

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**