Adult social care workforce

Recruitment and retention strategy

2014 - 2017

Prepared by Skills for Care on behalf of the Department of Health’s recruitment and retention group

On 10 June 2014 Skills for Care merged with the National Skills Academy for Social Care to maximise the impact of our combined knowledge and expertise.
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Adult social care workforce recruitment and retention strategy, 2nd edition
Published by Skills for Care, West Gate, 6 Grace Street, Leeds LS1 2RP
www.skillsforcare.org.uk
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Skills for Care is the employer-led strategic body for workforce development in social care for adults in England. It is part of the sector skills council, Skills for Care and Development.

Bibliographic reference data for Harvard-style author/date referencing system:
Short reference: Skills for Care [or SfC] 2014
www.skillsforcare.org.uk

This strategy was compiled and written by social care employer representatives working together as the Department of Health's social care recruitment and retention working group.
It is estimated that by 2030 the number of people aged over 85 will have doubled, whilst advances in healthcare mean people with disabilities and long-term health conditions are living longer. Longer life expectancy is to be welcomed, but it does mean in future, care services will be an important part of more peoples’ lives.

Effective recruitment and retention of a caring and skilled adult social care workforce has a central role to play in delivering high quality care and support to people who need it. Our challenge is to ensure the workforce has the right number of people, with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver the quality, compassionate care we all deserve.

In 2011 the Department of Health, working with Skills for Care and other sector partners, published a Recruitment and retention strategy that set out a vision and action plan for building the capacity of the social care workforce.

Earlier this year we saw the Care Act 2014 pass into law. We now need a refreshed Recruitment and retention strategy, which takes account of the many changes the Act will bring in, as well as incorporating lessons learnt from reports such as that of Robert Francis into the tragic events at Mid Staffs hospital. Without the right workforce we cannot deliver the promise of the Act.

Real progress has been made since the publication of the original Recruitment and retention strategy, including doubling the number of social care Apprenticeship starts, launching a new I Care...Ambassadors service and the launch and piloting of a values-based recruitment toolkit for the sector. However, much still remains to be done.

Lastly it is important to remember that if we want the right people with the right qualities and skills we must expect to offer appropriate rewards and ensure that staff have sufficient time to carry out their caring roles. Commissioners must ensure their procurement of care reflects the National Minimum Wage and the actual amount of time necessary to deliver good quality care. Employers must ensure that they pay their staff the National Minimum Wage.

I very much welcome this refreshed Recruitment and retention strategy. It represents the next milestone in our sector-wide work towards growing an adult social care workforce, who are motivated to work in care and support, recruited using the best practices on the basis of the right skills and values, within a care sector which values its employees and retains their commitment by providing appropriate opportunities for reward and progression.

Norman Lamb MP
Minister of State for Care and Support.
Since the publication of the first *Adult social care recruitment and retention strategy* in 2011 - which was developed by the sector, for the sector - substantial progress has been made in tackling the six key priority areas that were established:

- promoting the social care sector
- attracting a diverse workforce
- managing new interests and new recruits
- retention
- research and intelligence
- standards, learning and qualifications.

In short, the first strategy was about doing more to work together. Over the years, we have learnt a lot from employers that have been committed to developing fair terms and working conditions as the key to finding and keeping the very best kinds of people, with the right values to work within the sector, to deliver high quality care and support services to those that needed them.

It is clear that although significant progress has been made since the launch, the sector still thinks that there is much work to be done. This refreshed strategy is therefore built on the initial strategy through wide consultation across the sector. It acknowledges the many successes to date e.g. The Social Care Commitment (see section two for more examples). It also recognises that further progress to develop and promote the whole of the sector with the diversity of employers, settings and job roles requires effective recruitment and retention practices to remain a high priority for all.
What have we learnt?

The previous recruitment and retention strategy and implementation plan were evaluated for their impact by a team of independent consultants - a copy of their report can be found at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/research.

The evaluation showed that:

- the main impact was strategic with the focus on strengthening and developing joint working relationships between key stakeholders and employers to agree a plan of action to include how this work should be measured for its impact
- for the first time, ideas about how to address recruitment and retention issues were brought into a single document backed up by a group with membership from key organisations
- the activities of the group were influential in developing workforce proposals for the White Paper, Caring for our future: reforming care and support
- the broad membership of the Department of Health’s recruitment and retention group, and the flexibility with which it has worked, allowed it to address a wider range of issues, and provide support to different projects, than was originally included in the implementation plan
- examples of new activity initiated or augmented by the group include a pilot in the North East which is looking at new ways of linking Jobcentre Plus claimants with jobs available in the sector, and activity to address some of the practical barriers to offering work experience placements
- a range of new themes to include in a refreshed implementation plan were identified by stakeholders. The themes were:
  - a focus on practical tools to support employers when recruiting staff
  - assessing the skills, values and behaviours of candidates
  - prioritising emerging and important areas of the workforce such as domiciliary care, the reablement workforce, personal assistants and individual employers.
  These themes are covered within the priorities and major programmes included in this refreshed strategy
- there is a need for further research into the issues underpinning recruitment and retention in the sector
- employers have a range of support needs in this area, such as how to test candidates for basic skills (e.g. English language skills), how and where to advertise posts and assessing individuals for their values and behaviours
- there is a case for commissioning work to understand the nature of the challenge in greater depth, as there are still several gaps in the evidence base
- there were also suggestions about how the plan should be delivered in future. Stakeholders thought that monitoring and evaluation of the impact of activities should be embedded in the refreshed plan and linked to particular activities.
This evaluation recommended that any subsequent refresh should:

