

Adults and Lifelong Learning Select Committee

11 October 2018

Adult Social Care Strategic Priorities: Workforce

Purpose of report:

This report provides the Adults and Lifelong Learning Select Committee with:

- 1) information on the national, regional and Surrey challenge facing the Adult Social Care workforce;
- 2) information on initiatives in place to support delivery of the Adult Social Care workforce strategy in Surrey, with a focus on the key areas of challenge for Surrey County Council and the independent care provider sector; and
- 3) recommendations for the Adults and Lifelong Learning Select Committee to consider regarding the Adult Social Care workforce.

Introduction

1. This report outlines the challenges facing local authorities and independent care providers in recruiting and retaining social care staff, an issue which has been identified as a significant problem across England. Skills for Care which manages the National Minimum Data Set for Adult Social Care (NMDS) estimates that in 2017 there were 1.34 million jobs within the social care sector in England, the majority of which were directly involved in the delivery of social care support (980,000). For further information on the demographics of the social care workforce at both a national and regional level please refer to Annex 1 of this report.
2. For the purposes of clarity, this report focuses on workforce in relation to local authorities and independent care providers. The report highlights the workforce challenges and initiatives specifically for Surrey in the Council's Adult Social Care workforce and the Surrey independent care provider sector.

The National and Regional Picture

3. Staff shortages within the Adult Social Care workforce represent a significant national challenge. Both private social care providers and local authorities are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff within the sector. This has been highlighted by the National Audit Office in its 2017 report entitled 'The Adult Social Care Workforce in England' where it is reported that the turnover rate of social care staff in 2016/17 was 27.8%, 10% higher than the UK average.¹ Staff turnover is proving to be an even greater challenge for specific roles, particularly those directly involved in the delivery of care such as care workers where the turnover rate across England was 33.8% in 2016/17.²

¹ National Audit Office, *The Adult Social Care Workforce in England*, February 2018, <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/the-adult-social-care-workforce-in-england/>, page 5

² Skills for Care, *National Minimum Dataset for Adult Social Care*, <https://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/reportengine/GuestDashboard.aspx?type=TurnoverRate>

4. The NMDS reveals it has also become increasingly difficult to attract people to work in the care sector. In 2016/17, the vacancy rate for social care staff was 6.6% which represents an overall increase of 1.1% since 2012/13.³ This also masks spikes within specific roles such as care workers where the vacancy rates are higher. The challenge of recruiting people into the care sector is by no means limited to frontline care roles, for example the highest vacancy rate was among registered managers.⁴ For more details on the vacancy and turnover rates across specific positions and areas within the care sector please refer to Annex 2 of this report.
5. The situation across the south east of England largely mirrors the national picture with high vacancy rates and turnover rates. Skills for Care estimates there are 205,000 people employed within social care in the south east of England. The average turnover rate for social care staff across the south east in 2016/17 was 28.5%, 0.7% higher than the national average.⁵ The vacancy rate also stands at 6.8%, 0.2% higher than the national average with particular challenges around recruiting registered managers and care workers.⁶

The Recruitment and Retention Challenge

6. There are a number of reasons why local authorities and independent care provider organisations are finding it difficult to recruit and retain staff. One reason is the relatively low rates of pay offered, particularly to those directly involved in delivering care.⁷ There is a considerably lower turnover rate among higher paid care workers than among those on or just above the National Living Wage as demonstrated by the fact that the turnover rate nationally for senior care workers is almost half that of care workers.
7. Perceptions of social care also plays a role in the ability of local authorities and independent sector organisations to employ social care staff. The National Audit Office identified a lack of prestige within the sector as a significant impediment to the ability of local authorities and independent providers to attract people into the sector. Potential recruits view providing personal care as a demanding occupation compared with jobs that offer equivalent pay, such as retail or hospitality. For those committed to a career in caring for people, the majority feel that roles within the health service are held in higher regard than those in social care and are more likely to apply for jobs within the NHS as a direct result.⁸
8. A perceived lack of career opportunities is a further reason why independent care providers and local authorities find it difficult to attract and recruit new people to work in social care. The NHS by comparison has more defined career development pathways. The National Audit Office reports that development opportunities for staff vary depending on the provider due to funding constraints which necessitate them prioritising the provision of care in the short-term over offering extensive long-term support for learning and career development.⁹

