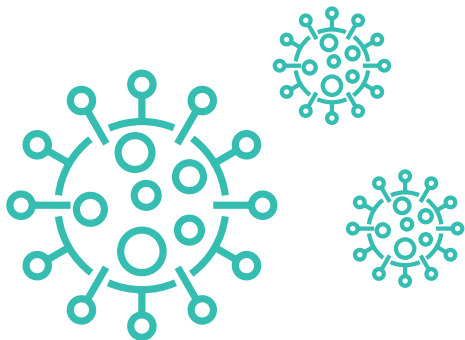


SECTOR GUIDE

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# HOW HEALTHCARE TACKLED COVID-19 WITH LEARNING



Back in February 2020, who could've predicted the next two years? A few short weeks later, we went from international vacations, celebrating birthdays in restaurants and going to gym classes to being stuck in our homes literally overnight.

The impact of COVID-19 was enormous, and its effects are still being felt today. Swathes of the global workforce were furloughed, businesses succumbed to the pressures of COVID and were forced to close down and borders slammed shut. And this is all before we consider the impact on the healthcare industry.

It's no secret that healthcare systems worldwide have always been overstretched, underfunded and constantly treading water to keep up with increasingly complex healthcare needs.

*COVID-19 brought with it a whole new set of challenges, leaving healthcare systems that were just about staying afloat completely overwhelmed.*

Hospital beds became scarce as they filled up with COVID patients. Widespread personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages left medical professionals, carers and patients at risk. Pharmaceutical companies clamored to create a vaccine. Primary medical care was put on pause as doctors and nurses abandoned their day jobs to offer their skills in temporary hospitals. This was a monumental challenge for the healthcare industry to navigate, and nobody was completely sure of the right course of action.



*The pandemic has left the global healthcare industry facing a whole new set of challenges:*

## 70,000 MORE NURSES

The UK needs 70,000 more nurses by 2024 to clear the COVID-19 backlog.



**In the US, trauma- and stress-related symptoms were as high as 35% among healthcare workers on the COVID-19 frontline.**



**A Chinese study showed that 72% of healthcare workers treating patients with COVID-19 reported feelings of distress.**

## 75%

## 49%

**49% of Italian healthcare workers exhibited signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) throughout COVID-19.**



**Researchers estimate a global shortage of 15 million healthcare workers in fewer than 10 years.**

While we may be out of the peak infectious period for COVID-19 itself, these statistics show that we're still far from out of the woods. Healthcare worker stress, anxiety and burnout is expected to lead to a mass exodus of skilled healthcare professionals in the coming years - so what can we do about it? ►



# THE KEY CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

## STAFF SHORTAGES

In the height of the pandemic, countries such as the UK asked retired and ex-medical professionals to temporarily return to the sector to help cope with the overwhelming demand for medical care. Even dentists could be found taking up posts at the UK's temporary hospitals, set up in conference centers, universities and leisure centers.

However, staff shortages weren't limited to the peak of the pandemic. As time has progressed, healthcare workers worldwide have had to self-isolate as a result of potential exposure to the virus, or been directly infected with the virus, leading to widespread shortages.

Furthermore, healthcare workers - especially doctors and nurses - have experienced extreme burnout from working long, tiring hours in full PPE, under huge amounts of stress, leading to increased staff absences and mental health challenges.



## MIXED MESSAGES FROM HEALTHCARE LEADERS

In most countries worldwide, communications and strategies around COVID-19 changed weekly. While New Zealand's Jacinda Ardern closed borders immediately and ordered strict lockdown measures for every small outbreak, Sweden's Stefan Löfven took a laissez-faire approach with minimal restrictions to citizens' movement and activities.

Mixed messages and unclear communications led to confusion, not just within healthcare organisations, but also across the general public. From hand washing to social distancing to national lockdowns to mask wearing, the guidance changed constantly. This led to a lot of confusion in the general population, leading to an explosion in infections and leaving healthcare workers to pick up the pieces.



# THE KEY CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

## OVERWHELMED HOSPITAL SYSTEMS

Worldwide, but especially in COVID-19 hotspots in China, Italy, the US and the UK, hospitals have been constantly overstretched and overwhelmed throughout the pandemic. At the peak of the pandemic, intensive care units were at full capacity, with entire departments and hospitals dedicated to dealing with the influx of COVID patients.

This had a severe knock-on effect on other services. With so much time and resource committed to dealing with the impact of COVID, other services fell by the wayside, leading to a giant backlog of diagnoses and treatment lists.



