Council of Deans of Health

The voice of the UK's **strategic academic leaders in healthcare education and research**

Strategy **2030**

Introduction from CEO Ed Hughes & Chair of the Board of Trustees Professor Alison Machin

The Council of Deans of Health (CoDH) is an independent charity and membership organisation representing over 100 organisations delivering health education and research in the UK and beyond. Our work benefits healthcare students, patients and the wider health and social care system. Since becoming an independent organisation in 2021, the Council has worked through a significant transition and is looking to evolve and strengthen further over the coming years.

The Council is **the voice of the UK's strategic academic leaders in healthcare education and research** working to amplify the voices of our members and advance the sector for the public good - shaping national policy, fostering innovation, and supporting the development of a future-ready health and care workforce.

Through strong connections with our members and active engagement with government and stakeholders, we promote high-quality education and research as the foundation of a sustainable, effective, and compassionate healthcare system.

Rooted in the insights of our members and responsive to a rapidly evolving sector, our 2030 strategy sets a bold and forward-looking framework, reflecting the ambitions, challenges, and opportunities shaping health education and research.

Grounded in our core values of inclusion, impact, collaboration, and integrity, and built around three interconnected aims - **supporting our members**, **building our community**, and **driving system change** - our strategy will ensure the Council remains a trusted and influential voice in strategic academic leadership in Healthcare Education and Research across all UK nations and regions.

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Shaping the future of health and care

The Council of Deans of Health represents the universities and colleges committed to delivering high quality education leading to careers in nursing, midwifery and allied health professions. Our members innovate through research, knowledge exchange and pedagogy to deliver a workforce ready for the future, drive forward practice, and improve patient outcomes.

Our members form a distinctive part of the education sector representing health educators and researchers. They span the UK and represent the diversity of education provision from colleges, smaller specialist providers and larger multi-faculty institutions. Our members operate in a complex system at the interface of the health and education sectors. Both sectors face financial challenges and are highly regulated. Our members also have a unique relationship with a major national employer – the NHS – which exerts a significant pull on members' own strategic direction. It also provides much of the practical experience mandated in pre-registration education programmes and is a key partner in continuing professional development, research and innovation.

We recognise that this environment is also changing rapidly, and our members work with a wide variety of partners across health and social care to provide the skills, knowledge and experience needed to be effective in future health care careers. We are mindful of the both the opportunities and risks posed by a more connected world, particularly in an era of global instability, and continue to help our members share their learning through strategic relationships with partners internationally.

We aim to support our members to navigate this complexity by acting as the trusted voice at the intersection between health and education policy and delivery, and using our convening power to bring groups together to address key challenges and identify solutions. Our staff team has unique expertise across the policy landscape and is frequently called upon to translate between the health and education policy domains. This positioning gives us our distinctive voice and enables us to add value to discussions with policy-makers, funders, regulators and government.

Evolution of our new strategy

Our strategy builds upon the foundations of the Council's charitable objects and the Council's previous strategy which established the organisation as an independent charity. The previous strategy had three strategic aims to influence policy across the UK promoting the essential contribution of our sector to health and social care, offer excellent services to our members creating sustainable sector networks and to advance healthcare education and research by strengthening our sector and organisation. Our Impact Report sets out our key achievements from the last strategy period.

In developing our new strategy we have gathered opinion from members, Trustees and staff to understand their priorities and vision for the Council. We tested a set of fundamental principles with members to inform our strategic positioning reflected in our commitments to members. We explored opportunities for growth and evolution in the Council's portfolio, particularly in terms of increasing either or both of the breadth of our reach into other professional groups and the depth of our offer for existing members working in nursing, midwifery and allied health. We considered our existing capacity and capability both in terms of our staff team and the resources at our disposal.

Recognising that, like others in the tertiary education system, our members face significant financial constraints we have focused our strategy on key priorities, underpinned by our commitment to maximising the value of our offer to members, and our drive to increase the impact of our work.

Through the oversight of the Trustee Board our leadership, governance and management will be compliant with Charity Commission regulation and other relevant statutory requirements, giving our membership, as our key beneficiaries, confidence that we are meeting their needs and using our resources appropriately in line with principles of effective stewardship.

The new strategy will run until 2030 but will remain under review to enable us to respond with agility to the rapidly evolving external landscape.

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Our commitment to members

Over the past year, we have worked closely with our members to shape our strategy and are committed to deliver value through sustainable, member-driven programmes. We will remain UK-wide, multi-professional, and responsive; empowering students and staff, embracing innovation, and upholding strong governance aligned with our charitable mission.