- be framed around the practical recruitment and retention challenges faced by employers and offer practical tools, written in a suitable style for busy employers
- assign key activities from the strategy to members of the Department of Health’s group who will collectively manage this work and provide regular updates
- ensure any refreshed strategy is accompanied by a robust evaluation framework to enable us to assess impact and make new decisions as we progress
- include a review of the Department of Health’s recruitment and retention group to ensure relevant membership and new terms of reference
- develop a business case for a larger study into the nature of recruitment and retention problems within the sector
- continue to work with employment and careers intermediaries based around the findings from the work piloted in the North East as these are likely to have a positive impact.

These recommendations will be addressed further in section two - what has the sector achieved? and section five – taking action and priorities for 2014 onwards.
Who is this strategy for and how should it be used?

This strategy provides a comprehensive overview of the excellent work that has been achieved to date by the sector and describes the sector’s own ambitions for the future.

The document focuses on the roles and commitments made by employers, key delivery partners, representative bodies and government departments and shows how their collective programmes of work will impact upon the key priority areas outlined in this refreshed strategy. It explains the broad array of major programmes that are being taken forward and how these are intended to raise the profile of adult social care, encourage and enable better recruitment practices and address the issue of above industry average turnover. Against each of these major programmes, links are provided to further information for those who want to find out more or get involved.

The strategy will be supported by a more detailed implementation plan for employers and priority groups or individuals. This will be linked to practical guidance to support employers to promote effective commissioning, fair terms and working conditions, such as taking active steps to ensure that employment practice complies with employment legislation as a minimum, and provides additional benefits or enhanced terms and conditions where possible.

It will also link to good recruitment and retention practices and will offer a range of practical tools, resources, case studies and further information to link the strategic objectives to employer’s everyday business and the ways in which they can develop their own very specific recruitment and retention plans for the future.
How will policy developments inform this refreshed strategy?

“We need to attract more people to work in care and support, to ensure there are enough skilled people to deliver high quality care in the future.”

The White Paper, *Caring for our future: reforming care and support*, published in 2012, set out a bold new vision for a reformed care and support system, with a focus on high quality services and the empowerment of individuals to have control over their own budgets and care and support plans.

Within this vision, we saw the identification of the need to develop an online, centralised approach to high quality recruitment and retention resources, guidance, information and support materials. The Department of Health commissioned a scoping exercise from Leeds University to look at this in more detail and the findings from this work will be instrumental in developing the implementation plan and supporting resources that will accompany this refreshed strategy.

The implementation of the Care Act 2014 will require significant change to workers roles and practice to meet new legal expectations. The Act highlights a specific focus on local authorities, due to their new duties and statutory responsibility for workforce development across the whole social care workforce in their locality, to ensure sufficient workforce capacity exists to meet the requirements of the reforms. However, social care employers in the independent sector also need to consider the impact of the reforms on their workforce. Commissioners and provider employers will need to start planning for new roles and/or differing roles, skills mixes and capacity based on the requirements of the Act. This further emphasises the support required by all employers to meet current and future needs for effective recruitment and retention. This strategy will support employers with the provision of tools and information to promote, for example, the legal duty to pay the National Minimum Wage and the positive impact and value of providing the workforce with adequate time for scheduled visits. By placing personal budgets into law for the first time, the Care Act 2014 will make them ‘the norm for people with care and support needs’. This has clear implications for the continuing growth of the individual employer and personal assistant market; and in turn the demand for information and support with recruitment and retention issues.
Skills for Care and the National Skills Academy for Social Care are developing resources to help employers with all aspects of learning and development and capacity planning readiness to implement the Care Act. Commissioned by the Department of Health they are working in partnership with the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, Centre for Workforce Intelligence, The College of Social Work, Local Government Association and Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).

Both the Francis Enquiry (2013) and the Cavendish Review (2013) emphasised the importance of positive cultures and a workforce with the right values and attitudes to provide high quality care. Cavendish asserted that employers should be supported to test values, attitudes and aptitude for caring at recruitment stage. The Culture for care toolkit, A Question of Care: A Career for You and the Value Based Recruitment Toolkit have all been positively received and are already making a difference in the sector. Further plans for their use and reach will be highlighted in the implementation plan.

Cavendish also stated that Health Education England (HEE), together with Skills for Care and Skills for Health should develop a “Certificate of Fundamental Care”, in conjunction with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), employers, and sector skills bodies. This should be written in language which is meaningful to the public, link to the framework of National Occupational Standards, and build on work done by Skills for Health and Skills for Care on National Minimum Training Standards.

Skills for Care is working with Health Education England (HEE) and other partners on the implementation of the 18 recommendations in the Cavendish report, including the development of a Care Certificate and value based recruitment. This will ensure that the adult social care sector is represented in the forthcoming period of reform, and that work developed from these recommendations will be built into the ways in which we provide support to employers to implement their recruitment and retention strategies.
Section Two
What has the sector achieved?

