

HPMA EXCELLENCE IN PEOPLE AWARDS 2026



Enter at <https://hpma.awardsplatform.com>

KEY DATES

Extended closing date: 26 May 2026 at 11.55pm

Shortlist announced – mid June

Judging panels: w/c 6 & 13 July 2026

Ceremony: Thursday 12 November 2026

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SPONSORS





The Healthcare People Management Association Excellence in People Awards celebrate the achievements of our members across the UK. This year's awards ceremony will be held on 12 November 2026 in Bristol.

As we continue to navigate change whilst driving forward transformation it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the significance of our profession. Please take this opportunity to reflect on your achievements, and those of your colleagues, and join us in celebrating the incredible successes within our profession.

As in 2025, we have 6 award categories based around the HPMA's values 'PEOPLE':

Professional	professional in everything we do.
Exemplary	we are the best at what we do.
Open	we are open, honest and kind.
Passionate	we are passionate about our profession.
Learning	we are always willing to learn.
Engaging	we are engaging and inspiring.

The focus of this section of the Awards is on celebrating the achievements of members in respect of specific work, initiatives, or projects that reflect the HPMA values in action. The 'Learner of the Year' category is part of this, and we strongly encourage entries from across all four nations to ensure that this year we can celebrate a winner from each of the 4 UK nations.

As always we are grateful to our sponsors for their support, without them the awards would not be possible. And offer special thanks to our judges who give up their time to support the shortlisting and judging processes.

We're looking forward to seeing your entries and to celebrating your achievements.

Julie Rogers
Chief Executive, HPMA



The HPMA Excellence in People Awards celebrate the important work of the people profession across the UK

Who can enter?

You must be a member of the HPMA to enter these awards.

What do I need to do to enter?

Entries must fulfil the definitions of the category in which they have been entered (see categories for details). Where the criteria require it, statistics and/or specific data must be provided.

Specifications

Entries should be submitted via the online awards platform. Submissions should be concise and not exceed stated word limits.

Judging

There are 13 award categories available to enter. Each entry will be judged by our panels of expert judges. All entries will be judged against the category criteria. Decisions of the Judges are final. No correspondence will be entered into.

Entry deadline

The deadline for entries is Wednesday 13th May 2026 23:55 GMT. There is no entry fee payable.

Shortlist and winners

The shortlist will be announced mid June. You will be informed via email if your entry has been shortlisted. The announcement of the winners will be made at the HPMA Excellence in People Awards, taking place at the Ashton Gate Stadium, on Thursday 12 November 2026 in Bristol.

FAQS

Can the same entry be entered into more than one category?

Submitting the same project into more than one category is not allowed. Each entry must be tailored to the category's specific criteria. Entries may be moved into more suitable categories at the discretion of the panel.

Can my organisation enter more than one project into the same category?

Yes.

Will I be able to provide physical support materials in addition to the uploaded collateral?

No unfortunately this is not permitted, apart from the Learner of the Year and Team of the Year where a video must be submitted.

Who can I contact if I have any questions

Contact hello@chamberdunn.co.uk

CATEGORIES

1 Mills & Reeve Award for achieving impact through open & inclusive leadership



The award will be given to an initiative that promotes collaboration to deliver cross-departmental or cross-functional EDI projects where opportunities for open dialogue, honest feedback, and collaboration have driven success. The successful entry will demonstrate exceptional commitment for greater inclusivity from Board to floor aligned with tangible evidence of impact.

2 Award for health and wellbeing

This award recognises outstanding achievements in improving the health and wellbeing of staff. Organisations will need to demonstrate how specific initiatives are positively impacting on staff satisfaction, motivation, health, retention or productivity.

3 Health Education & Improvement Wales award for developing the profession and people professionals



This award will be given to an individual or team that has consistently demonstrated adherence to high professional standards, industry best practices, and regulatory compliance. They will have delivered learning and interventions aimed at improving or maintaining high levels of professionalism and excellence in HR, OD or organisational processes. Acting as an exemplar for the profession and those they lead, there will be strong evidence of impact.

