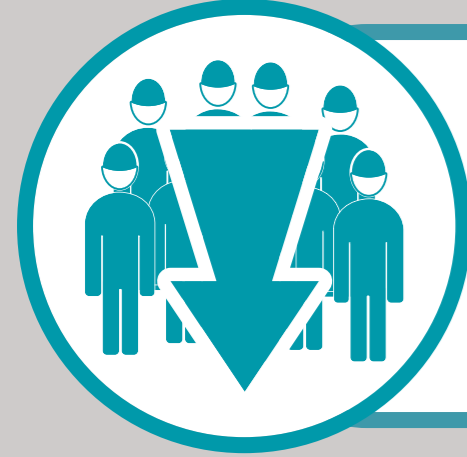


What innovations help to attract, recruit and retain social care workers within the UK context?

Rapid Evidence Review : December 2021



Shortage in the social care workforce



Social Care sector pressures predate the pandemic



International recruitment has been a challenge for social care



Although this is ongoing, it has been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic

- Aim : Explore evidence for innovations to **ATTRACT**, **RECRUIT** and **RETAIN** social care workers. Understand which factors influence turnover within the UK context.

EFFECTIVENESS FOR SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

Evidence Base

EXTENT

- 13 UK articles involving social workers
- 28 UK articles involving the social care workforce

REGENCY

- Studies were published **2001-2021**, largely pre-pandemic
- Findings may not be fully generalisable to the circumstances brought on by the pandemic

EFFECTIVENESS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

- **Nine innovations** were described across the evidence base to attract, recruit and retain **social workers**; of these only three were evaluated
- **Pre-employment initiatives** including practice-based learning activities may contribute to retention (mixed methods evidence)
- **Graduates of fast-track programmes** may be more likely to remain in employment, thus contributing to increased retention (mixed methods evidence)
- **Apprenticeships** are a potentially impactful way to train (recruit) and then retain social workers (mixed methods evidence)
- Frequently cited factors causing social workers to leave were identified as: **high caseloads and excessive workload, combined with organisational stress.**
- **No evidence identified** that explored **increasing diversity or good working conditions** for social workers

- **11 innovations** were described to attract, recruit and retain the **wider social care workforce** across the evidence base; only 4 were evaluated
- **Care workers as ambassadors** to promote career opportunities can positively impact attraction and recruitment for new staff and the ambassadors feel more valued and likely to stay with their current employer (retention) (mixed methods evidence)
- **Pre-employment training initiatives** such as the Care First Careers Pilot scheme are important in building basic care skills, interview preparation and confidence and can enhance recruitment (mixed methods evidence)
- **National recruitment campaigns**, specifically 'Every day is different' campaign saw an increase in enquiries and applications (attraction), and interviews and vacancies filled (recruitment) (organisational report evidence)
- **Values-based recruitment** has resulted in lower recruitment costs, positive return on investment, lower staff turnover and better staff performance (mixed methods and quantitative descriptive evidence)
- Negative factors affecting turnover were identified as: **poor terms and conditions, low pay, unsociable working hours, and inexperience** of both employees and managers.
- Positive factors included: **pay and retention bonuses, good working environment and celebrating achievements**

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

- Despite a **proliferation of initiatives** to promote attraction, recruitment and retention, there has been very little robust evaluation of specific approaches. Future policy initiatives should **include evaluation planning from the outset** to develop a more extensive evidence base.
- **Research funders should also be encouraged to design funding schemes to support research in this area.**
- Social Care Wales is devising a new social work framework that includes a **focus on practice learning which is well-embedded in local authorities, supportive induction and development activity, fast track graduate schemes, and diverse career pathways.**
- **Campaigns to promote care work** are necessary and important, to **counter the negative perceptions and low status of care work.**



The Wales Centre For Evidence Based Care

A JBI Centre of Excellence



Wales COVID-19 Evidence Centre
Canolfan Dystiolaeth COVID-19 Cymru



Ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by Welsh Government



Ymchwil Iechyd a Gofal Cymru
Health and Care Research Wales

The rapid review was produced in December 2021, and is available at:

<http://www.primecentre.wales/resources/RR00026> Wales COVID-19 Evidence Centre Rapid review of Social Care Recruitment December 2021.pdf