The examples provided in this section represent some of the major programme initiatives that have taken place over the life of the first strategy. These achievements have only been made possible where we have seen real and active employer/stakeholder co-operation at all levels.

For many of these programmes, activity is continuing in 2014 (and beyond) as there is more work needed to further develop and embed the efforts achieved to date. They are by no means a full reflection of the complete spectrum of work that has been accomplished behind the scenes since 2011 or the many sub-projects that have contributed to the overall successes of these major programmes - but they do represent a realistic snapshot of the direction of travel and in many cases signpost to future work that has yet to take place.
Values Based Recruitment Toolkit and A Question of Care: A Career for You?

Employers know that attracting talent isn’t just about trying to target those with existing skills, knowledge and experience. The online Values Based Recruitment Toolkit launched by the Minister in July 2013 received 44,823 web hits by the end of July 2014. The toolkit (which is currently being evaluated over a 12 month period) is helping employers to recruit the right people with the right social care values who can be trusted to do the right thing and who will stay with their employer to develop their careers in social care.

A Question of Care: A Career for You? provides further support for employers in making ‘right first time’ selection decisions. This free online resource has been piloted throughout 2013 and has attracted over 5,000 visits from jobseekers, careers advisors and employers. A Question of Care shows videos of day to day work in the care sector and generates a personal profile for each enquirer completing the challenge, measuring their suitability against the values and attitudes that social care employers are looking for.

I Care...Ambassadors

The I Care...Ambassador initiative was developed in partnership with employers and employees to use enthusiastic people working in social care to promote careers to those who had not previously considered working in the sector. Since the launch of the register in July 2013, 147 employers, 23 employer partnerships and 461 ambassadors have signed up to deliver I Care...Ambassador services. A series of activities took place to launch I Care...Ambassadors to the careers and employment support sector in February 2014.
Employing personal assistants toolkit

For many people, employing staff to provide care and support in their own homes can be very daunting. The *Employing personal assistants toolkit* guides individual employers through the process, from advertising vacancies and interviewing through to agreeing contracts, ongoing management and supervision and training. The toolkit, produced by Skills for Care, has been downloaded more than 3,000 times and more than 2,500 paper copies have been issued, with feedback from individual employers across England being consistently positive. As part of the continued implementation of the PA Framework, an online hub to support and host resources for individual employers and personal assistants (PAs) will be developed in 2014/15. Hosted by Skills for Care, the hub will collate resources and information from external organisations and partners; promoting a single point of access to information from a wide number of sources. Organisations from the sector will be invited to routinely submit content to ensure the continued currency of the resource.

Supporting unemployed people to access careers within the sector

The Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus have been working alongside Skills for Care, employers and other key stakeholders to develop activities to support the attraction of the right kinds of new entrants to the adult social care sector. This has included an innovative new pilot project in the North East that has trained advisors in each Jobcentre Plus office to understand the range of opportunities available within the sector, enabling them to better assess the potential of their candidates to satisfy employers role requirements.

Sector Route-way

Skills for Care developed this pre-employment training and recruitment process to support job seekers to access employment in the adult social care sector. It is used by Jobcentre Plus as the basis for sector-based work academies for social care. The 60 hour pre-employment course provides an introduction to the nature of work available in the sector, as well as the skills required. Learners receive a level 1 qualification when they complete the course and are then supported to find the right work for them within the sector.

The Social Care Commitment

Introduced in September 2013, the Social Care Commitment is the sector’s promise to provide people who need care and support with high quality services. Employers and employees, across the whole of the adult social care sector, sign up to the commitment pledging to improve the quality of the workforce. It is seen by the Department of Health as a key part of the solution to raising the standard of, and the public’s confidence in, adult social care. Within the first 10 months of the sign up system going live, over 1,000 employers had already made the Social Care Commitment and we expect the sign up rate to increase as the initiative gathers momentum.

Common Induction Standards and Managers Induction Standards

The Common Induction Standards and Manager Induction Standards recognised the need to ensure all staff receive a thorough induction and sought to address gaps in the skills of new managers. Developed by Skills for Care, both the Common Induction Standards (now mandatory) and the Manager Induction Standards are widely recognised by the sector. Between April 2011 and July 2014, the Common Induction Standards were downloaded over 205,600 times and the Manager Induction Standards over 36,800 times. The Common Induction Standards have informed, and will be superseded by the Care Certificate in 2015.
The Link Up Project

Through this innovative project in the South East and Midlands areas of England, individual employers and registered care providers have worked together to share knowledge, experience and good practice on a broad range of recruitment and retention related topics. An independent evaluation of Link Up, completed in early 2014, found it to have “considerable value and a strong rationale”, highlighting an array of benefits for those involved. The Link Up step by step guide has been produced to support other employers wishing to implement this new way of working. This guide is being rolled out nationally during 2014.

