



## 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 2024

- Introduced new reward framework for colleagues in hospitals
- Improved ability to attract and retain talent through improved in-house recruitment
- Sustained high engagement scores among colleagues during change
- Over 110 colleagues graduated from apprenticeship programmes

##### Priorities for 2025

- Supporting colleagues through business transformation
- Replace learning management system for all colleagues in hospitals and central functions
- Supporting development and career progression and development of colleague value proposition
- Implement updated equality, diversity and inclusion strategy

#### Creating a positive working environment

We recognise and value the hard work and dedication of all our colleagues – and we seek to make a positive difference to their lives. That's why investing in our workforce is a key pillar of our strategy. Our four key themes for 2024, led by our CEO, were: 'Listen up' embracing the gift of feedback, so we are open, honest and safe; 'Inspire kindness', having an open and honest culture; being a 'Change champion', so our future works better for everyone; and 'Making it count', growing our business. 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. We drive our colleagues to be curious and to challenge each other in a professional way to seek the best patient care, and ensure safety is paramount in the care that we're providing. We know when colleague, consultant, client and patient satisfaction join up, we see better performance.

We understand the importance of having high-quality leadership in our hospitals and our board annually reviews the calibre and diversity of our leaders, and visibility of our succession pipeline. We have an agreed target for ethnic minority representation in senior management (see more in Sustainability on page 38).

We are focused on creating a positive working environment, where people feel that they can speak up, with Freedom to Speak Up guardians at all sites. We are investing in our employee experience as part of our commitment to supporting and protecting our colleagues and our business. For example, during 2024 we introduced new initiatives including our new managers programme to support colleagues in hospitals and central functions who have recently moved into a managerial role, and bespoke learning sessions to support teams across the business. In VHG, in-house mentoring sessions developed colleagues' skills, confidence and networks.

**Our strategy** continued

We want our colleagues to have a great work experience, and if they feel engaged, they can perform at their best. Read more on how we engage with colleagues in Sustainability on page 38.

**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 a business.

In 2024, we worked towards our new equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy, examining and improving our data to better understand our colleagues, leading to improved insights into what changes should be made and to cultivate a feeling of belonging. We have identified areas that we want to focus on to either improve diversity or make positive change, and the strategy will progress in 2025.

Our network groups provide safe spaces for our diverse colleagues to discuss issues of relevance, raise awareness and influence, and include our Let's Talk LGBTQ+ network, menopause network and race equality network in the hospitals business and further networks on women, LGBTQIA+ and race equality in VHG.

We were pleased to again be listed in the FT Statista Diversity Leaders index as the leading UK healthcare company, based on a survey of 100,000 employees across Europe. For the first time we were ranked 254 by the FT UK's Best Employers 2025, of 500 companies ranked and 20,000 surveyed. We were also ranked as 4th in the FTSE 250 Women Leaders Review and in the top 100 businesses by Women in Work for senior female leaders, who also praised us for having transparent maternity policies available for job applicants. Read more on diversity in Sustainability on page 38.

**Valuing and rewarding colleagues**

We are focused on getting the fundamentals right on pay, benefits and reward for our colleagues. We have invested in pay and reward this year with the implementation of our new reward framework across our hospitals business, which maps all our core

roles and associated salaries. The framework was shaped through listening sessions with colleagues and senior leaders. Our robust structure ensures fairness and equity, with clarity on where colleagues fit in our structure and how they are rewarded. It will also help us ensure that we remain competitive – recruiting at the right salary levels and paying colleagues at the right level.

With the ongoing cost-of-living pressures, our colleagues want clarity and certainty about their pay. That's why for all eligible colleagues we prioritised a 2.75% salary increase from September 2024, announced in May to give colleagues predictability. It should be noted that the introduction of increased national insurance contributions for employees in 2025 will add to our cost base. In 2024 we got ahead of this by increasing and accelerating our efficiencies programmes.

During a year of change, our HR colleagues gave significant support to all projects, recruiting and inducting a large number of colleagues, supporting reward framework conversations, and redeploying people into new roles during business transformation, and this will continue in 2025.

Most colleagues have access to PMI cover, and access to a comprehensive health assessment every other year. In 2024, we introduced a menopause assessment as an additional choice. We also offer a comprehensive employee assistance programme, providing confidential advice support online and via a free helpline, available 24/7 to clinical and non-clinical employees.

**Mental health and wellbeing**

Colleagues working in our hospitals hold emotional and challenging roles. Our network of trained volunteer mental health first aiders support colleagues at our hospital sites. In 2024, we ran new and refreshed training to ensure our first aiders have the support they need and the opportunity to acquire additional skillsets that prioritise self-care before helping their colleagues. We delivered five personal resilience courses to support colleagues to recover from adversity, stress and difficult situations. In autumn 2024, we ran a 'Kindness works here' campaign, covering colleagues' physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing.

**Strategy in action**

## Investing in apprentices

Professional development is an important part of our offer to attract and retain the best people at Spire Healthcare.

In February, we appointed our first oncology support pharmacy technician at Spire Montefiore. This role runs the oncology pharmacy service with remote support, speeding up care for our patients.

