

Health Policy & Performance Board

Scrutiny Review: The Adult Social Care Workforce

**Report
December 2022**

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1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report, as outlined in the initial topic brief (Appendix One) is to:

- To identify the impact workforce has on good quality care.
- To understand the size and structure of the Adult Social Care Workforce across Halton, and consider the Council's role in sustaining and developing sector resilience in relation to workforce needs.
- To recognise the drivers for transforming approach to recruitment and retention, and benchmark Halton's position against these.
- To highlight the innovative work being undertaken to promote careers in the sector, provide new opportunities for existing staff and inspire new interest in being part of the Adult Social Care workforce.
- To examine the Council's own Adult Social Care workforce and its plans to recruit, train, retain and progress employees.
- To acknowledge the Council's duty in sustaining the provider market for Adult Social Care services and the impact of workforce needs on this.
- To appreciate the Council's contractual position in relation to delivery of provider services and the quality assurance role in respect of maintaining a competent workforce.
- To examine the Council's support to the provider sector in maintaining safe and effective staffing levels.
- To evaluate whether any further action can be taken to mitigate risks to market sustainability.

2.0 POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD (PPB)

2.1 This review was commissioned by the Health PPB and the topic formally adopted at the Tuesday 15 February meeting.

2.2 This report will be presented to Health PPB in February 2023. The report will also be presented to People Directorate Senior Management Team, Executive Board and boards or committees of stakeholders, as appropriate.

3.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE TOPIC GROUP

3.1 An open invitation to participate in the scrutiny group was made to all members of the Health PPB. The table below details which PPB members and officers participated in the review:

3.2	Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones (Chair)	Cllr. Sandra Baker
	Cllr. Eddie Dourley	Cllr. John Bradshaw
	Cllr. Laura Bevan	Cllr. Angela Ball
	Cllr. Dave Cargill	Damian Nolan – Interim Operational Director – Commissioning and Provision
	Cllr. Louise Goodall	
	Cllr. Louise Nolan	Nicola Hallmark, Senior Service Development Officer, Adult Social Care, People Directorate

3.3 The Schedule of Activity (Appendix Two) shows the visiting presenters who contributed to the topic review.

3.4 **The Chair would like to extend thanks to all of those who took the time to participate in this review.**

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 This scrutiny review was conducted through the following means:

- Monthly meetings of the scrutiny review topic group;
- Reports and presentations made by key stakeholders;
- Site visits to a care home and the offices of the primary domiciliary care provider.
- The final draft of this report was circulated to participating staff to check for accuracy.

5.0 BACKGROUND

5.1 Delivery of Adult Social Care (ASC) services involves a wide range of services and organisations. Halton Borough Council has a duty to ensure provision is made against a set of statutory social care functions. This is achieved through both in-house teams to the Council, and through commissioned services, contracting primarily with the private and voluntary sector. The ASC workforce is therefore made up of the entirety of staff employed to deliver services across the community, whether they work for the Council or for provider organisations. Their overarching function is to ensure that adults with additional needs, resulting from physical or mental impairment or illness, receive appropriate care to keep them safe and well.

5.2 The Topic Group was commissioned based on knowledge and intelligence of challenges and pressures across the ASC sector, with particular emphasis on the recruitment, retention, development and progression of staff. This was recognised as a national issue and not just a concern for Halton. Elected Members wanted to look more closely at whether and how this was affecting services in Halton and what is being done and what could be further done to alleviate the issues.

5.3 The first undertaking of the Group was to understand the ASC market and what its workforce looks like. There are a range of organisations who collect

data to calculate the size and shape of the ASC workforce in Halton. Some of the following supports this understanding:

- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has 32 registered services delivering provision across Halton (as at December 2022) including residential care homes, nursing care homes, homecare (domiciliary care), supported living, Shared Lives service, and other community provisions. It should be noted that not all adult social care providers are required to register with CQC – they only need to be registered if they deliver ‘regulated activity’, as defined by CQC.
- From their collation of information from the annual Workforce Data Set, Skills for Care estimate that the ASC workforce, nationally, equated to 1.65 million jobs in 2019/20. Skills for Care figures indicate that the borough of Halton hosts 2,900 jobs (equivalent to 2,000 whole time equivalent posts). Completion of the Data Set is not mandatory however so some services may not be represented.
- Local data from the Capacity Tracker (NHS England and Department of Health and Social Care’s single data capture platform for Care Homes, In-patient Community Rehabilitation, Substance misuse and Hospice Providers) indicates that 1,090 staff are employed (including nurses, care workers, non-care work roles, and agency staff) in services in Halton – as at December 2022.

