

# **Study into the impact of a values based approach to recruitment and retention**

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**Written by Consilium Research and Consultancy Ltd.  
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***Study into the impact of a values based approach to recruitment and retention***

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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.

This work was researched and compiled by Jamie Buttrick of Consilium Research and Consultancy.

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## Acknowledgements

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This research will help Skills for Care to support employers to develop values based approaches to recruitment and retention and put social care values at the heart of their recruitment and retention practice. This work will now be developed further under the remit of the Department of Health Recruitment and Retention group as part of their refreshed recruitment and retention strategy 2014/2017.

The key findings from the report will build upon work to help create and maintain a workforce which understands and embraces workplace values and maintains a consistent and quality approach to working by retaining employees who understand the right way to deliver values based care.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the research which will enable Skills for Care and partners to take forward developments during 2016/17.

# Executive summary

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## Introduction

Skills for Care supports employers to develop values based approaches to recruitment and retention to help employers put social care values at the heart of their recruitment and retention practice. A values based approach to recruitment and retention is about finding and keeping people who have the right values and attitude to work in care and supporting staff to develop their skills and knowledge to enable them to provide high quality care.

Consilium Research and Consultancy was appointed by Skills for Care to conduct a study to assess the impact of a values based approach to recruitment and retention in October 2014. This report provides an assessment of the longer-term impact by capturing changes in key business performance indicators such as staff retention, absence and performance measures.

An online survey was developed to gather quantitative data generating 112 complete responses from social care organisations employing, in total, approximately 27,000 people. 74% (N= 83) of the organisations self-reported using a 'values based' approach to recruitment and retention. The other 26% (N=29) of the organisations in this study reported using 'traditional' approaches to recruitment and retention (i.e. emphasising technical or experience based questioning/evidence). The online survey was supplemented with qualitative interviews to assess impact.

## Impact on Social Care Staff

Almost all employers reported that their values based approach to recruitment and retention represented an improvement on other approaches they had used.

These employers were most positive about the approach enabling them to identify attitudes and attributes which they believed could not be taught or learnt. Employers were very happy to invest in up skilling candidates who demonstrated a real desire and interest in social care work through mandatory and more specialist training.

The majority of employers (72% of 81 employers able to make a comparison) stated that staff employed and supported using a 'values based' approach perform better than those recruited through 'traditional' methods.

The majority of employers (between 73% and 76% of the 81 employers able to make a comparison) also stated that staff recruited and supported using a 'values based' approach possess stronger care values (for example, 'respect', 'empathy', 'compassion'; 'treating people with dignity'; and 'integrity') than people recruited through 'traditional' methods.

A 'values based' approach was stated to be more effective than 'traditional' methods in gaining an understanding of, and building a relationship with, candidates.

The relationship was enhanced by using a wide selection of recruitment methods which enabled the varied values and behaviours of individuals to come to the fore.

Employers highlighted how targeted, values based questions and follow-up discussions were used to enable candidates to reflect on their answers and apply them to real situations.

A number of employers highlighted their increased willingness to offer jobs to candidates without relevant experience or social care qualifications if they exhibited the right values and attitude. Employers provided examples of candidates who, under 'traditional' approaches would have been discounted at the application form stage who had gone on to provide high quality care in a variety of roles.

Employers have been rewarded for making informed judgements on people from a range of backgrounds because of their values and fit with the organisation, role and person in receipt of care and support.

### **Impact on costs**

Employers reported a range of financial benefits of implementing a values based approach to recruitment and retention.

Excluding investment in personality profiling tools, employers largely described using or developing existing resources more efficiently in order to identify values within candidates. Where additional resources had been used, employers reported that the benefits in terms of quality care outputs outweighed the costs.

The results of the employer survey found that staff turnover, at 19.0%, is 5.6 percentage points lower amongst employers using a 'values based' approach to recruitment and retention than those using 'traditional' methods. This compares to a sector average of 25.4% as of February 2016 according to NMDS-SC data.

The analysis reveals an estimated return on investment of 22.8% from implementing a values based approach to recruitment and retention (i.e. for every £1 spent on a values based approach to recruitment and retention, there is a return of £1.23 in terms of cost savings).

### **Barriers to adopting a values based approach**

Despite an overall desire amongst the majority of social care employers (involved in this study) to embrace a values based approach to recruitment and retention a range of issues and barriers linked to adopting a values based approach to recruitment and retention were highlighted, including:

- Many employers have a relative preoccupation with online personality profiling tools (not akin to effectively implementing a holistic values based approach to recruitment and retention).
- Some organisations currently see the step change from existing recruitment methods to a values based approach as too great a financial/organisational step.
- There is a greater emphasis amongst employers on 'improving' their recruitment performance than extending the values based approach to improving retention.
- Factors which employers feel will impact on their ability to implement a values based approach to recruitment and retention include the National Living Wage, financial pressures linked to 'tight' contracts with local authorities and a lack of time and capacity within senior management to invest in planning.

## **Conclusions**

- There is a spectrum of impact and understanding with reference to a values based approach to recruitment and retention. This research has confirmed that a large number of employers recognise and experience the benefits of using a values based approach to recruitment and retention. Staff recruited and supported according to a 'values based' approach are reported to perform better (i.e. in terms of sickness absence, punctuality, role related skills and overall) than those recruited through 'traditional', non-values based methods.
- There is evidence that staff employed and supported using a 'values based' approach demonstrate stronger care values (i.e. compassion, respect, empathy, treating people with dignity, integrity and communication) than people recruited through 'traditional', non-values methods. In addition, when extrapolating the impacts of lower turnover rates of staff to overall costs linked to recruitment, training and induction, a value based approach to recruitment and retention can offer significant cost benefits.
- The results of this research indicate that staff turnover amongst employers using a values based approach to recruitment and retention is lower than amongst employers using 'traditional', non-values methods and the sector average overall. This overall figure, sourced from the NMDS-SC, will include a number of employers using a values based approach to recruitment and retention. There is very little difference between the turnover figure reported in NMDS-SC and that for employers using 'traditional' approaches to recruitment and retention. This suggests that only a small minority of employers currently use a values based approach to recruitment and retention.
- Despite the positive perceived or experienced impact of using a value based approach to recruitment and retention there remains a large degree of confusion amongst employers about what a values based approach 'looks like', how to develop it and what represents good practice.

- There is a pre-occupation amongst many employers with the use of personality profiling tools. This could be an underlying barrier to engaging fully with the ethos of a holistic values based approach to recruitment and retention, which might be explained by the extra costs to employers of using such tools.
- Employers also tend to adopt short term solutions to tackling the shortage in the supply of labour rather than investing in the longer term approaches to improving rates of retention.

This research provides evidence of the positive impact of a values based approach to recruitment and retention in social care. Crucially for employers assessing their approach to recruitment and retention, the benefits of a values based approach are reflected in both stronger social care values linked to quality of care and lower rates of staff turnover which can contribute to substantial cost savings. Work still remains however for Skills for Care and partners to raise awareness amongst employers of how exactly they can work to change their approach to recruitment and retention. This should specifically look to increase knowledge of the potential component parts of a values based approach to recruitment and retention as well as emphasising the potential rewards to changing their recruitment and retention practice.



# 1. Introduction

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**Skills for Care supports employers to develop values based approaches to recruitment and retention to help employers put social care values at the heart of their recruitment and retention practice.**

**The Values based recruitment toolkit (VBRT) was designed to help build and promote a strong social care culture, based on recruiting the right people with the right values into careers in the sector and ensuring that those values are embedded into everyday organisational cultures in order to develop and retain a high quality workforce.**

**The evaluation of the VBRT pilot recommended conducting a survey during 2014/15 to evaluate the longer-term effectiveness and impact of a values based approach on recruitment costs, staff retention, behaviours and service improvement.**

**Consilium Research and Consultancy was appointed by Skills for Care to conduct a study to assess the impact of a values based approach to recruitment and retention in October 2014.**

**This report provides an assessment of the longer-term impact of a values based approach to recruitment and retention by capturing changes in key business performance indicators such as staff retention, absence and performance measures.**

## 1.1 Context

The adult social care sector faces a range of substantial challenges with implications for recruitment and retention. Whilst demand for care services continues to increase as the UK's population increases and ages in line with improvements in healthcare, the adult care sector faces a range of labour supply issues including a challenge to attract and retain the right people able to provide good quality care.

Although it is acknowledged that not all employers have low retention rates and there is a wealth of good practice being followed, the overall social care sector suffers from poor rates of retention compared to a UK all sector average of around 15%.

In mid-February 2016 the turnover rate across all job roles according to the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC) was 25.4%. This rises to 31.6% for care workers and 35.3 amongst registered nurses<sup>1</sup>. This emphasises the need to strengthen the evidence base and reinforce the benefits of attracting and retaining the right people with the right values and behaviours with direct relevance for quality of care and business survival.

It should also be accompanied by work to share good practice in approaches to recruitment and retention amongst adult social care employers. The challenge therefore, which forms the foundation of the Adult social care workforce recruitment and retention strategy 2014-2017<sup>2</sup>, is to prepare a workforce which has sufficient numbers of people with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver quality, values based care.