4 Hill Dickinson Award for 'Passionate about OD'



An innovative OD (or L&D) initiative or strategy to address an important business need that has been led with passion and exceptional commitment. Demonstrable impact on morale, engagement, and motivation within teams or departments within the organisation.

5 Award for learner of the year sponsored by Korn Ferry



This new award is aimed at people profession Student/Apprentice/Learners. The Award will recognise four individuals, one from each of the UK nations.

6 Browne Jacobson Award for excellence in employee engagement



Awarded to an organisation that can evidence a systematic approach to employee engagement and strong commitment from Board to floor. Typically, a cutting-edge project or initiative that demonstrates significantly improved and measurable successes in employee engagement.

7 Award for best use of an ‘Avoidable employee harm’ approach sponsored by Bevan Brittan

Bevan Brittan 

This is a new category reflecting HPMA’s commitment to our flagship ‘Avoiding Harm’ programme. Over the past year HPMA has been promoting 100 conversations, and the response from our members has been incredible. This award will showcase how members have used the methodology (or equivalent approaches) to drive change and provide insight into the impact locally of taking a more compassionate approach to investigations.

8 Social Partnership Forum Award for partnership working between employers and trade unions



This award will be given to a specific initiative that fully demonstrates the benefits of partnership working between employers and trade unions to support NHS staff in their delivery of healthcare services.

9 Capsticks Award for innovation

This award will be given to a cutting edge, creative initiative within any sphere of the people management function whose development has been informed by evidence and data, and which has led to improved outcomes for staff and/or patients.



10 Award for exemplary systems workforce planning and development

With this category we are looking to identify projects and teams that are leading innovative approaches to system workforce planning, developing workforce plans based on service planning to meet population health needs and developing a workforce that can provide health and care on a whole system basis.

11 People team of the year sponsored by Ward Hadaway



Awarded to a UK healthcare people team working together to achieve outstanding results over the past 12 months and demonstrating HPMA’s values in action.

12 Deputy people leader of the year sponsored by KPMG



Awarded to a UK healthcare deputy director (or equivalent senior leader working to a director) demonstrating an outstanding contribution to their employer, the sector and the workforce profession over the last 12 months.

13 People leader of the year sponsored by DAC Beachcroft



A UK healthcare workforce director (e.g. Chief People Officer, Executive Director of Workforce & OD, Director of People & Culture, HR Director etc) demonstrating excellent leadership and an outstanding contribution to the workforce profession over the last 12 months.

CRITERIA & SUBMISSION QUESTIONS

Judging panel to take place 6 July from 2 - 5pm

1 Mills & Reeve Award for achieving impact through open & inclusive leadership

MILLS & REEVE
Achieve more. Together.

The award will be given to an initiative that promotes collaboration to deliver cross-departmental or cross-functional EDI projects where opportunities for open dialogue, honest feedback, and collaboration have driven success. The successful entry will demonstrate exceptional commitment for greater inclusivity from Board to floor aligned with tangible evidence of impact.

Criteria

- **Engagement & delivery:** Specific examples of how transparency and open communication were embedded in the work/project to enable diverse staff engagement and the delivery of impactful actions.
- **Leadership:** Evidence of compassionate leadership of projects or initiatives that have created an inclusive environment where all voices are heard, and diversity is respected.
- **Impact:** Strong evidence of impact and change for example new inclusive people practices and/or equitable access to support

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your project – in plain English. We will use this summary should your project make the final, so please make sure it clearly explains your work (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? (250 words)
- 3 Who have you involved/partnered with? (250 words)
- 4 What is the learning, and how have you disseminated this learning? (200 words)

Judging panel to take place 10 July from 2 - 5pm

2 Award for health and wellbeing

This award recognises outstanding achievements in improving the health and wellbeing of staff. Organisations will need to demonstrate how specific initiatives are positively impacting on staff satisfaction, motivation, health, retention or productivity.