5.4 In examining the subject area it was important for Members to understand that delivery of ASC services is subject to an open market and is therefore competitive. No one body holds a full set of data that defines the extent of the workforce. This can be further explained in terms of a comparison with the NHS, which is a single employer for health services, operating to a shared set of rules and processes, where staff are engaged to a defined employment framework. Across ASC there is no mutual understanding around arrangements for staff terms and conditions (other than within the Council where staff are employed against local authority national conditions of service). Any shared employment practices are based on market expectations and the need to attract staff.

6.0 EVIDENCE, ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Adult Social Care Workforce - National context

6.1.1 It was important for the Topic Group to understand the ASC market and the national drivers and stressors on the sector. In the first Topic Group meeting, as well as agreeing the schedule of activities for the duration of the Scrutiny, Members were given an overview of the labour market forces impacting on the sector. This included the ongoing fallout from the pandemic, funding constraints, market competition and negative public perception of work in the sector.

6.1.2 The Group were briefed on what constitutes direct care provision, and the range of job roles which make up the sector. It was calculated that frontline

care provision in Halton, including in-house services to the Council as well as commissioned provision across the borough, was delivered by just over 1,600 staff – based on the data available.

- 6.1.3 Skills for Care, the national strategic workforce development and planning body for ASC in England, were invited to further apprise the Topic Group on their work. The presentation given opened with some ‘myth busting’ facts about the sector, including its size and structure in relation to the National Health Service (NHS) and what constitutes the requirements to be registered with the CQC. The Topic Group were informed about the wide range of roles on offer across the sector and heard that the majority of jobs (53%) are held by care and support workers, with just 5% of jobs in the sector being undertaken by regulated professionals (social workers, nurses and occupational therapists).
- 6.1.4 The Group were presented with statistics based on data from the ASC Workforce Data Set, based on responses from Halton services. This looked at qualifications held, turnover rates, sickness absence rates and other figures which were indicative of workforce needs.
- 6.1.5 It was conveyed, from the information and figures given, that recruitment and retention are clear issues for the sector, while at the same time the need for ASC services is set to increase with rising demand from an ageing population.
- 6.1.6 The Topic Group were made aware of the wide range of initiatives which Skills for Care deliver, and have planned, which are aiming at supporting the sector with workforce challenges. Locally, a Halton Social Care Employment Partnership has been formed (stemming from the Registered Manager’s Network which Skills for Care support) to consider recruitment and retention. Involvement from the local JobCentrePlus teams and the local college are proving to be productive.

Conclusions

- 6.1.7 ASC is a complex sector with a fragmented market.
- 6.1.8 Workforce needs for the ASC sector are a national issue, and one which is reflected in Halton. Localised support and relationships are being brokered.
- 6.1.9 There is widespread recognition that the situation results from a series of impactors.

6.2 The regional approach

- 6.2.1 Cheshire and Merseyside Adult Social Care Workforce Association of Directors of Adults Social Services (ADASS) were invited by the Group to talk about the actions being taken on a regional basis to support workforce needs.
- 6.2.2 Details of initiatives were shared from their own perspective but also where they allied to activity on a Liverpool City Region Combined Authority level, as well as what regional approaches were taken in relation to schemes offered through the Department of Work and Pensions and Skills for Care.