### **The 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, the Adult social care workforce recruitment and retention strategy 2014-2017 was refreshed in September 2014. This built on the first ever strategy published in 2011. The strategy emphasises the roles and commitments made by employers, key delivery partners, representative bodies and government departments in the context of how their collective programmes of work will impact upon the strategy's key priority areas 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;
- Encourage and enable better recruitment practices; and
- Address the issue of above average turnover rates that exist in the sector.

The strategy outlines a programme with aims of promoting values based recruitment and retention and developing values linked to a positive workplace. The programme aims to support more widespread promotion and take-up of values based recruitment within organisations that promote positive workplace cultures.

It is envisaged that this 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 skills and careers”***.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/reportengine/GuestDashboard.aspx?type=TurnoverRate>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Document-library/Finding-and-keeping-workers/Recruitment-and-retention-strategy/recruitment-and-retention-strategy-2014---2017.pdf>

The Strategy also has aims to support employers to “**develop their values within positive workplace cultures**” that “**will have a positive impact on employee wellbeing and promote closer alignment between employee and cultural values**”.

## **A values based approach to recruitment and retention**

A values based approach to recruitment and retention is about finding and keeping people who have the right values and attitude to work in care and supporting these people to develop their skills and knowledge about what it means to provide high quality care. When used effectively, it can help to create and maintain a workforce which understands and embraces workplace values and maintains a consistent and high quality approach to working by retaining employees who understand the right way to deliver values based care.

Key considerations that employers should use and reflect upon to maintain a consistent values based approach to recruitment and retention are covered in the Skills for Care publication, ‘Values based recruitment and retention guide’<sup>3</sup>.

Key considerations include:

### **1. Identifying workplace values**

Having a collective understanding and agreement of workplace values ensures that everyone does the right things for the right reasons. This common purpose and understanding helps people build great working relationships, helping the employer to achieve their desired outcomes.

### **2. Embedding values**

Having identified workplace values it’s important to have an agreed process for embedding them in every aspect of the organisation.

### **3. Recruitment, retention and selection**

Finding someone with the same values as the employer is an important part of the recruitment, selection and retention process. Employing staff who embrace the workplace values will help to ensure they deliver high quality, consistent care and support.

### **4. Induction**

From day one it’s important to be clear with colleagues about the expected workplace values and behaviours and ensure regular support is provided during the induction period.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Recruitment-and-retention/VBR/Guide-to-values-based-recruitment-and-retention.pdf>

## **5. Supervision, appraisal and progression reviews**

Engaging with staff and people who need care and support about workplace values helps to ensure they are appropriate, current and reflected in day to day service delivery. This is an important two way process which provides an opportunity to explore continued growth and personal development.

## **6. Leadership and management**

Leaders and managers are instrumental. It is crucial that leaders and managers are engaged and work to embed values into the day to day roles of all staff. It is important that leadership and management are embedded at every level to encourage staff to take responsibility for upholding positive workplace values.

## **7. Checking values**

It is important to have a continuous process for checking the impact of workplace values to ensure they are understood, being upheld and are having a positive impact for everyone

## **The Values based recruitment toolkit (VBRT)**

Skills for Care supports employers to develop values based approaches to recruitment and retention that put social care values at the heart of their recruitment practice. The VBRT is designed to help build a strong social care culture, help people develop careers in the sector and deliver high quality services through having the right people in place, doing the right thing, in the right way. It is based on a model of values-based recruitment, which gives employers, especially smaller or micro employers who may be unfamiliar with the approach, an opportunity to use the different components in a way which best suits their individual needs to gauge the effect on their workforce and service.

The evaluation of the VBRT pilot<sup>4</sup> recommended conducting a survey during 2014/15 to evaluate the longer-term effectiveness and impact of a values based approach on recruitment costs, staff retention, behaviours and service improvement.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Document-library/Finding-and-keeping-workers/Practical-toolkits/Values-based-recruitment/Final-report.pdf>

## **1.2 Research aims and objectives**

This report presents the findings of the impact evaluation of the values based recruitment toolkit pilot. The main objective is to understand the longer-term impact of values based recruitment and retention by capturing changes in key business performance indicators such as staff retention, absence and performance measures. The study surveyed a range of employers across the social care sector to compare the impact of different approaches to recruitment and retention. This includes an assessment of the cost savings associated with finding and keeping staff through a values based approach to recruitment and retention compared to the traditional methods used in the sector.

## 2. Overview of research methods<sup>5</sup>

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The development of the study methodology and compliance with research governance arrangements comprised the first stage of the study. Key milestones included:

- Developing research tools to support the study; and
- Liaising with the Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SC-REC) to develop and sign off the research ethics application in February 2015;

The majority of the research resource in the second stage of the study was dedicated to engaging with employers to encourage participation in the research. This included:

- Initial engagement with employers and potential participants including the 209 organisations that had supported the VBRT pilot; and
- Employers identified/coming forward through liaison with Skill for Care Area Teams, responses to SfC communications channels and partner newsletters.
- Approximately 6,000 employer contacts have been approached to participate in the study.

The online survey developed to gather quantitative data generated 112 complete responses. These were supplemented with qualitative discussions (of varying lengths) with all valid respondents to inform a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the impact of using a values based approach to recruitment and retention. These discussions have been used to inform case studies in order to explore issues in further detail.

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<sup>5</sup> A detailed description of the methodology can be found in Appendix II

### 3. Key findings from the research

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#### Responses to the survey

112 employers responded to the survey: 83 reported using a values based approach to recruitment and retention and 29 used a traditional approach

#### Impact on staff performance

The majority of employers stated that staff employed and supported using a 'values based' approach perform better than those recruited through 'traditional' approaches to recruitment and retention.

Of those employers able to make this comparison:

- 72% of employers stated that staff recruited for values perform either 'better' or 'much better' overall than those recruited through traditional approaches.

Staff performed better in terms of 'sickness absence' (62%), 'skills required for their role' (58%) and 'punctuality' (52%)

#### Impact on care values

The majority of employers stated that staff employed and supported using a 'values based' approach to recruitment and retention possess stronger care values than staff recruited through 'traditional' methods.

- Between 73% and 76% of employers stated that staff recruited for values perform either 'better' or 'much better' in terms of exhibiting the following care values: 'Respect', 'Empathy', 'Compassion'; 'Treating people with dignity'; and 'Integrity'.

#### Impact on staff turnover and costs

Staff turnover, at 19.0%, is 5.6 percentage points lower amongst employers using a values based approach to recruitment and retention than those using 'traditional' methods. This compares to a 'whole sector' average of 25.4% as of February 2016 based on NMDS-SC data.

The analysis reveals an estimated return on investment of 22.8% from implementing a values based approach to recruitment and retention (i.e. for every £1 spent on a values based approach to recruitment and retention, there is a return of £1.23 in cost savings).

## 3.1 Findings

The online survey developed to gather quantitative data generated 112 complete responses from social care organisations employing approximately 27,000 people overall.

74% or 83 organisations were classified as using a 'values based' approach to recruitment and retention. The other 26% or 29 organisations were categorised as using 'traditional' approaches to recruitment and retention (i.e. not based (entirely) on values and emphasising technical or historical questioning/evidence). The online survey was supplemented with qualitative discussions to inform an assessment of impact.

## 3.2 Values based approaches to recruitment and retention

Employers using a values based approach to recruitment and retention reported using a range of methods to identify attitudes and values within candidates. These values were predominantly aligned to overall organisational values or the needs of the people in receipt of care and support. Key features of values based approaches to recruitment and retention include:

- **Employers (approximately half) using a values based approach to recruitment and retention stated that they had used one or more elements of the VBRT.** The most popular areas of guidance used from the VBRT were suggested interview questions and example job adverts.
  - Employers reflected positively on being able to incorporate and explore organisational values and/or the needs of people in receipt of care and support into interview questions. By using a range of targeted questions and/or scenarios requiring the description or application of values by candidates, employers were able to complement or replace their traditional technical or historical questioning/evidence and 'drill down' into the characters of job applicants and identify the 'right candidates for the right roles'.
  - The majority of employers highlighted making changes to their job adverts to reflect the values required by candidates rather than desired levels of experience and qualifications. However, the impact in terms of the characteristics of candidates coming forward was difficult to attribute to the advert.



Examples of good practice and innovative methods used by employers as part of their values based approaches to recruitment and retention included:

- Use of short telephone interviews comprising of values based questions to identify and prioritise candidates for interview.
- Involving people in receipt of care and support (where appropriate) in the recruitment process. This typically formed part of a tour of a venue which provides opportunity to observe how a candidate interacts with clients, staff, families and even pets.
- Exploring candidates' understanding of critical words and phrases, exploring the depth of knowledge often hidden behind well scripted answers to interview questions.
- The use of 'group assessment days' designed to test different characteristics of candidates outside of the often 'pressurised' environment of a one-to-one interview. The use of different interview formats was stressed as important in identifying the strengths of people in different situations.