³The Adult Social Care Workforce in England, page 7

⁴ Ibid, page 8

⁵ Skills for Care, National Minimum Dataset for Adult Social Care, <https://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/reportengine/GuestDashboard.aspx?type=TurnoverRate>

⁶ Ibid, <https://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/reportengine/GuestDashboard.aspx?type=VacancyRate>

⁷ The Adult Social Care Workforce in England, page 8

⁸ Ibid, page 7

⁹ Ibid, page 7

9. A high vacancy and turnover rate can also affect the quality of care that people receive. People in receipt of homecare may experience shorter visits than necessary if care workers have higher workloads and they may lose continuity of care. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) found a link between high vacancy and turnover rates, and poorer levels of care being provided.¹⁰
10. A report from the National Audit Office in May 2016 entitled 'Discharging Older People from Hospital' concluded that social care providers' difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff had contributed to an increase in the time it takes to arrange care packages for people leaving hospital which resulted in increased delays in discharging people from hospital.¹¹

Adult Social Care workforce profile and challenges in Surrey

11. The Adult Social Care workforce in Surrey is 33,000, of which 24,000 work in the independent care provider sector and 2,100 work in the Council. The remainder of the workforce is made up of roles, such as personal assistants, day centre staff and care jobs within the NHS. The workforce profile and challenges in Surrey are in line with those across the south east region. A more detailed profile is included in Annex 3 of this report.
12. Within the Council social care workforce our key challenges are the recruitment and retention of experienced social workers and reablement staff. Vacancies as of September 2018 for these posts are 18% for social workers and 35% for reablement staff.
13. For independent care providers in Surrey the key challenge is the high turnover rate which is 28%. In addition, the NMDS profile highlights that there is a high percentage of EU workers in this part of the workforce. Surrey Care Association have undertaken a snapshot survey in September 2018 which is in line with the NMDS data identifying for those surveyed the percentage of EU workers ranged between 20-40% of their workforce.
14. There is increasing difficulty of attracting people into the sector. This is a shared challenge for both the Council and the independent care provider sector. As the Surrey workforce profile shows, a quarter of the ASC workforce is over 55 years of age. This challenge is further exacerbated by the fact that new and young people are not being attracted to work in the Adult Social Care sector.
15. The contributing factors to workforce challenges in Surrey are the poor image of social care, low rates of pay and lack of clear career opportunities. In addition in Surrey there is low unemployment rates of 2.5% in comparison to UK average of 4.3%.
16. The impact of workforce challenges, as highlighted earlier in this report, is that it may result in increased delays in discharging people from hospital. Surrey as a whole system works together in an integrated way to ensure that there are few delayed

¹⁰ Care Quality Commission, *The state of adult social care services 2014 to 2017: findings from CQC's initial programme of comprehensive inspections in adult social care*, August 2017, www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/.

¹¹ National Audit Office, *Discharging Older Patients from Hospital*, May 2016, page 9

transfers of care from hospital. While there may be local variation within Surrey, the overall trend across Surrey is that there are consistently low levels of delayed transfers of care. As of June 2018 Surrey's rate of delayed transfers of care was the 4th lowest out of 16 comparator local authorities and was significantly below the overall England rate.

17. As was highlighted earlier in this report, high vacancy rates within the independent care provider sector may have an impact on standards of care. In order to mitigate for this and support independent care providers in Surrey the Council has Quality Assurance processes in place that monitors the quality of care and offers proactive support for providers. The Council also hosts a Surrey-wide learning and development offer to ensure that staff are supported, trained and competent to undertake their roles.
18. The Quality Assurance team also monitors CQC reporting and undertakes quality assurance visits supporting providers to ensure they adhere to standards and have the appropriate processes and support functions in place. Independent care providers are also supported through regular forums where commissioners work with them to identify initiatives to improve outcomes for people.

Improve recruitment and retention with the Council's Adult Social Care Workforce

19. The Council has developed a workforce strategy that has five areas of focus recognising that all of these play a role in supporting the workforce and helping to improve recruitment and retention. The strategy aims to have a sustainable competent and diverse workforce who are valued and have the right skills to deliver quality, statutory services for Surrey residents. For a summary of the initiatives that are noted below and a copy of the strategy please refer to Annex 4 of this report.