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

Introduced in September 2012 as part of the output from the Social Work Reform Board, the ASYE is for newly qualified social workers (NQSW) in any employment setting. Now integrated by many employers into employment practice, it followed previous NQSW frameworks in adult’s and children’s services offering support in the form of reflective supervision, protected workload and dedicated time for professional development, and also includes an employer based holistic assessment which identifies progress throughout the year against the ASYE level within the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF). Employers currently register NQSW’s undertaking the ASYE (1,024 in adult services in 2013/14) to receive a grant through Skills for Care. A similar model is in place for children’s services via the Department for Education. The College of Social Work, who are responsible for the PCF, issue a certificate on successful completion.

Leadership Qualities Framework

The White Paper, Caring for our future: reforming care and support, recognised the importance of leadership in a changing social care landscape. In response to this, the Leadership Qualities Framework has been introduced by the National Skills Academy for Social Care and describes, in one place, the attitudes and behaviours needed for high quality leadership at every level of the sector. Reflecting the diversity of social care, the framework shows what leadership looks like in different contexts – in terms of practice leadership, collaborative leadership, community leadership and working with a range of stakeholders.

Apprenticeships

Skills for Care has a dedicated resource to promote Apprenticeships in adult social care. The Apprenticeship programme is ‘all age’ and the frameworks are designed and driven by employers. Over the last two years a further 133,401 adult social care workers began an Apprenticeship, employed in the sector and earning whilst learning. Of this total, 30% are younger recruits to our sector and in this same period we increased the retention of Apprenticeships to 76% which is 4% higher than the national average. In 2011/12 Skills for Care were directly responsible for 2,769 Apprenticeship starts on the intermediate and advanced frameworks as part of innovation projects, and following completion of their framework 96% continued their employment in the sector. 72% were aged 16-18 demonstrating success in attracting younger recruits. In Apprenticeship Week 2014, our activities, events and promotions reached an audience of over five million people.
Section Three
Our future needs

Although major advances have been made, recruitment and retention data tells us that progress is still required to prepare for future.

Demand for adult social care services is projected to increase significantly as the population grows and people continue to live longer with more complex care and support needs, such as dementia\(^1\).

Employers agree that they will need not only a larger workforce, but perhaps more importantly, a workforce that is skilled, highly functioning and flexible to provide high quality care with dignity and compassion.

\(^1\) Skills for Care, The size and structure of the adult social care sector and workforce in England in 2013
The sector will need to overcome out-dated perceptions and actively promote itself as one that offers fulfilling work and real career opportunities with fair terms and conditions to attract, recruit and retain a whole range of individuals looking for a variety of careers within the sector at all levels. The focus should not just be on entry level workers but also those careers linked to managerial and supervisory roles and opportunities to progress into professions including social work, occupational therapy and nursing, as well as ancillary roles such as IT and domestic personnel. Care and support services will need to become more responsive and innovative to ensure that new prospective entrants and those already working in the sector understand the true scope of opportunities that exist.

**Turnover and vacancy rates in the sector are too high**

The turnover rate is around 20% for adult social care; compared to 15% nationally across all sectors.

The vacancy rate is 3-4% for adult social care; compared to 2% nationally across all sectors.

Vacancy and turnover rates have remained pretty static over the last few years. It is estimated that roughly half of the turnover figures are attributed to people moving within the sector as opposed to leaving it all together.

Employers generally agree however that these rates remain too high, although they recognise that there are many excellent initiatives they can all share and learn from and this will be a continuing priority within this refreshed strategy.

However some employers state that, in reality, they have sometimes had to make the difficult decision to recruit people on the basis of urgent need rather than quality and this is not something that is acceptable for anyone.
If the temptation to respond (albeit reluctantly) to unfilled vacancies or address rapid turnovers with poor quality appointments is to be avoided, we will need to demonstrate beyond any doubt the negative impacts of taking such actions.

The experience of ineffective recruitment has been reported in terms of the negative impact this has on individuals receiving care and support services, lost revenue and business reputation.

This will be a priority area of work for the new strategy. We will undertake a range of activities to spell out the benefits of developing positive workplace cultures linked to fair working terms and conditions and offer alternative good practices that employers can readily implement.

The message is clear: effective recruitment and retention plans are essential if the sector is to plan for and meet the future demands.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) estimates the average cost of recruiting the wrong person is £8,200, rising to £12,000 for senior managers or directors.
Fundamentally, recruiting the right people into adult social care, and ensuring that they stay in the sector, because they feel valued and supported has a positive impact on not only retention and performance but more importantly, standards of care and support and therefore upon the quality of life of people who need these services.

Employers in the sector understand that recruitment and retention has to be based around fair working conditions and positive workplace cultures if they are to recruit high quality staff. No employer intentionally sets out to recruit people that are not suited to the job. Nor does any employer want to have high rates of staff turnover or unfilled vacancies. The reality is that good progress has been made. However, both high turnover and vacancy rates are still too common in our sector and have very significant consequences, not least for the people who are in need of these services. The negative impact on people who need care and support services, business reputation, wasted money and time being diverted away from other important business priorities are all significant factors.

There are many examples of excellent employment practices linked to recruitment and retention initiatives and the positive impacts this generates for people that need care and support services, but for some employers the issue has become a vicious circle. The presence of acute staff shortages can lead to the recruitment of unsuitable candidates, resulting in high turnover and staffing pressures and ultimately impacts upon the quality and continuity of care for some of society’s most vulnerable adults. This cycle needs to be broken.