With all healthcare professionals pivoting to dealing with COVID, things like cancer screening and mental health services became less of a priority, meaning that healthcare teams are still playing catch-up over a year later.

## NEW APPROACHES TO PATIENT CARE



The risk of spreading COVID-19 meant that the remaining healthcare professionals dealing with primary care had to act cautiously. Overnight, face-to-face appointments with medical professionals were replaced with telephone and video appointments, which completely changed the way in which healthcare professionals and their patients interacted.

Instead of the usual in-person relationship, including physical examinations and diagnostic tests, doctors and nurses had to diagnose based on verbal descriptions and virtual examinations. This wasn't just a drastic change for the professionals, but also for patients, many of whom may have struggled to articulate their symptoms or found it challenging getting to grips with the necessary technology.

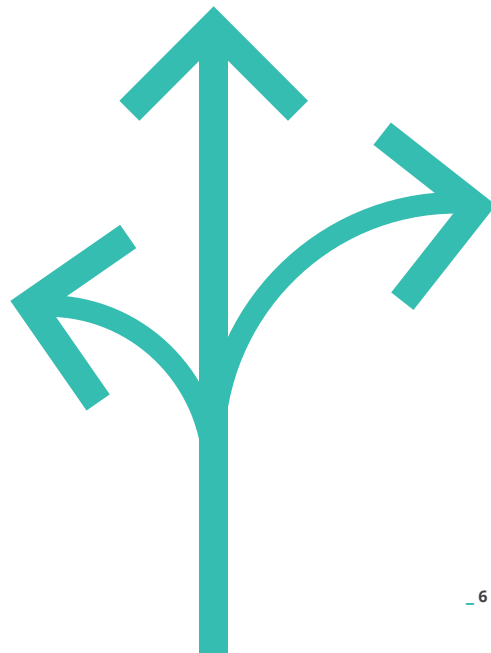


# THE KEY CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

## CONSTANT UNCERTAINTY AND RAPID CHANGE

Perhaps the biggest overarching challenge for the healthcare sector was the pervasive uncertainty and the need to constantly change direction to keep up with the rapidly evolving situation. New variants of the virus, changing lockdown restrictions, soaring infection rates and exhausted, overworked healthcare employees pushed the sector to its limit.

Once the vaccines were approved for the public, there was a scramble to get them in the arms of the right people at the right time. Vast disparities in access to vaccinations between countries led to major disruption for global travel, and vaccine hesitancy among certain demographics has widened the gap between the vaccinated and unvaccinated even further.



# HOW HEALTHCARE ORGANISATIONS TACKLED COVID-19

*Healthcare organisations have relied on Totara for the last 10 years to help them train, upskill and certify their people.*



Overall, **44 new healthcare customers started using Totara in 2020**, as healthcare organisations sought **talent experience solutions** offering great value for money and maximum adaptability to help them cope with the rapidly changing COVID-19 situation.

What does this tell us? Healthcare organisations are looking for tools and technology that will help their talent adapt within an uncertain, unpredictable working environment, whether that

means rapidly upscaling, changing the cadence of training or adding brand-new learning programs at speed.

As always, healthcare organisations must also do more with less, stretching their limited budgets as far as possible to meet the needs of their extremely busy employees - and volunteers.

*So what does this look like in practice?*



# The Italian National Institute of Health

The Italian National Institute of Health (Istituto Superiore di Sanità, or ISS) is the main center for research, control and technical scientific advice on public health in Italy. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Italy in February 2020, the ISS launched its first e-learning program for health professionals. In order to roll this out, they needed to **upscale their LMS from 40,000 to over 450,000 users in just one month**. They also required a robust, accurate reporting system to keep track of learner progress as the pandemic evolved.

The ISS upscaled their Totara Learn solution to support all 450,000 users, with more than 75% of participants completing the free course and improving their knowledge of COVID-19 and related topics. They used features such as Totara's announcements

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Benvenuto su EDUISS, la piattaforma dedicata alla Formazione a Distanza (FAD) in salute pubblica dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS).  
L'ISS è l'organo tecnico-scientifico del Servizio Sanitario Nazionale e persegue la tutela della salute pubblica in particolare attraverso lo svolgimento delle funzioni di ricerca, controllo, consulenza, regolazione e formazione.  
Da questa pagina potrai iscriverti e fruire dei percorsi formativi a distanza per il tuo aggiornamento professionale, in linea con programmi di Educazione Continua in Medicina (ECM). L'ISS è provider nazionale ECM.

