



NI Water's Apprenticeship Academy graduates.

Strategic areas of focus

Powered by talent

Safe, happy and healthy workplace

Creating a legacy for our communities

Sustainable development goals



Principal threats/opportunities



Page 76 Read more about principal threats and opportunities.

Strategic performance indicators

People	Unit of measurement	Target 2022/23	Actual 2022/23	Pass/Fail	Target 2023/24
Employee attendance	%	96.5	96.7	Pass	96.5
Health and safety incidents	Number	≤7	6	Pass	≤7

Powered by talent

We want to create a great place to work and ensure that NI Water is fit for the future by attracting, developing, and retaining top talent. Our people strategy is focused on driving performance for our customers through building capability, ensuring we have the right people with the right skills performing their roles to the best of their ability. Our plans support the provision of a safe and healthy workplace, helping to make NI Water an organisation in which we are all proud to work.

Whilst many organisations are experiencing the 'great resignation', our staff turnover remained consistently low at around 5%, while average tenure has remained high at over 15 years. Nearly 10% of our workforce were promoted in 2022/23. Our employer brand remains strong in the marketplace, with over 250 new recruits in the last two years.

Over 2022/23, we engaged an expert partner to support the delivery of a comprehensive management development framework that will develop world class management capabilities at all levels. This is a major investment in our leaders and managers over PC21 and continues NI Water's journey

in developing leadership skills, competencies, and behaviours to create a high-performance culture and role model our values.

Your future matters

We continue to grow and diversify our entry level academy to seed our organisation with top talent to support succession planning. Our Apprentice Academy won the prestigious Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Award for Best Apprenticeship Scheme. Our academy model has grown to 75 apprentices and covers business areas such as operations, mechanical and electrical engineering, civil engineering, and cyber security. We continue to see higher female representation through this programme in typically male dominated areas. We launched a campaign to recruit a further 33 apprentices and higher level apprentices and graduates to join in 2023/24, introducing programmes in new business areas including Science, Finance and Accountancy, Commercial Management, and ICT Telemetry to add to our existing programmes in Water Operations and Construction Engineering. This will bring our entry level academy numbers to 108 people, just under 10% of the workforce.



See it to be it!

Our entry level strategy is supported by promotion of careers in STEM, partnering with further and higher education bodies and influencing early career choices. Over 2022/23, we participated in the 21st Century Girls and Big Conversation schools and college career events, partnered with NIE Networks in the 4CUR future careers event involving 7,500 school children, and held our inaugural online parents evening. Several female leaders from NI Water are taking part in the 'Sisters IN' mentoring programme, which is designed to inspire tomorrow's female leaders.



Three of NI Water's inspirational female leaders with pupils from local schools taking part in the 'SistersIN' Mentoring Programme.

Providing a safe, happy and healthy workplace

It is only with a motivated, safe and healthy workforce that we can deliver exceptional standards of customer service. We do this by placing care for our people front and centre in how we do business, looking after them through all of life's events and providing the conditions for them to perform their role to the best of their ability.

Zero harm

Health and safety is an integral part of NI Water's day-to-day business. NI Water's vision for health and safety for employees, contractors and customers is the 'pursuit of zero harm by raising standards and performance through the identification and adoption of industry best practice and the development of an empowered, valued, engaged, accountable and competent workforce'.

NI Water has a dedicated Health and Safety team, which is key to ensuring that NI Water complies with relevant legislation and best practice. The Health and Safety Focus Group,

made up of representatives from across NI Water, examines NI Water and contractor incidents, reviews health and safety training needs, and general promotion of health and safety. Driver awareness is one of the areas of focus for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

NI Water has a Health, Safety and Facilities Transformation Programme (2021-2025) which sets out several priorities for health and safety. Significant investment continues to be made in our facilities and above ground buildings and related assets.

The Assure health and safety software enables all employees and our supply chain to report incidents, unsafe and good observations and safety suggestions via App or Source homepage using a mobile phone, Toughbook, or laptop. The system has been developed over 2022/23 and will give NI Water real time, accurate and meaningful data that will allow us to appropriately target and resource both our short and long-term health and safety priorities.



Prioritising Health

In recent years, our work on employee wellbeing has been widely recognised as a programme of best practice in Northern Ireland and has earned us several prestigious business awards, including the Belfast Telegraph Award for Excellence in Workplace Health and Wellbeing 2022. More importantly, the programme has proven to have been successful in helping to improve the health and wellbeing of many of our employees. We have had excellent feedback from employees who have benefited from the various programmes including a few notable cases where early identification of health issues prevented more serious consequences.

