



Why we need to encourage more men to work in social care

Sanjay Dhrona, Managing Director, The Close

The Close Care Home is an Outstanding rated service in Oxfordshire. Sanjay Dhrona, who is also a Director of The Outstanding Society, shares his experience of recruiting more men into his service.

Just 18% of our sector's workforce is made of up men, many of whom will be in head office, management, and ancillary or business service roles, meaning that the number of men directly delivering care is fewer than that.

It's time for a change. We need a new perspective and new ideas to attract more men to work in social care so that we can really enhance the care that we deliver.

In 2020, the most common age of death was 87.1 for males and 89.3 for females, meaning that we're seeing more and more male residents drawing on care and support.

When I joined the social care sector in 2015, the residents we had were primarily women. Now, we have around 50/50 male to female residents.

Delivering outstanding care means we need to have the right people in the right places. For me, having men working in social care is vital to providing person-centered care and support.

We want to see diversity in our teams to reflect the residents we care for. Unfortunately, some males don't consider a role in care.

There's many ideas about why this may be the case, but my experience from discussions with sector bodies such as the Department of Health and Social Care is that males felt men "couldn't" work in social care, men weren't allowed to deliver care, they didn't see themselves in the industry, and they didn't have the "experience" to support residents.

We found raising awareness about the benefits of working in care and building knowledge about what care roles involve is an important factor in attracting men to work in adult social care.



We need to highlight the flexible working patterns available, the training opportunities, the options for career progression and the stability and longevity that a career in care provides.

We found candidates were attracted to roles where they would be empowered, supported, and allowed to be creative.

At The Close, we make sure that our male team members are seen and known, be it on our website, in the community, or in the sector. We spend time and effort maintaining a visible profile as we believe there's importance in seeing a role model. More importantly we make sure these role models feature through our service at all levels of their career, to really inspire and advocate.

We further looked at where we advertise, who we spoke to and who we engaged with. A simple thing that we're working on at the moment is signing up to the Armed Forces Charter.

Your local Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) representative will be able to support you with information and ideas that really engage all potential candidates and can give you information on local resources, challenges and most importantly opportunities that they see and hear.

We've recently taken part in the new campaign by DHSC where one of our carers Costin spoke about his previous career as a driver in Romania and how he loves his work in care.

As they were filming it was evident that the connection that Costin was able to develop with his residents was because he really understood them and their needs. This made the residents' experience of living with us even better than we could imagine.

We need to continue to advocate for our amazing sector that delivers a crucial service to our country. Whenever I attend a job fair or do a call for the job centre, even if we do not get any applicants to join us, the people we speak to are often inspired to get in touch with a home close to them in their vicinity to discuss career options.