- 6.2.3 Members noted the assistance provided and support structures developed on a regional level, particularly during the height of the pandemic. These enabled fast-tracking of workforce funding, timely dissemination good practice, the promotion of sector recruitment opportunities and brokered partnerships to develop new ways of working to tackle workforce needs going forward.
- 6.2.4 A significant piece of work undertaken, during the pandemic, looked at what regional resources were available to support staff wellbeing. Collation of information was co-ordinated by Cheshire and Merseyside ADASS and offered back out to the sector from a centralised Hub. This conveyed an acknowledgement of the toll taken by the pandemic on the physical and mental health of the ASC workforce with a view to retaining staff during and beyond this unprecedented period.
- 6.2.5 Cheshire and Merseyside ADASS have also been able to organise learning opportunities across the region, work collaboratively to promote the sector, and undertaken specific activity to support the Personal Assistant market across the area. Having picked up on some successful practice they are also endorsing and support progress towards the development of 'Care and Health Academies' on a local level.
- 6.2.6 Examples of sector-specific initiatives and innovative approaches were discussed. It was recognised that, as a fragmented market, all providers need to be on-board with activities to get the most out of them.
- 6.2.7 Attracting young people to the sector was specifically acknowledged to be an issue and work needs to continue to develop distinct career pathways and attractive opportunities. Good links with school and colleges were evident.

Conclusions

- 6.2.8 Members acknowledged that working on a regional level provided the opportunity to embed good practice at scale and pace.
- 6.2.9 Regional activity complements both national and local support for workforce needs and a range of co-ordinated approaches are making steady in-roads towards tackling the issues at hand.
- 6.2.10 There is still a great distance to travel to establish ASC as a valued sector to work in.

6.3 The picture in Halton – Halton Borough Council's Adult Social Care workforce

- 6.3.1 Workforce needs are a focus across the board for ASC services delivered in-house to Halton Borough Council and activity is aimed at supporting all teams. As a sample of the work taking place the Topic Group were given details of the workforce initiatives specifically driven by the Council's care homes division. This involves utilising the division as a test-bed for pilot schemes so that best practice can then be exemplified across the wider sector.

- 6.3.2 The portfolio of care homes coming under Council ownership and management has grown significantly with four older people's homes (three with nursing facilities) being taken on since 2017. In purchasing of each home a Transfer of Undertakings - Protection of Employment (TUPE) took place resulting in change and some expected staff movement. This, together with the impact of the pandemic and other national constraints on the sector, has created the conditions for dedicated attention to workforce needs and has steered the Council's efforts.
- 6.3.3 Towards the end of 2019 the Council's care home division was successful in bidding for funding from the Liverpool Workforce Action Board (LWAB). A 12-month programme of work, extended due to the pandemic, has resulted in some innovative approaches which are to be further built on and embedded into practice. The Topic Group heard about the partnership formed with Chester University through the funding and efforts to work closely with existing staff to understand their needs and create additional opportunities for development and progression.
- 6.3.4 The Topic Group were told about the approaches taken to support new incumbents into the ASC workforce through dedicated Intermediate Labour Market roles, where job seekers are offered work placements alongside employability skills programme. For this, the care homes division is working in partnership with the Council's People into Jobs service. They heard about the new integrated health and social care roles of Nurse Associate and Assistant Practitioner, with associated Apprenticeship learning opportunities, which have been trialled in the homes. Work placements for students at both further and higher education level are being hosted by the homes, and in-reach to the education institutions is also being made. The in-reach has involved current staff members feeding into seminars and workshops so that students have a better understanding of day-to-day duties in the workplace. Specific work is being undertaken to create an on-line practice knowledge sharing platform, with e-learning opportunities, for nursing staff, and the Council intend to recruit a dedicated Clinical Development Lead to support nursing care across the borough.
- 6.3.5 The dedicated workforce activity, coupled with planned refurbishment work for the Council's homes, looks set to make the local authority an 'employer of choice'. However, the Council are keen to widen the best practice knowledge and share learning across with other providers of ASC for the benefit of the sector as whole. Members learnt that the overarching intention is to create teaching hub within Halton Borough Council's care homes to support staff intake and develop the workforce for the other areas of the sector. A Halton-based 'Career Academy' approach is being developed to bring all strands of workforce activity together.

Conclusions

- 6.3.6 Halton Borough Council's takeover of a majority share of the older people's care home market in the borough has rendered them well-placed to spearhead innovation in relation to workforce needs. The work being undertaken will alleviate workforce pressures by creating a pipeline of new appointees into the

sector and providing career progression models which can be mirrored to attract and retain staff.

