

# Succession Planning

## Critical Role Assessment Template



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# Critical Role Assessment

## Identifying critical roles

A critical step in succession planning is to identify positions most critical to the organisation for which potential successors are needed. Whilst arguably all roles in the NHS are critical in one way or another, it is helpful to prioritise them where possible. You may find it helpful to do this on the basis of succession challenges you have already identified in a wider talent context such as recruitment, development or retention, or apply criteria such as:

* The strategic or operational impact of a vacant role on the organisation/service/team
* Unique skill sets or knowledge bases
* Strength of the external job market or internal pipeline

It is critical to take a balanced approach to succession planning, weighing up the impact of the individual and that of the role. In relation to roles, this may relate to the impact that would be felt if there was a vacancy or difficulty in recruiting. From an individual perspective, this may involve specific knowledge or skills that would prove challenging to replace.

The matrix below can support organisations to make an assessment of the criticality of roles – green indicates not critical, amber, partly critical and red, high priority. The outputs can be captured/recorded on the Succession Planning Role Assessment template. The criteria and colours can be aligned to organisational priorities.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Impact of vacancy on the organisation/ service/ team | High |  |  |  |
| **Medium** |  |  |  |
| **Low** |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Easy** | **Average** | **Difficult** |
|  |  | **Difficulty of filling a vacancy** | | |

For example, a District General Hospital in a remote geographical area may have a shortage of radiographers. Neighbouring organisations may also struggle to recruit to these positions as this occupation is on the national shortage list. Internal succession planning processes may identify that there aren’t any internal successors with either the skill and/or motivation to fill this role at the current time.

The service may already be struggling to cope due to increased demand and other vacancies. This vacancy may be identified as having a high impact on the existing team and assessed as difficult to fill based on the circumstances outlined above.

## Template Guidance

The template below can used to capture information about critical roles at a team/service level which can then be aggregated to understand the wider picture across the organisation.

**Role assessment:**

Here, the different roles in the team/service can be listed and using the criteria which determines critical roles in your organisation, you can indicate the importance of the role operationally and/or strategically, and the level of priority that would be attached to recruiting to the role if it became vacant e.g. Low – non urgent, limited impact or role could be redesigned prior to filling, Medium – some important functions, partial impact and/or role likely to need to be replaced with relative urgency or High – critical role, hard to fill, high impact and/or skills/strengths of post holder are fundamental to delivery of organisational objectives.

**Further Information – known succession hotspots/challenges**

In this section, further/additional information can be provided about the actual impact or potential risk of vacancies, market availability, planned actions to mitigate the time it may take to fill critical posts, readiness to advertise or plans to enhance skills of potential internal successors etc. This information can be helpful to consider when shaping actions to address any succession issues that have been identified.

**Further Information – workforce profile information**

Further information/additional observations on the profile of the current team e.g. WTE, length of service, structure, patterns relating to diversity and/or protected characteristics can also be highlighted here, as these may be factors that need to be taken into consideration when managing succession/pipeline issues.

**Actions to address identified succession/profile issues**

This provides space for you to capture and actions/plans to address succession planning/workforce profile issues that are identified as a result of this exercise. This information can be useful as background when underpinning collective succession planning/talent reviews within the organisation and when discussing workforce issues in a local system context. It is also an opportunity for organisations to consider roles that are not in current structures so that they can respond to future needs and/or service innovation/developments.

**Succession Planning – Critical Role Assessment Template**

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| --- | --- |
| **Team name:** |  |
| **Service name:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |

1. **Role assessment**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Role Title** | **Strategically Critical**  **(Tick as appropriate)** | **Operationally Critical** | **Both O/S Critical** | **Priority H/M/L** |
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1. **Further Information – known succession hotspots/challenges**

*Please provide additional information such as actual or potential risk of vacancies, further details on impact, market availability, planned actions to mitigate time to fill, readiness to advertise or enhance skills of internal successors etc.*

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1. **Further Information – workforce profile information**

*Please provide additional information/observations on the profile of the current team e.g. WTE, length of service, structure, patterns relating to diversity and/or protected characteristics*

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1. **Actions to address identified succession/profile issues including changes to structure to support service developments**

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