

Valuing Social Care – Annual Workforce and Provider Engagement Summary

An overview

The Staffordshire Social Care Workforce Partnership is committed to understanding how people working in social care are feeling and how organisations rate their own strengths-based ways of working. We have committed to talking to the workforce every year.

By understanding the current position, we can shape our information and support to aide:

- quality recruitment attracting staff with the right values and ethos.
- retention of our workforce.
- the delivery of high quality care and support.

This year we asked for responses by May 2023, but we extended the timelines until 23 June 2023, because:

1. we launched these at the same time as our [Workforce Strategy](#) launch event – we were asking people about how they found the event too, so this was a lot!
2. we wanted to further promote the engagement with colleagues in Children’s social care, ensuring they had their chance to have their say.

We promoted the survey and self-assessment by:

1. using a range of Staffordshire County Council communications – to reach people working in the Council and our external partners, using emails, newsletters and updates.
2. asking our Social Care Workforce partners to promote across their networks, which included providers of adult social care in the independent market.

Valuing Social Care – Annual Workforce Survey

People from across the social care workforce were invited to complete an on-line survey, using a Microsoft Office Form.

We have summarised people’s responses below.

We have highlighted where the responses are different to the feedback we received when we talked to the workforce when shaping our Workforce Strategy, in 2022..

We have summarised the key messages and actions towards the end in our ‘So what...?’ section.

Your responses

People could select a maximum of three responses for the first two questions.

Q1. I work in social care because...

1. I want to make a difference: 229 people.
2. I want to make the best use of my skills and experience: 180 people.
3. I can work flexible to suit my needs: 82 people.

4. It is a steppingstone towards my future carer: 29 people.
5. It is local to me: 22 people.
6. It was recommended to me: 18 people.
7. Other: 15 people.
8. Experience was not required: 6 people.
9. There are lots of jobs in social care: 4 people.

Other included:

- people who wanted to support people to live happier and fulfilling lives.
- being a good communicator.
- finding the world of social care 'rewarding but challenging'.

People who completed our 2022 survey identified the same top two reasons as above. However, in third place was 'recommended by friends or family' (22%) in 2022, compared to sixth place (6%) in this our 2023 survey.

People who completed this survey identified being able to work flexibly as the third most common reason (30%), compared to fifth place (12%) in the 2022 survey.

Q2. The most important things to me are...

1. Making a difference: 163 people.
2. Work life balance: 147 people.
3. Being valued & recognised: 89 people.
4. Working as part of a team: 72 people.
5. Pay: 58 people.
6. Flexible working / working pattern: 54 people.
7. Training & development: 45 people.
8. Management / leadership support: 41 people.
9. Job security: 31 people.
10. Career progression: 30 people.
11. Other: 1 person.

The top two most important things to people who completed this survey have changed places compared to the 2022 survey – making a difference is now more important than work-life balance, although both are clearly very important.

We did not include 'being valued' as an answer in our 2022 survey.

Interestingly, 61% of people who completed our survey in 2022 identified pay as an important factor to them, compared with 21% of people who completed our 2023 survey. However, there were lots of comments about 'pay' in our 'supporting social care' section (please see below).

Q3 – Q5. How valued do I feel...

People were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how valued they felt.

1 means a person does not feel valued at all.

5 means a person feels highly valued.

How valued I feel by the people I support (and their families)

- The average score was 4.2.

How valued I feel by my employer

- The average score was 3.9.

How valued I feel by the public

- The average score was 3.3.

Q6. Having the right training and skills / access to the training to do my job well...

People were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 about how they felt about their training and skills.

1 means a person feels they do not have the right skills / access to the training they needed to do their job well.

5 means a person feels they have the right skills / access to the training to do their job well and progress.

- The average score was 4.4.

We did not ask people to rate how valued they felt and about their training and skills in the 2022 survey.

Q7. My future...

- I am planning to stay working in social care for the next two years: 238 people.
- I am planning to leave social care in the next two years: 32 people.

20% of people who completed our 2022 survey advised they were considering leaving the social care sector within the next 12 months or more.

We extended the timescale from 12 months to 24 months, following some feedback from partners about two years being a more realistic timescale.

86% of people who completed our 2023 survey advised they were planning in staying in social care for the next two years.

The majority of people who told us they were thinking about leaving social care in the next two years worked in adult social care, with half working in a direct care role.