6.4 The picture in Halton – Commissioned providers of direct care services

- 6.4.1 Halton Borough Council commissions services from a range of providers and works in partnership with them to support delivery of adult social care functions through its contract monitoring and management processes.
- 6.4.2 Throughout the duration of the Scrutiny Topic Group's work, issues of low pay were highlighted. The Topic Group requested a breakdown of provider starting pay and while it was found that all ASC services offered national minimum wage few went above the national living wage. It was further debated that the demands of working in the sector were high and the majority of feedback given pointed to commitment to a vocation rather than a job. Comparisons were made with other work areas, in particular the retail sector, where some employers are offering a higher starting wage than in the care sector, with potentially less unsocial hours and less responsibility. It was further felt that while high vacancy rates were reflective of a number of factors, the primary impactor was thought to be pay.
- 6.4.3 As part of the Scrutiny process the Topic Group invited commissioned providers to discuss current workforce issues they are facing and what they have put in place to alleviate the situation. This was coupled with some on-site visits so that the Topic Group could speak to staff directly about their experiences of the pressures.
- 6.4.4 Representatives from Cera Care (formerly Premier Care), as Halton's current domiciliary care provider, gave a presentation to the Topic Group which focussed on staffing needs. The national company employs 99 people to its Halton team to deliver against an exclusive contract with the Council to deliver home care provision. Since May 2022 the local branch has been escalated to a 'Tier 1' status. This is an internal measure to support area teams who are experiencing recruitment and retention issues. Additional support has been drafted in from their central office to conduct focussed work with the branch and within a four month period they reported an 83% improvement in 'hires'.
- 6.4.5 Cera Care provided insight into their recruitment processes, robust induction programme and the ongoing support, development and progression opportunities for staff. Discussions were held about the demands of the vocational work area and the negative impact on retention that comes from people not fully appreciating what the role is like in practice and/or seeing the opportunity to earn more in other sectors, with less responsibility.
- 6.4.6 Cera Care use agency workers but work exclusively with a bank of known workers who are trained to their specific standards and who work regularly to fill gaps in demand.
- 6.4.7 Following on from Cera Care's presentation a visit was planned to their Halton office. Feedback was given at the next Topic Group meeting on the competent

and co-ordinated approach taken to the delivery of service. Staff members approached during the visit seemed content with their working conditions.

- 6.4.8 Having already had details of the steps being taken by the Council's in-house care homes to support workforce needs, the Topic Group additionally heard from two further care home providers – HC-One and Hillcare.
- 6.4.9 Some differences were highlighted in the staffing needs between nursing and residential care settings. It was suggested nursing care is more skilled and more intensive support is given on a one-to-one basis, whereas residential and dementia care can offer more communal interaction. However, it was also highlighted that residential and dementia care needs are becoming more complex, with people going into care at the point where they then have a higher level of dependency. It was agreed that the work is difficult and requires a high level of skill and the subject of low pay, high turnover and poor public perception of the industry was echoed as an ongoing theme of the Topic Group.
- 6.4.10 Examples of good practice came out of discussions with the two care home providers present, both of whom offered career progression opportunities and had pay uplifts associated with either experience or learning. Other areas of distinction emphasised were around flexible working options (the sector tends to traditionally offer 12-hour shift patterns), training and ongoing development options and continuous support mechanism, such as regular supervision and manager 'open door' policies.
- 6.4.11 A reliance on agency staff to fill staffing gaps within the homes was cause for concern for the Topic Group, both in terms of ongoing costs and turnover which has the potential to impact on relationships with residents and on disparities in practice. Further discussions highlighted that use of agency workers was widespread across the sector as a result of workforce needs.
- 6.4.12 Members made a visit to a care home and remarked on the levels of commitment staff had to their jobs in spite of pulls to better pay and less responsibility in other sectors. Staff were keen to emphasise the fulfilment they get from working with service users.
- 6.4.13 Exploration was made during the Scrutiny Topic Group as to what reward and recognition staff received from their employers. There seemed to be a diverse variation in relationships with employers with some on-site managers working hard to build shared team values and keep staff motivated, while some parent companies neglected to recognise individual contribution. It was felt that some learning could take place around this.
- 6.4.14 Members credited the providers seen with some strong models of good practice and considered how this might be further communicated across the sector.
- 6.4.15 As well as hearing from providers themselves the Topic Group gained an understanding of the support available to them as part of their contracting arrangements with Halton Borough Council. They received a presentation detailing the remit of the Council's dedicated Quality Assurance and Contracts team and Commissioning function. Providers receive ongoing monitoring and

support through regular contact and close working to develop quality improvement opportunities.

