

Abstract citation ID: ckad160.060

What steps can improve and promote investment in the health and care workforce in Europe?

Gemma Williams

*G Williams*¹

¹European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, London School of Economics, London, UK
Contact: g.a.williams@lse.ac.uk

Background:

Recent experiences from Ireland and elsewhere have shown the urgent need for countries and international actors to prioritize investment in the health and care workforce (HCWF) and ensure funding is used well. This research, based on a European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies policy brief, explores: i) areas for strategic investments in the HCWF; and ii) how greater funding from domestic and international sources can be secured.

Methods:

A scoping review of English-language peer reviewed and grey literature was conducted across databases and online repositories including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, WHO data collections. The literature search focused on two areas: 1) areas for strategic investments in the organization, training, deployment and management of the HCWF; 2) actions that can help scale-up investment from domestic and international financing sources.

Findings:

Strategic investments to effectively enhance the sustainability of the HCWF can be grouped into strategies that aim to: 1) increase the quantity, quality and diversity of available HCWs through education investments; 2) reskill and optimize use of the HCWF through investments in preventative and primary care, skill mix reforms and digital technologies; 3) improve employment and retention through labour market interventions and protecting, supporting and managing the HCWF. Ministries of Health must be able to share the measurable benefits of workforce development to secure greater investment, which requires: evidence on the socioeconomic benefits of HCWF investments; strong leadership and capacity; improved intersectoral governance processes; and more efficient and transparent health sector budget cycle processes.

Conclusions:

Education, employment and retention of HCWs needs to be a priority in public expenditure to increase supply, protect the existing workforce and plan ahead to address future challenges.