



**A cross-sectional survey investigating  
the prevalence of values-based  
recruitment and retention approaches in  
the adult social care sector in England**  
Baseline report

March 2020

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# Executive summary

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## Background and context

Following two earlier studies, which showed that employers can benefit from adopting values-based recruitment and retention approaches<sup>1</sup>, Skills for Care has continued to develop its package to support employers<sup>2</sup> interested in adopting a values-based approach to recruitment and retention.

Skills for Care was keen to establish how far this approach has been adopted by the adult social care sector in England as a whole, so commissioned IBP, a market research firm, to undertake a telephone survey of 300 employers in the adult social care sector in England, with a stratified random sample drawn from a database of CQC-registered adult social care providers. The sample was representative of the different types of setting and organisation size.

## Findings

Ninety-seven percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with at least one of the statements devised to measure adoption of values-based recruitment and retention practices.<sup>3</sup>

The survey findings suggest that the prevalence of values-based recruitment and retention practice is high among CQC-registered adult social care establishments, higher than may have been anticipated (though there may be some degree of over-reporting), and fairly evenly spread among establishments of different type, service, size and across areas.

Skills for Care's reach into the sector is good, with 92% of respondents reporting awareness of Skills for Care support on values-based recruitment and retention, and around four-fifths having used at least one type of Skills for Care support.

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<sup>1</sup> Skills for Care (2016) Study into the impact of a values-based approach to recruitment and retention, *and* Skills for Care (2017) Recruitment and retention in adult social care: secrets to success. Learning from employers what works well.

<sup>2</sup>See <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Recruitment-retention/Values-based-recruitment-and-retention/Values-based-recruitment-and-retention.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> These were:

We recruit for values, not just skills, qualifications and experience

We state our values in job adverts and other recruitment materials

Our application process asks candidates to demonstrate their values and behaviours

We ask value-based questions during interview and assessment

We invest in our managers so that they are competent to embed values in interview, induction, supervision and appraisal

We induct, train, develop and supervise our staff to live the values and behaviours

We induct, train and develop our managers to live the values and behaviours

We recognise and reward our staff for demonstrating workplace behaviours in line with our values.

Around three-quarters of respondents who were using some form of values-based recruitment and retention were able to cite at least one benefit from this, most commonly an improvement in staff retention (mentioned by one-third).

Around half of respondents to the survey suggested they would like further support on values-based recruitment and retention, most commonly more information about values-based recruitment and retention, or more communication and promotion of the approach within the adult social care sector (requested by 20%).

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Reported benefits are perhaps lower than expected given the high prevalence of values-based recruitment and retention approaches. One possible reason for this may be that, while awareness of values-based recruitment and retention is high, employers may be struggling with implementation and/or benefit realisation. For example, employers may need support to develop and co-produce values statements, disseminate workplace values, and follow values-based recruitment practice through into retention.

We recommend that Skills for Care therefore:

- shares and tests the conclusions above with employers
- continues to offer its support on values-based recruitment and retention
- reviews content to ensure that developing and co-producing values statements and benefit realisation is covered adequately
- continues its campaign of awareness-raising, focusing on:
  - making employers aware of the benefits already realised by others adopting this approach
  - encouraging take-up of Skills for Care support.

# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Background and context

In 2016, Skills for Care commissioned an [independent study](#)<sup>4</sup> into values-based recruitment, which found that employers could secure a return of £1.23 for every £1 they invest in the approach. The average staff turnover among employers adopting values-based approaches was over six percentage points lower than the average for the sector as a whole.

A [second study](#)<sup>5</sup> involved research with 140 social care employers with significantly less than average staff turnover. These employers also cited values-based recruitment and retention approaches as a key ingredient in their 'Secrets of Success'.

Since then, Skills for Care has continued to develop its package to support employers interested in adopting a values-based approach to recruitment and retention, and we were keen to establish how far this approach has been adopted by the adult social care sector in England as a whole.

## 1.2 This study

Therefore, in summer 2019 Skills for Care commissioned IBP, a market research firm, to undertake a telephone survey of 300 employers in the adult social care sector in England, with a stratified random sample drawn from a database of CQC-registered employers containing contact information that is already in the public domain. The sample was representative of the different types of setting and size. A respondent profile is included in Annex A.

The survey was intended as a three-stage study, measuring baseline in Autumn 2019 then follow-up in Autumn 2020 and Autumn 2023.

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<sup>4</sup> Skills for Care (2016) Study into the impact of a values-based approach to recruitment and retention.

<sup>5</sup> Skills for Care (2017) Recruitment and retention in adult social care: secrets to success. Learning from employers what works well.

## 2. Prevalence of values-based recruitment and retention

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### Key findings

Based on the survey findings, we estimate that between 60-78% of CQC registered adult social care establishments have a values statement in place, though less than two-thirds were co-produced involving people who receive care.