Criteria

- **Strategy aligned to business need:** Evidence of an effective, innovative wellbeing strategy that addresses an important business issue.
- **Impact, ROI:** Evidence of success – return on investment and how its impact has been measured and evaluated – please use metrics, anecdotes, staff feedback and case studies.
- **Transferability:** Ability to share key insights and learning from the project.

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your project – in plain English. We will use this summary should your project make the final, so please make sure it clearly explains your work (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? (250 words)
- 3 Who have you involved/partnered with? (250 words)
- 4 What is the learning, and how have you disseminated this learning? (200 words)

Judging panel to take place TBC

3 Health Education & Improvement Wales award for developing the profession and people professionals



This award will be given to an individual or team that has consistently demonstrated adherence to high professional standards, industry best practices, and regulatory compliance. They will have delivered learning and interventions aimed at improving or maintaining high levels of professionalism and excellence in HR, OD or organisational processes. Acting as an exemplar for the profession and those they lead, there will be strong evidence of impact.

Criteria

- **Standards:** Evidence of successful implementation of professional standards, industry best practice.
- **Impact:** Specific examples of how their leadership, project or initiative enhanced professionalism in practice (e.g., improved communication, efficiencies, better outcomes).
- **Commitment to developing others:** Ability to transfer professional knowledge enabling others to achieve success through their commitment to professional development.

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your project – in plain English. We will use this summary should your project make the final, so please make sure it clearly explains your work (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? (250 words)
- 3 Who have you involved/partnered with? (250 words)
- 4 What is the learning, and how have you disseminated this learning? (200 words)

Judging panel to take place 9 July from 9am - 12pm

4 Hill Dickinson Award for 'Passionate about OD'

Hill Dickinson

An innovative OD (or L&D) initiative or strategy to address an important business need that has been led with passion and exceptional commitment. Demonstrable impact on morale, engagement, and motivation within teams or departments within the organisation.

Criteria

- **Evidence:** Evaluation of return on investment and success in terms of how it has met its learning objectives and demonstrated a positive impact on the organisation, patient care or staff experience.
- **Impact:** Clear measures of success and evaluation undertaken; demonstrable impact of the project on team motivation, or overall organisational culture.
- **Testimonials:** Recognition from stakeholders (patients, colleagues, or the community) of the project team's exceptional leadership, passion and commitment.

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your project – in plain English. We will use this summary should your project make the final, so please make sure it clearly explains your work (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? (250 words)
- 3 Who have you involved/partnered with? (250 words)
- 4 What is the learning, and how have you disseminated this learning? (200 words)

Judging panel to take place 14 July from 2 - 5pm



5 Award for learner of the year sponsored by Korn Ferry

This new award is aimed at people profession Student/Apprentice/Learners.
The Award will recognise four individuals, one from each of the UK nations.

Criteria

- **Early promise in practice:** Demonstrates potential through quality work, innovative thinking, and a proactive approach to learning and development.
- **Commitment to personal growth:** Shows dedication to improving skills and knowledge through participation in workshops, courses, and other learning opportunities.
- **Engagement and collaboration:** Actively engages with peers and instructors, contributing to a positive learning environment and collaborating effectively in team settings.

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your nominee – in plain English. We will use this summary should your nominee make the final, so please make sure it clearly describes them. (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? Please ensure that each of the criteria is addressed. (750 words)
- 3 Please upload a video* which covers:
 - What makes this person stand out
 - About their passion for learning and for the profession

* The video can be from the nominator or the nominee or both
max 300 seconds; max 1GB. Permitted formats MP4, MPEG, MPEG4

Please note that this is compulsory for this category.

It may be recorded on a mobile phone as long it is audible. High production values are not necessary, we are interested in the content alone.

Judging panel to take place 16 July from 9am - 12pm

6 Browne Jacobson Award for excellence in employee engagement



Awarded to an organisation that can evidence a systematic approach to employee engagement and strong commitment from Board to floor. Typically, a cutting-edge project or initiative that demonstrates significantly improved and measurable successes in employee engagement.