We recognise the financial pressures on the education sector and the impact this has for our members

We recognise the different political, financial, organisational and geographic contexts in which our members operate.

We will continue to offer and evolve a strong, member-driven policy agenda, an engaging programme of both in-person and online events and robust, financially sustainable, operations to deliver value for money for our members.

In delivering our new strategy we recognise that our approach must be consistent with our Charitable Objects in the Articles of Association.

Committed to working across nations and professions

At the heart of our strategy is our ongoing to commitment to members to:

Work with our membership across all four nations and our associate members overseas.

Maintain our multi-professional outlook and policy focus across nursing, midwifery & allied health whilst considering ways to support other professions in the broader faculty and leadership portfolios of our members.

Deliver support and add value to our members across all aspects of their organisational missions – education, research, innovation & knowledge exchange, EDI, access and participation, and the wider civic role of education providers in their localities and communities.

Support academic staff throughout member faculties and at different career stages - as well as equipping senior leaders to navigate challenging events and complex situations.

Committed to developing the workforce of the future

We will be engaged across the student lifecycle – from recruitment through their transition into work and throughout their professional careers, enabling our members to support students at all levels for an evolving world of work:

Recognising the diversity of future career settings: with more focus on community, public health, social care settings, and flexibility through portfolio careers

Addressing how teaching and research can reflect the shifts towards Digital, AI & simulation

Responding to the increased emphasis on prevention and public & environmental health

Our vision, mission and values

To set the direction for our new strategy we have refreshed our vision, mission and values with a focus on enabling a thriving health education and research sector with the Council as its voice having a positive impact and influence on policy and practice.

Our vision is for a thriving health education and research sector delivering a high-quality nursing, midwifery and allied health professional workforce.

Our mission is to be the collective voice of nursing, midwifery and allied health professions in education and research, positively influencing and impacting policy.

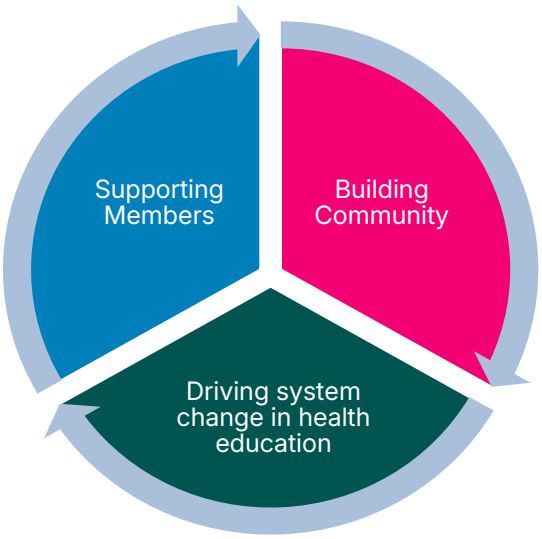
Our values of **integrity**, **impact**, **collaboration** and **inclusion** drive the way we will work with our members and our partners

Our strategic priorities

Our strategy sets out how we will achieve our vision and mission in line with our values. We have committed to three key mutually reinforcing strategic priorities, which together will support member organisations, empowering them as system leaders, and build a connected community - driving evidence-led change in health education through collaboration, advocacy, and inclusive leadership.

Supporting our member organisations across the education system

Empowering our members as system leaders to navigate the sector, deliver on their mission, effectively advocate for health education and promote excellence in education and research.



Building our community of leaders in health education & research

Building and expanding our community to increase the Council's reach, both externally and within health faculties, to amplify the voices of our members and their students, promote collaboration and advance the sharing of best practice.

Driving system change in health education through our policy and influencing work

Advocate for member-informed, evidence-led change in health education, research and knowledge exchange to increase our political and policy influence engagement across the four nations of the UK.

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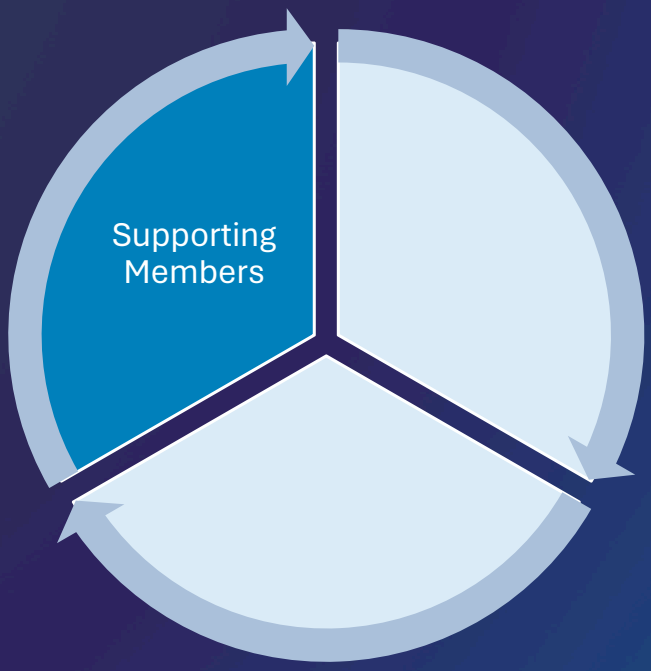
Supporting our members across the education system to:

- Empowering our members as system leaders to navigate the sector
- Support members to deliver on their mission
- Promote excellence in teaching, research and knowledge exchange
- Advocate effectively for health education



What does success look like:

Through our membership we represent the majority of providers delivering healthcare education and research across the UK; the diversity of our member institutions is recognised in our policy work.

Members feel equipped to advocate for their professions effectively within their organisations.

Our members have an increased awareness of key issues and the implications for their institutions.

We deliver activities which enhance the ability of our members to lead in challenging and complex environments.

We offer our members more opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions around policy development and sector sustainability, both amongst the membership and externally.

How will we achieve this?

Empowering our members as system leaders to navigate the sector

- Ensure our members are fully informed about the complex political, regulatory and financial landscape of health education and equipped to respond positively to change.
- Support and help develop both emerging leaders in health education and those in senior roles leading through challenging times.

Promote excellence in teaching, research and knowledge exchange

- Help create the conditions to sustain the high-quality education and research delivered by our members.
- Showcase and promote the contributions of our members across teaching, research and knowledge exchange and the impact this has on the delivery of healthcare.

Support members to deliver on their mission

- Recognise and celebrate the diversity of our membership.
- Address the needs of different members across teaching and learning, research, knowledge exchange and their contributions to wider civic agendas within their institutions.

Advocate effectively for health education

- Advocate for the sustainability of the healthcare academic community across the professions we serve.
- Equip our members to advocate for their work within their HEIs, particularly with senior leaders and governing bodies.
- Empower our members to shape how shifts in health and care policy and practice (particularly the emphasis on community-based services, social care, health prevention and digital technologies) change the needs of both the current and future health workforce and nature of healthcare education and research.

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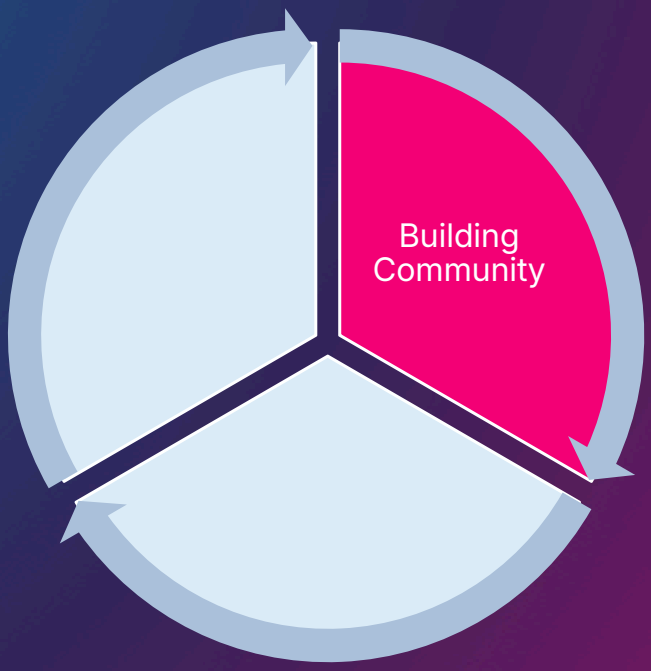
Building the community of leaders in health education & research to:

- Encourage collaboration & advance the sharing of best practice
- Building and expanding our community
- Increase the Council's reach
- Amplify the voices of our members and students



What does success look like:

Our Strategic Policy Groups and nation groups are the "go to" groups for expertise on key policy areas and contribute to enhancing the sector's knowledge and understanding.

Our events remain relevant, impactful and well-attended, and serve as effective vehicles for networking and collaboration.

Our audience is increasingly representative of the diversity of those working in healthcare education and research across the tertiary system including from different professional groups across the sector.

Evidence of the impact of our collaborative work is effectively demonstrated through our communications.

Continue our commitment to equity and inclusion.

How will we achieve this?