- 6.4.16 To illustrate the level of support offered the Topic Group were given details of how the Council assisted providers with continuity of service throughout the pandemic. During this period of rapid change the Council maintained oversight of provision and advocated for providers by creating a strong presence and delivering unified messages in conjunction with health services. This helped assure providers, and the staff delivering care, that the Council was a valuable ally and relationships have thrived as a result.
- 6.4.17 During this time, the Council recognised the distinct impact on the care home sector and devised and delivered against a 'Care Home Resilience Plan' in collaboration with health service, primarily the NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (now the ICB) and Public Health. A wide programme of support was developed, much of which was open to providers of other services across the ASC sector. Among other interventions, daily welfare calls were made with providers; a co-ordinated communications plan was formulated to eliminate duplication; information and guidance was shared alongside messages of support and encouragement; Halton pulled together its own wellbeing resources for staff across the sector (in addition to the aforementioned ADASS hub); online learning opportunities, including fast-track induction programmes were devised and rolled out; multi-disciplinary 'ward rounds' were co-ordinated on a virtual basis; funding and equipment was deployed; a supportive 'lessons learned' approach was taken with providers to reflect on infection outbreaks; and donations were distributed, including Easter eggs for staff and residents.
- 6.4.18 Continued support from the Council is accessible to providers and ongoing engagement activity is channelled to needs. Specific to workforce needs the already cited Career Academy approach is anticipated to aid joint working across the sector.

Conclusions

- 6.4.19 Recognition needs to be made of the value of care work and the profile of the sector, and the individuals who work in it, needs to be raised. The Topic Group acknowledged the demands of working in the sector and the high level of skills needed to support service users.
- 6.4.20 Attracting and retaining talent into the sector is challenging while pay remains low. Pay and resources are intrinsically tied to funding settlements from central government and both providers and Council felt bound by these limitations.
- 6.4.21 The continued reliance of agency workers across the sector is considered to present risk. Initiatives and activity undertaken to support sustainable permanent staff is favoured.
- 6.4.22 Pockets of good practice exist and providers should endeavour to replicate excellence. Learning and development opportunities and progression options in particular were seen as important measures for retaining staff. It is

recognised however that providers operate in a competitive market and difference systems of service delivery are to be expected.

6.5 Social Care Reform and workforce

- 6.5.1 The Adult Social Care sector has been stretched for some time, with increased need up against frozen budgets and reduced opportunities for targeted grant funding. This is particularly evident when it comes to considerations of workforce needs and the pressures on services to attract, retain, train and develop staff with limited resources. As well as being widely reported on a national basis, this has been apparent in the examinations undertaken throughout the course of the Scrutiny Topic Group.
- 6.5.2 The sector has looked to central Government for direction on long-term sustainability, including financial commitments to assure safe and compliant practice which recognises the value of the workforce delivering services. In December 2021 Government published the long-awaited White Paper '[People at the Heart of Care: Adult Social Care Reform White Paper](#)'. This was followed by '[Health and Social Care Integration: joining up care for people, places and populations](#)'. Both make distinct reference to workforce; the former pledging investment of £500m in the social care workforce and the latter further building on this to advocate place level planning of workforce needs, support job role movement between health and social care and puts forward the notion of: "joined up, workforce planning at a system level to ensure the right people, with the right skills and training to deliver collaborative, person-centred care." Translation of the 10-year vision into tangible application is awaited.
- 6.5.3 The Topic Group took note of the Government's 'Fair Cost of Care' process, as an intended part of the feed-in to long-term plans. They were interested to learn the impact across Halton and whether there was opportunity for it to benefit staffing, specifically in relation to the potential for pay increases. They heard that the exercise only covered care homes and does not directly translate to a commitment to invest in the sector. Councils have been asked to conduct their annual fee setting exercise as usual, which will be based on the funding settlement announced in late December. The Topic Group urged for any uplifts to be invested in pay increases but recognise that the sector operates within a competitive market and there is consequently no direct influence over this which they can make.
- 6.5.4 The Topic Group expressed particular concern for low paid workers and the impact of the current cost of living crisis.