**I nostri corsi**  
Per iscriversi ai corsi è necessario creare un account in piattaforma. Vedi: [come iscriversi a un corso](#)  
L'offerta formativa istituzionale è visibile sotto alla sezione "Corsi disponibili". Prima di iniziare verifica di essere in possesso dei **Requisiti tecnici per la fruizione dei corsi**  
I corsi ospitati su questa piattaforma sono generalmente ispirati al metodo didattico "Problem Based Learning" e contengono alcune risorse volte a rendere il partecipante parte attiva del suo percorso formativo.

**I miei corsi**  
In questa sezione ritroverai tutti i corsi FAD ai quali ti sei iscritto

**Corsi Disponibili**  
Questa sezione contiene l'elenco dei Corsi FAD attualmente attivi

**Formazione per il personale delle scuole**  
In questa sezione sono contenuti i corsi FAD diretti al personale scolastico

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forum for COVID-19 updates, the certificate tool to award certifications based on program completion and an RSS feed for real-time updates from governments' Twitter feeds, equipping

Italian healthcare professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to tackle the spread of COVID-19.

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# Monash Health

Monash Health is the largest public health service in Victoria, Australia, providing safe, high-quality care to one-quarter of Melbourne's population, across the entire lifespan, from pre-birth to end-of-life.

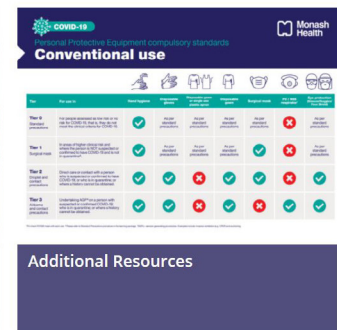
They were struggling with the spread of COVID-19 cases in residential aged care facilities when the second wave brought 500-700 cases into Victoria a day.

Monash Health wanted to deploy its existing personal protective equipment (PPE) training across an additional 70,000 residential care workers across the state, which needed to be accessible from any device, available at any time and supportive of statewide certification efforts.

Over 500 different state residential care sites have accessed the newly extended

## Keep updated

Keep up to date with the latest Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources and information for the aged care sector at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/aged-care-sector-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>



LMS to date, with over 7,500 user completions of the PPE training. The new LMS made a demonstrable difference by upskilling thousands of aged care workers when the COVID-19 pandemic in the state of Victoria was at its worst

and residential aged care facilities were under significant stress, helping to safeguard employees and residents alike.

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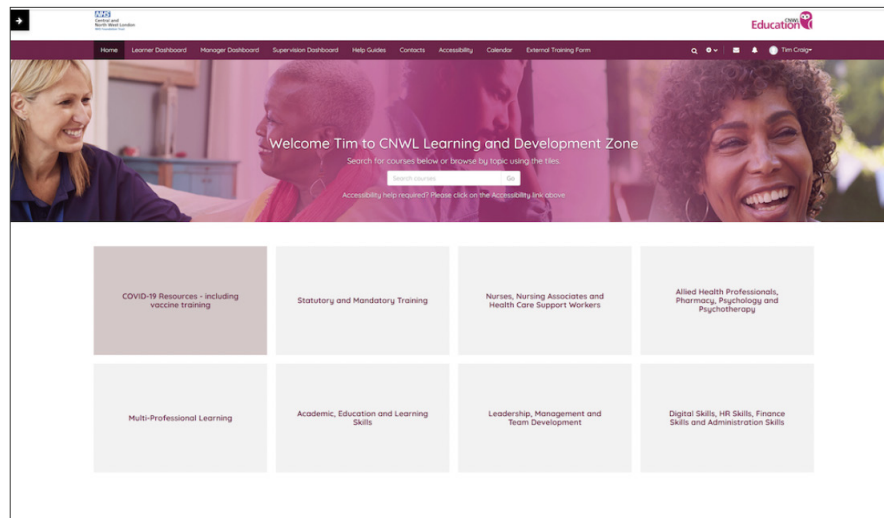


# Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) has almost 7,000 staff providing integrated healthcare to a third of London's population, Milton Keynes and areas beyond. They provide more than 300 health services across 150 sites and many other community settings.

The COVID pandemic had a significant impact on CNWL's ability to deliver face-to-face training, and decisions had to be made and implemented quickly to react to this unprecedented event.