When we considered their responses to the question below, 34% of people thinking about leaving adult's social care referenced pay and 24% referenced feeling valued.

Q8. How can we support social care...

People had an opportunity to tell us anything else that was important to them and how we could support social care, using a free text box.

We received 135 individual responses in total and summarised them as the following key themes (many of the comments contained more than 1 point).

1. Pay & financial wellbeing: 55 comments.
2. Raising the profile of social care: 46 comments.

3. Training, career progression & development: 29 comments.
4. Ways of working: 27 comments.
5. Management & leadership report: 16 comments.
6. People's passion for social care: 15 comments.
7. Work-life balance: 8 comments.
8. Wellbeing: 6 comments.

40% of comments submitted referenced 'pay and financial wellbeing', including:

- the hourly rate of pay was not reflective of the 'complexity' of the job'.
- the cost-of-living crisis and impact this was having on the wellbeing of people and their families.
- recruitment and retention will likely continue to be negatively impacted by the rate of pay – it does not represent the need for a skilled workforce.

The majority of people who commented on pay also commented that the typically lower rate of pay potentially demonstrated how people perceive social care, and the value they place on this.

Raising the profile of social care comments included:

- the public do not always value social care in the same way other roles and sectors are valued.
- social care needs to be celebrated more – saying 'thank you' and recognising good practice can make a real difference to our workforce.

Comments about people's perception of social care also linked into comments about career progression and people not always understanding the range of opportunities available to them in social care.

Some useful things to think about from people who talked about ways of working and training, career progression and development:

- a good induction is vital as is on-going training for all roles.
- working as part of a team makes a difference.
- strong, visible and supportive leadership makes a difference to the quality of care and retention of staff.
- 'supervision', and confidentiality, is critical.
- we should routinely check in on people's wellbeing, in a way that considers their physical, emotional health. Another point was understanding financial wellbeing and how this affects a person.
- managers, leaders and the Council should engage more with our 'front-line' workforce to help shape ideas and ensure our expectations are realistic.
- people need more shadowing and work experience opportunities.
- some people commented about staff to people ratios and workloads not being sustainable in the long term.
- people working in home care commented on the transport costs associated with their role and payment for 'contact time' only.
- people want information to be shared with them, clearly and concisely and located in one place (where possible).

People's passion for social care really came through in these comments!

Who responded

All questions in this section had to be answered with one response.

Q9. My area of social care...

- Adults' social care: 209 people.
- Children's social care: 53 people.
- Children's and Adult's social care: 8 people.

7% of people who completed our survey in 2022 advised they worked in Children's Social Care, compared with 19% of people who completed our 2023 survey.

Q10. My role in social care...

- Direct care role: 143 people.
- Managerial / supervisory role: 60 people.
- Regulated professional role: 50 people.
- Other: 17 people.

29% of people who completed our survey in 2022 stated they worked in direct care role, compared with 53% of people who completed our 2023 survey.

Q11. My employer...

- A Care home – nursing care: 72 people.
- A Home care service: 52 people.
- The local authority – Children's social care: 49 people.
- A Care home – residential: 49 people.
- The local authority – Adult's social care: 16 people.
- A Supported living service: 14 people.
- Other: 6 people.
- A Day Opportunity: 10 people.
- A person with a Direct Payment (Personal Assistant): 2 people.

The majority of the respondents working in Children's social care worked in a local authority role, so the survey findings have been shared with relevant colleagues in Staffordshire County Council for consideration and next steps.

'Other' included people advising they worked with people who have specific needs as opposed to the type of service they worked in.

We did not ask this question in this way in our survey in 2022.

Q12. My gender...

- I identify as a male: 39 people.
- I identify as a female: 225 people.
- I self-describe: 1 person.
- Would prefer not to say: 5 people.

These results are similar to our 2022 survey.

Q13. My age...

- I am aged between 16 – 24 years old: 11 people.
- I am aged between 25 – 54 years old: 193 people.
- I am aged 55 years or over: 66 people.

64% of people who completed our survey in 2022 were aged 25 – 54 years old, compared with 71 % of people who completed our 2023 survey.

Q14. My ethnicity...

- I would describe my ethnicity as white – English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British: 213 people.
- I would describe my ethnicity as any other white background: 6 people.
- I would describe my ethnicity as Asian / Asian British: 7 people.
- I would describe my ethnicity as Black, African, Caribbean, Black British: 25 people.
- I would describe myself as mixed, multiple ethnic groups: 3 people.
- I would describe myself as any other ethnic group: 3 people.
- I would prefer not to say: 13 people.