According to the survey findings, values-based recruitment and retention practices are highly prevalent among registered establishments, with 94% agreeing with the statement 'We recruit for values, not just skills, qualifications and experience', and 97% indicating that they have adopted at least one of the value-based recruitment practices tested for in the survey.

### 2.1 Prevalence of values statements

Definitions of values-based recruitment differ, and our study was not able to identify a universally-accepted definition of values-based recruitment in adult social care. Logic however suggests that practising values-based recruitment first requires an employer having a values statement in place.

Over three-quarters (78%) of survey respondents said they had a values statement in place. Community care providers were significantly less likely than residential care providers to say they had a values statement in place (75% compare to 80%). There were no significant differences between providers of different sizes (measured by number of people employed or number of beds).<sup>6</sup>

Examples of values statements are reproduced in Table 2.1 below, and Cloud 2.1 shows the most common words mentioned in response. 'Dignity' and 'respect' featured particularly highly in values statements, as did 'caring' and 'people'.

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<sup>6</sup> Throughout this report, differences are only highlighted where they are statistically significant.

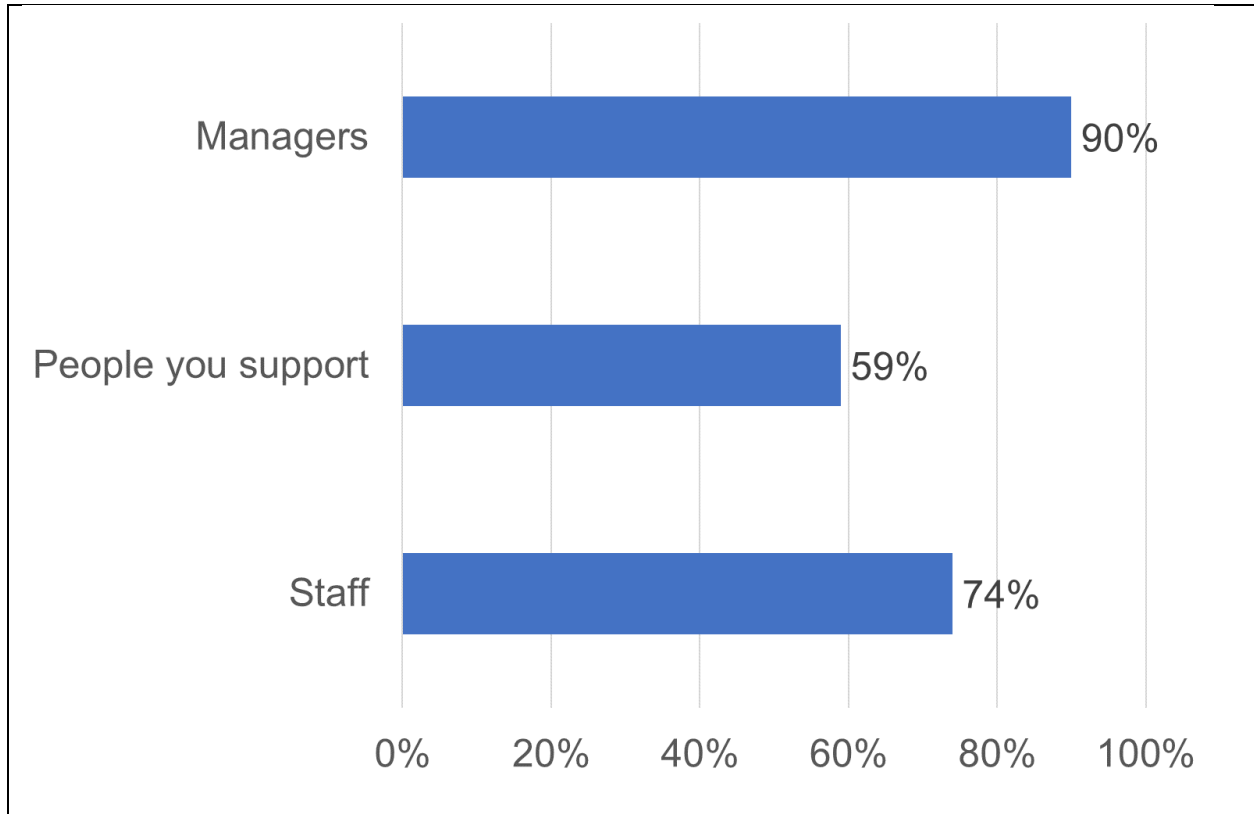




## Co-production of values statements

Chart 2.1 shows the proportion of those values statements that were co-produced involving staff, people supported and manager. Managers were most likely to be involved in producing a values statement, followed by staff. Less than two-thirds of respondents to this question said that people they support were involved in co-producing their organisational values statement.