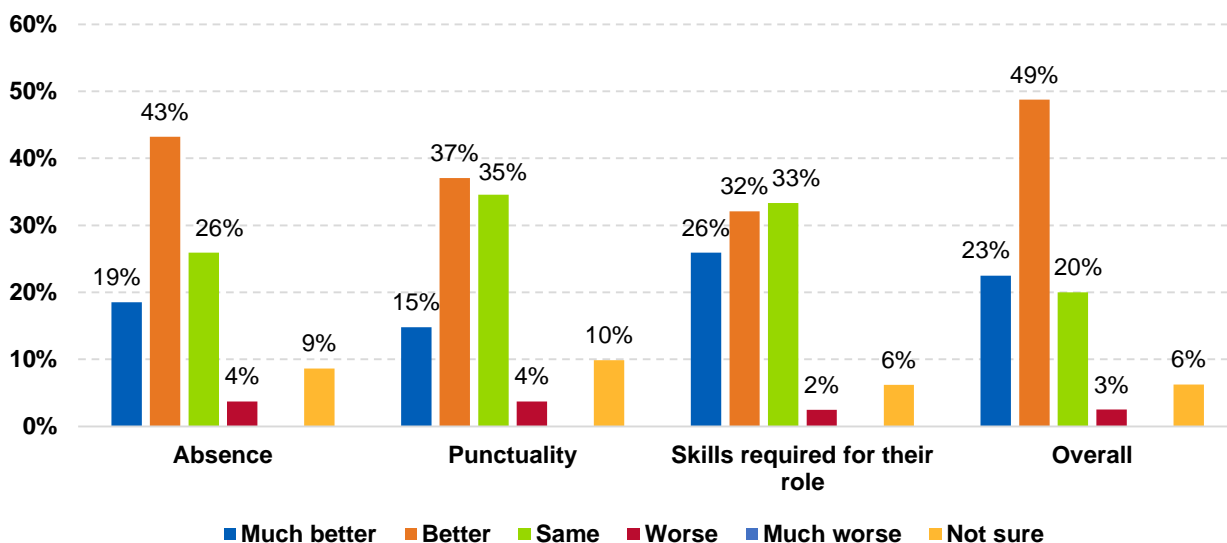
### **3.3 Impact on social care staff performance**

Employers were asked to compare the performance of staff recruited through a values based approach to recruitment and retention with those recruited using traditional methods. Employers provided ratings across the following measures of staff performance from 'much better' to 'much worse':

- Sickness absence;
- Punctuality;
- Skills required for their role; and
- Overall.

Figure 3.1 provides an assessment of the impact of a values based approach to recruitment and retention on staff performance (also see [Table A5](#)).

**Figure 3.1: Performance ratings of staff recruited using a values based approach compared to those recruited through traditional methods (n=81)**



- 72% of employers overall stated that staff employed through a values based approach to recruitment and retention performed either ‘better’ or ‘much better’ than people recruited through ‘traditional’ approaches.
- The best results in the performance of staff recruited using a ‘values based’ approach were in terms of improved rates of ‘sickness absence’, followed by ‘skills required for their role’ and levels of ‘punctuality’.

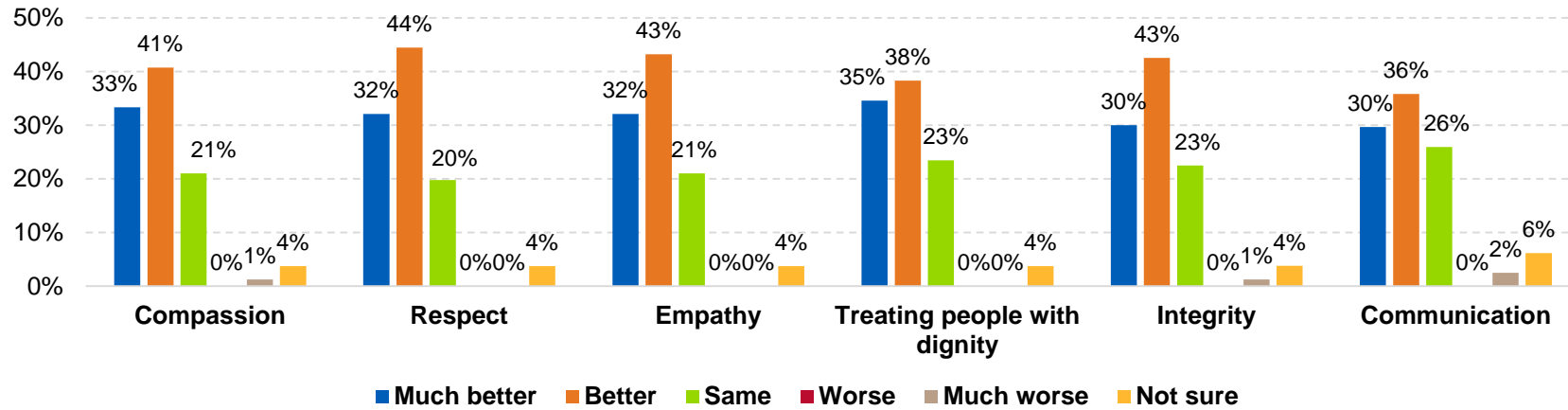
### 3.4 Impact on staff care values

Employers were also asked to compare the care values of staff recruited through a ‘values based’ approach to recruitment and retention with those recruited by more ‘traditional’ methods. Employers were asked to provide ratings from ‘much better’ to ‘much worse’ across the following care values:

- Compassion
- Respect
- Empathy
- Treating people with dignity
- Integrity and
- Communication

Figure 3.2 provides an assessment of the impact of a values based approach to recruitment and retention on the care values of staff (see [Table A6](#)).

**Figure 3.2: Care value ratings of staff recruited using a values based approach compared to those recruited through traditional methods (n=81)**



- Approximately three quarters of employers stated that staff employed through a values based approach to recruitment and retention performed either ‘better’ or ‘much better’ than people recruited through ‘traditional’ approaches in terms of a wide range of care values.
- Although still significant, the proportion stating that ‘communication’ was either ‘better’ or ‘much better’ amongst staff employed according to values was slightly lower than the other care values at 66%.

**Employers using a values based approach to recruitment and retention were more likely to highlight the links between care values and positive staff performance measures** than specifically criticise the performance of staff recruited and supported through 'traditional' approaches. Examples include a willingness of staff to embrace changes in organisational structures or working practices (e.g. a shift towards greater work in the community or changes to policies and procedures). Another common example offered by employers was the desire to be flexible or help out the organisation in time of crisis (e.g. covering for absent staff or staying longer than planned with someone requiring more intensive care and support).

Almost all **employers confirmed that their values based approach to recruitment and retention represented an improvement on other approaches** they had used. A number of other employers did not have anything to compare their approach to and therefore could not comment.

The overwhelming advantage of using a values based approach to recruitment and retention from the perspective of employers was stated to be **the identification of attitudes and attributes which cannot be taught or learnt**. Employers were very happy to invest in up skilling candidates through mandatory and more specialist training - especially when they showed a real desire and interest to work in social care.

***“We can train people up on skills. You’ve either got care values or you haven’t”***

**The values most commonly highlighted as being crucial to the recruitment decision making process were:**

- Empathy
- Respect
- Compassion
- Treating people with dignity
- Integrity
- Common sense
- Friendliness and
- Communication

**A ‘values based’ approach was stated to be more effective than ‘traditional’ methods in gaining an understanding of, and building a relationship with, candidates.** Employers highlighted how targeted, values based questions and follow-up discussions were used to make candidates think about their answers and apply them to real situations. Employers reflected on the benefits of identifying a more accurate picture of a candidate rather than hearing a well-rehearsed and much repeated standard answer to a standard question.

The quality of the relationship established with candidates was enhanced by using **a wide selection of recruitment methods which enabled the varied strengths of individuals to come to the fore.** These include group activities to assess team work and communication, as well as individual interviews and tours of facilities enabling candidates to observe and interact with people in receipt of care and support. **The use of personality profiling questionnaires** also enabled a number of employers to inform the shortlisting process of candidates for interview more effectively. More frequently, and especially outside of the VBRT pilot given the cost implications, profiling was used primarily to inform shortlisting and question selection at interview

Discussions with individual employers emphasised that a values based approach to recruitment and retention is especially important where the link between employer and carer is so close. For people employing a personal assistant (PA), **investment and trust in the values and attitudes of an individual are paramount given the PA’s role in facilitating them to live the way they want to live.** This is reflected in the innovative and inclusive approaches to recruitment and retention used by individual employers, with the positive results reported offering lessons for larger employers.

A number of employers highlighted their **increased willingness to offer jobs to candidates without relevant experience or social care qualifications if they exhibited the right values and attitude.** Employers provided examples of candidates who, under ‘traditional’ approaches, would have been discounted at the application form stage who had gone on to provide high quality care in a variety of roles.

