



SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SECTOR SKILLS PLAN

June 2024



Contents

Overview.....	2
Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Context	3
Social Care and Health Sector.....	4
Consultation Feedback.....	5
Our Priorities for Action.....	8
Governance.....	10

Introduction

The Social Care and Health Sector Skills Plan for Norfolk and Suffolk represents true partnership working between Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, a range of sector stakeholders and consultation with the care market and its workforce.

The health and social care workforce has the highest share of employment across Norfolk and Suffolk (13.9%) with over 50,000 people delivering high quality care to our residents. Our workforce is dedicated, professional and hard working. However, we are very aware of the challenges workforce members and social care providers currently face in ensuring high quality delivery of care. Skills development plays a crucial role in recruitment and retention in the sector and in ensuring that individual workforce members are confident, capable and enjoy their work.

The skills environment in Norfolk and Suffolk is undergoing a period of change with the transfer of responsibilities from the New Anglia LEP to the County Councils, the delivery of a Local Skills Improvement Plan, and the potential transfer of powers regarding adult education if the proposed devolution deals for Norfolk and Suffolk are progressed. It is therefore the ideal time to take a partnership approach in developing a clear understanding of the workforce’s skills needs and to address both the opportunities and challenges for skills development for the social care and related health workforce.

This plan is designed to be dynamic, relevant and make a difference. Regular Partnership meetings including stakeholders and employers within the sector are key to this, identifying what works, sharing best practice, and working to attract additional resource into our region for our sector. Our governance structure in section 5 outlines how this will be achieved.

Overview

The health and social care sector continues to face significant challenges in recruitment, retention, and skills development, all of which have been exacerbated by Covid-19. In Norfolk and Suffolk, the health and social care workforce has the highest share of employment (13.9%) and the need for skilled, committed workforce members is increasing as the population ages and care needs become more complex.

Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils took action to produce a social care and health sector skills plan to ensure the sector's skills requirements are clearly identified and represented within wider skills discussions across both counties and support the sector to leverage additional funding and resource that may become available.

A working group undertook:

- A robust literature review of regional, national, and international sources
- Data analysis of key economic and social metrics as well as sector specific data highlighting current and future challenges
- A consultation, including an online survey with which over 60 people engaged
- Conversations with key stakeholders such as Skills for Care, Suffolk and North East Essex ICB, Norfolk and Waveney ICB, Department for Work and Pensions, Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support, Care Development East, further education colleges and social care providers/ networks.

This work led to the development of four Social Care and Health sector skills plan priorities:



A collective approach to skills for the social care and health workforce is vital due to the range of resources, funding and effort needed to make progress. Currently, funding for workforce development and skills work in social care and health is short-term and often reactive which does not allow for consistency of good practice or time to really understand what is needed and 'what works'. However, this plan represents an opportunity to collaborate, capture, and prepare.

An informed decision was made to focus the plan on social care and related health roles within social care, for example Training Nursing Associates or Registered Nurses working in residential care with nursing settings. This is to recognise the size of the social care workforce in Norfolk and Suffolk and the difference in funding arrangements for skills development in social care and in health. However, the Partnership will recognise, and be responsive to, wider strategies and plans which impact the whole health and social care sector.

We have identified five, four-digit standard occupation classifications (SOC) defining social care and related health roles, which this plan seeks to support.



1. Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Context

Opportunities	Challenges
<p>High proportion of economically inactive people that want a job - ¹. Norfolk and Suffolk have a higher-than-average percentage of working age people who are economically inactive but want a job. Approximately 49,700 people in the region don't have a job but would like one. This highlights the potential for increasing labour supply to the sector.</p> <p>High gross value added to local economy - the sector is of high value to the local economy; in 2019, within Norfolk and Suffolk, Health and Social Care's gross value added (GVA) was the fourth highest at approx. £3.3 billion, and lower only than Real Estate, Manufacturing and Wholesale and Retail Trade².</p> <p>The sector contributes to a large proportion of employment within the local economy - the Health and Social Care sector contributes to 13.9% of all employment across Norfolk and Suffolk which is slightly higher than the National average of 12.9%¹. It has the highest share of employment in our region, followed by retail (10.1%) and accommodation and food services (9.3%).</p>	<p>Increasing needs - Norfolk and Suffolk have a combined population of approximately 1.7 million, of which 58% is of working age (16-64), and 25% is in the 65+ bracket (compared to 19% nationally) ¹. Over the next 20 years, there will be an estimated 35% increase in the 65+ population, a 1% increase in people of working age, and a 3% decrease in children and young people. Norfolk and Suffolk have an above average proportion of the population self-reporting as disabled (19.3% equivalent to 323,300 versus 17.3% nationally) ³.</p> <p>Low wages and in-work poverty - Norfolk and Suffolk are low wage economies. In England, the median hourly pay is £16.42 (2022). However, in Norfolk and Suffolk the median hourly pay is £14.74, which means that those employed in the region earn (on average) £44.60 less a week than the national average³. The gap in earnings also persists at the sector level, with the median hourly wage for the social care and health sector in Norfolk and Suffolk stands at £11.82⁴. The percentage of people on Universal Credit who are in employment in Norfolk and Suffolk in 2022 was 44% (national average, 41%)⁵.</p> <p>Long-term sickness and early retirement - the most common reason for economic inactivity across Norfolk and Suffolk is long-term sickness, equating to 42,100 people.¹ The counties also have a higher-than-average proportion of people who have taken early retirement (16.5%, equating to 32,100 people) compared to the national average of 14%.¹</p> <p>Low qualifications - qualification levels across the working age population in Norfolk and Suffolk are low, with only 33.8% holding a NVQ4+, compared to 43.2% nationally, and 55.5% holding a NVQ3+, compared to 61.4% nationally.¹ On a sector level, 45% of direct care providing staff hold a qualification at Level 2 or above⁶</p>

More detailed information included in Appendix 1.

¹ Annual Population Survey, NOMIS

² Gross Value Added, ONS, 2019

³ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, NOMIS

⁴ Lightcast, data based on the identified six, four-digit standard occupation classifications.

⁵ Department for Work and Pensions, StatXplore

⁶ The State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England (Skills for Care)

2. Social Care and Health Sector

Opportunities	Challenges
<p>Inclusive recruitment - the lack of diversity within the workforce presents an opportunity to broaden the range of perspectives and skills in the sector. For example, disabled friendly recruitment and retention policies and practices will help to attract more candidates and increase talent pool. Disabled people could bring a level of insight to workplaces gained through lived experience. Adapting recruitment processes is key.⁷</p> <p>International recruits - in 2022/23, approximately 70,000 people arriving to work in the UK from overseas started direct care roles in the independent adult social care sector, compared with around 20,000 in 2021/22. However, a ban on newly arriving care workers bringing dependants into the UK was introduced on 11th March 2024 and will subsequently impact this.</p> <p>The Care Workforce Pathway - outlines a vision for the Level 2 Care Certificate to be the baseline standard for all new care workers. It sets out clearly what a career in social care means and the level of knowledge, experience and skills required to deliver high-quality, personalised, care and support. Refresh of roles with behaviours, knowledge, skills, responsibilities, and opportunities for progression set out. Universal set of values for entire adult social care workforce.</p> <p>High apprenticeship starts within the sector - Health and Social Care made up 16.7% of all apprenticeship starts in Norfolk and Suffolk in academic year 2022/23⁸, higher than any other subject area. Of those, 70% were from those age 25+ and 49% were from those who had been in employment for more than 12 months. This indicates that apprenticeships are being utilised for upskilling existing staff.</p> <p>Embracing Artificial Intelligence (AI) - has the potential to bring huge improvements for people providing and receiving care⁹</p>	<p>Lack of diversity in the workforce - a breakdown by age reveals that 45% of Norfolk and Suffolk’s sector workforce is aged 45+ (compared to 41% across all occupations), with 22% aged 45-54 (all occupations, 22%), and 23% aged 55+ (all occupations, 19%). Those aged 16-24, make up only 10.7% of the social care and health workforce (compared to 13.1% across all occupations)¹⁰, indicating that we need to do more to recruit and retain younger workers to keep pace with replacement demand. Only 18% of the sector’s workforce is made of up men, many of whom will be in management, ancillary or business service roles, meaning that the number of men directly delivering care is fewer than that.⁷</p> <p>Recruitment - vacancies in the sector remain high compared to other sectors. In Norfolk and Suffolk, in 2022, there were around 23,000 job postings in Social Care and Health. 17,501 (76%) of these were for Care Workers and Home Carers⁸. Over the last 5 years, Care Workers and Home Carers has been the top posted occupation. The very high demand points to both a rise in demand for social care, and high staff turn-over.</p> <p>Retention - turnover rates nationally remain high at 29%¹¹, and are even higher for staff under 20 years old (53.7%). 63% are recruited from elsewhere within the sector. This represents significant costs to employers. Care providers cite low pay, high pressure and staff burnout as key causes of the many care workers leaving the sector for better paid jobs in less pressurised environments, such as retail, being the main competitor.⁸</p>