**Chart 2.1: Was your values statement produced by...?**



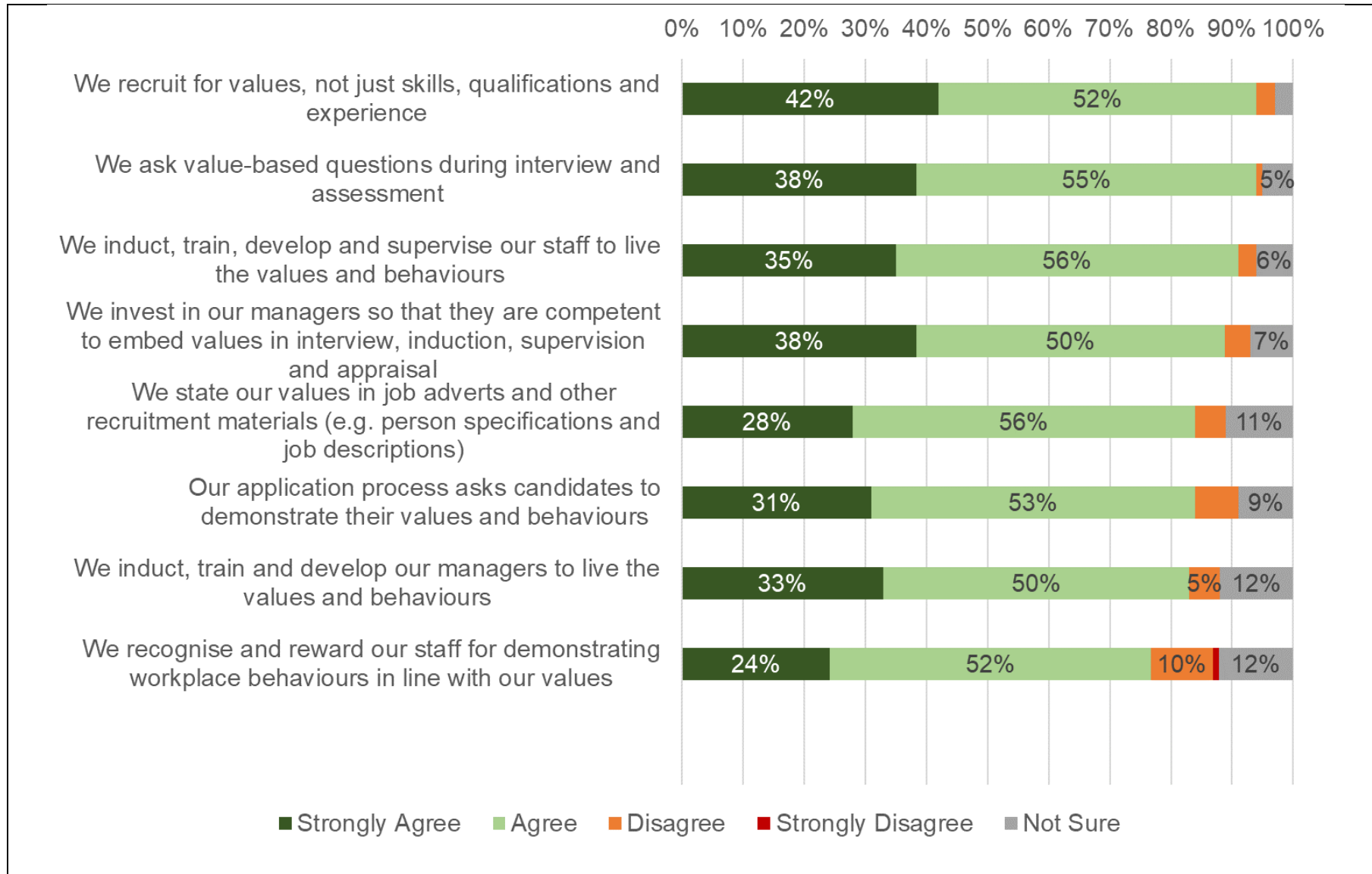
N=234

## 2.2 Prevalence of values-based recruitment and retention approaches

Survey respondents were asked whether they adhered to a set of example values-based recruitment and retention approaches. These were drawn from the Values-based Recruitment Checklist and Action Plan developed by Oxfordshire County Council and promoted by Skills for Care.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Recruitment-and-retention/Values-and-behaviours-based-recruitment/Values-based-recruitment-checklist-and-action-plan.pdf>

**Chart 2.2: Please say the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements**



N=300

The findings are shown in the Chart 2.2 above. Despite the fact that only 78% had a values statement in place:

- nearly all respondents (94%) agreed with the statement 'We recruit for values, not just skills, qualifications and experience'
- 84% agreed that 'we state our values in job adverts and other recruitment materials (e.g. person specifications and job descriptions)'
- 97% overall agreed with at least one of the statements in the chart.