Their Totara Learn platform was instrumental in creating a space specifically for COVID response learning resources, such as e-learning modules, videos, presentations and assessments.



They also used the LMS to convert existing face-to-face training activities into webinars, along with making available vaccination e-learning modules from the NHS's central Elearning for Healthcare service.

Since implementing Totara Learn, CNWL has achieved a 94% pass rate in statutory and mandatory compliance training, helping keep employees and patients safe.

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## Eastern Health

Eastern Health is a large metropolitan health service in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Australia, employing over 10,000 medical, nursing, allied health, clinical support, and non-clinical staff.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that all face-to-face training at Eastern Health had to stop, and therefore a rapid transition involving the development of online resources had to commence.

Eastern Health's Totara Learn system rapidly adapted from managing face-to-face training to moving content online, including switching to video and live online content and replicating face-to-face learning pathways online.

Within just two weeks from the cessation of face-to-face training, the first online modules were launched.



The flexibility of Totara meant that this was possible at no extra cost, and the online offering has been a hit with learners, with a 20% increase in completions of the Occupational Violence and Aggression course

compared with pre-COVID completions. The videos have also attracted 57,000 hours of viewing time, and Totara Learn has handled the reporting of training completion with ease.

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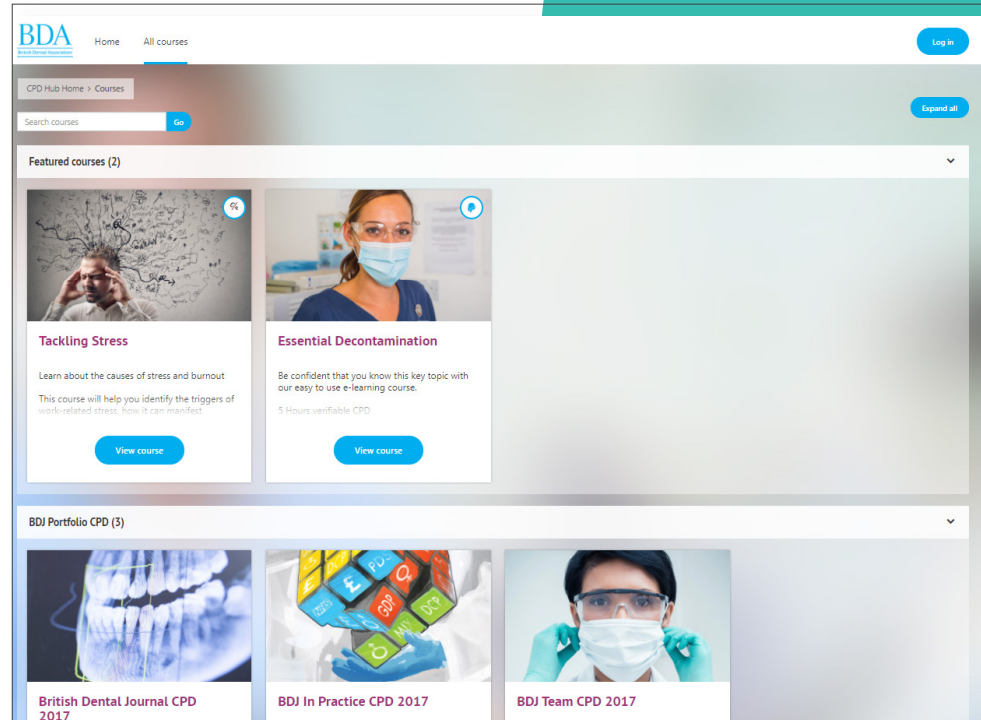


# British Dental Care

British Dental Association (BDA) is the professional association and trade union for dentists and dental students in the UK, offering guidance and training to experienced and trainee dentists.

COVID-19 brought about unparalleled challenges that required the BDA to upskill its workforce in a very short timeframe. This needed to be done within tight time constraints for busy staff and to keep dentists informed about PPE and COVID-related compliance. The BDA adapted their existing Totara Learn solution, incorporating additional features such as the assessment tool to create a Return To Work Toolkit.

Over 9,000 dental professionals became certified in the BDA's Using PPE Safely course, and over 1,600 dentists accessed microlearning to assess their dental practices ahead of reopening after the peak of the pandemic.



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## BaptistCare

BaptistCare is one of Australia's most respected non-profit care providers, serving the aged and people living with disadvantage for over 75 years. They support thousands of people across NSW and the ACT in Australia, through more than 160 programs and facilities.

