



WF 31

Ymchwiliad i gynaliadwyedd y gweithlu iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol

Inquiry into the sustainability of the health and social care workforce

Ymateb gan: Fforwm Gofal Cymru

Response from: Care Forum Wales



Consultation response – Inquiry into the sustainability of the health and social care workforce

Care Forum Wales welcomes the opportunity to respond to this inquiry. We are a membership organisation for Health and Social Care Providers in Wales representing over 450 independent providers. Our response focuses on the workforce employed by our members, who include both private and third sector providers.

- **Do we have an accurate picture of the current health and care workforce? Are there any data gaps?**

Data collected on an unregistered workforce is by its nature patchy but valuable work has been undertaken. This will by its nature become more comprehensive as we move into registering further parts of the workforce, i.e. domiciliary care workers and social care workers in care homes. In terms of information collected outside that process from providers we must concentrate on what we want the data for and the additional burden that would be placed on providers by gathering it.

- **Is there a clear understanding of the Welsh Government's vision for health and care services and the workforce needed to deliver this?**

We do not believe there is a sufficient understanding of the workforce needed to deliver Welsh Government's vision for health and social care. Not sufficient. We would highlight:

- the lack of clear career pathways in social care, which contribute to the insufficiency of qualified managers to fill every position currently available in Wales;
- qualifications not always being fit for purpose to meet the needs of employers in the sector;
- a recognition of the terms and conditions needed to attract an increasingly professionalised workforce to the sector;
- particular difficulties in recruiting nurses to work in nursing homes and ensuring that the needs of nursing homes are included in planning figures for nurse education. We would also likely to see greater use of nursing homes to provider pre-placement training;
- There needs to be a clear commitment at a regional level to partnership working to make the vision work.

How well-equipped is the workforce to meet future health and care needs?

Care Forum Wales supports the need to train and further professionalise the social care workforce. However, we need to recognise that many existing staff have poor experiences of academic education and in order for training to work for them it needs to be highly practical and building in literacy and numeracy skills through practice rather than formal education. Training needs to be easily accessible to workers in the independent sector with improved processes for local authorities and the NHS making their



training available. Commissioners also need to recognise that time used for training is time when other staff members will have to cover caregiving and this needs to be built into costing models.

What are the factors that influence recruitment and retention of staff across Wales? This might include for example:

- the opportunities for young people to find out about/experience the range of NHS and social care careers;
- education and training (commissioning and/or delivery);
- pay and terms of employment/contract;

Regulations which have prevented those under 18 from working in a care home have presented a barrier. A number of current managers and senior works began their relationship with the care sector by taking on non-caring roles in care homes before they were 18. There is no substitute for this hands-on experience of the sector and we are pleased that this prohibition is being relaxed. That said we need to recognise that the majority of entrants to the sector are more mature often bringing voluntary caring experience to the role. The decision by the last Welsh Government to end funding for NVQs at levels 2 and 3 is causing significant problems to the sector. Experience indicates that older entrants are more likely to stay in the sector and their maturity and experience is appreciated by clients.

In terms of pay and terms and conditions we need to be realistic and recognise the increasing complexity of the work required by those in the sector. Ultimately providers can only pay rates that balance their books given what they are commissioned on. We know that commissioning at levels where care workers are able to deliver relationship based outcomes will create more job satisfaction (e.g. Raglan project in Monmouthshire has seen vastly improved staff morale). We were pleased to see Welsh Labour note the sector as one of national strategic importance in its manifesto and we believe more needs to be done to publicly recognise the value of the sector to encourage more applications and stop care workers feeling their role is not recognised.

Whether there are there particular issues in some geographic areas, rural or urban areas, or areas of deprivation for example.

Recruitment is a challenge everywhere – in more urban areas there are other competing offers for social care workers e.g. you can earn more stacking shelves in a supermarket. In more rural areas transport, ability to drive and access to a car are issues.