



Benefits of qualifications

February 2012

The benefits of employer investment in qualifications for the workforce

“The decision to see training as important was driven by my personal view that having trained and flexible staff leads directly to better service delivery, but it was also a hard-nosed business decision. We saw that when we trained staff from day one they were confident in their roles very early in their careers, tended to stay with us much longer and their absenteeism was lower. In short we produced a confident flexible and reliable workforce.”

Sharon Allen, CEO Skills for Care, former CEO of large voluntary organisation

The Care Quality Commission’s Essential Standards of Quality and Safety re-enforce the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and state that *“staff should be able to take part in learning and development so they can carry out their role effectively.”* (Outcome 14, CQC Essential Standards of Quality and Safety)

The law states that staff employed in regulated social care activity should receive appropriate training, professional development, supervision and appraisal and from time to time be enabled to obtain further qualifications to enable them to deliver care and support to people using the services.¹ As an employer you have a legal responsibility to meet this requirement for **all** staff.

Business benefits of qualifications

There are a wide range of benefits to employers from investment in qualifications. As a sector we need to raise ambitions for a skilled workforce demonstrated through qualification achievements. Business benefits include:

- **Marketability** – A qualified workforce is flexible, inspired and up to date and more able to respond to change. The achievement of accredited qualifications provides external validation for the quality of your workforce as they demonstrate current best practice to a benchmark in which you can have confidence. Customer confidence and satisfaction is increased and the reputation of the organisation is enhanced both with new people you might support and when recruiting new workers.

The average cost of recruiting a replacement member of staff and supporting them through initial training, up to the point that they are to work alone, is estimated at £3683, taking money and time into account.

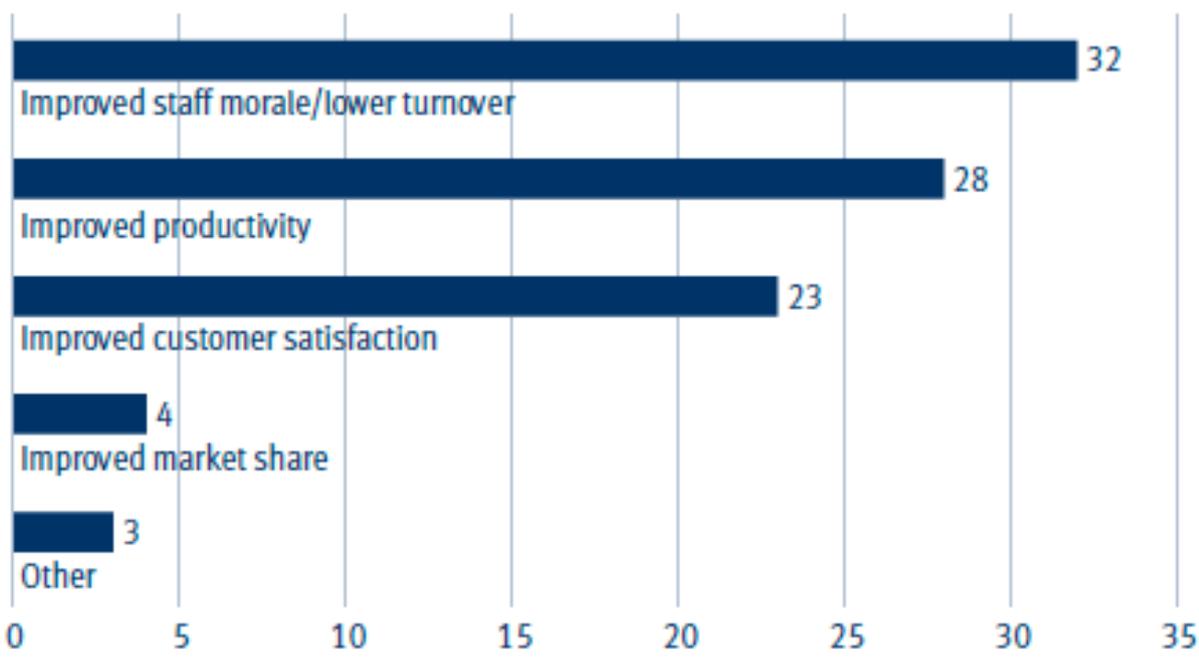
¹ Regulation 23 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2010