Our sector is still misunderstood. Despite progress being made in the original strategy the sector still has to tackle out-dated perceptions that exist about working in adult social care, and this is why it remains a priority area in this refresh. The evidence shows ultimately negative perceptions prevail. We have many excellent examples from committed employers that understand much can be done to promote the very positive aspects of working in the care sector. However, too few people recognise the many rewarding career and progression opportunities that are available. They are not aware of the many graduate, supervisory or managerial posts that exist nor do they recognise the opportunities that are available for specialist roles such as social workers, nurses, occupational therapists and physiotherapists and the many supporting and ancillary roles. As a consequence, the sector is consistently missing out on a large talent pool of people with the right values and skills to have very varied and successful careers in our sector. This includes opportunities to recruit from groups in society that are currently under-represented in the adult social care workforce including young people, males and disabled people. It is essential that out-dated perceptions are overcome to support the sector’s growth.

Skills for Care’s National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC) dashboards provide more detailed national, regional and local data on things like turnover and vacancy, pay, demographics and qualifications. For more information visit www.skillsforcare.org.uk/nmds-scdashboards.
Employers who promote fair terms and conditions linked to positive workplace cultures and effective recruitment and retention practices are more likely to see the positive impact upon their own businesses. But there are also positive benefits across the adult social care sector, from people who need care and support services, to those employed in the sector, individual employers and large companies. It is relevant to everyone and everyone has a role to play.

Research has shown that effective retention strategies don’t need to be costly or complex and can be linked to good organisations who promote positive workplace cultures and values. To see this research visit [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitmentandretentionstrategy](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitmentandretentionstrategy).

“Recruiting people with the right values in the first instance and giving them a career path and progression gives us better retention and continuity of the workforce, improving the quality of care through consistency.”

**Nigel Taylor**, Group Learning and Development Manager, CareTech Community Services

“Getting the right personal assistants is crucial for me. I have a very full and busy business life and at the moment I am going through a recruitment drive. It’s taking time, but it isn’t about taking on just anyone, it’s about that special someone that I can work with. If they’ve got the right values and basic skills we can always work together to address any other training they may need.”

**Nina Osborne**, Individual employer, Nina Osborne Training and Consultancy
“Strong social work values, experience and skills and a commitment to professional development are key to the recruitment and retention of staff. Creating a culture of support is crucial, in order to progress workers through programmes such as Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and beyond, in line with the Professional Capabilities Framework. This support makes workers feel valued and assists in retaining a professional and competent workforce.”

**Cheryl Scott**, Social Work Team Manager, Salford City Council

“ADASS members recognise that local councils commissioning high quality, ethical care and support resources for their communities can only do so if they work hand in hand with their providers to prioritise efforts to recruit and retain high quality, motivated workers. People with the right values, skills and attitudes who want to make a real difference make this possible.”

**John Nawrockyi**, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Workforce Development Network

“I was astounded to learn of such a wide variety of social care roles. I would highly recommend working in this sector as you can really make a big difference to people’s lives.”

**Stephanie Taylor**, Care worker

“Recruitment processes which test values and include people who use the services has improved the diversity of our workforce, reduced issues of poor performance and strengthened the voice of people we support. We have found that assessment centres deliver this and also support a greater understanding of the role for candidates with and without previous experience.”

**Mandy Crawford MSc**, Director of Adult Services, Westminster Society
Employers agree that they must continue to take decisive action now to impact on current and future recruitment and retention practices. It remains a high priority for the adult social care sector in England. In simple terms employers agree that there are three main challenges:

- target and attract a diverse range of new talent, address misconceptions about the sector and better promote the rewarding career opportunities it offers to ensure care is a career of choice
- recruit more people into the sector with the right values and skills
- raise retention levels and reduce vacancy rates.

They also agree that there is no single solution to overcoming these challenges and different employers will have very different needs at any given time.
Priorities

Linked closely to these challenges, this refreshed strategy focuses on three main priorities:

- to raise the profile of adult social care and the career progression opportunities it offers to help attract more people with the right values and skills to work in the sector
- to encourage and enable better recruitment practices
- to address the issue of above average turnover rates that exist in the sector.

These priority areas are intrinsically linked to developing positive workplace cultures that embed fair terms and working conditions into employers recruitment and retention practices, taking active steps to ensure that employment practice complies with employment legislation as a minimum, and provides additional benefits or enhanced terms and conditions where possible.

For presentational purposes, the priorities are shown separately, but we recognise that the issues are clearly connected. Success in one area is therefore expected to generate positive impacts for other priorities, creating a self-fulfilling cycle that leads to an appropriate and sustainable workforce, as well as wider benefits for the quality and continuity of care offered as a result. For example, promotion of a positive workplace culture that nurtures and develops the workforce will support workers to be motivated and productive in their role which in turn will decrease turnover rates and reduce the need for recruitment drives and as a result have a positive effect for people needing care and support services.

A deliberate decision has been taken to propose that the focus remains on a limited number of priorities to focus efforts and ensure a stronger opportunity for success. In the tables that follow, the current position against each priority is explained and a statement of ambition provided. There is also an outline of how we will move from where we are now to where we want to be, with the emphasis on major programmes that will benefit the sector. Whilst the major programmes are expected to remain important areas of work, new initiatives will continue to be introduced over the life of the strategy and existing ones brought to a close, and it is inevitable that some will be more successful than others. However, the starting point is well defined and offers encouragement that beneficial change can be achieved.