They chose Totara to help them create a solution to deal with the challenges of COVID-19.

This included creating brand-new pandemic-related content, bolstering their existing offering with online webinars for remote learning and the rapid deployment and management of new audiences.

The screenshot displays the BaptistCare LMS interface. At the top, the BaptistCare logo is on the left, and user information (Sahar Ali) is on the right. A navigation bar includes links for Home, Record of Learning, Reports, Find Learning, and Calendar, along with a search bar. The main content area features a large banner for the course 'The Power Of Routine Check-Ins During COVID-19: A Simple Guide for Managers'. Below the banner, a breadcrumb trail shows the path: Home / Courses / Leadership & Management / Leading Teams / The Power of Routine Check-Ins. On the left, a sidebar lists course components: Participants, Badges, Grades, Step 1: Complete the Module, Provide your Feedback, Learner resources, and Course Completion Certificate. The main content area is titled 'About this course' and includes sections for 'Course Aim' (describing collaboration with Channel 1 and the course's purpose) and 'Learning outcomes' (stating that managers will be able to structure and carry out routine check-ins).

Thanks to the flexibility of Totara, BaptistCare was able to integrate and manage their new temporary “surge” workforce to deal with COVID-19 in aged care facilities. They also used Microsoft Teams to better integrate with webinars

and in-house courses, and supported the rapid transition of face-to-face seminar programs, including leadership, team and personal development workshops, into online courses.

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# Elysium Healthcare

Elysium Healthcare launched in December 2016, bringing together strategic sites from Partnerships in Care and the Priory Group. Further acquisitions enlarged the group, which now has over 6,000 people offering Mental Health Care, Neurological Care, Learning Disabilities & Autism, Children's Services and Private Patient Services.

Elysium Healthcare had been using Totara for several years prior to COVID-19, so they decided to continue to use their Totara to tackle the new challenges they faced as a result of the pandemic. This included the rapid adaptation of face-to-face onboarding and overseas nurse training to enable virtual delivery, along with brand-new training programs around infection control protocols and PPE.

The screenshot shows the 'My Elysium Learning' dashboard. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Home, My Training Records, My Development, My Team, Catalogue, My Reports, and a search bar. The user is logged in as 'Grumpy Dwarf'. The main content area is titled 'Welcome to the Healthcare Worker Development Pathway'. It includes a welcome message and three main action buttons: 'Search for internal learning via the Course Catalogue', 'Apply for external learning via Continuing Professional Development (CPD)', and 'Go to Senior Healthcare Skills Development Programme'. Below this, a section titled 'Jobs to grow into' contains a table with three columns: Health & Care, Nursing, and Support Services. The table lists various job roles under each category.

Health & Care	Nursing	Support Services
Senior Healthcare Assistant / Support Worker	Staff Nurse	Administrator
Senior Healthcare Assistant / Support Worker - Additional Responsibility		Receptionist
Assistant Psychologist		Personal Assistant
Social Work Practitioner		Security
Occupational Therapy Assistant		Housekeeper
Activities Co-Ordinator		Catering Assistant
Fitness Instructor		
External Liaison Co-Ordinator - coming soon		

Fortunately, Elysium Healthcare was able to deliver much of its learning in virtual classrooms. At the peak of the pandemic, logins to the LMS more than

doubled, showing the huge demand and support for online learning to help support healthcare workers throughout a confusing, uncertain time.

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# WHAT CAN HEALTHCARE ORGANISATIONS LEARN FROM COVID-19?

While COVID-19 has had the most significant impact of any pandemic in living memory, it certainly won't be the last time we face a global health crisis of this scale. From influenza to cholera to the bubonic plague, the history books are filled with millions of deaths caused by pandemics - and new strains of the coronavirus suggest that the world might expect aftershocks from this particular pandemic for years to come.

But whether it's COVID-19, another pandemic or another challenge entirely, what can healthcare organisations learn from this crisis? It's clear that we can't continue how we were, but what does that mean for the way our healthcare employees learn, engage and perform in the workplace?

## PLAN LITTLE AND OFTEN



*"In preparing for battle, I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."*

**- DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER**

As COVID-19 showed us, there is absolutely no point in planning far ahead in times of crisis - but increasingly, too, in "normal times." Our "new normal" should consist of planning little and often instead of making grand elaborate plans spanning the next six months or even a year. In fact,



as Dwight D. Eisenhower said, the act of planning tends to be more useful than the plan itself, as it forces us to think about all of the possible outcomes, contingency plans, different approaches and how to adapt what's currently in place.