This suggests that there is some degree of response bias within the findings (for example social desirability bias, in which good behaviour may be over-reported, or acquiescence bias).

Those respondents who said 'we induct, train and develop our managers to live the values and behaviours' were also highly likely to:

- 'induct, train and develop our *staff* to live the values and behaviours'
- 'invest in our managers so they are competent to embed values in interview, induction, supervision and appraisal.'

### 3. Skills for Care support

#### Key findings

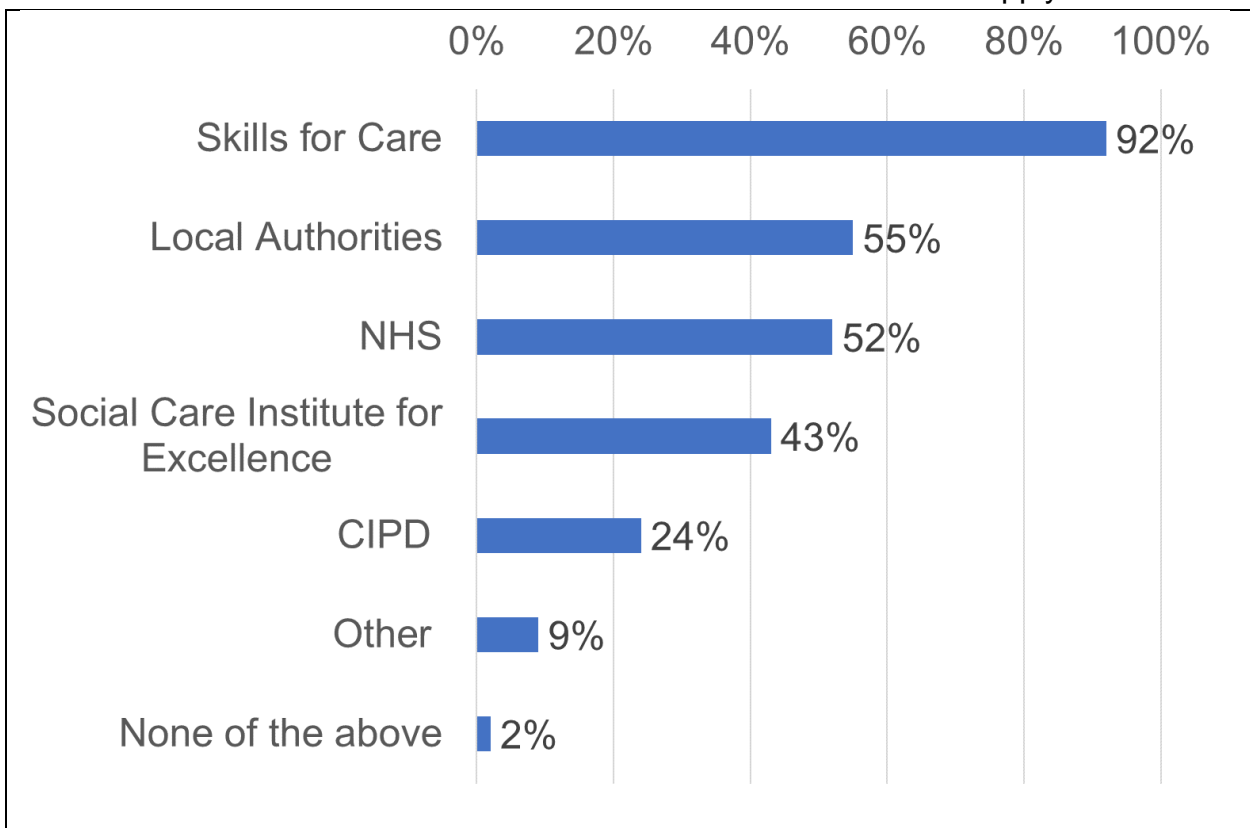
Ninety-two percent of respondents were aware of Skills for Care support on values-based recruitment and retention, and four-fifths of those had utilised it.

Of those employers who had used Skills for Care support, 55% said that this had been 'quite' or 'very' important in implementing their values-based recruitment and retention support.

#### 3.1 Awareness of Skills for Care and other support

Ninety-two percent of respondents were aware of Skills for Care support on values-based recruitment and retention. Over half (55%) were aware of local authority support.

