

Prevention and the role of adult social care

Headline findings from research (Nov 2019)





The research - 2018

Skills for Care commissioned research to learn more about the scope of prevention activity across the adult social care sector.

The aims of the research were to:

- provide an overview of the published and unpublished literature relating to prevention in social care
- consult with stakeholders to understand more about engagement with the prevention agenda
- identify examples of practice in England to learn more about how prevention is working in social care
- explore how preventative work is linked to commissioning processes.

Read the full report: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/prevention



We carried out further research in 2019 strengthen the evidence base of:

- adult social care employers' definitions of prevention
- employers' views on the importance of prevention
- the ease or difficulty with which it can be implemented
- impact of prevention activities
- commissioners' views on prevention
- workforce development implications.

We carried out:

Employers:

15 qualitative consultations
300 telephone surveys
15 follow-up qualitative telephone consultations

Commissioners:

11 local authority commissioners contributed to online forum in August



Here are the findings

Employers' definitions covered 4 main areas:

- 1) Supporting people to live as healthily as possible, both mentally and physically
- 2) Reduce the use of health services, including primary care, emergency services and hospitals
- 3) Preventing or reducing the escalation of health issues
- 4) Supporting people to remain as independent as possible.

Employers told us prevention is not a standalone task or activity but interwoven within business-as-usual delivery and central to high quality care and support.



91% of the employers surveyed said that prevention is embedded within the everyday activities of their staff and is seen as an integral component of their care and support services.

Prevention activity – key themes	% employers
Monitoring and tracking of physical health concerns	92%
Advice and guidance to promote healthy lifestyles	88%
Support people with diet, hydration and nutrition	82%
Support people with mental health and wellbeing	82%
Exercise and movement plans to promote physical health	78%
Promote self-care and self-management	78%
Activity focussed on ‘Making Every Contact Count’	76%
Falls prevention	60%



Impact for people who access care and support

85% of employers surveyed said prevention activity helped achieve better outcomes by:

- being more responsive to individuals' health needs
- providing more tailored and personalised care
- identifying problems earlier and prevent escalation
- reducing the need for emergency health services and hospital admissions
- promoting independent living and reduce social isolation.

“Our prevention work has given some residents a new lease of life. They are happier and more stimulated.”

Residential care provider

“I would say it has enhanced our quality of care. The feedback from people supported and their loved ones shows us they are happy with the work we are doing.”

Domiciliary care provider



Organisational and employee impact

Impact	% employers
Helped them to deliver the organisations aims	73%
Improved employee self-awareness of own health	73%
Cited increased job satisfaction	72%
Increased staff morale	68%
Provided new or additional employee training opportunities	65%
Beneficial in terms of recruitment and/or retention	41%



Commissioning and prevention: feedback and thoughts

- Employers had mixed views on prevention as a focus and consistency from commissioners.
 - Prevention is becoming more prevalent within commissioning specifications but is not yet universal or consistent.
 - Over time, commissioners would expect prevention to feature overtly within all service specifications.
 - Agreement that co-production has an important role, although there were barriers, including representation, purposeful engagement, finance and time pressures.
-



Looking ahead

- 51% of the employers surveyed plan to increase the scale and/or reach of prevention activity.
 - 38% plan to introduce new prevention activities.
 - 15% plan to recruit to new prevention focussed roles e.g. activity workers, specialist co-ordinators, including around mental health and dementia, and care liaison officers
 - The majority of employers expect there to be changes in job roles, though there is considerable uncertainty about what any changes will look like.
-



National changes recommended by employers

Recommendations	% employers
There needs to be greater integration of health and social care in order to maximise the benefits of prevention activity	96%
More support, guidance and training is needed for social care providers to help them to deliver prevention activity	87%
There needs to be a standardised process of monitoring prevention outcomes across providers in the sector	84%
There should be a greater focus on prevention within CQC inspections	66%

Source: Employer survey (n=302)



Employer suggestions

- A guidance document explaining **‘how to’** translate prevention policy into on-the-ground delivery.
 - Top tips on establishing links with colleagues in other sectors, particularly health.
 - Case studies showcasing prevention ‘good practice’ from organisations in the sector.
 - More clarity on commissioners’ expectations for prevention in future specifications.
 - Training materials and tools focused on key aspects of prevention, such as exercise plans and falls prevention.
 - A central repository of prevention training materials and guidance documents.
 - An online forum to enable providers to consult each other about prevention activity.
-



Summary

- No single definition but several themes across both employers and commissioners.
 - Prevention is interwoven into business-as-usual.
 - Key enablers are the same that drive good quality care and support.
 - Main constraints are time pressure and financial.
 - Prevention activity delivers good outcomes but can be challenging to measure.
 - Prevention is becoming more prevalent in commissioning but further clarity/consistency is needed.
 - Employers are positive and enthusiastic about prevention activity and would like more support, guidance and resources.
-



Skills for Care's next steps

Between November 2019 and April 2020, we'll work with five adult social care providers across different sizes, service delivery and user group, to:

- establish a baseline of prevention activity with each provider
- develop a workforce action plan for 2 or 3 of the key research themes
- provide direct support from a social care consultant to implement the action plan
- use evidence based approaches and test out existing prevention resources for their effectiveness and accessibility for social care
- link and evidence prevention activity to the CQC key lines of enquiry and ratings characteristics.

We'll use the learning to inform the next steps to support workforce development and resources. If you would like a copy of the full report from this stage of the research, please email policy@skillsforcare.org.uk