More detailed information included in Appendix 2.

⁷ Skills for Care: Widen your Talent Pool

⁸ Explore Education Statistics GOV.UK

⁹ The State of Health Care and Adult Social Care in England 2023 (CQC)

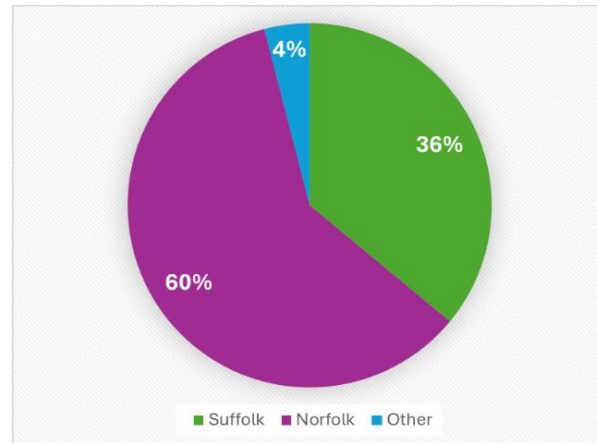
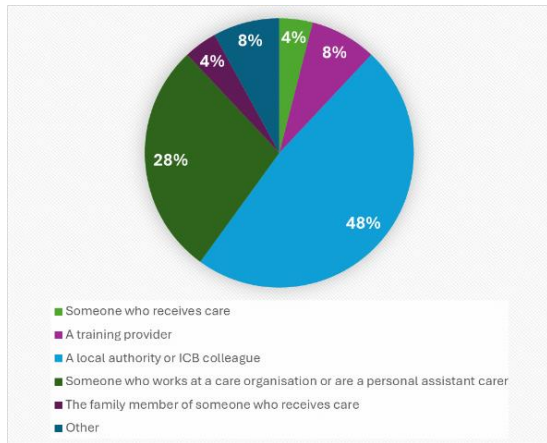
¹⁰ Lightcast, data based on the identified six, four-digit standard occupation classifications.

¹¹ The State of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England (Skills for Care)

3. Consultation Feedback

During the development of the Sector Skills Plan there was extensive consultation by the working group on the proposed priorities. This consultation included:

- An online survey, which was accessed by 62 people and from which there were 25 full responses and 37 partial responses. 60% of respondents were based in Norfolk, with 36% in Suffolk. 8% of respondents were someone who receives care or a family member, 28% were from someone who works at a social care provider or is a personal assistant carer, 8% were from training providers, 48% were from the local authority or Integrated Care Board and 8% were other stakeholders/interested parties.



- Attendance at a range of 12 online and in-person meetings, network groups, and forums, including:

Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Registered Managers

Care Development East Registered Managers

Norfolk Care Association (NorCA) sub-group meetings

There was agreement that all four proposed priorities should be included, as illustrated below. The headlines from the consultation, by priority, are included below with more detailed information included in Appendix 3.