Strategic Areas of Focus	Summary of Initiatives in place
Recruit and retain experienced social care and public health staff ensuring a balanced workforce to reflect the communities that support the Council supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A team has been put in place that is dedicated to improving recruitment and retention within the service; implemented more candidate focused recruitment approaches; implemented an exit interview process; and developed a targeted approach to identified areas of challenge.
Ensure practice is consistent and proportionate and staff are trained and equipped to apply policy, legislative and guidance frameworks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> up front induction for all new starters in place & managers pack for new starters; Surrey-wide senior manager workshops in place to focus on best practice and policy matters; JIVE page to promote and share best practice; and put a Practice development team in place to support qualified professionals.
Develop a culture of learning that invests in and supports all staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new Essential Learning and Development Offer launched in April 2018 to ensure each member of staff is equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies to perform their role; additional continuing professional development offer in place focusing on collaborative learning,

	<p>action learning as well as virtual and blended learning options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sponsored qualifications offer in place through the Apprenticeship Levy; • All staff complete appraisals (100% completion for last 3 years)
Use technology, engagement, wellbeing, learning and development and leadership to support our workforce to improve productivity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developed e-brokerage; on line assessment tools; piloting mobile application; • developed and promoted our wellbeing toolkit and wellbeing offer; • bi-annual staff engagement sessions with Director & leadership team; • reviewed essential learning and development offer; and • in the process of implementing new learning management system and sourcing a catalogue of up to date virtual/online learning opportunities.
Collaborate with partners to develop and deliver local integrated community based teams and commissioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agreed Surrey-wide strategic principles on health and care integration in place; • agreed Surrey-wide principles of integration to apply for the social care workforce; • joint recruitment & career events with the NHS in Surrey.

20. To deliver this strategy the Council has taken a flexible approach enabling it to adapt to changes in the market and learn from what is, or is not, working in Surrey and elsewhere. Data, information and evidence are all used to inform where the Council needs to target its efforts. The data and information used includes vacancy and staff turnover information. It also includes feedback from staff through the staff survey, induction, staff engagement sessions and exit interviews.
21. The data and information highlights that within the service turnover rate for all staff has remained consistently low and is currently at 8.2%, compared to the south east region average 13.7% (Skills for Care NMDS Data, Local Authority, ASC roles).
22. Exit interviews have highlighted that, 79% of people would recommend Surrey as an employer. The feedback from leavers without professional qualifications has been that they would like clearer career progression offers in place. The theme from the feedback from qualified leavers has been that the service needs to continue to focus on improving work life balance and on the wellbeing offer. The feedback from the staff survey and staff engagement sessions have supported these themes.
23. To deliver a culture of learning, supporting our staff development and helping them with career progression the Adult Social Care and Public Health Directorate has reviewed its learning and development offer so it has a greater emphasis on in time, easily accessible solutions to ensure staff can perform their roles to the best of their ability. The learning and development offer has been scrutinised by sector skills council, Skills for Care, and in May 2018 the Council was awarded the Centre of Excellence status. This means that the offer has impact not only on staff and managers but also positively impacts on the individuals using social care services.