1 A wider range of activities are being delivered and proposed by partners across the adult social care sector but this strategy focuses on the major programmes that respond to strategic priorities and will be supported by a range of individual projects over time.
#### Priority One

To raise the profile of adult social care and the career opportunities it offers to help attract more people with the right values and skills to work in the sector. This includes nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, other diversely qualified staff and those performing important ancillary and support roles.

### How will we do it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major programmes</th>
<th>How will it contribute to the strategic priority?</th>
<th>Who’s responsible?</th>
<th>Where can I find out more?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showcasing excellence in the delivery of adult social care</td>
<td>Skills for Care’s Accolades reward the ‘best of the best’ in adult social care. The awards provide an opportunity to share best practice so we can continue to make innovative improvements that make a difference to those who need care and support.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/accolades">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/accolades</a> or email <a href="mailto:accolades@skillsforcare.org.uk">accolades@skillsforcare.org.uk</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>The National Skills Academy for Social Care is committed to strengthening the leadership and management involved in the delivery of care and improving the status of social care as a skilled profession. Participation in the national heats of the Worldskills UK Health and Social Care Competitions not only demonstrates this but also has a positive impact on the public perception of those who work in the sector. The competitions showcase all that is positive and valued in social care and gives the people whose daily work may often go unnoticed the opportunity to shine.</td>
<td>National Skills Academy for Social Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.nsasocialcare.co.uk/worldskills">www.nsasocialcare.co.uk/worldskills</a> or call 0203 011 5270 or email <a href="mailto:contactus@nsasocialcare.co.uk">contactus@nsasocialcare.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>I Care...Ambassadors</td>
<td>The formal launch of the I Care...Ambassador initiative took place in February 2014. The continuation of this successful initiative will see the adult social care sector promoted as a positive career choice, by engaging and committed role models who have first-hand experience of working in the sector.</td>
<td>Cross-sector employer-led initiative coordinated by Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/icareambassadors">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/icareambassadors</a> or email <a href="mailto:icare@skillsforcare.org.uk">icare@skillsforcare.org.uk</a></td>
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#### Where are we now?

Vacancy rates in the adult social care sector are between one and a half times and twice the national average. Negative perceptions about working in the sector still exist and social care is being insufficiently promoted as a valid and rewarding career choice.

#### Ambition

The adult social care sector will have vacancy rates that are closer to, or below, the national average. Career pathways and opportunities offered by the adult social care sector will be better understood and conveyed in schools, other educational settings, by careers and employment advisers and across society at large.

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Note: The table above contains the key points and actions related to the strategic priority as outlined in the document. The specific links and contact details provided are for further information and support.
## I Care... resources

Resources will be produced in partnership with employers and key stakeholders to support their recruitment and retention practices. Whilst much of what is produced is generic, specific work will focus on highlighting projects such as the Homecare Challenge and case studies to promote the recruitment of different job roles, for example nurses, occupational therapist, and supporting and ancillary roles. This work will showcase the range of different entry levels.

Collaborative working across key partners can help to encourage more graduates to choose a career in adult social care and can showcase the leadership and management opportunities that the sector can offer.

### Major programmes

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<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment</a></td>
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<td>Collaborative working across key partners can help to encourage more graduates to choose a career in adult social care and can showcase the leadership and management opportunities that the sector can offer.</td>
<td>Cross-organisation, including National Skills Academy for Social Care and Department for Education</td>
<td>One example is the Careship for Graduates, outlined on the National Skills Academy for Social Care website: <a href="http://www.nsasocialcare.co.uk/careship/graduates">www.nsasocialcare.co.uk/careship/graduates</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with communities as a route to talking to people to promote social care. By acknowledging and appreciating the skills that people have and valuing the support that people in communities offer free of charge to people in need of care and support has proved to be an excellent way to raise the profile of social care and the different career opportunities available. Activity will focus on providing pre-recruitment information and guidance and embedding the recruitment and retention of volunteers and carers wishing to enter into care settings (either in a paid or voluntary capacity). This in turn may lead to a pre-recruitment drive.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/communityskills">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/communityskills</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship programmes in adult social care are for all ages over 16 years and provide a formal structure for entry into and development within the sector. Traineeship programmes are specific to young people between the ages of 16-24 years and may lead to an Apprenticeship. The combination of the programmes help to facilitate increased retention across all age groups as well as increased recruitment opportunities for younger people. Execution of the five year implementation plan for Apprenticeship growth will guide activity. The current Apprenticeship offer accommodates the majority of adult social care staff across intermediate at level 2, advanced at level 3 and higher at level 5. An Apprenticeship at level 4 is being developed and the facilitation of a trailblazer underway to expand provision.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/apprenticeships">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/apprenticeships</a> or <a href="http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk">www.apprenticeships.org.uk</a></td>
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</table>
Priority Two
To encourage and enable better recruitment practices.

How will we do it?