**Employers have been rewarded for making informed judgements on people from a range of backgrounds because of their values and fit with the organisation,** role and person in receipt of care and support. Examples include people for whom English is a second language and people moving to social care from a range of different occupations including hairdressing, customer service and chemical engineering.

### 3.5 Impact on costs

Employers were asked whether there was a cost to introducing a values based approach to recruitment and retention. In the majority of instances, unless employers had invested in a personality profiling tool, the costs associated with values based recruitment were described as relatively minor. These tended to relate, in the first instance, to initial (sunk) costs linked to **the time taken to research, design and implement changes in company policies and procedures.**

Another cost linked to introducing a values based approach to recruitment and retention was **communicating the changes in the recruitment process to relevant staff.** This was typically accompanied by training and guidance provided to managers in applying the new approach (e.g. enhancing interviewing skills to adopt values-based interviewing). This process was typically undertaken internally and did not therefore involve any significant external costs. This enabled employers to take ownership of this process, for example, ensuring that organisational values are reflected adequately but could also elongate the process given the pressures of other areas of management and delivery.

Employers providing details of any ongoing costs associated with implementing a new, values based approach to recruitment largely highlighted **using existing resources (e.g. time and finances) differently rather than incurring (significant) additional costs.** Examples include introducing a preliminary telephone interview to explore and identify care values in candidates prior to a formal interview and amending interview questions to reflect the new 'values based' approach.

**Where additional resources had been used to expand an existing recruitment process, employers were adamant that the benefits outweighed the costs.** Although few organisations were able to quantify these 'cost benefits', the results were explained in terms of more effective shortlisting prior to interview and greater inclusivity involving those in receipt of care and support. However, the major benefits of any additional costs associated with a values based approach to recruitment and retention were described in terms the higher quality of staff recruited.

### 3.6 Return on investment of using a values based approach to recruitment and retention

This study has involved the collection of a range of data from adult social care providers including details of employee numbers, numbers of people recruited to and leaving the organisation, as well as data relating to costs of recruitment and training. In practice, a combination of the small number of employers using a ‘traditional’ or non-values approach to recruitment and retention and difficulties in providing (reliable<sup>6</sup>) data on recruitment and training costs has, on occasion, required the use of proxy data.

In the absence of a definitive source of data relating to social care, the study has drawn on the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) estimate of the average cost of recruiting a ‘private services’ employee which is between £2,000 and £7,500<sup>7</sup>. Figures for employees recruited in the public and not for profit sectors are slightly lower. Whilst not bespoke to social care, a figure of £4,000 has been used as a conservative estimate of the cost of recruiting non-management staff and a ‘shift towards lower-cost, technology-based attraction and selection methods’ outlined by the CIPD.

The key employment statistics for a 12 months period provided by employers participating in the research have been verified, analysed and applied to an example scenario to illustrate the relative impact of a values based approach to recruitment and retention.

Figure 3.3 presents the results for two fictional employers – one using a ‘values based’ approach to recruitment and retention and another using a ‘traditional’ approach.

Each employer has 100 employees and, in lieu of the data caveats outlined above, has identical costs for training, recruitment and average salaries. The differences in estimated performance are based on staff turnover statistics and time taken for new recruits to reach an ‘average level of performance’ which has implications for costs of upskilling.

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<sup>6</sup> There were several notable outliers (i.e. employers offering a much higher cost for recruitment, which, without a full understanding of the basis for these costs need to be removed from the calculations) within a small sample.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cipd.co.uk/research/resourcing-talent-planning-survey.aspx>

**Figure 3.3: Cost comparison – ‘values based’ vs. ‘traditional’ approaches to recruitment and retention<sup>8,9</sup>**

Values based employer		Traditional (non-values) based employer	
• Staff	100	• Staff	100
• Staff turnover	19.0%	• Staff turnover	24.6%
• Recruitment costs (per hd)	£4,000	• Recruitment costs (per hd)	£4,000
• <u>Total recruitment costs</u>	£76,000	• <u>Total recruitment costs</u>	£98,400
• Training costs (per hd)	£2,229	• Training costs (per hd)	£2,229
• Average salary	£16,998	• Average salary	£16,998
• Time to reach average performance	12 weeks	• Time to reach average performance	9 weeks
• <u>Total cost of upskilling</u>	£63,188	• <u>Total cost of upskilling</u>	£81,812
• <b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£181,539</b>	• <b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£235,046</b>

- A higher rate of staff turnover amongst employers NOT using a values based approach to recruitment and retention translates into additional recruitment, training and induction costs of approximately £53,506 in the above example.
- This represents a return on investment of 22.8% from implementing a values based approach to recruitment and retention (i.e. for every £1 spent on a values based approach to recruitment and retention, there is a return of £1.23 in cost savings).

<sup>8</sup> Training costs per head - Confidential Skills for Care report (October 2014)

<sup>9</sup> Average salary - median annual pay rate for social care workers who have created or updated their NMDS-SC information in the past 12 months, NMDS-SC, February 2016 (<https://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/reportengine/GuestDashboard.aspx?type=Medianannualpay>)



### 3.7 Barriers to implementing values based approaches to recruitment and retention

Employers consulted as part of the research highlighted a range of issues and barriers – both perceived and based on experience, linked to adopting a values based approach to recruitment and retention. The most prominent issues and barriers are summarised below:

- **There was an overall desire amongst the overwhelming majority of social care employers to embrace a values based approach to recruitment and retention.** Many employers stated that they were just starting or had plans to explore the potential costs and implications for managers and staff of implementing a values based approach to recruitment and retention.
- Consultation revealed a large degree of **confusion around the terminology** with employers often unsure whether they use a value based approach to recruitment and retention or not.
- **Many employers have a relative preoccupation with online personality profiling tools. This highlights a relative lack of understanding of what is involved in effectively implementing a holistic values based approach to recruitment and retention.** This is reflected in some employers equating their use, or non-use, of a profiling tool as an indication of whether they are following a values based approach to recruitment and retention. Linked to this issue, some employers stated that moving towards a values based approach to recruitment and retention was unachievable due to the relative expense of a personality profiling tool.
- **Some organisations see the step change from existing recruitment methods to a ‘values based’ approach as too great a financial or organisational step at the current time.** A number of employers using ‘traditional’ methods of recruitment and retention stated that their high rates of staff turnover and a need to ‘fire fight’ workforce issues just to maintain provision represented significant short term barriers to implementing a values based approach to recruitment and retention.
- **There is a greater emphasis amongst employers on ‘improving’ their recruitment performance than extending the values based approach to increasing retention rates.** Where there are significant demand side issues in a local labour market (e.g. in London and the South East), a small number of employers reported pressures to ‘just to fill a position’. Employers still need to be convinced to think of longer term and sustainable strategies to recruitment and retention whilst dealing with short term workforce issues.

- **Respondents highlighted a range of factors which they feel will impact on their ability to implement a values based approach to recruitment and retention.** These include the introduction of, and rises in the, National Living Wage, financial pressures linked to 'tight' contracts with local authorities and a lack of time and capacity within senior management to invest in planning. The attraction of higher paid and less stressful/demanding roles outside of social care (e.g. in customer service and retail positions) also represents a barrier.

## 4. Conclusions

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This report has presented the findings from the impact evaluation of a Value Based approach to recruitment and retention. It has shown there is a spectrum of impact and understanding with reference to a values based approach to recruitment and retention. This research has confirmed that a large number of employers recognise the benefits of using a values based approach to recruitment and retention.

Staff recruited and supported according to a 'values based' approach are reported to perform better (i.e. in terms of sickness absence, punctuality, role related skills and overall) than those recruited through 'traditional', non-values methods.

There is evidence that staff employed and supported using a 'values based' approach demonstrate stronger care values (i.e. compassion, respect, empathy, treating people with dignity, integrity and communication) than people recruited through 'traditional', non-values methods.

The results of this research indicate that staff turnover amongst employers using a values based approach to recruitment and retention is lower than that amongst employers using 'traditional', non-values methods and the sector average overall. This overall figure, sourced from the NMDS-SC, will include a number of employers using a values based approach to recruitment and retention. The close comparison between this turnover figure and that for employers using 'traditional' approaches to recruitment and retention suggests that only a small minority of employers currently use a values based approach to recruitment and retention.

When extrapolating the impacts of lower turnover rates of staff to overall costs linked to recruitment, training and induction, a value based approach to recruitment and retention can offer significant cost benefits.

Despite the positive experiences or perceptions of using a values based approach to recruitment and retention, a large degree of confusion remains about what a values based approach 'looks like', how to develop it and what represents good practice.

There is a pre-occupation amongst many employers with the use of personality profiling tools which may represent a barrier to engaging fully with the ethos of a holistic values based approach to recruitment and retention.

There is an emphasis on tackling recruitment issues amongst employers as short term solutions to supply side labour market pressures which are preferred to longer term answers based on improving rates of retention.