Encourage collaboration and advance the sharing of best practice

- Create opportunities for our members to work together to address shared challenges, and to collaborate with partners across the tertiary education system to deliver change, including widening access to health careers.
- Engage internationally to share learning and advance mutual understanding.
- Build on our strong relationships with other HE sector bodies, health policy groups, regulators, funders and others to broaden the reach of our activity and showcase the work of our members to different audiences.

Increasing the Council's reach

- Deepen the reach of the Council within health faculties, building networks within our membership which incorporate a broader range of professional, technical and academic staff.
- Evolve our engagement between our members and build connectivity between themes and across professional boundaries.

Building and expanding our community

- Facilitate purposeful networking via our national, regional and strategic policy groups, connecting our members with policymakers, regulators and funders.
- Support peer engagement between our members to build professional relationships and equip their teams with the skills and knowledge to step into leadership roles.
- Ensure those engaged with the Council's work reflect the diverse communities they serve across healthcare education.

Amplify the voices of our members and their students

- Redefine our work with students following the conclusion of the #150Leaders programme to ensure the voice of students is embedded in our policy work.
- Ensure our policy work reflects the diverse settings where health professionals work- including social care - and includes perspectives from students, staff, and those with lived experience.
- Increase the impact of our external communications and provide more opportunities for members to showcase their work

Driving system change through our policy and influencing work by:

Promoting member-informed, evidence-led change in health education, research and knowledge exchange

Increasing our political and policy influence across the four nations of the UK

What does success look like:

Our members feel their voice has been heard by government and regulators and feed back that they can see the tangible impact of our policy interventions, in areas such as: student recruitment and retention, the academic educator workforce, research and KE capacity for nursing, midwifery and allied health professions and regulatory change to enable innovation and reduce compliance costs.

Our Parliamentary and political engagement increases across the UK and we are sought out as the key sector voice by policy makers and regulators.

We grow the evidence base for our policy positions with data and insight, including drawing upon our international partnerships and the experience and expertise of our members.

How will we achieve this?

Promoting member-informed, evidence-led change in health education, research and knowledge exchange

- Formulate data-rich, evidence-based and member-driven policy agendas informed at local, regional and national level, engaging our membership more explicitly in our policy work.
- Bring together national and local intelligence and insight to support members in their local discussions with NHS and other partners.
- Showcase research and knowledge exchange undertaken by our members which advances health care education and the delivery of care.
- Draw upon colleagues engaged in health education from different perspectives and professional backgrounds, including internationally and from across breadth of our institutional membership; ensuring the voices of the varied professions and systems represent are heard.

Increasing our political and policy influence across the four nations of the UK

- Build on our stakeholder engagement across the health and education sector.
- Work with our members and partners across the UK to drive targeted change to health education systems at a national level, particularly to enhance recruitment, retention and successful outcomes for students of all backgrounds, and in underserved communities and localities.
- Leverage the strong reputation of the Council as a trusted partner and convenor to increase our political engagement across the four nations of the UK and our wider membership overseas.
- Equip our members to engage directly with government both locally and nationally, including through our parliamentary events.
- Increase the visibility of our policy work, measure and demonstrate the impact of our interventions, and communicate effectively on the outcome of our discussions.

Cross cutting strategic enablers

Our three enablers underpin how we deliver our strategic aims

Championing inclusion in our policy and practice

Continue our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across the health professions, including through our annual equity month and by showcasing good practice in research and education which supports inclusive practices.

Support the breadth of our institutional membership, and ensure a diversity of voices from across the professions they represent (students, staff, clinicians and those with lived experience of services) are heard in our policy discussions.

Support our members' work to widen access and increase participation from under-represented groups in health education, and to address health inequalities in under-served localities and communities.

Working in partnership to leverage our impact

Engage constructively with government, regulators and wider education sector to find shared solutions to system challenges for nursing, midwifery and the allied health professions across health and social care.

Work in partnership to support the increasing emphasis on tertiary education and effective collaboration across HE/FE to widen access to health careers.

Continue to bring international perspectives to our work, encouraging new partnerships and collaborations to add value to the work of our members and the Council.

Evidence the impact of both the Council's and individual members work more directly through our communications and via our website.

Maintaining effective & sustainable operations

Demonstrate effective stewardship, making the best use of all our resources, including member subscriptions, and seeking to operate sustainably - both financially and environmentally.

Nurture and develop our valued staff team, providing opportunities for career development and growth.

