

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Monday 17 October 2022

Health and Care Workforce Update

Recommendation

- a. I recommend that the Committee consider the ongoing challenges and support to the adult social care workforce, and current and potential longer-term initiatives.

Local Members Interest:

NA

Report of Cllr Julia Jessel, Cabinet Member for Health and Care

Summary

1. As is the case across the country, the adult social care workforce in Staffordshire faces considerable challenges in retaining and recruiting sufficient staff with the right range of skills. Alongside current actions to support recruitment and retention, these challenges are best addressed collaboratively with employers, training and skills organisations, the NHS and other partners. We are co-producing a strategy to address these challenges as far as possible within the funding available.

Key data relating to the adult social care workforce in Staffordshire

2. Our local workforce data comes from a range of sources and surveys, which have been updated at different stages before, during and since the Covid pandemic. While there are a range of estimates from different survey sources, the best estimate of the size of the sector comes from Skills for Care - their data relates to 2020/21 and is due to be updated in October 2022.
3. Based on this data, approximately 21,000 people work in adult social care in Staffordshire. The vast majority (approximately 18,500) work in the independent (private and voluntary) sector. Approximately 12,000 people work in residential and nursing care, 7,900 in domiciliary care, and 1,000 in day services and community services. An estimated 1,600 are Personal Assistants, providing care to an identified person (this includes Personal Assistants who provide care to children, and provide care on behalf of the NHS).
4. 87% of the workforce is female and 13% male. The average age is 44, with 10% of the workforce under 25, 64% aged between 25-54 and 26%

aged 55 or above. 91% of the workforce is white, with 9% from Black and other communities. 93% of the workforce is British, with 3% from the European Union and 4% from countries not in the European Union.

Recruitment and retention

5. Based on the 2020/21 Skills for Care data: turnover was 28.2% with 64% of leavers remaining in the sector; the vacancy rate was 6.5%; and the sickness rate was an average of 9 days annually. There was an average of 8.9 years of experience in the sector, with a third of the workforce having more than 10 years of experience.
6. However, since this data was collected, and particularly since the end of lockdown, the vacancy rate has increased, and the Staffordshire vacancy rate is now estimated to be over 10% – with the greatest challenge being to recruit and retain sufficient registered nurses (in care homes).

Qualifications and skills

7. Across the adult social care workforce, excluding professional roles and based on the 2020/21 Skills for Care data, 46% have a relevant qualification, with 1% at entry level/level 1, 23% at level 2, 18% at level 3, and 4% at level 4 or above. This compares with 45% across England. 54% of the workforce had completed or were working towards the Care Certificate, compared to 46% across England.¹

Current actions to support the adult social care workforce

8. The Council continues to support the adult social care workforce in Staffordshire through:
 - a. The Council's discretionary fee uplift for its commissioned services as part of the 2022/23 MTFS included a 12% uplift for home care (recognising some of the specific challenges of pay and travel costs in this sector), partly supported through the Better Care Fund.
 - b. The promotion of a wide range of wellbeing and resilience resources, available to the social care sector as well as the NHS, including our Think Well Counselling service, Instructor Live and Wellbeing Webinars, alongside the Wellbeing Hub.
 - c. Regular communication to the sector setting out a range of resources, good practice and training, including on-line training

¹ Although the Care Certificate is available to all, the main target is workers who are new to social care

- d. A recruitment campaign which includes videos and other materials featuring people from the Staffordshire workforce and supports a better understanding of the range of roles available in adult social care.
- e. The Social Work Learning Academy which supports recruitment, retention, learning and development for social work across the Council and MPFT, and the Care Market Development Team, which provides a range of expertise and support to the wider adult social care market (whether it is commissioned by the Council or not)
- f. Events to support and recognise staff working across the whole sector, including the twice-yearly Managers Quality Network Forum and the annual Dignity in Care Awards.
- g. Administration of the Workforce Development Grant to support training and development in the care market (£149k of funding in this financial year).
- h. Joint development with the local NHS of a Care Reserves model to provide some potential support to care services in the case of a very short-term staffing gap
- i. Increased access to a range of NHS expertise and training relevant to the sector.
- j. The Quality Assurance Team and Provider Improvement Response Team support services to identify good practice opportunities and materials as part of an improvement methodology
- k. Our Vivup lifestyle benefits portal is now live for the whole adult social care workforce, offering a range of lifestyle savings and practical money management advice.
- l. The Council's new applicant tracking system, transfer back of the applicant tracking process to the Council, and changes to adverts and recruitment materials should improve both the pace and the experience for applicants.

Further work with partners

- 9. Since March this year, we have brought together a Steering Group of partners (including SCC, the NHS, the LEP, Skills for Care, providers, boroughs and district, universities, and colleges amongst others) to co-produce a strategy for the social care workforce – including adults and children's services, and across the whole market

10. We carried out two surveys in June and July, and a range of focus groups with frontline employees or prospective employees, with 323 responses and around 70 people attending the focus groups. While many respondents were positive in terms of job satisfaction and advocacy for the social care sector, there remain huge challenges in recruiting staff, and some real difficulties in retaining staff.
11. From the survey and other intelligence, there are challenges relating to pay, benefits, work/life balance, stress, training and development, career progression, and the perception of the sector (i.e. that social care is not positively viewed or appreciated in comparison with the NHS).
12. During the autumn, potential actions to address as many of these issues as possible are being brought together by the Steering Group. These include improved and co-ordinated training and skills development; a better, more attractive, Journey into Work; potential further support for values based recruitment; targeted support to improve capabilities for managers and clinical leads; pro-actively sharing resources for wellbeing; a stronger programme of apprenticeships and work experience, and more opportunities to develop careers pathways; potential further development of an academy approach; and a programme of visibly valuing and promoting the sector (e.g. building on our Dignity in Care Awards). We are also reviewing whether there is any potential to support non-drivers into the home care market.
13. In relation to the challenges of pay, the Steering Group recognises that any major financial investment would need to be carried out by the relevant organisations. In terms of the Council's investment in adult social care, we are undertaking other work at present to set out our approach to market sustainability in the context of available national funding for adult social care reform

Link to Strategic Plan

14. Be healthier and independent for longer.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

15. Considerations of workforce challenges in the NHS.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

N/A

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