- **Retention** – Workers who receive structured learning and development feel valued, supported and engaged with their organisation. They develop confidence, self-esteem and greater job satisfaction and are more likely to remain in their post. This can reduce staff turnover and means you are spending less on recruiting new staff.
- **Value for money** – The investment your organisation makes in its workers is a significant part of ongoing costs. It is in the interest of both the organisation and individual staff that you make the most of their potential and realise the benefits. Qualification levels and achievements give considerable added value and assist workforce planning in the organisation.
- **Safety** – You want to be sure that your workers contribute to the quality of care rather than making dangerous and expensive mistakes. Training and qualifications in the key areas of health and safety provide reassurance about their confidence and competence.
- **Quality service** – As the manager or owner of a social care provider you will want to provide the highest quality service for the people who you support and that means having highly skilled and competent workers to deliver that service. Completion of accredited qualifications develops a professional culture within the organisation.

EXHIBIT 5

Main benefits from investing in employees' skills (%)



Taking Stock, CBI Education and Skills Survey 2008

“Senior executives know that most employees value training and this improves employee morale and helps reduce staff turnover. Raising skill levels also resulted in improved productivity for 28% of firms and improved customer satisfaction for nearly a quarter.”



Learning culture - getting it right from the beginning

A good induction will give workers confidence and inspire them to continue in social care. Good induction will also help workers who work at a distance from their organisation to identify with it and maintain the required values, standards and procedures. If workers are to continue to be sufficiently motivated and skilled to provide high quality services, they need to continue to improve their knowledge and skills. The attitude workers take to learning and development tends to be set by their previous experience and the attitude of their manager. This means that how induction is approached and delivered is likely to affect how that worker will approach future learning.

New workers will be able to see the completion of an induction as the first or next step on their career pathway. It provides them with the basic building blocks of good, safe practice and will prepare them for starting a Diploma in Health and Social Care that will both extend and deepen their knowledge and skills.

Flexibility of the new qualifications

The new qualifications are based on current best practice and can be tailored to an individual's job role. This allows learners to gain the knowledge and skills directly relevant to the work they do and the people they support, and ensures that the people who use their services are gaining the best outcomes possible. These qualifications allow learning to take place in small bite sized chunks through the award of credit for units which, when combined together, lead to the achievement of qualifications for example, the Diploma in Health and Social Care. Learners can work at their own pace and balance their learning with their work and family lives.

There are a range of opportunities for learning to take place in a variety of different ways, not all of which mean time out of the workplace. E-learning, mentoring, work shadowing, supervision are just a sample of other ways in which learning takes place.

For examples of how the qualifications can be structured to meet individual needs please visit – www.skillsforcare.org.uk/qcf

What about the costs of training and development?

Support and training for workers to gain qualifications can reduce turnover, increasing the overall quality and availability of social care workers, and reducing costs for your organisation. Skills for Care's National Minimum Dataset for Social Care (NMDS-SC) is revealing that organisations who have a strong learning and development culture have workers, who gain qualifications, and are less likely to leave than those who do not. This adds stability and consistency in the experience of the people who use your services leading to greater quality.

Changing roles

As a worker's role changes or develops over time their learning remains with them, and can be transferred. Units that become relevant to a worker's role as it changes can be undertaken as part of their continued professional development. The Diploma in Health and Social Care at levels 2 and 3 offer opportunities to follow specialist or generic pathways. Specialist pathways are available in learning disabilities and dementia, learners who follow these pathways can still transfer to different service types.

Example

A worker who moves from Learning Disability services, with the Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Learning Disability Pathway) into supporting older people with Dementia would not have to repeat the Diploma and can add to their learning with specialist Dementia Care units.

For more information on CPD please see 'Keeping up the Good Work' – www.skillsforcare.org.uk/cpd

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are not just for young people, but for all ages. They can be particularly successful for more mature workers transferring into social care from successful careers in other sectors. Consider the value of employing an apprentice in your organisation. With current government priorities there is some funding to support this venture. More information on the Skills for Care website at:

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/apprenticeships

Attracting young people into adult social care jobs

There are a number of new qualifications aimed at young people in school or college, including those on apprenticeships. These are available at levels 1-3 and allow for progression to the Diploma in Health and Social Care at levels 2 and 3.

Young people entering the workplace in the future may have already gained a basic knowledge qualification at level 1 in the key areas required to work in adult social care, or may already have achieved the knowledge elements of the mandatory units of the Diplomas in Health and Social Care. This means they will not have to repeat learning and will be more likely to stay. Employers can reap the benefits of this pre employment investment.

Invest in your staff whenever you can – it makes good business sense!