This research provides evidence of the positive impact of a values based approach to recruitment and retention in social care. Crucially for employers assessing their approach to recruitment and retention, the benefits of a values based approach are reflected in both stronger social care values linked to quality of care and lower rates of staff turnover which can contribute to substantial cost savings. Work still remains however for Skills for Care and partners to raise awareness amongst employers of how exactly they can work to change their approach to recruitment and retention. This should specifically look to increase knowledge of the potential component parts of a values based approach to recruitment and retention as well as emphasising the potential rewards to changing their recruitment and retention practice.



## **Freedom Support Ltd.**

- Provides bespoke, person centred social care services for people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum conditions and physical conditions.
- Employs 56 people from its base in Stafford.
- <http://www.freedomsupportltd.org.uk/>

### **Approach to recruitment and retention**

The company recognises the importance of a personalised service and places an emphasis on providing high quality person-focused care in line with the individual and specialist needs of its service users. Crucial to this approach is the ability of its staff to build a rapport with service users and their families based on their skills and crucially values identified through the recruitment process.

***“We can train skills but not care values”***

Freedom Support uses a number of elements from the [Values based Recruitment Toolkit](#) (VBRT) to support its recruitment process including:

- **Suggested interview questions** that enable candidates to demonstrate values in action; and
- **A Question of Care: A Career for you?** - an online self-assessment challenge for potential recruits to the sector.

***“We find ‘A Question of Care’ incredibly useful in identifying the values of candidates, especially those with years of experience”***

The ‘values based’ approach begins with job adverts which do not aim to tick competency boxes but explore the feelings and attributes that a candidate brings to the role and company. These values are initially assessed in a 15 minute telephone interview based on suggested interview questions taken from the VBRT. This ***‘provides a feel for a person’*** which informs the shortlisting procedure for a face to face interview and completion of ‘A Question of Care’.

The specialist nature of many of the roles on offer at Freedom Support places a greater emphasis on the attitudes and values of an individual, rather than questions exploring previous jobs and qualifications. Specific skills can be taught throughout and beyond the 12 weeks induction period. The interviewers own values are used to identify and tease out the values that align with the service user and organisation overall as part of a relaxed, yet focused, discussion.

***‘We don’t look specifically at the jobs people have done before - some of the best carers come from quite strange backgrounds - they are just the right person for the role’.***

### **Values crucial to the decision making process**

- Empathy
- Respect
- Trust
- Friendly nature

### **Costs**

The cost of introducing and maintaining a values based approach to recruitment and retention are relatively low. Costs primarily relate to the time taken to develop specific questions to identify candidates’ values which align with those of the organisation and supporting staff to implement these within the interview.

***“The initial telephone interview cuts down the number of people invited to interview - saving time and money for everyone”***

There was no difference in the time taken to complete the recruitment process between a values based and ‘traditional’ approach to recruitment - averaging out at around four weeks depending on notice periods.

### **Impact**

A values based approach to recruitment and retention has ensured that the organisation has not merely ticked a box with regards to recruitment. A structured approach has identified the right individuals for the right roles almost irrespective of their backgrounds and former jobs which have included hairdressers, chemicals workers and models.

***“We look at the person rather than what their CV says they can do”***

The impact of a values based approach is also highlighted in terms of retention rates which are built upon respect, openness and honesty.

***“They realise we are all cogs in a big machine. Because they are valued as staff they don’t migrate”***

The speed at which staff recruited through a values based approach reach ‘average performance’ was stated to be linked more to the individual as to the methods used in recruiting them. Some people will require additional support which is readily on offer as long as they exhibit the right values and attitudes.

## **Dussindale Park Nursing Home**

- A privately-owned 48 bed purpose built nursing home in Norwich
- Nursing home providing respite and day care to elderly residents
- Employs 55 people
- <http://www.mmccarehomes.co.uk/our-care-homes/dussindale-park/>

### **Approach to recruitment and retention**

The values and mission of the Dussindale Park Nursing Home and wider group are clearly stated in its job adverts for staff. These are then reinforced and used to filter applicants in telephone interviews with candidates for frontline posts and face to face discussions for senior positions with the manager prior to people being invited for a formal interview. An in-depth recruitment process continues with an interview informed by values based questions and a tour of the home complemented by prompted and targeted conversations with a variety of staff members and engagement with residents.

***“The recruitment process is structured around engagement and inclusivity”***

The recruitment process has benefited from approaches to identify the degree of understanding amongst candidates of key words and phrases. This helps to build a clear assessment of the knowledge and values of a candidate and highlights individuals merely providing what they feel are the right responses.

***“What do we mean by empathy and apathy?”***

The use of scenarios are used effectively to illustrate and drill down within a candidate’s values. Examples include asking people to explain:

- How they deal with difficult situations;
- How they would deal with a sad situation; and
- How they would handle difficult behaviour whilst maintaining respect; and

The home has introduced a structured induction process with one week of e-learning, understanding of policies and procedures, staff introductions and shadow shifts. A three-month probationary period includes weekly reviews and benefits from the input of staff trained to become Care Certificate Assessors based on their nurturing values.

### **Values crucial to the decision making process**

- Honesty
- Integrity



- Kindness

### **Costs**

The cost of introducing and maintaining a stronger values based approach to recruitment and retention within the home has been minimal with costs linked primarily to reinforcing values within adverts and interviews and providing guidance to staff using them.

An estimated 50% increase in costs linked to the new week-long induction process have also been outweighed by a range of complementary actions and related benefits. These include greater assurance that e-learning undertaken on site is being completed by the employee, policies and procedures are effectively disseminated and issues with identifying spare time to complete mandatory training are avoided, thus saving management time and resources.

### **Impact**

Introducing a stronger values based approach to recruitment and retention has created a degree of cultural change in the organisation and resulted in some longstanding members of staff leaving who were reluctant to embrace the changes.

***“You have to make sure that messages are communicated effectively and explain clearly why changes have to happen”***

However, just one of 12 new starters have left the home since the changes were introduced with the nurturing, supportive yet firm and open approach to management acknowledged as a key factor in this success.

***“If the people won’t change I will change the people”***

The impact of embedding a values based approach to recruitment and retention has also been seen in quality assurance reports undertaken with staff. The number of issues reported has decreased, any issues raised have been dealt with quickly and efficiently and staff have reported feeling supported and happy in their role as a result.

A values based approach to recruitment and retention is also linked to improvements in relationships with clients and their families. This is reflected in positive reviews provided through the [carehome.co.uk](http://carehome.co.uk) website used to gather independent feedback on the quality of care provided.

## **Nina Osborne, Nina Osborne Training and Consultancy**

- Individual Employer
- Normally employs a teams of four personal assistants

### **Approach to recruitment and retention**

Nina's approach to recruitment and retention reflects the values within her support team and a desire to encourage diversity and inclusivity within the workforce. Matching the values within the team with someone who can complement her busy business and personal life requires a values based selection process which begins with the advert.

***“A job advert needs to capture the imagination but also be practical by highlighting the need to work long and/or varied shifts”***

Nina requests that people showing an interest in the role 'come and have a chat' as a basis for learning more about each other. A discussion enables Nina to build a rapport with the candidate in a relaxing environment and see how they relate to each other, the job and her dog. She will not always send out an application beforehand and may instead complete one during the course of the discussion.

***“I can get a feel for someone's values from the moment they come through the door”***

She is upfront in discussing her style of working and implications on the style and nature of tasks required from her personal assistants. In line with the guidance in the VBRT, her discussions often include questions relating to work-based scenarios. These explore the boundaries within the personal assistant role, for example exploring how and when to provide support when attending a business meeting with Nina or in undertaking domestic tasks around the home. Nina finds that 'A Question of Care: A Career for you?' is particularly useful for 'entry level staff' with little experience. The tool enables Nina to explore values whilst informing the candidates of the nature of the role and wider sector, something which a personality profiling questionnaire for example will not achieve.

Candidates must also be able to cope with the concept of 'caring for the boss'. This is further complicated by working at a residential address which can feel like a strange working environment.

## **Crucial values**

- Showing consideration of diversity
- Knowing when it is appropriate to step in and help
- Maintaining a balance between caring and supporting
- Willingness to learn

## **Costs**

Nina's costs linked to using a values based approach to recruitment and retention are linked primarily to her (valuable) time in planning and implementing not only the recruitment process but also ongoing support as part of a learning environment.

***“A values based approach to recruitment and retention done well takes longer. If you are prepared to invest you will be rewarded.”***

## **Impact**

Although a 'values based' approach to recruitment was found to take longer than 'traditional' approaches, it has been found to pay dividends in terms of finding the right person for the right role within her team of personal assistants. This is reflected in the length of time which people remain in the role and therefore the periods in between recruitment drives, but crucially the quality of care and support provided.

Personal assistants can be required to learn a wide variety of skills which requires an aptitude to learn on their behalf and the provision of a supportive learning environment from the individual employer. By supporting their development, both Nina and the personal assistants maximise the benefits of the role and their professional relationship.