Our health and wellbeing strategy, is focused around four key pillars of health (mental, physical, social, and financial). Over 2022/23, we hosted a range of

guest speakers, attracting record audience numbers and continued our health promotion and awareness campaigns via the use of storytelling to support Men's Health Week, Mental Health Awareness Week, Carers Week and Smoking Cessation.

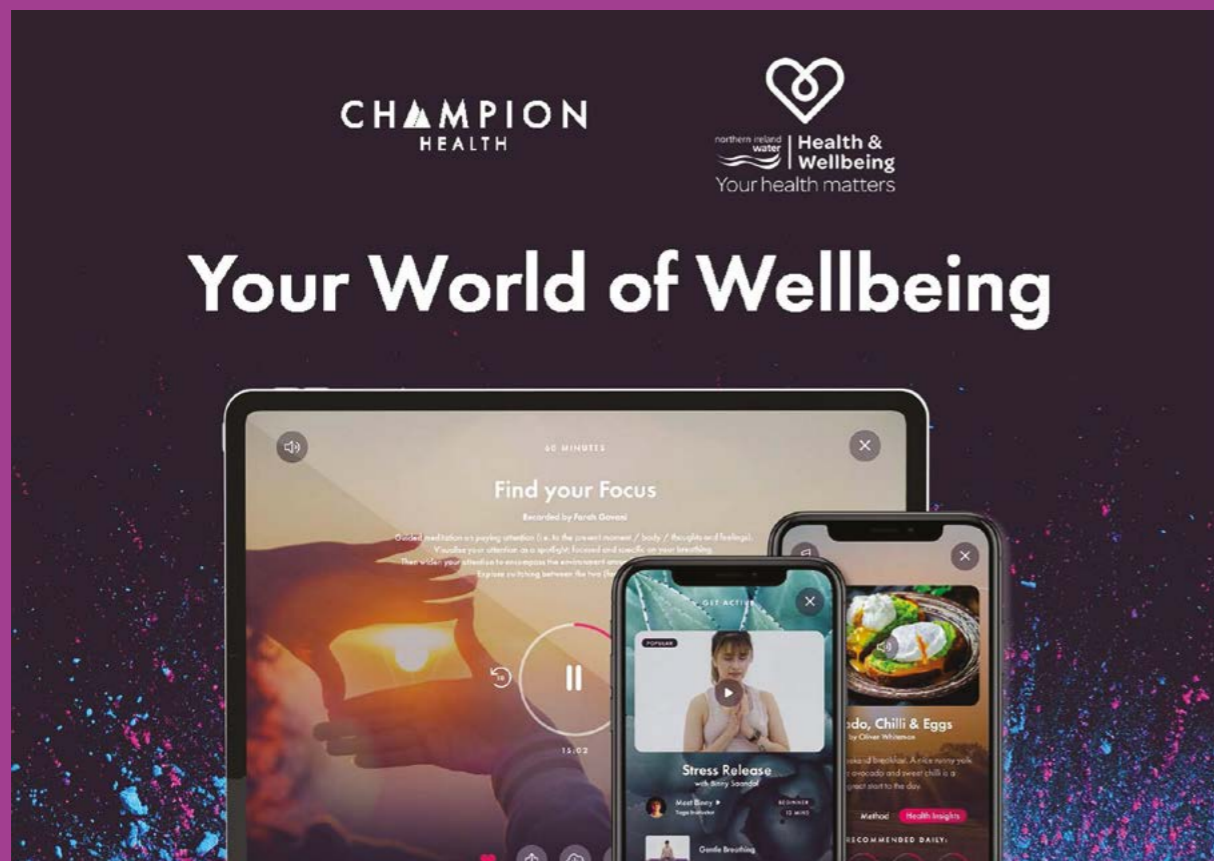
Our hugely popular live well roadshow was brought to each hub office over 2022/23 with a newly designed programme reflecting feedback from our many listening strategies asking for increased support for retirement, financial health, men's health, and women's health.



Netflix of wellbeing

We introduced our new wellbeing app in association with Champion Health to offer employees a 'Netflix of wellbeing' at their fingertips, completely personalised to their

individual needs and interests. Family and friends of NI Water employees can also use the app.



