

Over the past two year the project has worked to empower providers with the tools they need to face the challenges, present and future, of maintaining a sustainable workforce in the health and social care industry.

Skills for care provided stats <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/NMDS-SC-intelligence/NMDS-SC-and-intelligence.aspx> show clearly the challenges Surrey faces when trying to employ skilled workers with the right values. Recruiting and retaining team members in the present climate is more than tough, with many services carrying vacancies and a low level of unemployment in the area other barriers such as the need for driver compound the problem. These issues are not just the concern of the people receiving and providing care, they are also a very real issue to the residents of Surrey, the general public however does not appear to see the value of the care services have to their community. The biggest challenge to recruiting and retaining the right people is to convince the right people to apply for the jobs.

Reaching out into the community and talking to the public, the potential employees of tomorrow, has been a key part of the project. This has included the traditional areas of recruitment, such as Job Centres and career fairs as well as less conventional approaches, through identifying target groups in the community of people who may have the values and aptitude for social care work. Following the work of writers such as Neil Eastwood and Simon Tweed the project has looked at Surrey demographics and put information about the potential for a job and career in care into the local areas and appropriate local groups.

The unemployment in the county is very low, this means that recruiting requires employers to look at their appeal to workers. To help providers develop a culture of pride in their ‘best practice’ work a selection of workshops were help, developing into online toolkits for providers to refer to. This has assisted in a greater understanding of need to ensure a company’s communication with the public and potential employees is clear, positive and engaging.

The project has worked directly with the NHS in joint recruitment and helped develop and value-based recruitment approach that can assist applicant to see health and social care as opportunities for employment. This has helped to reframe the relationship between people only looking for jobs in the health arena to understand the importance of social care in the lives of the public.

The challenges facing the future of care in Surrey have not changed since 2017, many would say they have become more complex with the approach of Brexit, this has been scoped by the projects and is available on the SCA website.

At the end of two year we can conclude a very local approach is often the best way to recruit sustainably, employers must be aware of the changing needs of their teams, able to provide training where required and value their teams and the work they do. The project has focused on manager and teams being proud of their work and spreading the message about potential roles to their local communities. This approach has been built on with national campaign, ‘Every day is different’. <http://www.everydayisdifferent.com/home.aspx>

The learning from the past two years has led to a refunding and refocusing of the work we can do to help providers find the right team members.

A key area that has been identified is the need to networking and mentoring, as well as sharing the highs and lows of the work. To help with this funding has been won for a further year’s work. Surrey Heartlands has funded the 2019 project, details of the full project are available on the SCA site. This year we will be focusing on networking training and skills development as well as launching a ‘Proud to Care Surrey’ web page to collate the activities of the county and provide support to employees and their teams.

Please look out for workshops and training opportunities provided by the workforce project.

If you would like any further information about the workforce project, please contact me at

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