Of course, in healthcare, there are some likely occurrences that we can anticipate, such as an increase in influenza and winter viruses in the colder months, but there's also plenty we can't predict. Instead of trying to plan everything to the letter, equip your people with the skills to change direction when needed. This will often encompass soft skills, such as resilience, problem solving and quick thinking.



## SPEND YOUR BUDGET WHERE IT COUNTS

Few industries are under such financial pressure and scrutiny as healthcare, meaning that every cent in your budget counts. Technology to support your talent experience can take up a significant proportion of your budget, which is why it pays to invest in cost-effective, open technology that provides true value for money.

**For instance, opting for a system such as Totara could save you up to 80% on the cost of a proprietary system.**

Investing in systems offering you true value for money ensures that you can spend more on new learning and life-saving solutions. For instance, as COVID-19 took hold around the world, healthcare organisations had to scramble to pull together training on everything from PPE to correct COVID-19 patient protocols and, eventually, vaccinations.

**Making smarter investments in cost-effective technology allowed organisations to allocate more of their limited training budget and resources to creating the actual learning needed by healthcare professionals.**





## EXTEND YOUR LEARNING PROGRAM

While training healthcare professionals will always be your number one priority, you could also consider extending your learning outside your organisation. For instance, in the pandemic, healthcare organisations could have opened up their vaccination training to volunteers or community healthcare workers to help speed up the vaccine rollout through rapid upskilling.

Additionally, you could reuse your existing resources as part of a public learning program. While COVID-19 may be less of a pressing concern today, healthcare organisations could create public information campaigns including ways to avoid catching a serious illness, such as the correct hand-washing technique and general wellbeing advice.



This could also be extended to long-term healthcare concerns, such as smoking, alcohol consumption and mental health conditions, to help reduce the strain on healthcare organisations in the long run.



## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR INTERNAL EXPERTISE

Your people are your lifeblood. The knowledge in your organisation may feel quite overwhelming at times, and it can often become siloed within specific teams or departments. Supporting knowledge sharing and collaboration will help you connect your people with the information they need to do their jobs properly, whether that's a new treatment method, emerging data or anecdotal evidence.

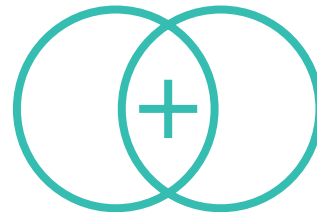
Additionally, we have all seen the mental health impact of the pandemic. Just because we're over the peak, that doesn't mean that things will get less stressful. A [learning experience platform](#) (LXP) provides a place for your people to connect with their peers, share concerns and solve problems together, helping to foster a supportive organisational culture and build a foundation for a well-informed, engaged workforce.



## **ENSURE MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES ARE IN SYNC**

For busy healthcare workers, the idea of increasing the frequency of conversations with managers might seem virtually impossible. But in the long run, maintaining the cadence of manager-employee conversations will keep everyone on track and ensure that everyone has the support they need to perform to the highest standard in their roles.

Continuous performance management can be introduced at a frequency that suits your organisation. Just 15 minutes a month for managers and employees to catch up can enable managers to put the right support in place for their employees, listen to any concerns and suggest any useful learning or wellbeing resources to maintain a resilient, well-informed workforce.



## BE EQUIPPED TO ADAPT

Choosing the right technology is key for healthcare organisations looking to stay adaptable and cope with whatever the world throws at them next.

**Totara's Talent Experience Platform** (TXP) has the adaptability and flexibility to change with your healthcare organisation no matter what, whether you're a hospital system, a specialist association or a community group.

**Totara's TXP is fully customisable and scalable, ensuring you have the ultimate freedom to do whatever you need.** That could mean doubling the capacity if you merge with another group, rapidly adding a new learning program or switching your face-to-face training into online events. Those organisations who have opted for flexible talent technology will reap the benefits the next time an unexpected event arises - which could be sooner than any of us think.





*Ready to prepare your healthcare organisation for whatever happens next?*

**Request your free demo today** to learn first hand how an LMS from Hubken can empower your employees.

A tailored live demo with clear and transparent advice. No hard sell. Promise!

**REQUEST DEMO**



***Connect with other healthcare HR/learning professionals***

Join our healthcare sector space in the Totara Community to solve challenges, share inspiration and discuss today's healthcare issues with your peers.





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