NI Water wellbeing app.

Involving people in the decisions that affect them

We use a range of listening strategies to gather the voice of the employee and ensure that action is targeted in the right place. These include employee surveys, frontline focus groups, cultural ambassador network, monthly polls, and employee workgroups. This approach provides agile ways of staying connected with our people to understand the sentiment of our workforce.


Feedback received has helped inform a variety of corporate strategies including the new hybrid working strategy. In 2022/23, we engaged a new expert culture and engagement partner to help design and deliver a new holistic listening strategy across NI Water. We will use this to gather the voice of the employee and develop our ability to measure the health of our corporate culture.

Celebrating and promoting diversity

As a major employer delivering an essential service, we recognise both the business and personal benefits of creating a diverse and inclusive environment and the importance of diversity in attracting and retaining the best talent. We are committed to creating an environment where everyone feels valued and able to contribute fully to their full potential. Significant work has been undertaken in the last three years to lay the foundations for a new culture of diversity and inclusion.



NI Water receiving the Silver Diversity Charter Mark.

 Find out more about diversity and inclusion at page 130.

Our progress was recognised at the Belfast Chamber Business Awards in October 2022, when NI Water was recognised as the best of Belfast business in becoming the inaugural winners of the Diversity and Inclusion award. The Diversity and Inclusion award recognises organisations who exhibit exceptional practice and exemplary contributions towards improving diversity and inclusion in their business.

Building on our success in achieving the Bronze Charter Mark for Diversity in 2020/21, NI Water became the second public sector organisation in Northern Ireland to achieve the challenging standard of the Silver Diversity Charter Mark by Diversity Mark in 2022/23. We now join 17 other leading NI employers who have also achieved this important standard.

We also began our programme of diversity and inclusion training in 2022/23, delivering Inclusive Leadership training to key groups across the organisation including our entire Level 3 senior leadership team (over 70 leaders) to enable them to fulfil their commitments in this area and act as role models.



NI Water receiving the Diversity and Inclusion award.



Creating a legacy for our communities

Wrapping up a milestone year of celebrations

In 2022/23 we wrapped up a milestone year of celebration through one of the largest corporate volunteering schemes in Northern Ireland.

In 10 outstanding years, we have donated over 11,500 employee hours to help good causes. Supported by Business in the Community, NI Water has helped employees to volunteer their time through a wide range of volunteering activities.

As part of our 'Cares Challenge' programme, activities are planned and set up in partnership with Business in the Community's NI Cares Programme. The programme identifies organisations and charities within the local community who need a helping hand with physical tasks. This has allowed our staff to help a wide range of charities including, Southern Area Hospice, The National Trust, Welcome Organisation, Crosskennan Lane Animal Sanctuary and Foyle Hospice.



NI Water staff volunteering with Cares Challenge assisting with the winter campaign at Simon Community.

Making a difference in Malawi

NI Water supports WaterAid's vision of a world where everyone, everywhere has access to clean water, decent sanitation, and good hygiene. We are proud to lead the local WaterAid NI Committee, which raises around £60,000 each year. Recent fundraising has been dedicated to WaterAid's Deliver Life project in Malawi, which aims to improve the health of women, girls, and children

by providing access to clean water, decent sanitation, and good hygiene in their communities. These funds will support health centres in Machinga and Zomba districts of Malawi, by helping to introduce a variety of facilities such as solar-powered piped water supply systems, inclusive bathrooms, and other sanitary facilities.



Deliver Life project in Malawi. Photo credit Dennis Lupenga.

Creating a water saving culture

NI Water is committed to creating a water saving culture for communities. Our Education Programme delivers NI Water's key environmental messages on water efficiency to schools, community, and youth groups with a strong emphasis on the link between saving water and saving energy. Schools are encouraged to promote the use of water butts throughout the school community via a colouring competition.

These messages are further promoted through the free water audit and water efficiency project supported by an online platform 'Get Water Fit', which involves distributing save-a-flush, four minute shower timers, leaky loo strips and toothy timers directly to the customer. We have completed 210 school visits and 63 community visits in line with targeted engagement.



Water whizz-kids from Bellaghy Primary School, County Derry/Londonderry with their new water bottles provided as part of NI Water's refillation campaign.



NI Water's Environmental Outreach and Learning Officer with water whizz-kids from Ballymacash Primary School, Lisburn, County Antrim.