24. To support development and career progression for staff the Council has appointed a service wide lead in place for the sponsored qualifications (apprenticeship levy) and champions in teams to actively promote and support staff to take up opportunities. Since implementing this in the autumn of 2017 44 people have taken up this training offer. This continues to be an open program that is actively promoted in the service. Feedback from staff about the approach and offer has been positive.
25. Vacancy rates have identified the recruitment and retention of experienced social workers, senior social workers and reablement workers as a key challenge for the Council. The Council has therefore undertaken some targeted work to address these challenges.
26. The recruitment of experienced social workers is not an issue isolated to Surrey as there is a national shortage of experienced social workers. Issues around locum pay in comparison to permanent staff have contributed to the recruitment challenge. Since 2016 the Council has addressed this issue by signing up to the South East Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) memorandum of cooperation. This is designed to drive down locum pay rates and reduce the amount of qualified staff leaving to work in the locum market. Further targeted initiatives put in place to improve social worker recruitment and retention include :
 - launched a temporary to permanent role transfer for qualified locums which has resulted in 14 people converting to permanent roles since July 2016;
 - launched a Senior Social Worker readiness programme with the first cohort in September 2018, the feedback from the first two sessions has been positive;
 - introduced a “register your interest” process in September 2018, for qualified social workers providing a personalised response to them within 48 hours of registration; and
 - Practice Development Team contact all new and promoted qualified staff to discuss the professional development opportunities and support that is available to them.
27. Recruitment into reablement services remains a challenge. This is largely due to having to compete with NHS pay bands. This has recently been addressed through developing a new role, the Integrated Reablement Assistant which has a salary band that puts the Council more in line with NHS posts. The Council is in the first phase of implementing these new roles and have 24 people starting in October.
28. The Council has also introduced ‘values-based’ recruitment. ‘Values-based’ recruitment is an approach that focuses on recruiting people for their values and behaviours, recognising that people can be trained on the technical aspects of most roles. It ensures that the Council gets the right people to work in the sector who know what it means to provide high quality care and support. Where this has been used it has helped to improve recruitment and retention, particularly in the lower paid roles in social care. Managers have attended skills for care training on ‘values-based’ recruitment. The Council has also developed a ‘values-based’ recruitment tool for candidates to self-assess themselves and have incorporated into the recruitment and interview process value based assessments of candidates.
29. These initiatives have had impact as the social work vacancy rate has reduced from 28% in April 2016 to 18% in September 2018. The Council will be monitoring the impact of the new reablement worker roles and continue to review and develop new

initiatives to improve recruitment and retention for social workers and reablement workers.

Support Recruitment and Retention in the Independent Care Provider Market

30. The work taking place with the independent care providers aims to support them so that their workforce has capacity, is competent and delivers quality services. This approach recognises that by supporting the workforce to be competent and deliver quality services, it can help to mitigate against risks that may arise from recruitment and retention challenges as highlighted earlier in this report.
31. The Council has created the Surrey Skills Academy which provides access to learning, development and consultancy for the sector. This aims to support the competency and quality of the provider sector through a learning and development offer supporting providers with targeted interventions and range of support opportunities funded through external grants and bids.
32. In order to promote the uptake of qualifications and apprenticeships for independent care providers across Surrey, the Council Learning and Development team bids for and manages the Workforce Development Fund. The team is a lead partner of the Workforce Development Fund Partnership and manages over 100 members who make claims for the accredited qualifications delivered to their staff. The Council disburses the allocated funds on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care
33. It is known that staff tend to remain working within an organisation if they are well led and so there are Registered Manager Networks in place across Surrey to help them in their leadership role and to enable them to share best practice. The offer is available through Surrey Skills Academy and funded through an external grant received from Skills for Care and the Department of Health and Social Care. The Networks are led by the registered managers themselves and the agenda is influenced by the participants.
34. To improve recruitment and retention, in partnership with Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System, the Council has supported Surrey Care Association to lead on a Surrey-wide recruitment and retention project. This focuses on the independent care provider sector in Surrey and has three key areas of work :
 - Research and understanding of the current workforce profile
 - Engage with providers to identify barriers and share good practice
 - Re-brand care worker roles as enabling and exciting

Research and understanding the current workforce profile

35. The research and profile of the workforce has informed where the project has needed to focus its attention. Given the age profile it has focused on engaging with younger adults to encourage new people into careers in social care. This includes a program of engagement with colleges, job centres and university leavers. It has also developed recruitment methods that are more millennial friendly, for example, implementing and increasing the use of social media as a tool to promote careers in social care.
36. Given the high percentage of EU workers, Surrey Care Association have and continue to be involved at the national level. The Association have submitted evidence and reports to the migration committee of the challenges faced in the Surrey social care workforce in order to inform the committee when considering future policy. Surrey Care

Association have also shared risk mitigation tools for Brexit to help individual providers in undertaking their own assessments.

Engage with providers to identify barriers and share good practice

37. The project has engaged with providers across Surrey. Toolkits have been developed to help providers to understand and apply best practice in recruitment and retention. There has been an emphasis placed on promoting values based recruitment which, as noted earlier in this report, improves recruitment and retention particularly in the lower paid and entry roles of the sector.
38. Surrey Care Association hosts a Surrey-wide web page that shows the job opportunities across all of the Surrey independent care provider sector. The website provides links to individual organisations as well as promotional videos that profile staff testimonies and the benefits of working in the sector.
39. The project has been published as a best practice case study with NICE Quality Matters and the ADASS website.