It was borne from our apprenticeship programme, where we supported an apprentice through a two-year apprenticeship after four years in community pharmacy elsewhere, leading to a Level 3 Pharmacy Technician apprenticeship in June 2023, and further training with the lead oncology pharmacist in 2024.

At Spire, we encourage employees to share our value of investing in the future, by investing in their own learning and development to build their skills for the future. By growing and developing talented people, we are helping to address the shortage of skilled professionals in the health sector. We offer apprenticeships across the country in a range of skills including nursing, biomedical science, physiotherapy, laboratory work and engineering.

Some of our apprentices are school leavers, others join us mid-career, and a significant group already work for Spire but seek to improve and develop with us. Read more in Sustainability on page 45.

Our strategy continued

**Bringing recruitment in-house**

Our workforce is a critical enabler to deliver our strategy, and resourcing well remains important to building capacity across our services. We brought resourcing in-house in 2023, and over 2024 fully realised the benefits of developing and managing our own recruitment capability. While vacancies are a continuing challenge across the healthcare sector, notably for specialist clinical roles, the past year has seen high rates of fulfilment with reduced turnover.

We continue to attract talented people to join our teams, and actively promote people to new roles from within. We have record levels of permanent employment in the hospitals business, high retention rates of 86.1% (2023: 84.4%), and the lowest number of vacancies for some time, with a 20% increase in the number of permanent offers made to new colleagues, compared to 2023. This drives continuity of care to our patients and reduces our reliance on agency, leading to improvements in safety, quality and patient experience.

Agency costs remain a key area to manage for all healthcare providers, and rates for specialist skills have increased, but we are controlling them well. We 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, while retaining necessary flexibility for our workforce.

**Working with consultants**

Our practising consultant partners operate as self-employed practitioners in our hospitals across all medical and surgical disciplines. Each hospital's medical advisory committee (MAC) meets quarterly to ensure proper, safe, efficient and ethical medical use of the hospital. In addition, the MAC chair meets regularly with the hospital director.

It is important that we engage with consultants and make it easy for them to do business with us, not only so they understand our quality standards and how we wish care to be delivered, but also so we can support them as they develop their business. Over 2024, we spent time listening to them and understanding the consultant journey – from first referral to patient discharge. In summer 2024, we introduced a new consultant induction handbook and in-person consultant private practice development sessions to support those new to private practice and ensure that they are clear on their responsibilities when practising with us; both developments have received positive feedback and ensure a national approach.

Our annual consultant survey in 2024 showed that 84% of consultants now state that the care provided in hospitals is 'very good' or 'excellent' (2023: 83%). The percentage of consultants rating the quality of service provided to them by our hospitals as 'very good' or 'excellent' is 70% (2023: 69%). We use findings from the consultant survey for each hospital leadership team to develop action plans.

**Absence and turnover**

Managing absence and turnover supports our colleagues' wellbeing, is essential to maintaining a stable and productive workforce, and ensures continuity of care for patients. We use data to flex our workforce and manage capacity and resilience.

Absence rates in the hospitals business were level with 2023, though short-term absence continued to decline. The overall rate of absence was 4.7%. Our monthly turnover rate continued to reduce, to 13.3% (2023: 15.1%), with 6.7% fewer leavers in 2024. The highest recorded reasons for leaving are changes in personal circumstances, career progression and retirement; our focus continues to be on career development and flexible working solutions. The market for talented people remains competitive, with demand for nurses particularly high.

Absence rose slightly at Vita Health Group during 2024 with an overall rate of absence of 3.7% (3.6% in 2023). Turnover fell from 23.5% in 2023 to 18.3% in 2024. Absence at The Doctors Clinic Group during 2024 was 1.65% overall (1.2% in 2023), and turnover was 45% (46% in 2023).

 [Read more in Sustainability on page 38](#)

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Colleagues proud to work for Spire Healthcare

76%

(2023: 81%)  
Spire Healthcare annual survey 2024  
(Spire Healthcare Limited and The Doctors Clinic Group).

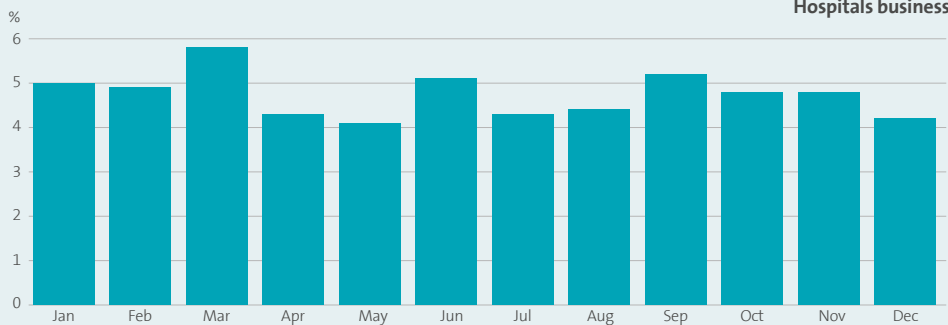
Consultants who describe the care provided to patients in hospitals as 'excellent' or 'very good'

84%

(2023: 83%)  
Spire Healthcare consultant survey 2024.

**Employee absence 2024**

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



**Employee turnover 2024**

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