***“Staff who have values appreciate working in a values based environment”***

## **Woodford Homecare & Support Services**

- Private sector home care provider
- Providing care and support in Wolverhampton
- Specialisms include dementia, learning disabilities, mental health, physical disabilities, sensory impairments and elderly care
- <http://woodfordhomecare.co.uk/>

### **Approach to recruitment and retention**

The organisation follows a comprehensive, person-centred recruitment process using a combination of tools from the VBRT. A range of staff are involved in recruiting staff with candidates invited into a presentation on the company after being asked to complete 'A Question of Care: A Career for you?'. This is used to help build a more complete picture of the candidate by asking them to reflect on their answers and why they think it is important. At this stage answers are compared to CVs and covering letters before candidates meet other staff members and complete an application form.

Successful candidates progressing from this initial recruitment are then asked to complete an online personality profiling questionnaire. The profiling tool enables employers to gain a better understanding of candidates' personal attributes or values which can help to inform an assessment of a person's potential to deliver high quality care. The results of the profiling questionnaire are used to prepare for interview as part of a person-centred approach which will enable people to be matched with the right mentors and roles within the business as well as compatibility with people who use their services.

***“The personality profiling questionnaire also enables us to identify pinch points for the future and organise the support required to identify and work towards challenges earlier.”***

The value of the profiling questionnaire was highlighted in the case of a candidate for whom English was not her first language. Analysis of the profiling results confirmed that an impression that she was quite abrupt or arrogant was in fact just a result of language difficulties and something, with the right support, that should not impact on her employment chances.

### **Values crucial to the decision making process**

- Empathy
- Communication
- Values linked to 'staying in the role' - acknowledging how tough the role is

## **Costs**

The new, values based approach to recruitment and retention was stated to be much more efficient, targeted and informative in terms of understanding behaviours of job candidates and existing staff. The values based approach is characterised by a more efficient use of the time allocated to recruiting new staff. Example job adverts from the VBRT tailored to a person-centred approach combined with informed short listing for interview has resulted in less time being wasted.

***“The suggested interview questions helped us to move away from a long standing approach to interviews which may not reveal too much – we now learn more from same amount of time.”***

***“We are more mature now, previously we would just look for those people that came across well and ticked the boxes on the application form.”***

Although management had not attempted to quantify the costs associated with the recruitment process, they are certain that the benefits to the business outweigh the costs.

***“It has helped our ability to grow the organisation and streamline the recruitment process with improvements to staff turnover.”***

## **Impact**

The improvement in organisational performance linked to the introduction of a values based approach to recruitment and retention was clear to see.

***“We are more efficient, completing tasks in the same time but getting more from it. We are more targeted and learn more about the person when making decisions.”***

However the impact was not straight forward. The introduction of a values based approach to recruitment and retention contributed to a short term increase in staff turnover. Those members of staff who were reluctant to change/add to skills have made way in many cases for new staff members who are more open to new ideas. New staff members are said to typically reach an average rate of performance in half the former time. Longer term improvements in retention have been built upon trust with relationships supported through one-to-ones and open conversations in supervision and team meetings with staff who are more willing to work on areas of need.

***“We have developed a structure based on values which includes Quality Compliance Leaders and key workers.”***

## **Linfield Care**

- Stafford-based with 60 employees
- Provides support to people with learning disabilities, autism spectrum conditions and other disabilities
- [www.linfieldcare.co.uk](http://www.linfieldcare.co.uk)

### **Approach to recruitment and retention**

Linfield Care's experience of participating in the VBRT pilot evaluation provided an extra dimension to its approach to recruitment in community support and residential care. Although not using the personality profiling questionnaire after the pilot ended, Linfield Care has maintained a values based approach to recruitment and retention that has underpinned the business.

The approach involves assessing CVs and application forms in terms of the language used before carrying this through to face-to-face interviews. For example, use of terms such as 'a diabetic' or 'children' is judged to represent a lack of person-centred approach. Example questions to candidates could include:

***“Imagine you required 24 hour care - what would that look like?”***

***“Breaching confidentiality, when and why is that important?”***

A values based approach is maintained in induction and training with a one day, class-based session delivered on the values and beliefs of the company. This includes a conviction that ***'everyone can learn'*** with staff exploring how they can support people to learn or experience new things through 'active care'.

Management have adapted the Common Induction Standards and more recently the Care Certificate to match company beliefs. Use of the Grey Matters learning tool<sup>10</sup> enables staff to be monitored by managers to assess progress and identify learning areas. All staff are supported to reach QCF Level 3 as soon as possible although they are also continuously assessed for the 'wrong values'.

***“We make them jump through hoops and hope will find good staff as a result but will not hesitate to terminate their employment if they are showing the wrong signals.”***

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cis-assessment.co.uk/default.asp?p=sp>

The 'values based' approach is also illustrated in the wider roles of managers and directors which include being an I Care...Ambassador<sup>11</sup>, going into schools and supporting staff to become Dignity Champions and sign up to the Social Care Commitment<sup>12</sup>.

### **Values crucial to the decision making process**

- Empathy
- Non-judgmental
- Genuineness

### **Costs**

The initial costs associated with using a values based approach to recruitment and retention are estimated as being between £2-3,000 per person based on the Care Fund Calculator<sup>13</sup>.

### **Impact**

The VBRT and personality profiling questionnaire in particular was judged to enable inexperienced interviewers to target questions at specific skills and individuals although it is thought to be more effective on people from outside of the sector.

The targeted discussions and values based questions enable 'the true person to come out' with staff trained to probe around candidates' experience to reveal natural examples of empathy or caring that are genuine and not revised.

***“People are unique, you cannot have a text book approach for all.”***

Employees recruited through a values based approach to recruitment and retention are thought to get up to speed sooner.

***“They hit the ground running and just have to learn how to apply their skills”.***

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Recruitment-retention/I-Care...Ambassadors/I-Care...Ambassadors.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Leadership-management/The-Social-Care-Commitment/The-Social-Care-Commitment.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Regions/EastMidlands/CMD/calculator/>

## **Branching Out**

- A social enterprise charity based in East Cambridgeshire
- Providing support in the community for adults with learning disabilities
- Formed with an aim of identifying a project that could provide work experience training for vulnerable adults as an alternative to the standard provision at that time.
- <http://branchingoutuk.com/>

### **Approach to recruitment and retention**

Branching Out follows 'standard' recruitment practices through from advert to application form, interview and decision making using a short listing matrix. However, the process is underpinned by the values required by staff working in a diverse role which allows people to develop values as part of their professional progress. The process is focused on getting them to value their job and show compassionate values.

***“Branching Out holds values that are important for people to succeed in their lives: Traditional respect for others, and innovative ideas, and caring, understanding and structured routine, industrious work experience and fun.”***

Although essential to have Level 2 qualifications in health and social care, knowledge of the care and support required by clients and minimum levels of literacy and numeracy, an emphasis is placed on people that want to develop.

A three-stage recruitment process informed by the example job adverts from the VBRT begins with an application form and psychometric test with the suitability of the candidate compared to the needs of the clients and the rest of the team. Issues raised in the psychometric test inform the questions asked at subsequent telephone and face to face interviews which are tailored to the individual.

### **Values crucial to the decision making process**

- Empathy
- Compassion
- Self-motivation
- A desire to develop skills



## **Costs**

The introduction of a values based approach to recruitment and retention are mainly associated with the two weeks of management time taken to plan and develop the process.

Although involving a large degree of planning and multiple stages, the values based approach provides greater scope to filter out unsuitable candidates prior to the relatively time consuming and therefore expensive face to face interview.

The merits of identifying the right person are also acknowledged in term of the potential disruption and costs associated with dealing with staff issues in the future due to 'poor' recruitment decisions.

***“One HR issue can run on for months”***

## **Impact**

A values based approach to recruitment and retention provides greater levels of confidence in the results than more 'traditional' approaches with improvements in retention rates justifying the approach taken.