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<tr>
<td>Development of an online version of the Finders Keepers resource</td>
<td>We will explore the possibilities of working with employers to develop a centralised online resource to support their recruitment and retention challenges and showcase good practice. This will include supporting tools and resources to help them to understand more about the importance of fair terms and working conditions, positive workplace cultures and best practice recruitment and retention activities.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values based recruitment and developing values linked to a positive workplace</td>
<td>More widespread promotion and take-up of values based recruitment within organisations that promote positive workplace cultures will help to ensure that more people are recruited into the sector with the values and skills required to deliver high quality care and with a good chance of staying in the sector to develop their careers. Supporting employers to develop their values within positive workplace cultures will have a positive impact on employee wellbeing and promote closer alignment between employee and cultural values.</td>
<td>Skills for Care, National Skills Academy for Social Care, Department of Health</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.nsasocialcare.co.uk/values-based-recruitment-toolkit">www.nsasocialcare.co.uk/values-based-recruitment-toolkit</a> or email <a href="mailto:values@nsasocialcare.co.uk">values@nsasocialcare.co.uk</a> Also <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/values">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/values</a> Also <a href="http://www.aquestionofcare.org.uk">www.aquestionofcare.org.uk</a></td>
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| Implementation of the Personal Assistants (PA) Framework | This work will embed working with personal assistants (PA) and individual employers (IEs) across priority areas including:  
▪ exploring a response to the mainstreaming of personal health budgets (PHBs) to deliver an integrated, efficient approach to wider PA working and recruitment  
▪ working with national partners to grow and share market intelligence; with a focus on emerging trends in the IE/PA market  
▪ maximising the use of existing levers (including the Social Care Commitment and Values Based Recruitment toolkit) to support employers to recruit and retain PAs  
▪ supporting the effective growth and use of PA registers/indexes. | Skills for Care  
Think Local Act Personal (TLAP)  
Local Government Association  
Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) | Visit [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/employingpas](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/employingpas) or email marketing@skillsforcare.org.uk or call 0113 2451716 to request a paper copy of the toolkit |
| Sector Route-way | The Sector Route-way provides essential pre-employment training and support to potential recruits to ensure they have a full and accurate appreciation of the opportunities that are available, the skills they will need and the values they must hold, before they apply for a position. The sector-based work academies that Jobcentre Plus provide for social care are based on the Sector Route-way process. A new interactive version of the Sector Route-way will be released in Autumn 2014. | Skills for Care and partners including Jobcentre Plus, Work Programme supply chain, further education colleges and learning providers | Visit [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/caresectorrouteaway](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/caresectorrouteaway) |
| Sector based work academies | The sector based work academies provide opportunities for work experience and skills development in the sector for those on unemployment benefits. | Department for Work and Pensions | A guide for employers can be found on the following site: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/sectorbased-work-academies-employer-guide](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sectorbased-work-academies-employer-guide) |
| Work trials | Work trials offer unemployed people the opportunity to experience work in the adult social care sector on a short term, voluntary basis, to help them develop a better understanding of the work and progression opportunities it offers.  
In 2014 the newly developed work experience guides will be launched to support this experience for individuals, employers and careers and employment support intermediaries. | Skills for Care  
**Priority Three**

To address the issue of above average turnover rates that exist in the sector.

**How will we do it?**

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<td>A Culture for Care: Your toolkit</td>
<td>Launched in March 2014, the culture toolkit encourages employers of all sizes to recognise the value of a positive workplace culture within their organisations or teams and the benefits it can bring to businesses in terms of recruitment, retention and the improved quality of care and support provision. This practical toolkit provides a range of resources, good practice case studies and messages from the sector to support employers to develop a positive workplace culture.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/culture">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/culture</a> or email <a href="mailto:marketing@skillsforcare.org.uk">marketing@skillsforcare.org.uk</a> to request a paper copy of the toolkit</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Care Certificate</td>
<td>The Care Certificate has been piloted with a range of employers across health and social care during the spring and summer of 2014. The purpose of the pilot is to ascertain that the content and delivery of the Care Certificate is effective and fit for purpose. It is planned that the Care Certificate will be introduced in March 2015, replacing both the National Minimum Training Standards and the Common Induction Standards.</td>
<td>Skills for Care, Skills for Health, Health Education England</td>
<td>Updates will be provided via Skills for Care’s website <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/carecertificate">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/carecertificate</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce capacity planning</td>
<td>This programme will develop a model that enables social care employers to ensure that they have the right number of staff, with the right skills and behaviours in the right job roles to deliver the requirements of the Care Act.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/careact">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/careact</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning and Development Plan for the Care Act</td>
<td>Skills for Care and the National Skills Academy for Social Care are working in partnership with The College of Social Work to produce a comprehensive package of free learning and development materials aimed at delivering the skills and knowledge needed to meet the changes required by the Care Act when it is introduced in April 2015. An integrated suite of high quality materials are being designed that can be tailored to the needs of an organisation or locality in which they are to be delivered, whilst maintaining consistency.</td>
<td>Skills for Care, National Skills Academy for Social Care, The College of Social Work</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/careact">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/careact</a></td>
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**Where are we now?**

Staff turnover in adult social care is amongst the highest of any sector in England which has significant consequences in terms of time, financial cost, continuity and quality of care.