**Chart 3.1: Are you aware of any of the following sources of support for employers on values-based recruitment and retention? Please select all that apply.**



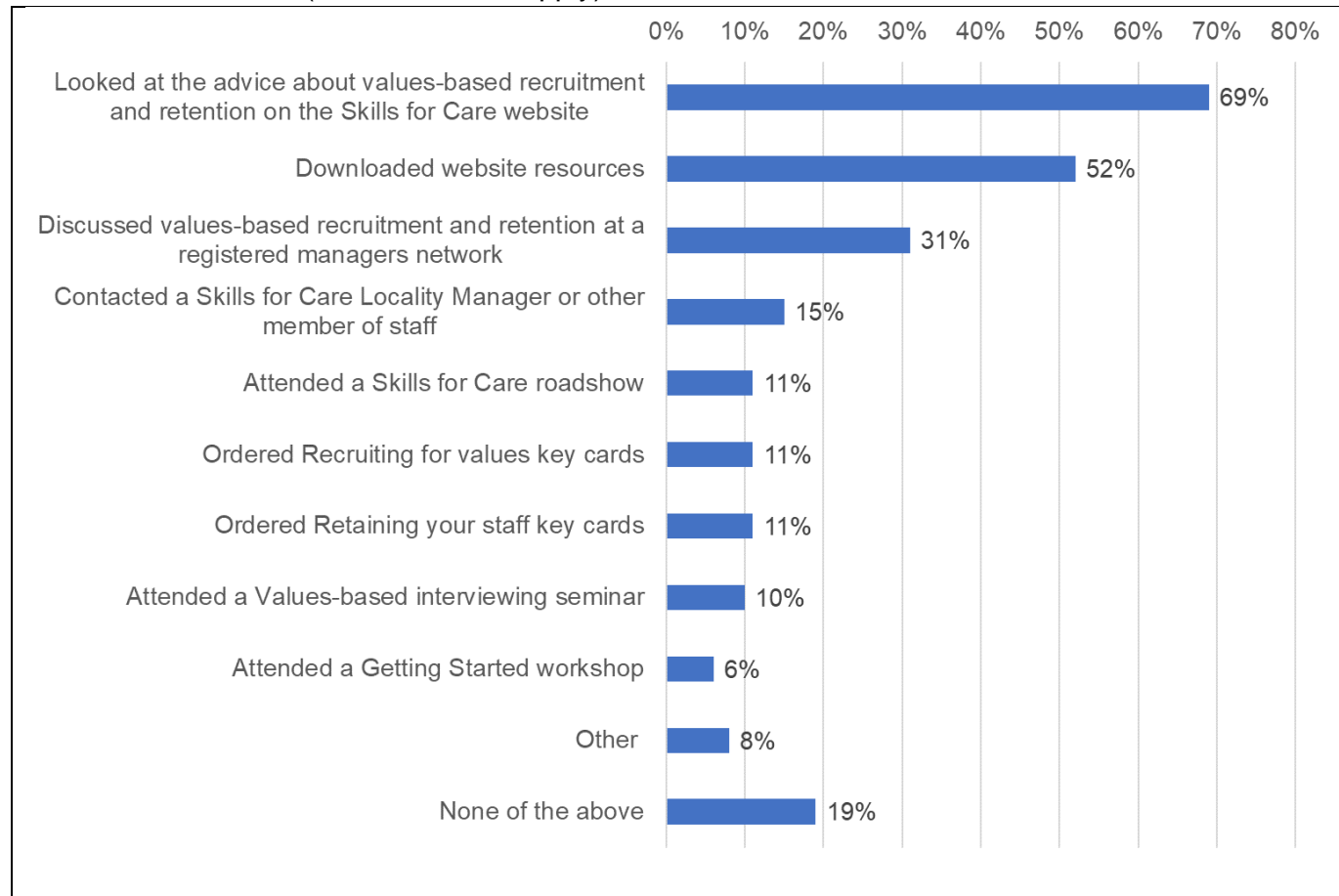
N=300

'Other' sources not mentioned in the chart included the CQC, provider head offices and HR departments, training providers, consultants and trade associations.

## **3.2 Take-up of Skills for Care support**

Chart 3.2, overleaf, shows that of those who had heard of Skills for Care, over two-thirds (69%) had looked at advice about values-based recruitment and retention on the organisation's website. Over half (52%) had also downloaded website resources. One-fifth had not used Skills for Care support.

**Chart 3.2: Have you used any of the following Skills for Care resources to help implement a values-based approach to recruitment and retention? (Choose all that apply)<sup>10</sup>**



