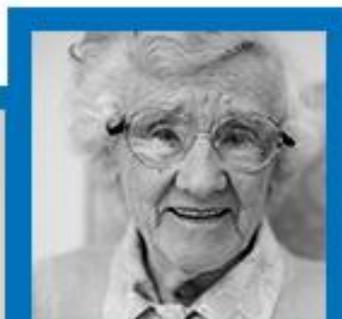# Rapid evidence assessment: adult social care and factors associated with productivity and work performance

Introduction

Purpose of the presentation

- Productivity is subject of much discussion in the UK as productivity generally has fallen

- This presentation sets out evidence from published literature identifying characteristics associated with productivity

- This presentation will help you understand the evidence but can be used with employers and managers to help them digest and assess applicability to their situation

What is productivity?

Traditional definitions of productivity are being extended

- to focus on how well a system can use resource to achieve its goals
- taking a more holistic view of additional impacting factors, e.g. staff training to increase help people reach goals etc.
- there is recognition that measuring productivity is more complex as you move from measuring how many individuals are being cared for toward factors like changes in care needs
- however, higher productivity is perceived to be better than lower productivity.

How can we measure productivity?

- currently there are limitations to existing measures of productivity in adult social care and no one accepted approach

- as with traditional definitions, traditional measurement approaches are increasingly viewed as too narrow

- advice focuses on identifying outcomes of productivity which are important to individuals or organisations as starting points

- in addition, consideration of the audience for data on productivity as this will impact on what is required, for example:

  - accountants might focus on efficiency and financial ratios

  - managers might focus on absenteeism, quality, staff turnover etc.

- the ONS are currently working on a new methodology to measure productivity in adult social care.

How can we measure productivity?

Literature would suggest the following considerations need to be applied when thinking about productivity in this sector:

- observing behaviour - 'Hawthorne effect' can impact on accuracy of productivity measures
- self-report bias (if not direct observation) has limitations
- absence of market clearing prices (as adult social care services can be free or subsidised)
- differences between outputs and outcomes
- lack of a well-defined and measurable goal
- multiple inputs required to produce outcome e.g. co-production
- range of tasks involved in delivery of adult social care.

Factors associated with productivity

Five main factors have been identified in the literature:

1. Culture
2. Leadership
3. Employee wellbeing
4. Learning and development
5. Digital technology.

Culture of the workplace

A growing body of literature linking organisational culture to productivity linked to culture. Identified characteristics for positive cultures include:

- positive leadership and management (discussed below)
- a clear vision of and approaches to delivering care, and shared organisational understanding of these and sense of identity
- peer to peer support
- intolerance of bullying and incivility
- supportive and clear staff policies and procedures, which are interwoven with the vision and approaches to care delivery
- realistic job demands and resources to deliver
- good teamwork and staff engagement
- skilled staff doing the right job.

Culture of the workplace

Resources to support employers include:

- Skills for Care work with the adult social care sector to improve the culture of care in the workplace – Culture for Care
- Developing People - Improving *Care* has been published following a recommendation from Carter Review on productivity which addresses culture in the NHS.

Leadership

Literature identified leadership as important to productivity and across a number of domains including:

- setting the culture of an organisation is important for productivity

- managing change in an organisation and maintaining staff engagement through the process

- setting up peer support which is linked to stress and burnouts

- directly influencing stress among staff

- promoting employee health more generally

- ensuring appropriate allocation of resources

- supporting innovation.

Leadership

Skills for Care defined seven dimensions of leadership:

1. Demonstrating personal qualities (self-awareness, managing self, integrity, CPD)
2. Working with others (networks, relationships, encouraging contribution, integrity)
3. Managing services (resources, people, performance)
4. Improving services (safety, reflection, improvement, innovation, change)
5. Setting direction (context, knowledge, evidence, decision making)
6. Creating the vision (development, communication, embodiment)
7. Delivering the strategy (framing, developing, implementing).