Conclusions

- 6.5.6 It is recognised that pay and conditions for the Adult Social Care workforce need to be attended to. However, it is also understood that resources are tight and the commerciality of the provider market limits Member influence on the situation.

7.0 OVERALL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO HEALTH PPB

The Topic Group valued the opportunity to further scrutinise this topic area and gain a solid understanding of the challenges facing the Adult Social Care sector in relation to workforce needs. Detailed examination of the subject alerted the Topic Group to good practice and key areas for development.

Recommendations to the Health PPB:	Required Actions:
The Topic Group endorsed the Council's intention to develop a sector-wide Workforce Strategy for Adult Social Care.	The Council will work with providers and partners to develop a borough-wide workforce strategy which incorporates a range of approaches to support recruitment, retention, progression and development across the sector.
The Scrutiny Topic Group support the current activity being undertaken by the Council to engage with providers and develop wider partnerships which support workforce development, and invite acceleration of this work.	The Council will progress exploration of the development of a Career Academy, a model endorsed regionally for meeting workforce needs. The approach advocates partnership working between employers, education providers, the DWP and others.
Support was given to the continued exploration of career pathways which help promote work in the sector and assist in the retention and progression of staff	Allied to the above, the Council will look at developing sector support materials to exemplify career pathways and progression opportunities.
Staff wellbeing remains a priority for supporting both the Council's Adult Social Care workforce and those working in the provider sector	<p>The Council will further seek to source and promote wellbeing opportunities across the sector.</p> <p>Quality Assurance will make regular enquiries with providers as to how they are supporting staff wellbeing.</p>
Use of agency workers in the provider sector is more closely monitored.	The Council is to re-assess its contract terms with Adult Social Care providers in respect of employment requirements, to specify the terms of using agency workers and assure that safe recruitment processes are applied to the use of agency workers. This might include, for example, a plan being required to show how permanent vacancies are to be filled, where agency workers are currently covering posts.
Services are given the opportunity to share best practice and encouraged to	The Council will continue to demonstrate creativity and innovation in its support of staff development.

<p>adopt new ways of working which are seen to have had clear benefits for staff</p>	<p>The Council will continue to support a range of networks and forums for providers to share best practice.</p> <p>The Council will consider options to ensuring that providers commit to initiatives which are shown to support workforce needs, for example, pay progression linked to the achievement of qualifications. This might involve development of contractual obligations, service level agreements, an employer charter, or similar.</p>
<p>Elected Members agreed to lobby Central Government on sustainable funding for the sector, and the need for this to translate to staff pay.</p>	<p>The Health Policy and Performance Board will feedback to the Leader of the Council on the concerns raised as part of the Scrutiny Topic investigations around funding and pay for the sector, and will request that the Leader writes to Government on the matter.</p>
<p>Ward Councillors will establish a continuous dialogue approach with providers operating in their district to ensure that workforce needs continue to be met.</p>	<p>Elected Members are to reinstate visits to provider services, and specifically consider workforce needs as part of service quality indicators. The Council will support Elected Members to arrange visits.</p>
<p>The Topic Group acknowledged that reward and recognition needs to be an ongoing endeavour, and that staff motivation can impacted significantly by small gestures.</p>	<p>As part of the Council's support for promoting good practice details will also be shared on reward and recognition initiatives and opportunities.</p> <p>The Council will additionally look at what they can do to recognise and reward good practice, both internally and with providers.</p>

Appendix One: Scrutiny Topic Brief

TOPIC BRIEF

Topic Title:	Adult Social Care Workforce – Planning and Development
Officer Lead:	Damian Nolan – Divisional Manager – Commissioning and complex care
Planned Start Date:	May 2022
Target PPB Meeting:	September 2022

