



**Planning your future**

**workforce strategy?**

We are here to help





## IES has a long track record of supporting organisations with workforce planning and strategy development

### We have supported organisations and senior leadership teams to:

- Develop a shared understanding of workforce risks and opportunities aligned to business strategy.
- Develop actionable plans to address capability gaps now and in the future.
- Build internal capability of HR teams to use data effectively and facilitate workforce planning exercises.
- Conduct labour market analysis to inform location and operating model decisions.
- Support the development of future-proofed and resilient people and workforce strategies that reflect changing workforce trends.
- Encourage different ways of thinking about the future and support workforce development leads, senior leadership teams and HR to identify insights into the way work and jobs could be done differently, and the types of capabilities that may be needed.
- Model the projected demand and supply for professions, occupations and workforce groups, identifying potential capability gaps and mitigating actions.
- Identify drivers of demand for skills, future skills needs and priorities under different scenarios to inform workforce planning and development at a sector, organisational and occupational level.

### Examples of our work include working with:

- A **leading charity** to support the development of a workforce plan aligned to their business strategy, and focussed on critical workforce groups and roles.
- An **adult social care** directorate to create a shared view amongst the leadership team of workforce risks and actions to address those risks. The work also assisted the team to have a firmer grasp of the current workforce, patterns of joining, progressing and leaving the organisation of key professional groups and to target actions at key points in the employee lifecycle.
- A **professional body** to model different scenarios of how technological change may impact the future size and shape of the workforce, and to identify the potential implications for roles and skills and shape a strategic learning and development offer to ensure member firms can continue to be successful in the face of change.
- A **public sector agency** to understand trends shaping the future workforce and identify how HR practices may need to adapt to ensure that they continue to be able to attract, recruit and retain the workforce they need in the future.



## The Children's Society

IES helps The Children's Society to plan a workforce strategy in support of its growth plans



### Context

The Children's Society has a goal of overturning the damaging decline in children's wellbeing by 2030. The organisation is on an ambitious growth journey and sought help from the IES to ensure it has the workforce it needs on that journey.

### What was the challenge?

The team at The Children's Society led by Chris Hawcutt (Director of Talent and Organisation Development) and Michelle Clark (Executive Director of People, Culture and transformation) wanted support from the IES to work with senior leaders to build a shared understanding of current and future workforce requirements and help develop a plan of action to address those requirements.

### What support did IES provide?

The team at IES led a series of workshops with a core team of senior leaders from across the business to surface workforce challenges and opportunities in the context of the business strategy, identify and prioritise areas of action, and to shape an actionable workforce plan and approach to embedding and communicating it with key stakeholders. IES worked collaboratively with senior leaders and the People, Culture and Transformation team to guide them through the process drawing on its expertise in workforce planning and development.

Practical work was conducted by the senior leaders, with internal support from the People, Culture and Transformation team, between each workshop with sharing of findings and decisions on next steps at each point in the process.

### How did the support from IES help?

The support provided by IES ensured the team at The Children's Society developed a shared understanding of workforce priorities and actions that would support the to achieve its strategic goal. The approach put in place plans to address key workforce-related risks likely to impede the business strategy.

As a result of the work, the team at TCS developed a plan of action that was owned by the business and integrated with the business strategy. IES is continuing to support the People, Culture and Transformation team at The Children's Society with tailored support as they continue on their journey to implement the plan and develop their workforce planning capability.



*"It was important for us to have external expertise in generating a solid understanding and true engagement of strategic workforce planning at The Children's Society. IES have been instrumental in helping us to develop a clear framework that is owned by the organisation and setting us on our workforce planning journey. We are now confidently moving into the next phase of the work that will enable us to effectively plan and ensure we have the workforce skills, talent and capability we need that are truly aligned to our strategic objectives so we can achieve our all-important 2030 goal."*

**Michelle Clark**, Executive Director of People, Culture and Transformation





## Developing Strategic Workforce Planning at the Office for National Statistics



### Context

Just before the Office for National Statistics (ONS) became familiar to many people as the key provider of crucial data on the pandemic, IES was brought in to work closely with ONS colleagues on the development of a strategic workforce plan.