Criteria

- **Creativity that can be shared:** An innovative approach that is sustainable and transferrable to other settings and organisations.
- **Impact on engagement & culture change:** Evidence of how the project or initiative has improved employee engagement and contributed to wider culture change in the organisation.
- **Evidence to support:** Tangible benefits identified through qualitative and/or quantitative statistics, with recognition from stakeholders (staff, patients, colleagues etc) of the success.

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your project – in plain English. We will use this summary should your project make the final, so please make sure it clearly explains your work (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? (250 words)
- 3 Who have you involved/partnered with? (250 words)
- 4 What is the learning, and how have you disseminated this learning? (200 words)

Judging panel to take place 13 July from 9am - 12pm

7 Award for best use of an 'Avoidable employee harm' approach sponsored by Bevan Brittan

Bevan Brittan 

This is a new category reflecting HPMA's commitment to our flagship 'Avoiding Harm' programme. Over the past year HPMA has been promoting 100 conversations, and the response from our members has been incredible. This award will showcase how members have used the methodology (or equivalent approaches) to drive change and provide insight into the impact locally of taking a more compassionate approach to investigations.

Criteria

- **Background & proposal:** Clear articulation of the case for the intervention, including the data and evidence considered, and how the intervention was developed
- **Practical application:** Evidence of an evaluation plan, alongside communication of the work and engagement with stakeholders.
- **Impact:** Demonstrable impact of the work undertaken (data, lessons learnt, change made and future plans).

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your project – in plain English. We will use this summary should your project make the final, so please make sure it clearly explains your work (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? (250 words)
- 3 Who have you involved/partnered with? (250 words)
- 4 What is the learning, and how have you disseminated this learning? (200 words)

Judging panel to take place 10 July from 9am - 12pm

8 Social Partnership Forum Award for partnership working between employers and trade unions



This award will be given to a specific initiative that fully demonstrates the benefits of partnership working between employers and trade unions to support NHS staff in their delivery of healthcare services.

Criteria

- **Genuine commitment:** Demonstrable & genuine partnership working between employers and trade unions from the outset, not just collaboration
- **Impact:** Evidence that the initiative had a measurable and sustainable impact for the benefit of staff, including qualitative and/or quantitative statistics.
- **Transferability:** Evaluation of lessons learned and exploration of opportunity to spread and scale and/or replicate elsewhere

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your project – in plain English. We will use this summary should your project make the final, so please make sure it clearly explains your work (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? (250 words)
- 3 Who have you involved/partnered with? (250 words)
- 4 What is the learning, and how have you disseminated this learning? (200 words)

Judging panel to take place TBC



9 Capsticks Award for innovation

This award will be given to a cutting edge, creative initiative within any sphere of the people management function whose development has been informed by evidence and data, and which has led to improved outcomes for staff and/or patients.

Criteria

- **Genuine innovation & case for change:** Evidence of true innovation, not simply new ways of working or implementation of policy including the data and research that led to the initiative.
- **Impact:** Evidence that the innovation has made/is making a real difference.
- **Transferability:** Clear scope for the transfer of learning to other organisations.

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your project – in plain English. We will use this summary should your project make the final, so please make sure it clearly explains your work (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? (250 words)
- 3 Who have you involved/partnered with? (250 words)
- 4 What is the learning, and how have you disseminated this learning? (200 words)

Judging panel to take place 9 July from 2 - 5pm

10 Award for exemplary systems workforce planning and development

With this category we are looking to identify projects and teams that are leading innovative approaches to system workforce planning, developing workforce plans based on service planning to meet population health needs and developing a workforce that can provide health and care on a whole system basis.