Employee wellbeing

Literature has identified a number of aspects of the job which can impact on job satisfaction and subsequently, employee wellbeing:

- **Demands** of the job and wellbeing tends to be lower when demands are high
- **Autonomy** over the job they do and time to perform the job
- **Control** in relation to the broader organisation through participation in decision-making
- **Clarity** over what is expected including feedback on performance
- **Security** both in terms of physical security as well as job security
- **Pay** and how this compares to peers and other workers rather than absolute pay
- **Equity** and a perception of fairness in the organisation that all workers are treated in the same way.

Employee wellbeing

Staff stress and burnout key concerns for health and social care in part linked to the demands from the job.

Poor and unsupportive working environment, unrealistic goals or high demands on staff are all contributing factors. There are a number of factors which might mitigate positively on staff stress and burnout including:

- organisational level: positive working environment, no blame culture, guidance to recognise signs of stress and burnout, balanced workload
- team level: peer support and good relationships, debriefing, good leadership, access to management
- individual level: mentoring and coaching, supervision, self-care advice and support.

Employee wellbeing

Relationships at work are important for productivity. Bullying is sometimes used as a measure of staff relationships:

- in the UK recent figures estimate nearly a third of people have been bullied at work (29%)
- in nearly three quarters of all cases (72%), the bullying is carried out by a manager
- half of those questioned said that bullying had an adverse impact on their performance and mental health
- more than a quarter felt it had a physical impact and a fifth report time off work as a direct result of bullying.

Employee wellbeing

One of the most important factors associated with productivity is the level of staff engagement, drivers for engagement include:

- work that has meaning and purpose
- staff involvement in decision-making
- opportunities for staff feel able to voice their ideas with managers who listen to these views, and value employees' contributions
- opportunities employees have to develop their jobs
- timely recognition and reward
- rganisational concern for employees' health and wellbeing.

Employee wellbeing

Presenteeism is an important measure of staff wellbeing

- There are different types of presenteeism ranging from healthy through to stressed and unhealthy

- Measuring presenteeism is becoming increasingly important as it is estimated that presenteeism costs UK employers between c.£17bn and £26bn per year and may be a bigger issue that absenteeism

- Large employers are starting to focus on measures of presenteeism e.g. NHS staff survey

- Importance of tackling presenteeism through wellbeing programmes and other initiatives is becoming more apparent.

Learning and development

The impact of a learning environment on employee productivity has been explored by a small number of authors in both health and adult social care

- learning and development had a significant and positive impact on productivity at both micro and macro level
- specially trained staff are likely to be more productive
- having the right person skilled to do the right job has an impact on:
    - productivity
    - job satisfaction
    - potentially engagement.

Digital technology

is increasingly important in social care and sever reviews have identified a role for technology to improve productivity

- public sector bodies will need to improve and include technology in their future plans

- some argue IT in public sector has suffered from under-investment, for organisations to be more productive they need to equip employees with technology that helps them maximise their time

- the potential benefits of technology for adult social care include reduced travel, reduced time spent on collection and processing of case notes, more efficient job scheduling and the availability of up-to-date information.

Conclusion

The focus on productivity in adult social care is increasing but with limited information on what to measure and how to measure, areas for consideration include:

- use meaningful indicators – indicators of productivity should be meaningful to the organisation's objectives and operations

- use an integrated approach – get a comprehensive picture of organisational performance in order to analyse the relative contribution of each and diagnose problem areas

- involve employees in decisions that affect them – this gives employees a sense of ownership of the process and a perception of fairness

- review progress – productivity measurement is not an isolated task and should be reviewed regularly

- measure presenteeism – for example, by adding self-reported questions onto existing staff surveys.

Next steps

What do we need from you?

- What workforce productivity means to you?

- What examples of good practice do you have or might know of?

- What are the gaps in the evidence presented so far in your view?

- What further support is needed for your organisation in order to be more productive?

- Email liz.burtney@skillsforcare.org.uk

- Complete survey www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/prodconsult

- Read full report www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Productivity