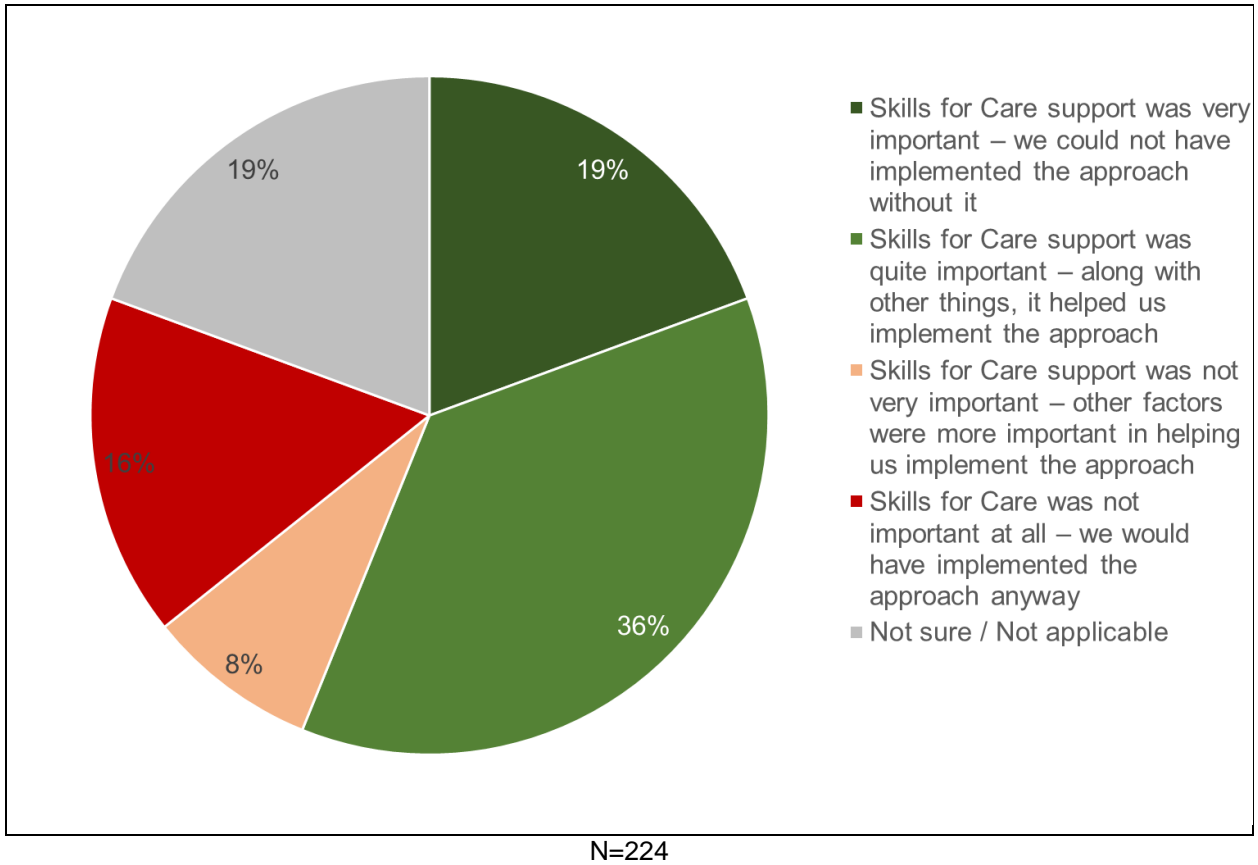
N=277

<sup>10</sup> Skills for Care have a range of resources available which are developed over time. The website is the longest standing resource, which gives access to other tools and support. The key cards are the most recently added resource, only launched in 2019. It is expected therefore that people are less familiar with certain offers due to the length of time available.

