens the opportunities available to the nurses who join us from other countries, however long they stay with us and wherever they choose to pursue their future careers. Each new nurse undertakes Objective Standard Clinical Examination (OSCE) training and is individually welcomed, and we provide them with access to support teams 24/7.

As ethical recruiters, we only recruit actively in 'green' countries under the World Health Organization definition. We help overseas colleagues, including resident doctors, to connect with others making the same journey. Since 2021, we have recruited over 670 members of staff from overseas.



Mental health and wellbeing

We have a network of trained volunteer Mental Health First Aiders who support colleagues at our sites. Resilience training is available, and attendance is encouraged to ensure our first aiders have the support they need and the opportunity to acquire additional skillsets to prioritise self-care before helping their colleagues. Group People Director, Rachel King, attends regular listening calls with our network of mental health volunteers to enable colleagues to raise concerns in a safe, supportive and confidential environment.

We also offer a comprehensive Employee Assistance Programme providing confidential advice and support online and via a free helpline, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In late 2023, Spire Occupational Health started to provide support to non-clinical Spire Healthcare employees through new starter assessments, bringing services in-house.

Working with consultants

A crucial part of the care we provide is our consultant partners, who operate as self-employed practitioners in our hospitals, drawn from all medical disciplines. Each hospital's medical advisory committee meets quarterly with consultants, and the committee chairs meet hospital directors and directors of clinical services regularly to ensure proper, safe, efficient and ethical medical use of the hospital. In 2023, hospital leadership teams developed action plans to build on our existing relationships with consultants. These aimed to ensure we have the best clinical facilities available to them, and effective digital systems which make it easy for them to do business with us. Our annual consultant survey in 2023 ran using our new experience measurement platform, Qualtrics, and saw a seven percentage point rise in the response rate. Results showed that 83% of consultants now state that the care provided in hospitals is 'very good' or 'excellent', up from 78% in 2022, and driven exclusively by uplifts in consultants rating care as 'excellent'. Five hospitals saw rises of 12 percentage points or higher. Consultants rating the quality of service provided to them by our hospitals as 'very good' or 'excellent' is 69%, up from 64% in 2022 and the highest level since 2016.

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Colleagues proud to work for Spire Healthcare

81%

2022: 80%
Spire Healthcare annual survey 2023 (Spire Healthcare Limited and The Doctors Clinic Group)

Consultants describe the care provided in hospitals as 'excellent' or 'very good'

83%

2022: 78%
Spire Healthcare consultant survey 2023

Our strategy continued

NHS sexual safety in healthcare charter

Following reports of sexual assault, harassment and abuse in the NHS, NHS England launched a new sexual safety charter this year – urging all NHS trusts, Integrated Care Boards and others across the healthcare sector to sign up. We stand in full support of anyone who has been the victim of this kind of behaviour and were pleased to sign up to the organisational charter which commits us to a zero-tolerance approach to any unwanted, inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviours towards our workforce. We also commit to actively working to eradicate sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace, and to promote a culture that fosters openness and transparency. These commitments apply to everyone in our organisation equally.

Creating value for each other

With the pressures of the past few years compounded by the cost of living, high inflation, and recession in the economy, supporting our colleagues' health and wellbeing remains a top priority. Our Helping Hand initiative uses bespoke notice boards at all hospitals where our people can ask for or offer help such as donating or loaning useful items or offering their skills and time. Our virtual monthly nightcap club remains in place, giving colleagues a safe space to share how they are doing. One of the chief executive's key messages for 2023 was 'Be Kind', supported by messaging on financial, mental health and exercise, and a 'Be Kind' Christmas campaign.

We introduced new questions in our 2023 colleague survey about wellbeing to enable us to better understand how colleagues feel they are being supported. We offer discount savings via our online colleague portal, Spire for You, and have promoted Blue Light cards to colleagues; these provide more than 15,000 discounts for healthcare workers.

Absence and turnover

Managing absence and turnover helps us understand our colleagues and ensure they are valued and rewarded. We use data to flex our workforce and ensure we have sufficient capacity and resilience.