**Ambition**

Employers in the adult social care sector will acknowledge the positive effects that this strategy has had on their turnover during the life of the strategy (recognising that a host of other factors also influence turnover rates at a national level).
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<td>Core skills</td>
<td>A new core skills strategy was launched in March 2014 and will be implemented from 2014/15 onwards. The strategy focuses on the core generic skills that enable value based working and will provide support to enable employers to develop employability and functional skills within the workplace. In turn, this will enhance an individuals’ ability to continue their personal development and so increase retention rates.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/coreskills">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/coreskills</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Care Commitment</td>
<td>The Social Care Commitment is the sector's promise to provide people who need care and support with high quality services. It is envisaged that by the end of September 2014, 2,500 employers will have made the Social Care Commitment, and that by 31 March 2015, this will have led to more than 14,000 organisational development activities and over 20,000 additional personal development opportunities for employees. Each of these figures is set to rise significantly in future years.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.thesocialcarecommitment.org.uk">www.thesocialcarecommitment.org.uk</a> or call 0845 300 9505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Qualities Framework and leadership and management programmes</td>
<td>These programmes support staff to gain the skills they need to progress within the sector and provide managers with leadership skills that can help to improve staff retention and enhance productivity.</td>
<td>National Skills Academy for Social Care</td>
<td>Details of the Leadership Qualities Framework are available at <a href="http://www.nsasocialcare.co.uk/about-us/leadershipqualities-framework">www.nsasocialcare.co.uk/about-us/leadershipqualities-framework</a> Alternatively, a hard copy can be requested by emailing <a href="mailto:terri.myers@nsasocialcare.co.uk">terri.myers@nsasocialcare.co.uk</a> Details of leadership and management programmes are available at <a href="http://www.nsasocialcare.co.uk/programmes">www.nsasocialcare.co.uk/programmes</a></td>
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<td>Think Care Careers</td>
<td>The Think Care Careers online tool aims to help make working in social care not just a good job, but a great career. The site is for people considering starting a career in social care and for those already working in the sector who are keen to see what career development opportunities there are. The pages provide interactive guidance on working in adult social care. There are also videos and case studies of people already working in the sector, explaining what their job involves to enable users to have a clear understanding of the variety of roles offered. This should help to improve retention within the social care sector.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/thinkcarecareers">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/thinkcarecareers</a></td>
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<td>Workforce commissioning</td>
<td>Ensure that within existing workforce commissioning resources commissioners are supported to communicate effective recruitment and retention strategies.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk">www.skillsforcare.org.uk</a> and search for workforce commissioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Centre for Workforce Intelligence (CfWI)</td>
<td>The CfWI produces quality intelligence to better inform workforce planning both in the ‘here and now’ and in 10 and 20 years’ time through the use of foresight techniques. Findings from this work will inform and influence the ways in which the sector makes robust decisions that recognise the uncertainty of the future.</td>
<td>Centre for Workforce Intelligence</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.cfwi.org.uk">www.cfwi.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting fair employment terms and conditions</td>
<td>A programme of measures is being developed to help employers enhance their understanding of the variety of issues that impact upon offering their workforce fair terms and conditions. This will include explaining statutory obligations in terms of, for example, paying the National Minimum Wage and the effective and proper use of zero hours contracts. It will signpost to relevant support services and showcase examples of good practice.</td>
<td>Skills for Care</td>
<td>This work will be linked to the development of the implementation plan and the consideration to develop an online version of Finders Keepers <a href="http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment">www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment</a></td>
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Section Six

Measuring the strategy and staying in touch

Each priority will include a series of major projects, each with their own link to further information and timescales.
Whilst the priorities do not have quantified targets, it is important to demonstrate the outcomes, impact and value for money generated by the major programmes that sit beneath them. A very clear commitment is therefore being made to the following throughout the life of this strategy:

- robust and consistent research and evaluation covering all of the major programmes to ensure that the differences they are making to the sector can be accurately identified
- the gathering, analysis and sharing of high quality labour market information, including workforce projections - a key channel for this will be to further increase the take-up of the National Minimum Dataset for Social Care (NMDS-SC).

The research and evaluation reports relating to the programmes in the strategy will be made available. The Department of Health, Skills for Care and the other organisations responsible for the major programmes will use the reports to inform on-going decision making about the continuation, expansion, or should the need arise, end of particular programmes. It is becoming ever more important that publicly funded interventions deliver the best possible outcomes and the maximum benefit for their investment, and as such research, evaluation and labour market intelligence from the NMDS-SC have vital roles to play in the implementation of this strategy.

**Implementation plan**

A detailed implementation plan will be developed to accompany this refreshed strategy. Within this we will explore the development of an online recruitment and retention resource and information hub for individual employers and personal assistants which is envisaged to become crucial elements to supporting the implementation. In essence, the implementation plan will be the ‘wiring’ behind the strategy. It will be the responsibility of the Department of Health’s recruitment and retention group and will be kept under regular review.

**Staying in touch**

This strategy will be a live document and will naturally be subject to amends in order to accommodate change. It will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Department of Health’s recruitment and retention group and progress updates will be posted on the Skills for Care’s website at [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment). Updates can also be found via the enews bulletins of Skills for Care and the Department of Health and via the links for specific major programmes of work in this document.