Topic Description and Scope:

The 2022/23 scrutiny review for the Health Policy and Performance Board will examine the Adult Social Care Workforce in Halton. It will look at both Council staffing structures and those in the provider sector to consider how the Council supports workforce planning and development. The topic group will be apprised of the innovative projects and initiatives being undertaken to promote a sustainable and skilled workforce. It will consider the impact of external forces on the labour market for Adult Social Care and examine local and regional activity, partnership working and contractual arrangements aimed at supporting services to recruit, develop and retain staff.

Why this topic was chosen:

Sustaining Adult Social Care services across Halton is a statutory duty and a fundamental priority for the Council. Central to this is ensuring that services are staffing with a skilled, knowledgeable, competent and motivated workforce.

Skills for Care report annually on [‘The State of the Adult Social Care Workforce’](#). Their most recent report highlights a national increased rates of staff turnover, high rates of vacancies and heightened absences. These trends are not new but have been compounded by a number of factors, including the pandemic. Nationally, public perception of the work, the pay, the contractual conditions and the career development and progression opportunities associated with Adult Social Care is low. In contrast to this, the sector continues to grow to meet the needs of an ageing workforce.

From a local perspective, Halton Borough Council supports a range of creative and forward-thinking work to consider Adult Social Care workforce needs. The Council has responsibilities to work strategically to ensure its own workforce is fit for purpose; that workforce planning involves safe and robust processes for the recruitment of good quality candidates; that pay and conditions are competitive; that personnel are valued and offered ongoing support so that their services are retained; and that they are trained to deliver a high standard of care and support, as well as being offered continued development opportunities and career progression.

In addition, the Council works with commissioned providers and has a duty, within the Care Act 2014, to support and sustain the Adult Social Care provider market. The Board aim to better understand the Council’s responsibilities and action in specific relation to supporting the provider sector with their own workforce needs.

Key outputs and outcomes sought:

- To identify the impact workforce has on good quality care.
- To understand the size and structure of the Adult Social Care Workforce across Halton, and consider the Council’s role in sustaining and developing sector resilience in relation to workforce needs.
- To recognise the drivers for transforming approach to recruitment and retention, and benchmark Halton’s position against these.
- To highlight the innovative work being undertaken to promote careers in the sector, provide new opportunities for existing staff and inspire new interest in being part of the Adult Social Care workforce.
- To examine the Council’s own Adult Social Care workforce and its plans to recruit, train, retain and progress employees.
- To acknowledge the Council’s duty in sustaining the provider market for Adult Social Care services and the impact of workforce needs on this.
- To appreciate the Council’s contractual position in relation to delivery of provider services and the quality assurance role in respect of maintaining a competent workforce.
- To examine the Council’s support to the provider sector in maintaining safe and effective staffing levels.
- To evaluate whether any further action can be taken to mitigate risks to market sustainability.

Which of Halton’s 5 strategic priorities this topic addresses and the key objectives and improvement targets it will be help to achieve:

A Healthy Halton – Our overall aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of Halton people so that they live longer, healthier and happy lives.

This topic group intends to gain knowledge and understanding of the Adult Social Care workforce across Halton. It will develop an effective oversight of the processes and practices for meeting and maintaining workforce needs across the sector to ensure good standards of provision to Halton residents who access services.

The topic group will gain input from different standpoint from across the sector to look at current workforce needs and measures being taken to alleviate them. Evaluation will be made of the Council’s support to the provider sector on workforce issues.

Nature of expected/ desired PPB input:

Member-led scrutiny review of Adult Social Care Workforce planning and development across Halton and the impact this has on our ability to deliver quality services to local residents.

Preferred mode of operation:

- Meetings with/presentations from relevant officers from within the Council and partner agencies to examine current services.
- Visit to community-based intervention sessions.
- Interviews with those who have accessed services.
- Desk top research in relation to outcome measures and best practice delivery methods.