Our absence rates show a further reduction in 2023, particularly short-term absence. The overall rate of absence was 4.7% (5.9% in 2022, 6.3% in 2021). Cost of sickness absence reduced by over £2 million across the group in hours lost compared to 2022. Our monthly turnover rate continued to reduce significantly, with 23% fewer leavers in 2023, compared with 2022, suggesting that recent pay awards and increased development opportunities have had a positive impact on retention. The highest recorded reasons for leaving are personal circumstances and career progression; our focus will continue to be on career development and flexible working solutions. The market for talented people remains competitive, with the demand for nurses particularly high. We are pleased to see a 40% increase in the number of offers made to new colleagues, compared to 2022, following the successful insourcing of our recruitment team.

Absence rose at Vita Health Group during 2023 with an overall rate of absence of 3.6% (3.2% in 2022). Turnover fell slightly from 24% in 2022 to 23.5% in 2023. Absence at The Doctors Clinic Group during 2023 was 1.2% overall, and turnover was 46%.

Overseas nurses recruited

115

2022: 112
Spire Healthcare Limited recruitment data

Colleagues who get satisfaction from their work

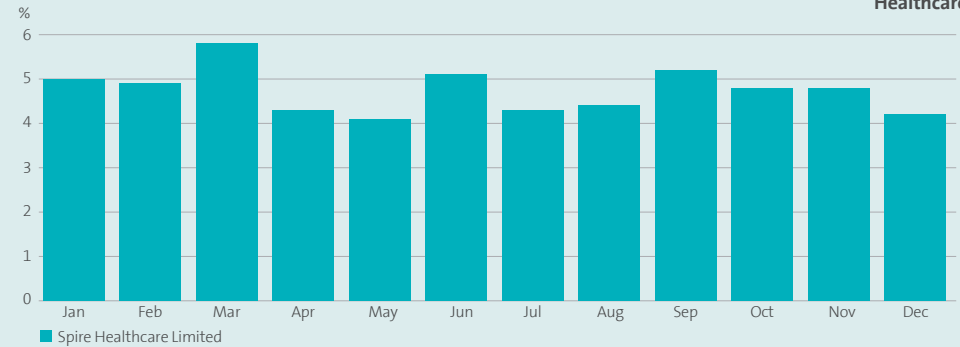
84%

2022: 84%
Spire Healthcare annual survey 2023 (Spire Healthcare Limited and Doctors Clinic Group)

Employee absence, 2023, Spire Healthcare

Total sickness absence in hours as a % of total employed hours

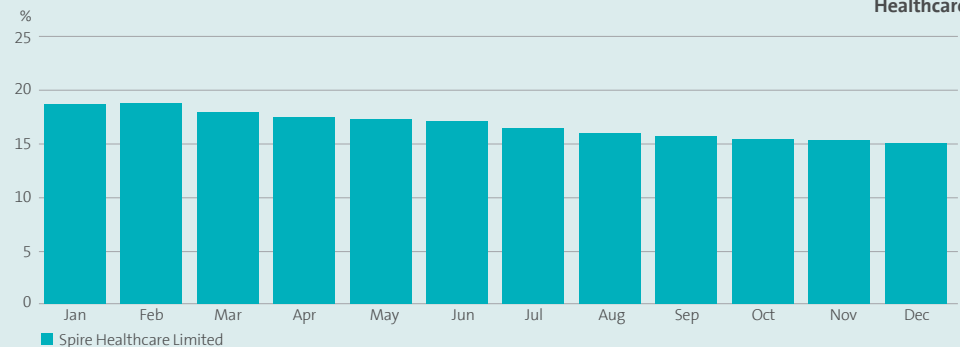
4.7%
overall Spire Healthcare



Employee turnover, 2023, Spire Healthcare

12-month rolling turnover rate as a % of total headcount

15.1%
overall Spire Healthcare



Read more about diversity networks, allyship and data in our sustainability report on page 36

Read more about apprentices and learning and development in our sustainability report on page 36