Criteria

- Takes account of the needs of the whole health and care sector and its workforce in planning for the future, taking a 'one workforce' approach across the NHS, primary care, social care and the voluntary, independent and charity sectors
- Evidence of developing governance and infrastructure that enables workforce plans to align with local service and financial planning
- Evidence of impact, new ways of working and growing the workforce
- Evidence of using workforce plans to help shape education and training needs, recruitment and retention and workforce transformation

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your project – in plain English. We will use this summary should your project make the final, so please make sure it clearly explains your work (100 words).
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? (250 words)
- 3 Who have you involved/partnered with? (250 words)
- 4 What is the learning, and how have you disseminated this learning? (200 words)

Judging panel to take place 8 July from 9am - 12pm



11 People team of the year sponsored by Ward Hadaway

Awarded to a UK healthcare people team working together to achieve outstanding results over the past 12 months and demonstrating HPMA's values in action.

Professional	professional in everything we do.	Passionate	we are passionate about our profession.
Exemplary	we are the best at what we do.	Learning	we are always willing to learn.
Open	we are open, honest and kind.	Engaging	we are engaging and inspiring.

Criteria

- **Performance & impact:** Exceptional team performance and impact on frontline team experience and service delivery.
- **Evidence based practice:** Use of evidence, data and/or workforce analytics to underpin professional development and interventions.
- **Cohesion:** Evidence of excellent team working and cohesive relationships

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your team – in plain English. We will use this summary should your team make the final, so please make sure it clearly describes it. (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? Please ensure that each of the criteria is addressed. Please include any metrics. (750 words)
- 3 Please upload a video* which explains how your team demonstrates HPMA's values in action (max 300 seconds; max 1GB). Permitted formats MP4, MPEG, MPEG4

**Please note that this is compulsory for this category.*

It may be recorded on a mobile phone as long it is audible. High production values are not necessary, we are interested in the content alone.

Judging panel to take place 10 July from 2 - 5pm



12 Deputy people leader of the year sponsored by KPMG

Awarded to a UK healthcare deputy director (or equivalent senior leader working to a director) demonstrating an outstanding contribution to their employer, the sector and the workforce profession over the last 12 months.

Criteria

- **Credibility, peer exemplar:** Evidence of high levels of personal and professional credibility within the workforce functions, the wider organisation and peers; strong commitment to own CPD.
- **Focus on quality:** Demonstrates effective use of people's skills and experience in developing new ways of working in delivering high quality customer focussed services for staff and/or to support the delivery of care to patients.
- **Change agent, innovator:** Evidence of initiative, innovation and commitment to addressing workforce inequalities and achieving positive change in the workplace.

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your nominee – in plain English. We will use this summary should your nominee make the final, so please make sure it clearly introduces them. (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? Please ensure that each of the criteria is addressed. Please include any metrics. (750 words)

Judging panel to take place 6 July from 2 - 5pm

13 People leader of the year sponsored by DAC Beachcroft

A UK healthcare workforce director (e.g. Chief People Officer, Executive Director of Workforce & OD, Director of People & Culture, HR Director etc) demonstrating excellent leadership and an outstanding contribution to the workforce profession over the last 12 months.

Criteria

- **Leadership, peer recognition:** Recognised by their peers as an outstanding leader in their organisation and beyond; considered an exemplar for the people profession and with a strong commitment to creating compassionate and inclusive cultures.
- **Focussed on delivery & impact:** Exceptional track record of achievement and of making a significant contribution to improving workforce delivery and the delivery of care to patients.
- **Influencer and relationship builder:** Evidence of ability to influence and work with a range of partners across boundaries and sectors.

Questions

- 1 Please provide a summary of your nominee – in plain English. We will use this summary should your nominee make the final, so please make sure it clearly describes them (100 words)
- 2 What is the evidence for meeting the criteria? Please ensure that each of the criteria is addressed. Please include any metrics. (750 words)

Go to <https://hpmawardsplatform.com/> to enter & <https://www.hpma.org.uk/previous-winners-guides/> to download winners guides from previous years.

If you have a query or question please call 020 8334 4500 or email hello@chamberdunn.co.uk



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Chamberlain Dunn
on behalf of HPMa