## Appendix II - Methodology overview

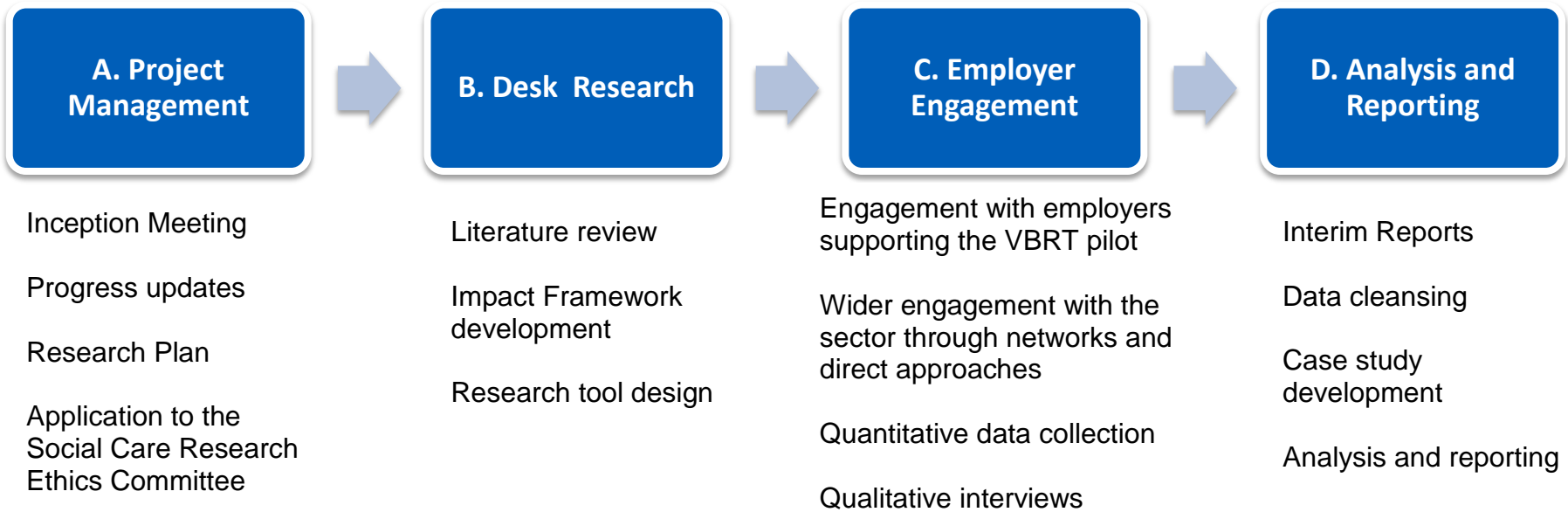
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### Research aims and objectives

The objectives of this research are to:

- Understand the longer-term impact of values based recruitment and retention;
- Capture changes in key business performance indicators such as staff retention, absence and performance measures;
- Compare the impact of different approaches to recruitment and retention; and
- Assess the cost savings associated with recruiting and retaining staff through a values based approach.

## Methodology overview



## **Methodology - key terminology**

The majority of quantitative data relating to recruitment and retention and staff performance was gathered through an online survey disseminated to employers either directly or through sector networks. Any gaps in workforce information were either filled by data sourced, with permission, from the NMDS-SC or gathered via follow-up telephone discussions with employers.

These discussions were also used, as a minimum, to ascertain whether the data provided was a reflection of a **'values based'** approach to recruitment and retention or a more **'traditional'** approach (i.e. one not based (entirely) on values and emphasising technical or historical questioning/evidence).

A total of 112 organisations employing approximately 27,000 people responded with sufficient detail to requests to complete the quantitative survey. Discussions with these 112 organisations informed an analysis based on:

- **74% or 83 organisations using a 'values based' approach to recruitment and retention; and**
- **26% or 29 organisations using 'traditional' approaches to recruitment and retention.**

The initial stages of the study focused on the agreement of the study methodology and compliance with research governance arrangements. Key milestones included:

- A review of relevant documentation and background information leading to the submission of a Research Plan in October 2014 which was later revised in lieu of the application to the Social Care Research Ethics Committee (SC-REC);
- Discussions with SfC to inform the design of research tools to support the study.
- Liaising with the SC-REC in order to develop the application submitted on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015 which included:
  - Research Ethics Committee application form
  - Project Proposal incorporating a summary, synopsis or diagram (flowchart) of protocol in non-technical language
  - Summary CV for Chief Investigator
  - Participant Information Sheet
  - Evidence of sponsor insurance and indemnity
  - Letter from sponsor (Skills for Care)
  - Participant consent form

- Gaining conditional agreement from the SC-REC on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015 with final agreement received on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015 (Appendix 2) following clarifications on the following areas:
  - The development and management of case studies
  - The collection of personal data
  - Amendments to the consent form and Participant Information Sheet.
  - Clarifications on the research approach
- Following agreement of the research process, the study team has worked to engage with potential participants. With the support of SfC, this has been actioned through a variety of methods:
  - Multiple emails and telephone calls to the 209 organisations that had supported the VBRT Pilot followed up by telephone calls to explain the aims and objectives of the study and outline the implications and benefits of their participation.
  - Extensive engagement with employers identified through Skill for Care Area Teams and partner networks.
  - Inclusion of details of the study through a variety of SfC communications channels and partner newsletters.

### **Methodological challenges**

A number of methodological challenges were identified and mitigated in the methodology design. In addition further challenges arose as the research progressed. A summary of the methodological challenges is provided below:

- **Employers were reluctant to participate in the research and typically needed to be contacted on multiple occasions by email and telephone** to make even small steps towards gaining consent or completion of the online quantitative survey.
- Organisations **declining or delaying a decision to participate** (i.e. asking to be contacted again in a certain number of weeks). This was stated to be due to a lack of capacity or time but also **a reluctance to get involved where the company contact from the VBRT pilot is no longer in post.**
- **Employers failing to return consent forms** to facilitate their participation in the research;
- Feedback from employers revealing that **the length of the Participant Information Sheet developed in line with SC-REC guidance is seen as a barrier** to take up.
- **A lack of buy-in to the research from organisations not using a values based approach** to recruitment and retention which has impacted on the balance of data

available and required the use of some 'proxy' of 'sector' data to overcome any related bias.

- **A lack of desire to participate amongst a small number of organisations which had experienced a 'negative' involvement with the VBRT pilot** (e.g. those with limited access to, or negative views on, the profiling tool etc.).
- Issues with **incorrect contact details** (i.e. incorrect or out of date email addresses and telephone numbers) for those employers involved in the VBRT pilot evaluation.
- **A need to follow-up responses to the quantitative survey in order to ascertain the degree to which an employer has been using a values based approach to recruitment and retention.** Consultation revealed a large degree of **confusion around the terminology** with employers often over or under-estimating the extent to which they use a value based approach to recruitment and retention.
- **Difficulties amongst social care employers in estimating the costs and benefits associated with recruitment and retention** (e.g. costs of recruitment and training).

## **Research tools**

### **Summary of Approach**

- Representatives of employers (managers, HR departments or equivalent staff) recruiting staff using a values based approach to recruitment and retention and traditional (not values based) approaches will be consulted through telephone interviews.
- Questions (below) will produce a combination of qualitative and quantitative impact data (e.g. improved retention rates) which can be attributed to the use of a values based approach.
- To be read in conjunction with Participant Information Sheets provided to both employers using a values based approach and other/traditional approaches (i.e. not values based).

### **Employer discussion guide (telephone)**

#### ***Introduction***

We are pleased that you have agreed to take part in our research study. To reiterate, the research will be managed by Jamie Buttrick, a Director at independent research company Consilium which has been asked to undertake the study on behalf of Skills for Care (home of the National Skills Academy for Social Care). Jamie can be contacted by email ([jamie@consiliumresearch.co.uk](mailto:jamie@consiliumresearch.co.uk)) or by telephone (07713 357389).

#### ***Purpose of the Study***

As you may be aware, Skills for Care (home of the National Skills Academy for Social Care), is involved in developing values based recruitment approaches to help employers put social care values at the heart of their recruitment and selection practice.

One product we developed was the Values based Recruitment Toolkit (VBRT), which was designed to help build a strong social care culture, help people develop careers in the sector and deliver high quality services through having the right people in place, doing the right thing, in the right way. An evaluation of the VBRT pilot found that it was too soon to say whether there was evidence of improved retention, improved behaviours or improved service provision. For this reason, the evaluation recommended conducting a survey during 2014/15 to evaluate the longer-term effectiveness and impact of a values based approach on recruitment costs, staff retention, behaviours and service improvement.

This study aims to understand the longer-term impact of values based recruitment and retention by capturing changes in key business performance indicators such as staff retention, absence and performance measures. The final results of the research will be published by Skills for Care early in 2016.

The research is sponsored by Skills for Care (home of the National Skills Academy for Social Care) and funded through its main work programme.

The chat should take up to 25 minutes with all answers provided treated in the strictest confidence.

## **Use of a values based approach to recruitment and retention**

### **A Values based approach**

#### **1. Are you currently using a values based approach to recruitment and retention?**

- a) Yes (Ask Q2 and go to Q3)
- b) No (Ask Q2 and go to Q4)
- c) Not sure (go to Q2)

#### **2. Could you describe your approach to recruitment and retention?**

*(Assess response and redirect as appropriate to study (using values based approach) or control group (not using values based approach))*

#### **3. When did you start using a values based approach?**

MM/YY

#### **4. Have you used the Skills for Care values based recruitment toolkit?**

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

#### **5. Were you involved in the earlier pilot of the values based recruitment toolkit? [pre-populate]**

- a) Yes – we were part of the full pilot and had access to the Personality Profiling Questionnaire (PPQ)
- b) Yes – we were on the waiting list and did not get to access the PPQ but we did use other elements of the VBRT
- c) No (Go to Q7)



**6. Which elements of the VBRT did you use?**

Discuss the added value and learning points of each response compared to other approaches.

*(List below to be used as a prompt rather than read out. Discuss the added value and learning points of each response compared to other approaches)*

- a) Example job adverts
- b) Shortlisting for interview
- c) Leadership Qualities Framework
- d) Online Personality Profiling Questionnaire
- e) Suggested Interview Questions
- f) Other (which?)