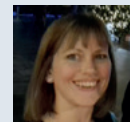
The organisation had recently updated its business strategy, including a major shift away from working mostly on its own surveys towards also analysing existing data, especially from other parts of government and public services. Technology was changing to accommodate this flexible and responsive approach to data analysis. The job design boundary between analysts and digital professionals therefore needed to evolve. These changes were occurring against a backdrop of heightened skill shortages of so-called data scientists as other sectors were also becoming increasingly dependent on the analysis of 'big data'. Recruiting and retaining IT people of the right calibre and with some quite specialised skills was also difficult, with sharply rising salaries in other sectors.

### What support did IES provide?

In the first rapid phase of work, IES worked in a hands-on way with colleagues leading on workforce planning and also those who could work in detail with the HR information system and its contents. Workforce data was extracted and analysed to show the patterns of employment and the workforce over several years, and of colleague movement by workforce group (or profession) as well as by level and directorate. Although ONS held good workforce data, it had little specialist workforce planning expertise at the time. IES coached relevant colleagues in the HR function to use their data to inform leaders in the organisation and work with them to develop a relevant strategic workforce plan.

Key analytical findings included a much clearer picture of the critical workforce groups, especially analysts (statisticians, economists and social scientists) and digital professionals. Data on flows showed that much of the labour turnover, seen by managers as disruptive, was due to high levels of internal sideways movement. Many organisations would like more internal mobility, but ONS almost had too much. More recently ONS has moved towards more flexible internal deployment,

so that shifting work demands, and colleague availability, can be better aligned without each fresh activity leading to job vacancies and formal job moves for the people concerned.

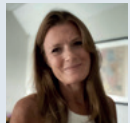


**Gemma Kelly**, Head of People Data and Insights, emphasises the benefits of helping stakeholders to plan using evidence brought together from varied data sources:

*"Successful workforce planning lies in the ability to utilise both quantitative and qualitative data, providing a holistic view of numbers as well as feelings. This blended approach helps to focus discussions rather than relying on gut instinct and empowers stakeholders to prioritise and take appropriate action in the areas that truly matter."*

A second phase of work, a couple of months later, helped relevant leaders in HR to integrate the strategic workforce plan with the wider People Strategy, which was being articulated at the same time. Too often, in the experience of IES, workforce plans sit on the sidelines and are not fully communicated and acted on as part of people management priorities.

In the third phase of IES input, with lower intensity and over a longer time frame, various staff at IES have input flexibly into specific issues (on skills, training, turnover, job design etc). Working as a 'critical friend' IES has helped ONS develop its analytical and HR research capability so that an appropriate range of sources of evidence, both internal and external, are used to inform decision-making in a rigorous but timely and practical manner. HR analytics is now better understood and better resourced, so that managers in ONS are better and more quickly informed about what is happening on staffing and employment issues and whether their decisions and interventions are having the desired impact.



**Philippa Bonay** is Director for Operations and Chief People Officer for ONS and Government AF. She sees the ONS work on strategic workforce planning as part of a wider journey:

*"Making effective people decisions depends on developing good quality evidence about both our current workforce and our future needs, based on our strategic aims. IES has been a vital partner in helping ONS to mature in this space, where we are now seen as a leader across government in people data and evidence-led HR practice."*





## About IES

IES is widely respected for its knowledge, insight and practical support in people management issues including workforce planning and people strategy. The Institute is a leading centre of evidence-led HR and combines expertise in research with its practical application through our consultancy work. Our approach is based on:

- Independence, objectivity and rigour.
- Building, sharing and exploiting the evidence base.
- Combining expertise in research with its practical application through our consultancy work.
- Considering the whole people system, not just the individual parts.
- Building our clients' capabilities rather than their dependence.
- Delivering practical, sustainable business benefits.

## Contact

Please contact Dan Lucy, Director HR Research and Consulting at [dan.lucy@employment-studies.co.uk](mailto:dan.lucy@employment-studies.co.uk) to discuss your workforce planning and strategy needs.