Agreed and signed by:

PPB chair Officer

Date Date

Appendix Two: Schedule of Activity

Health Policy and Performance Board – Scrutiny Topic Group 2022-23 – Schedule of Activity

Topic: Adult Social Care Workforce Planning and Development

Meeting	Input	Areas to be covered	Proposed representation
<p>Date: Thursday 12 May 2022 Time: 6.30pm to 8pm Venue: Committee Room 1, Runcorn Town Hall</p>	<p>Review draft topic brief and proposed schedule of activities</p> <p>Overview of the size and structure of the Adult Social Care workforce in Halton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further discuss topic group remit and whether any other areas of enquiry are needed - any changes to be captured and progressed • Halton Borough Council's Adult Social Care workforce and the role of the provider sector • Brief overview of some of the activities aimed at supporting workforce needs, in anticipation of hearing more throughout the scrutiny. • Nation impactors driving workforce pressures across the sector. • Halton's Borough Council's own recruitment processes and learning offer. 	<p>Nicola Hallmark</p> <p>Nicola Hallmark</p>
<p>Date: Thursday 9 June 2022 Time: 6.30pm to 8pm Venue: Committee Room 1, Runcorn Town Hall</p>	<p>Presentation: Skills for Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Adult Social Care workforce – national picture • Support across Halton – Registered Manager's Network and Halton Employment Partnership 	<p>Alison Everett – Skills for Care</p> <p>Michelle Carmon – CIC</p>
<p>Date: Thursday 14</p>	<p>Presentation: Regional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce planning activity on a regional basis 	<p>Angela Johnson - NW</p>

<p>July 2022 Time: 6.30pm to 8pm Venue: Committee Room 1, Runcorn Town Hall</p>	<p>Workforce planning</p> <p>Presentation: Support for care homes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the innovative work within the Enhance Nursing Care project work and Care Home Development Group, including plans to attract and retain staff; develop work experience placements, student residencies and 'Grow your own' opportunities. 	<p>ADASS</p> <p>Jane English – Divisional Manager, Care Homes</p>
<p>Date: Thursday 8 September 2022 Time: 6.30pm to 8pm Venue: Committee Room 1, Runcorn Town Hall</p>	<p>Presentation: Supporting our Domiciliary Care workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline Halton's contractual position with Premier care and the evolution of this through the Transforming Domiciliary Care work. Discuss the opportunities the contractual arrangements offer in relation to building a stable workforce. • Look at current recruitment and retention activity being conducted to assure service provision. 	<p>Jackie Harber and Julie Benjamin (Cera Care – formerly Premier Care)</p>
<p>Date: Thursday 13 October 2022 Time: 6.30pm to 8pm Venue: Committee Room 1, Runcorn Town Hall</p>	<p>Presentation: Supporting workforce resilience</p> <p>Provider Sector – Workforce Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at the support offered to the provider sector by the Council's Quality Assurance team, the approaches taken throughout the pandemic and maintaining relationships going forward. • Approaches taken to ensure workforce are equipped with skills, knowledge and competence to undertake their role. 	<p>Helen Moir – Divisional Manager, Independent Living</p> <p>Helen Wilkinson and Tracey Yates, HC-One, and Linda Hodgkinson, Hillcare.</p>
<p>Date: Tuesday 15 November 2022 Time: 6.30pm to 8pm</p>	<p>Presentation: Fair Cost of Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes of findings for Halton and the potential impact on workforce needs. 	<p>Damian Nolan</p>

Venue: Committee Room 1, Runcorn Town Hall			
Date: Tuesday 13 December 2022 Time: 6.30pm to 8pm Venue: Committee Room 1, Runcorn Town Hall	Review input and collate recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towards the development of the final report 	Led by Cllr Peter Lloyd Jones

Appendix Three - Presentation:



ASC workforce -
national - Skills for CaWorkforce Support -



CM ADASS



In-house care homes



Premier Care



Scrutiny Topic -



Workforce Resilience
- Pandemic Support -

Appendix Four - Meeting notes:



Scrutiny topic group
8.9.22.docx



Meeting One -
12.5.22.docx



Meeting notes -
14.7.22.docx



Scrutiny topic group
15.11.22.docx



Scrutiny topic group
13.10.22.docx