### 3.3 Value of Skills for Care

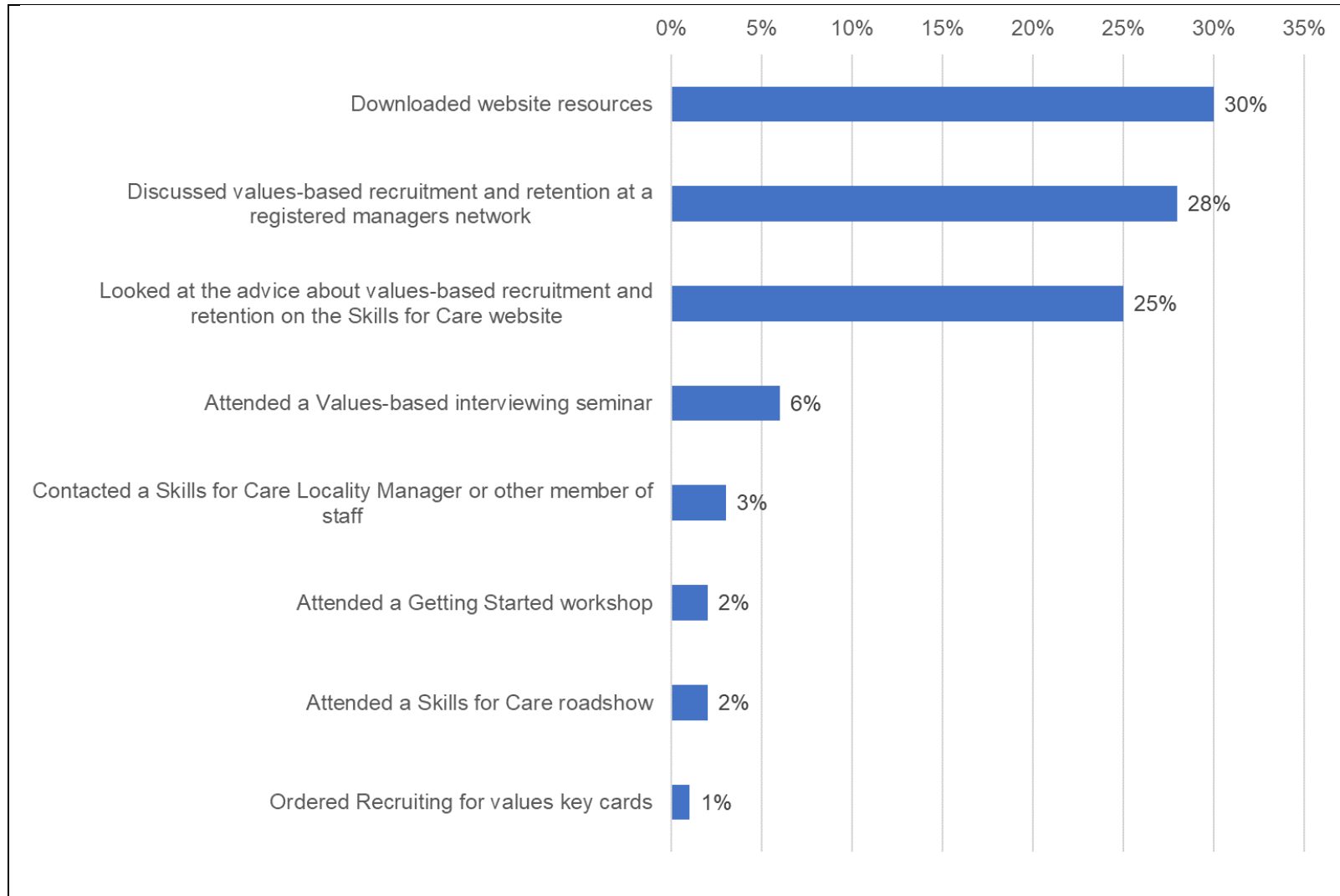
Of those employers who had used Skills for Care support (224), one-fifth said that Skills for Care support was very important, and they could not have implemented their values-based recruitment and retention support without it. A further 36% said Skills for Care support was 'quite' important. Less than a quarter felt that Skills for Care support was not important.

**Chart 3.3: How important would you say Skills for Care support was in helping you to implement a values-based approach to recruitment and retention?**



Of those employers who had used more than one element of Skills for Care support (175), the resources they had downloaded from the web were most commonly mentioned as the most useful (30%), closely followed by discussion at a Registered Managers network (28%) and more general information from the Skills for Care website (25%).

**Chart 3.4: If you used more than one of the above, which was most useful?**



N=175





the correct values. Seventeen percent said it had improved staff or resident satisfaction, and sixteen percent reported it had improved care.

**Table 4.1: How has values-based recruitment and retention benefitted your staff, organisation, and the people you support? (Themed from open question)**

Benefit	Mentioned by
Reduced staff turnover/ improved staff retention and continuity of care	31%
Staff with right values	20%
Staff/resident satisfaction	17%
Better quality or more person-centred care	16%
Improved motivation/morale	15%
Builds relationships, team working and collaboration	8%
Creates happy/ positive atmosphere	6%
Improved attitudes	3%
Builds trust	2%
Staff progression	1%
Other	21%
Not sure/ don't know	4%
No difference	1%
No reply	1%

N=292

Additionally, four percent said they were not sure and one percent (three respondents) said they felt adopting values-based recruitment and retention practice had made no difference.

**Table 4.2: Example responses: How has values-based recruitment and retention benefitted your staff, organisation, and the people you support?**

*“If you have someone with the right attitude and values, they are open to training and working with different people with specialist needs, they have good attitudes, values and open mind.”*

*“It has benefitted us greatly in so many ways, we have people coming through the door that have had no experience on paper but they have blown us away with how they are on the floor (great attitudes and doing an amazing job) so that has benefitted us massively as we are getting the right people for the job.”*

*"It has helped us to interview and employ people that have better attitudes and values than what they have knowledge, people who actually care and empathize. We can train once we have the right person with those values."*

## 5. Further support

### Key findings

Around half of respondents to the survey suggested they would like further support on values-based recruitment and retention, most commonly more information about values-based recruitment and retention, or more communication and promotion of the approach within the adult social care sector (requested by 20%).

### 5.1 Further support

Respondents were asked in an open question what support they would like to see in future for employers around values-based recruitment and retention. Around half of respondents suggested they would like further support. The most common responses are included in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1: What support (if any) would you like to see in the future for employers around values-based recruitment and retention?** (Themed from open question)

Support	Mentioned by
More information and promotion of values-based approaches	20%
Attract people to care sector	16%
Training and qualifications	14%
General support	11%
Financial support	6%
Continue existing support	5%
Promote social care values	5%
Simplify guidance	4%
Support for managers	3%
Standardisation	1%
Other	11%
Not sure or don't know	29%
No support needed/ already enough support	15%
No reply	6%

N=300

Nearly one-third of respondents said they weren't sure, or didn't know what support was needed, and 15% said that no further support was needed. However one-fifth (20%) said that they would like to see more information about values-based recruitment and retention or more communication and promotion of the approach within the adult social care sector.