91% of people who completed our survey in 2022 described themselves as ‘white – British’, compared with 79% of people who completed our 2023 survey.

So what...?

The number people who responded to our annual workforce survey was pretty much the same as the number of people who responded to us when shaping our [Workforce Strategy](#). However, the make-up of people who responded was different as detailed in the sections above.

Overall, we want to increase the number of people who complete our survey next year, so it is even more representative of our workforce.

175 of respondents provided their email so we could contact them next year to complete the survey, which is great news, but we want to talk to more people so we will continue to work with our partners to understand other ways we can better promote this survey.

People’s passion, ethos, values, culture and approach shone through; this is a dedicated workforce to be proud of! Our key focus should be:

- Ensuring we retain this workforce.
- Ensuring we use values-based recruitment to attract more like-minded people to the sector.

We hope employers find the feedback from the survey really useful to aid them with recruitment and retention – and if they would like to know more detail about the feedback – for example specific suggestions with from our ‘how can we support social care’, please don’t hesitate to contact us (see the contact details below).

Overall, the responses to the survey align to our Workforce Strategy and the actions within this document. A few highlights for over the upcoming months include:

- Increasing our use of social media – this will help us to raise the profile of social care and talk directly to more employees and share really important information, such as supporting people’s wellbeing.
- Continuing to work across Staffordshire to raise the profile of social care. This includes:
 - Celebrating good practice in different ways.
 - Increasing the number of benefits and discounts available to our workforce – we want to try to secure more discounts for transport related expenditure incurred by our homecare workforce, as well as thinking about possible grant funding to support this sector with sustainability.
- Launching our social care academy – to bring learning, training and development opportunities into one recognisable place.
- Continuing to produce local information packs on good practice and local resources on a range of topics – many of these for our adult social care sector are produced by our [Care Market Development Team](#) and can be accessed via our [MiDoS platform](#).
- Raising the profile of the local wellbeing resources and thinking about the future need for further Mental Health First Aider Training opportunities.

We will also take this feedback and consider it alongside recently updated data and intelligence, including the Skills for Care Report: [‘The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England’](#), and further prioritise our future actions.

Self-Assessment: Strength-based & outcome focussed ways of working

Strength-based and outcome-focussed ways of working are a key theme of our Workforce Strategy.

The self-assessment survey was designed for social care organisations to rate themselves from three different perspectives.

The scoring was:

- 0 - No Elements:** There are no elements in place and there no plans in place to help us improve.
- 1 - Early Stages:** Planning to improve things has started, but it is too early to say anything more.
- 2 - Developing:** Planning to improve things is in place and actions are underway, but it is too early to talk about our impact.

3 - Progressing: We are starting to be able to evidence the impact of our actions and we have a plan to support our next steps.

4 - Maturing: Our plan is largely in place. The evidence of our impact is clear and we have a plan for continuous development.

5 - Mature: Our plan is well established and implemented. We have strong evidence of our impact and as a whole we are committed to continuous development and improvement.

Q1. How people receiving support (and their families) feel - our people and communities.

- The average score was 4.

Q2. How people delivering support feel - our staff.

- The average score was 3.91.

Q3. How people in a leadership role feel - our managers.

- The average score was 4.13.

45 organisations responded – 44 indicated they worked in the Adult social care sector.

This was the first year of using this approach, so we will compare the scores on an annual basis moving forwards.

The average scores are a really strong starting point for us to collectively build on and move forwards.

The theme of our recent Managers Quality Network Forum was strength-based approaches and people who attended expressed a real interest in getting involved and learning more about what this looks like for Staffordshire providers in practice.

We will be sharing further information, including ways to get involved and training and support opportunities, in the upcoming weeks and months.

Getting in touch

If you would like to find out more about the survey or you would like to support with making our Workforce Strategy a reality, please email:

FSCWProgramme@staffordshire.gov.uk.

For the latest updates and information, please visit our dedicated '[Valuing social Care in Staffordshire](#)' [webpages](#) and you can [sign up to our regular newsletter](#).

On behalf of the partnership, thank you to everybody who promoted our survey and to people who took the time to share their feedback as part of our annual engagement. We recognise how valuable your time is!

Finally, one last THANK YOU to our social care workforce for your continued passion, commitment and hard work! Without you this would not be possible.