

Planning and preparing



Overview of actions

This section explains the origins and strategic purpose of the Pledge, outlining how it was designed to address critical workforce challenges through a sustainable, place-based approach that responds to the needs of the community.

Initial idea and strategic rationale

The Pledge began as a response to workforce challenges that had long been recognised within the region.

- **Origin** – Conceived by Sharon Stead, Programme Lead, NEL HCP, the initiative was initially designed as part of the Care Plus Group's 'Grow our own at place' programme, which aims to strengthen local workforce development within the health and social care sector and is delivered as part of the NEL HCP's workforce strategy.
- **Purpose** – Align with the NEL HCP's workforce strategy and broader regional priorities to strengthen local workforce development within the health and social care sector and offer solutions to recognised challenges around recruitment, skills, social mobility and an ageing workforce.
- **Focus** – Create clear career pathways for employers, employees and those considering a career in health and social care.

Solution and Pledge design

During this initial planning phase, four pledges/interconnected commitments were established as being core to meeting the local workforce challenges. These pledges were based on Sharon's intimate knowledge of the sector within the region and extensive experience in delivering pre-employment programmes

- **Grow our own** – Local talent pipeline development centred around offering or supporting work experience, voluntary work placements and work experience.
- **Recruitment** – Tailored recruitment support and vacancy advertising that helps organisations find great candidates, including those new to the sector, sector returners, career switchers, apprentices and graduates.
- **Investing in your workforce** – Access to funded and part-funded training and support with wellbeing initiatives.
- **Inspire the future workforce** – School, college and university engagement, mentoring, careers events and health and care ambassadors donating time to inspire young people to consider health and social care careers.

Team requirements and skill set

A dedicated team was essential to deliver the programme effectively. However, it was noted later that more resources would be needed to meet the greater than expected demand.

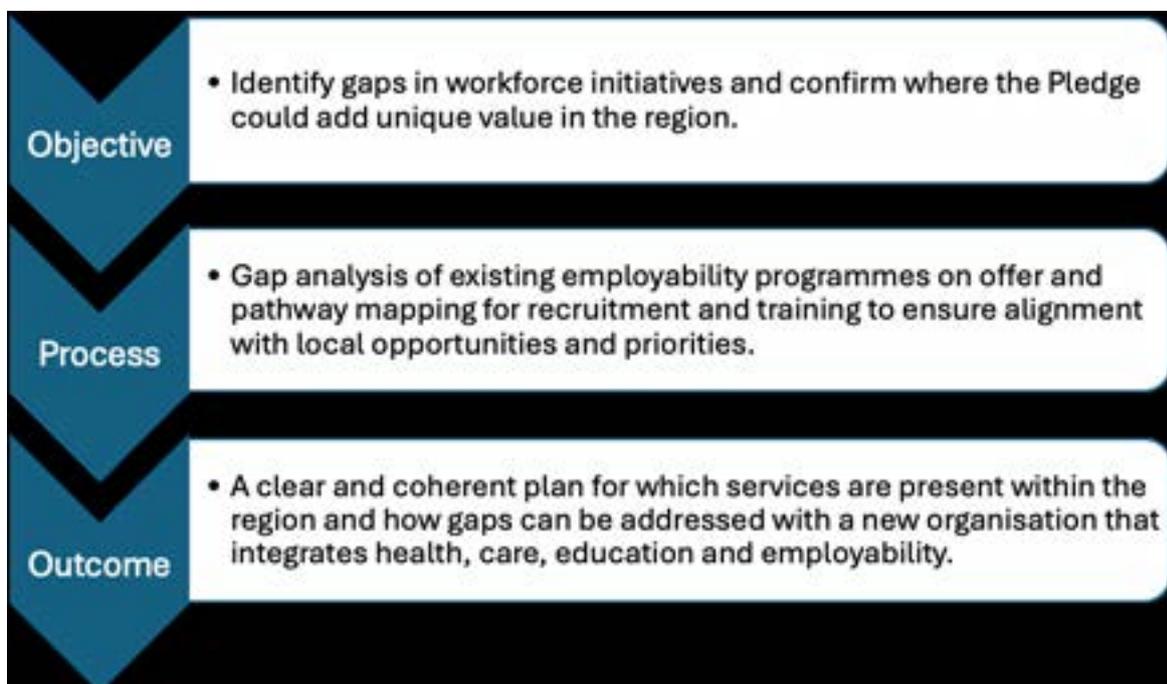
- **Staff resource** – The programme required a team that was able to engage with employers directly, support those enrolled in employment programmes or training and develop marketing materials and administrative tasks.

The structure is:

- Full-time co-ordinator x 1
 - Full-time employability support officer x 1
 - Part-time (32 hrs) employability support officer x 1
 - Part-time (16.5 hrs) marketing assistant x 1
 - Part-time (18.75 hrs) administrative assistant x 1.
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- **Key skills** – To support the programme and ensure maximum engagement, a variety of ‘softer’ skills were required across leadership, including networking, stakeholder engagement, and, critically, an extensive knowledge of health and social care systems within the local area.

Mapping exercise

Provision mapping was conducted to avoid duplication of services in the area and ensure value for money.





Key decisions

- Develop an initial offering with thoroughly thought-out employability offers based on experience and stakeholder engagement.
- Conduct mapping exercises to avoid duplication and ensure local relevance.

Key learning

- Creating and promoting brand materials sooner would have helped to establish the Pledge brand.
- A launch/promotional event would have helped to launch the programme.

“Ensure that a mapping exercise is conducted to avoid duplication and deliver value for money. Bring partners together at the start, map out who’s delivering what, identify gaps, and adapt the model flexibly to local needs.”

Sharon Stead, Programme Lead, NEL HCP