Sixteen percent said they felt more support was needed to attract people into the care sector, and 14% said that training, development or qualifications were needed around values-based recruitment and retention (or that it needed to be better embedded into existing training and qualifications). Six percent mentioned funding or financial support, and this included funding for training and financial support for the sector to raise pay and parity and help attract staff in.

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

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### 6.1 Conclusions

The survey findings suggest that the prevalence of values-based recruitment and retention practice is high among CQC-registered adult social care establishments, higher than may have been anticipated (though there may be some degree of over-reporting), and fairly evenly spread among establishments of different type, service, size and across areas.

Skills for Care's reach into the sector is good, with 92% of respondents reporting awareness of Skills for Care support on values-based recruitment and retention, and around four-fifths having used at least one type of Skills for Care support. (For over half of these, Skills for Care support was seen as important in helping them implement their approach).

However, reported benefits from values-based recruitment are perhaps lower than expected (with around three-quarters of respondents who were using some form of values-based recruitment and retention were able to attribute at least one benefit from this, most commonly an improvement in staff retention (mentioned by one-third) and alignment of the workforce with organisational values (mentioned by one-fifth)).

One possible reason for this may be that, while awareness of values-based recruitment and retention is high, employers may be struggling with implementation and/or benefit realisation. For example, employers may need support to develop and co-produce values statements, disseminate workplace values, and follow values-based recruitment practice through into retention.

Around half of respondents to the survey suggested they would like further support on values-based recruitment and retention, most commonly more information, or more communication and promotion of the approach within the adult social care sector.

### 6.2 Benefits realisation

We recommend that Skills for Care therefore:

- shares and tests the conclusions above with employers
- continues to offer its support on values-based recruitment and retention
- reviews content to ensure that developing and co-producing values statements and benefit realisation is covered adequately
- continues its campaign of awareness-raising, focusing on:
  - making employers aware of the benefits already realised by others adopting this approach
  - encouraging take-up of Skills for Care support.

Regarding future research and evaluation, measuring further increases in the take-up of values-based recruitment and retention will be challenging, as the survey suggests that prevalence is already high. Skills for Care may wish to refocus evaluation efforts on ensuring that all elements of the Skills for Care offer are used and valued and making improvements where necessary. Employer case studies focusing specifically on benefits realisation may also be useful.

## Annex A: Respondent profile

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Quotas were set to ensure that the sample was representative of the CQC Registered Provider database, from which the sample was drawn.

**Table A.1: CQC Category**

CQC Category	Sample	Database
Community	39%	39%
Residential	61%	61%

**Table A.2: Number of beds (residential only)**

	Sample	Database
Not applicable (Community)	39%	39%
Up to 10 beds	18%	18%
11 to 30 beds	19%	19%
31 to 50 beds	14%	14%
Over 50 beds	10%	10%

**Table A.3: Region**

Region	Sample	Database
East Midlands	9%	10%
East of England	11%	11%
London	12%	12%
North East	4%	4%
North West	12%	12%
South East	19%	18%
South West	11%	12%
West Midlands	11%	11%
Yorkshire and The Humber	10%	9%

Respondents were also asked to describe themselves using the service types from the Adult Social Care Workforce Dataset (ASC-WDS).



**Table A.4: What is the MAIN service you provide?**

Adult residential care	59%
Adult daycare	0% <sup>12</sup>
Adult domiciliary care	18%
Adult community care	18% <sup>13</sup>
Other	5%
Total	100%

Compared to the social care sector as a whole, the sample under-represents micro-organisations and has an over-representation of small, medium and large establishments. However this may be because micro-organisations are more likely to be non-regulated and therefore less likely to feature in the CQC Regulated Providers database, from which the sample was drawn.

**Table A.5: How many staff does your organisation employ?**

Size	Sample	Social care sector <sup>14</sup>
9 or fewer	12%	53%
10 – 49	55%	32%
50 – 249	24%	12%
250+	10%	2%

**Table A.6: Is your establishment...?**

Private Sector	75%
Voluntary or Third Sector	17%
Local Authority	7%
Don't Know	1%

<sup>12</sup> Adult daycare is non-regulated therefore did not appear in the CQC database which was sampled.

<sup>13</sup> Adult community is also non-regulated therefore would not appear in the CQC database, however some respondents chose to describe themselves as such rather than domiciliary care.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Skills for Care (August 2019) *Size & Structure of the Adult Social Care Workforce*.

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