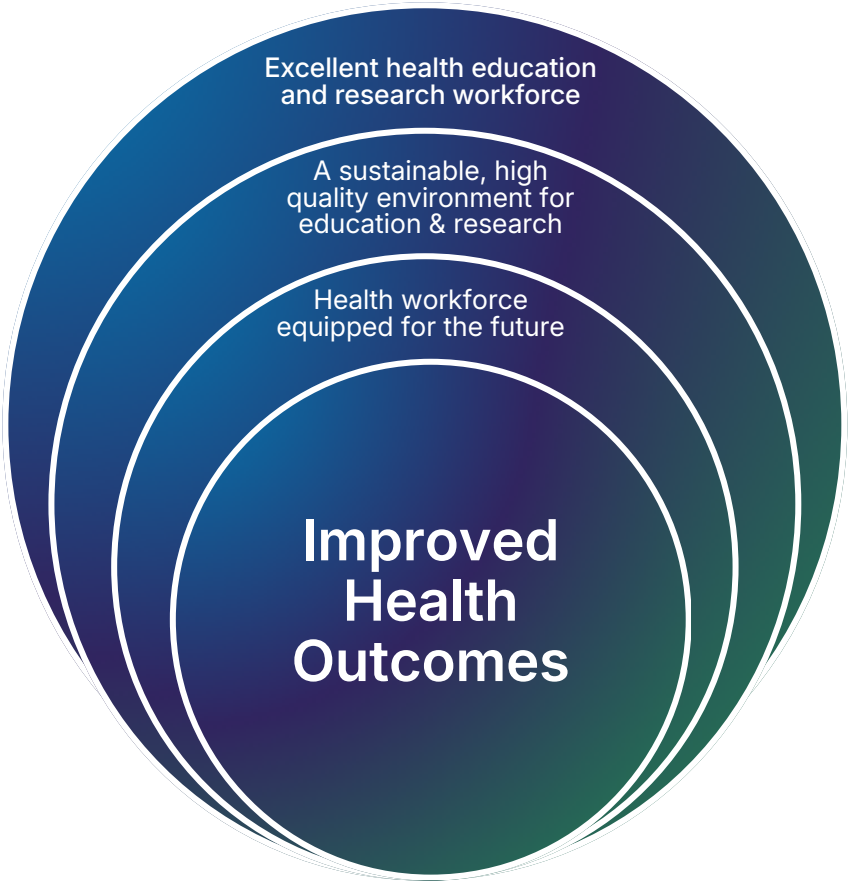
Ensure the Council continues to work within an effective governance model, meeting our obligations as a charity.

Leverage the impact of our new brand and website to enhance our communications.

Creating Change Together

Working within a sustainable and effectively regulated tertiary education and research ecosystem, we will contribute to **improved health outcomes** by ensuring that we educate and train a **health workforce equipped for the future and undertake research with impact.**

We will achieve this by supporting an **excellent education and research workforce in our member institutions,** working with system partners to enable them to create **a sustainable, high-quality environment for education and research**.



How will we achieve this change?

We will create change through our three mutually reinforcing strategic aims:

- Supporting our members across the education system
- Building the community of leaders in health education
- Policy influence and systems change

Our cross-cutting enablers will provide the tools to shape our activity:

- Partnership working to leverage our impact
- Championing inclusion in our policies and practice
- Effective and sustainable operations

Key policy building blocks:

To ground our strategic vision in day-to-day practice, we have identified key policy building blocks that shape and drive our work, drawing upon the priorities of our members and stakeholders. These reflect the breadth of our current policy offer and areas of active interest. These building blocks will remain under regular review as our operating context evolves.

- Financial viability for health education
- Collaboration across tertiary education to support access to health careers
- A proportionate and enabling regulatory regime for health education
- A high-quality learning experience for all health care students
- Innovation in Teaching and Learning to address changing healthcare practice
- A more integrated approach to health and social care in health professional education
- Responsible use of artificial intelligence and simulation in teaching and research
- Joined up health and education policy at all levels
- Increased student numbers to meet workforce needs
- A sustainable academic educator workforce
- Sufficient placement capacity, diversity and quality
- Increased Research and Knowledge Exchange capacity and capability

How will we monitor & measure success?

- **A Strategic Delivery Plan will underpin the strategy and form the basis of monitoring by our Trustee Board, which will review key priorities regularly and update them annually.**
- **Our risk and assurance work will be framed through the lens of our new strategic objectives**
- **Our Trustees will oversee our operations to ensure the effective stewardship of our resources, regulatory compliance and that we meet our statutory obligations**
- **We will review the strategy at its mid-point.**
- **We will balance a clear sense of direction with flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.**
- **We will measure the impact of our work at different levels - including the impact on the sector, our members and the charity itself.**

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