Re-brand care worker roles as enabling and exciting

40. The project has supported providers to improve the branding of their service, helping them to improve their websites so that they highlight the benefits of working for them and the career opportunities available. It has helped providers to ensure they focus on the values and culture of their organisation to help attract people into the sector.
41. The project has also contributed to a national initiative led by the Justice department that will be launched in winter 2018. This aims to raise awareness of career opportunities in the sector and improve the public profile of social care career opportunities. The Surrey video testimonies and stories from people working in the sector has formed part of that contribution.

Our shared challenge - attracting new and young people into Adult Social Care careers
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42. As noted in the introduction, both nationally and in Surrey, the perceptions of social care play a role in the challenges that are faced in attracting people to work in the sector. This alongside, the Council's age profile reinforces the need to focus on attracting people, including younger people, into the care sector in Surrey.
43. The Council is engaging more effectively with the millennial candidate market by putting in place continual streamlining of the application process to make it a quicker and more efficient candidate journey. Social media is also being used to attract younger candidates. The Council works closely with the recruitment team to utilise the wider Council social media strategy.
44. The Adult Social Care Directorate has had an offer of apprenticeship roles over the last three years, which continue to be offered. These have been successful in attracting new and younger people into the service and a significant number of apprentices have stayed in the service, applying for substantive posts. Apprenticeship roles are available in each of the teams and a fresh campaign was launched this summer for entry level social care and business administration apprentices. This is an ongoing campaign and,

as of September, the Directorate has four new apprentices who have joined the service.

45. The Surrey Care Association project has been working with job centres on the potential opportunities provided by changes in the benefit system whereby people will be able to work more hours without reductions to their benefit entitlement. It is anticipated this could have a positive impact on attracting people into the sector and/or enable people to work more hours than they are currently able to.
46. Together with Surrey Care Association, the Council is working with Health Education Kent, Surrey and Sussex (HEKSS) to attract new people into the social care sector. This is part of continuing efforts to explore opportunities to collaborate in addressing shared workforce challenges.
47. A further area and opportunity for a shared focus is on supporting people with disabilities to become part of the workforce. This recognises that the Council employs relatively few people with disabilities when compared to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) data for Surrey. The Learning and Development Team recently won a bid to run "Chance 2 Care" project. This project will concentrate on attracting people from under-represented groups, people with disabilities and/or with mental health issues to attend a one day pre-employment programme, access to one-to-one mentoring sessions and complete work placements within social care sector. The aim is for the participants to secure employment within social care at the end of the programme.
48. The joint recruitment initiatives in partnership with the NHS in Surrey have had some positive impact on attracting new people into the sector. Further joint recruitment events are being planned, including a program of system wide recruitment through Surrey Heartlands using the theme of "one workforce".
49. The Council is a member of ADASS's regional workforce network. As well as acting as a regional forum to share best practice and learn from each other, it also has a regional workforce plan in place. One of the agreed objectives is to work together to promote career pathways into social care.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Adults and Lifelong Learning Select Committee:

- i. recognises and acknowledges the work being undertaken in the Service and with external partners such as HEKSS, Surrey Care Association, Skills for Care and the NHS that aims to address our key challenges in the social care workforce across Surrey.
- ii. notes the work underway in the Service and in partnership with Surrey Care Association that aims to address our key challenges in the Adult Social Care independent care provider sector in Surrey.
- iii. supports and endorses the work underway within Surrey, regionally and with other partners that aims to attract people into the sector and improve the image of social care sector in general.

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Annexes:

Annex 1 – Workforce Demographic Profile

Annex 2 – Workforce Recruitment and Retention Profiles

Annex 3 – Surrey Workforce Profile September 2018

Annex 4 – Adult Social Care & Public Health Strategic Narrative

Sources and Background Papers:

Care Quality Commission, *The state of adult social care services 2014 to 2017: findings from CQC's initial programme of comprehensive inspections in adult social care*, August 2017

House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, *The Adult Social Care Workforce*, 30 April 2018

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