If **NOT** a values based approach go to Q11

**7. What are the key features of your values based approach in the recruitment process? What other tools or methods have you used?**

**8. How did your approach to the recruitment process using a values based approach compare to other approaches you have used? Why?**

- a) Improvement
- b) Same
- c) Not as effective

**9. Overall, how would you compare the values based approach with your previous recruitment methods in terms of the following:**

- a) Gaining an understanding of the candidates' behaviours and values
- b) Developing tailored questions for each candidate
- c) Developing a relationship with the candidate
- d) Supplementing/cross-referencing with information in application forms

**10. Which values were seen as crucial to the decision making process?**

If **using** a values based approach now go to Q15

**11. Did you feel that you had all the necessary information in order to inform the interview process?**

**12. In what way? What other information would you like to have at your disposal?**

**13. How well do you feel your recruitment methods are effective in:**

- a) Gaining an understanding of the candidates' behaviours and values
- b) Developing tailored questions for each candidate
- c) Developing a relationship with the candidate
- d) Supplementing/cross-referencing with information in application forms

**14. Which values were seen as crucial to the decision making process?**

If **NOT** using a values based approach now go to Q17

**Costs**

**15. Was there a cost to introducing values based recruitment?**

- a) Yes
- b) No

**16. If yes, please estimate:**

- The initial (sunk) costs associated with introducing the new approach (e.g. staff training, new materials)
- Any ongoing costs associated with the new approach (e.g. do you conduct more interviews or run an interview day as part of the process when you didn't before?)

If **using** a values based approach now go to Q18

**17. Can you estimate the cost of recruiting and supporting the induction and training new staff?**

*(Discuss in terms of **time and financial resources** throughout the process including advertising, admin, interviewing etc.)*

If **NOT** using a values based approach now go to Q23

**Impact**

**18. What influence has a values based approach had on your recruitment decisions? What were the key influencing factors?**

**19. What influence has a values based approach had on your staff retention? What were the key influencing factors?**

**20. Were there any differences in the time taken to complete the recruitment process (through to making an offer) between the values based approach and your previous recruitment methods? How long does it take on average in both cases?**

**21. Overall, how would you compare the following between a values based and traditional approach to recruitment and retention? Why?**

- a) The overall quality of candidates at interview
- b) The overall quality of those employed
- c) The existence of care values

**22. Compared to staff recruited under a traditional (not values based) approach to recruitment, and based on your experience of VBR to date, do you think that staff recruited using a values based recruitment approach reach average performance:**

- Sooner
- Later
- Same
- Not sure

**23. Please give reasons for your answer**

**24. Were there any other impacts or outcomes that you can link to the use of a values based approach to recruitment and retention?**

If **USING** a values based approach now go to Q26

**25. What are the key factors which influence staff retention?**

*(Discuss identification of social care values linked to quality of care and performance as per quality data from the impact assessment tool)*

**26. Overall, how would you rate the following?**

- a) The overall quality of candidates at interview
- b) The overall quality of those employed
- c) The existence of care values

**27. How have your retention rates in the last 12 months compared to past trends?**

*(reference employer data sourced through NMDS-SC with permissions gained prior to interview - are there any other factors (internal or external) that have influenced your retention rate in the last 12 months?)*

**28. Any further comments?**

## **Impact assessment tool (online survey with telephone option)**

### **Summary of approach**

- This impact assessment tool (converted into an online survey for ease of completion) will be provided to managers, HR departments or equivalent staff in order to complete the required dataset, supplementing data accessed and pre-populated from the NMDS-SC (e.g. staff numbers, recruitment, retention and salary data).
- To be completed by those staff able to assess care quality (e.g. line managers, supervisors, HR staff as appropriate) in respect of staff recruited using a values based approach to recruitment and retention and a control group of employees recruited through other/traditional methods.
- This tool will be 'translated' into a simple online survey format which reduces the burden on the managers by requesting straight forward, clear ratings across a range of quality, values and employment variables for staff recruited according to a values based approach.
- The completion of the impact assessment tool will be complemented by telephone interviews with managers to introduce the manager to the study team, highlight the importance of completing the impact assessment tool and gain feedback on their approach to recruitment and retention. We will offer the opportunity to complete the questions by telephone at the preference of the employer.

### **Organisation**

- 1. Employer Name:**
- 2. Manager name:**
- 3. Location (region):**
- 4. Type of service delivered:**
- 5. Sector:**

### **Staff Turnover Variables**

- 6. Number of staff:**
- 7. Staff Turnover % (last 12 months) (=staff number/no. leavers):**
- 8. No. new recruits:**
- 9. Internal Recruitment Costs (e.g. staff time preparing for screening, shortlisting and interview)**

**10. Time taken for new recruits to reach average performance (weeks) (average across all new recruits in last 12 months):**

**11. Compared to staff recruited under a traditional (not values based) approach to recruitment, and based on your experience of values based recruitment to date, do you think that staff recruited using a values based recruitment approach perform differently on the following measures?**

<b>Comparison to previous recruitment</b>	<b>Much Worse</b>	<b>Somewhat Worse</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Better</b>	<b>Much Better</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
<b>Absence</b>						
<b>Punctuality</b>						
<b>Skills required for their role</b>						
<b>Overall</b>						

**12. Compared to staff recruited under a traditional (not values based) approach to recruitment, and based on your experience of VBR to date, do you think that staff recruited using a values based recruitment approach perform differently on the following measures of care values?**

	<b>Much Worse</b>	<b>Somewhat Worse</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Better</b>	<b>Much Better</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>
<b>Compassion</b>						
<b>Respect</b>						
<b>Empathy</b>						
<b>Treating people with dignity</b>						
<b>Integrity</b>						
<b>Communication</b>						

## Appendix III - Data tables

### Participant profile

The profile of respondents to the employer survey by region is broadly representative of the sector as a whole.

Table A1: Participants by region					
	Traditional		Values based		Sector comparison <sup>14</sup>
	No.	%	No.	%	%
East	2	7	8	10	11
East Midlands	1	3	9	11	9
London	4	14	4	5	11
North East	0	0	2	2	6
North West	3	10	8	10	15
Scotland	0	0	4	5	-
South East	9	31	19	23	15
South West	1	3	8	10	11
Wales	0	0	2	2	-
West Midlands	8	28	15	18	11
Yorkshire and the Humber	1	3	4	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The profile of respondents to the employer survey using a values based approach to recruitment and retention is over-representative in terms of adult domiciliary provision and under-representative of adult residential care.

Table A2: Participants by main service area					
	Traditional		Values based		Sector comparison <sup>10</sup>
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Adult community care	3	10	11	13	12
Adult day care	1	3	1	1	4
Adult domiciliary	6	21	35	42	21
Adult residential care	14	48	18	22	52
Direct Employer	0	0	3	4	-
Healthcare	1	3	1	1	1
Other	4	14	14	17	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>14</sup> NMDS-SC Key information and statistics reports, January 2016 (<https://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/research/researchdocs.aspx?id=10>)

The profile of respondents to the online survey is strongly reflective of the sector breakdown of the adult social care sector.

<b>Table A3: Participants by sector</b>					
	<b>Traditional</b>		<b>Values based</b>		<b>Sector Comparison<sup>11</sup></b>
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Care Provider (voluntary or third sector)	8	28	22	27	20
Care Provider (private)	18	62	49	59	57
Individual who employs own care / support staff	0	0	6	7	-
Local Authority	3	10	4	5	8
Other	0	0	2	2	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The profile of respondents by size (i.e. number of employees in care roles) under represents micro businesses and over represents businesses of 50 employees or more.

<b>Table A4: Participants by size (number of employees)</b>					
	<b>Traditional</b>		<b>Values based</b>		<b>Sector Comparison<sup>15</sup></b>
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
1-9	0	0	15	18	49
10-49	11	38	26	31	37
50-249	9	31	31	37	12
250 or more	9	31	11	13	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>15</sup> Skills for Care estimates based on ONS IDBR data - Estimated number of adult social care organisations in England by service type and size, 2014 (from The size and structure of the adult social care sector and workforce in England, 2015. Skills for Care, September 2015)

## Staff performance

**Table A5: Performance ratings of staff recruited using a values based approach compared to those recruited through traditional methods**

	Absence		Punctuality		Skills required for their role		Overall	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Much better	15	19	12	15	21	26	18	23
Better	35	43	30	37	26	32	39	49
Same	21	26	28	35	27	33	16	20
Worse	3	4	3	4	2	2	2	3
Much worse	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not sure	7	9	8	10	5	6	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table A6: Care values ratings of staff recruited using a values based approach compared to those recruited through traditional methods**

	Compassion		Respect		Empathy		Treating people with dignity		Integrity		Communication	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Much better	27	33	26	32	26	32	28	35	24	30	24	30
Better	33	41	36	44	35	43	31	38	34	43	29	36
Same	17	21	16	20	17	21	19	23	18	23	21	26
Worse	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Much worse	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2
Not sure	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>



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