

# Creating a definition of

# talent management

# for your organisation

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Within the wider NHS, talent management represents the approach organisations take to attract, develop and retain skilled and valuable employees. Its goal is to ensure that people have the capabilities, commitment and behaviours needed for current and future organisational success.

This means making sure we have:

* the right people, in the right roles, with the right values;
* that they have access to the right opportunities, exposure, stretch and development to reach their potential;
* whether this be in their current role, or for a future role.

This allows organisations to develop a better understanding of the individuals they employ and provides insight into the future skills and behaviours needed to deliver against strategic and operational priorities. Through aligning the right people to the right roles, it is hoped this will lead to improved quality of healthcare services and outcomes for our patients will continue to improve.

## Why it’s important to have a definition for your organisation

Depending upon the function, size, and location of your organisation, the way you define your talent priorities and definition of talent management will vary.

Creating your own definition will enable you to:

* ensure your approach is aligned to other business and people strategies
* clarify what is included and what is excluded in your approach
* provide a focus in relation to future resource allocation and requirements
* place a greater emphasis on the priorities for your organisation
* use the right language and tone for your employees

## Creating your own definition

Whilst your starting point may be a more generic definition of talent management (such as the ones at the end of this document); the questions below are designed to help you consider how to tailor this to the requirements of your organisation.

1. What is the ‘talent’ that the organisation needs now and in the future and to achieve what?
2. What are the organisation’s key priorities and goals and how are these reflected in the people/workforce/OD strategies?
3. What outcomes do you want your approach to talent management to achieve (or problems to you want it to solve)?
4. What cultural, ethical and legal considerations or restrictions need to be considered?
5. How will you ensure your definition is reflective of your brand and values? And what language will you need to use to ensure it speaks to / engages the whole workforce?
6. Does the definition apply to the whole workforce? If not, where/how will it differ?
7. Will there be any exclusions? If so, why?
8. Who else needs to be involved in crafting this definition?

## Some risks to consider

Finally, we have also summarised some of the potential pitfalls when developing a definition of talent management for your organisation. You may find it helpful to run through these once you have developed your definition.

*Political/cultural/ethical considerations -*There is a question about whether it is acceptable to describe certain individuals as talented and others not. Some organisations have used a policy of ‘removing’ the bottom 10% of their workforce on an annual basis. This has led to misconceptions and stigmatization of the term talent. It also emphasises the need for definitions of talent to provide a message consistent with the purpose brand and culture of your organisation.

*Legal considerations -*Employees continue to benefit from greater legal protection. For this reason, definitions have to work within the legal framework. Many organisations for example had to amend their definitions when age discrimination legislation was introduced.

*Motivational considerations* ***-*** Definitions that are too narrow can alienate people. Those people who are not covered but who are still essential to the organisation need to know where they stand and how they are valued. Consideration must also be given to labelling and the effects of removing a label. Someone who is ‘high-potential’ for two years and who then has this label removed will most likely feel demotivated.

## Talent management definitions

Many people find when developing a definition for their own organisation that it helps to review those that have been created by other individuals/organisations. Summarised below are a selection of talent management definitions

* Talent Management (TM) represents organisations’ efforts to attract, develop and retain skilled and valuable employees. Its goal is to have people with the capabilities, commitment and behaviours needed for current and future organisational success. (NHS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY)
* Talent Management is the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention and deployment of those individuals who are of particular value to an organisation, either in view of their ‘high potential’ for the future or because they are fulfilling business/operation-critical roles. (CIPD 2016)
* Talent management is an integrated set of processes, programs and cultural norms in an organisation designed and implemented to attract, develop, deploy and retain talent to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs. (SILZER AND DOWELL 2010)
* At its heart, talent management is simply a matter of anticipating the need for human capital and then setting out a plan to meet it. (CAPPELLI 2008)
* The recruitment, development, promotion and retention of people, planned and executed in line with your organisation’s current and future business goals. (WELLINS ET AL 2006)
* Activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organisation’s sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organisation. (COLLINGS AND MELLAHI 2009)
* We understand talent management to be a distinctive process that focuses explicitly on those persons who have the potential to provide competitive advantage for a company by managing those people in an effective and efficient way and therefore ensuring long-term competitiveness of a company. (BETHKE-LANGENEGGER 2011)
* A conscious, deliberate approach undertaken to attract, develop and retain people with the aptitude and abilities to meet current and future organisational needs. Talent management involves individual and organisational development in response to a changing and complex operating environment. It includes the creation and maintenance of a supportive, people-oriented organisation culture. (STOCKLEY 2014)
* Talent is some combination of a sharp strategic mind, leadership ability, emotional maturity, communications skills, the ability to attract and inspire other talented people, entrepreneurial instincts, functional skills, and the ability to deliver results. (MICHAELS ET AL 2001)
* Talent management in the health sector refers to the attraction, recruitment, management, development and retention of those whose professional expertise or operational competence contribute to positive patient or societal outcomes and the creation of stakeholder value. (TURNER 2017)