Question: Do you agree with this priority being included?



Consultation Feedback - Increase the Potential Workforce Pool

Current Activity	Suggested Activity	What Success Looks Like	Measurements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment drives/fairs Networking Recruitment agencies Social media/ advertising Overseas recruitment Flexibility Focus on different groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of the sector as a skilled profession Support for childcare Support for mental health Engage with students Better pay Promoting senior roles with all staff Celebrating knowledge and expertise Supporting new recruits with functional skills Government incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating at full capacity with good retention, reduced turnover Happy, settled workforce Providing continuity of high-quality care for clients and their families Talent management programme Competent candidates Increase in men in sector Increased range of ethnicities An offer for 16 – 19-year-olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeing a change in public view of the sector as a career Track new recruits from colleges Track age range of workforce Qualitative data gathering Number of candidates per role Vacancy rates Exit interviews Case studies

Consultation Feedback - Increase Qualifications and Accreditation

Current Activity	Suggested Activity	What Success Looks Like	Measurements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enthusiastic training lead, in-house trainer Training matrix Role champions, mentors, buddies Care Awards Collaboration Supporting workforce to do qualifications Apprenticeships – take up high but lack of data on completion and success. Challenges with training provider understanding of sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better funding for care Qualifications lead to recognition in pay and role Experience recognized Set training time Sharing good practice with other organisations Short bitesize courses Team up with training providers who have funding for free of charge courses Training quote for providers Clear training pathways One government provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are confident to challenge to provide quality care Strong effective team who are valued and respected Staff rewarded for experience and length of service, staff with more recognized certification Improved staff knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased uptake and success on courses Quality measures Feedback from service users and their families Progression e.g. filling of senior vacancies with in-house staff Benchmarking with yearly reporting on training and retention rates Staff satisfaction

Consultation Feedback - Specific Skills Developed Through Training

Current Activity	Suggested Activity	What Success Looks Like	Measurements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction • Mentors, supervision, champions • On the job training • Development via the Quality Improvement Nurses • Specialist trainer employed • Workforce Development Fund free training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to be paid to attend training • Bitesize training to build up to accreditation • Partnerships with local training providers • Train the trainer courses • Seek out budgets for free courses • Nationally recognized training programme • Training expectations to be written into contracts • Training provider accreditation schemes • Training time for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable workforce • Good staff retention • Happy and settled team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased enrolments • Increased completion • Benchmark to increased customer satisfaction • Compare providers- look at staff turnover, care placement breakdowns and safeguarding referrals- can this be linked to issues with lack of understanding/ training?

Consultation Feedback - Good Organisational Environment to Support Retention

Current Activity	Suggested Activity	What Success Looks Like	Measurements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay above the minimum wage, guaranteed hours, paid for training • Carer of the month • Exploring flexible working hours • Legacy Mentor • Sharing of training through managers meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real living wage as a minimum • Permanent contracts • Promoting/celebrating career • Job sharing/flexibility • Ambassadors • Careers/role profiles • Legal representation • Training transferable • Pay into training fund • Upskilling managers • National steer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff rewarded for experience and length of service • A happy, settled workforce, with minimal turnover • Safe working culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved staff wellbeing • Track progress through social care to become specialists • Recognition of experience evident • Increase in recruitment and retention • Staff satisfaction • Service user satisfaction • Length of service • Compare social care • Unmet needs declining

4. Our Priorities for Action



Increase the Potential Workforce Pool

1. Increase the diversity of the workforce
2. Attract new people into the sector
3. Engage with economically inactive people



Increase Qualifications and Accreditation

1. Increase qualifications and accreditation of existing workforce
2. Support uptake and completion of apprenticeships



Specific Skills Developed Through Training

1. Support employers in the sector to identify and meet skills needs
2. Ensuring there is training available to meet the changing, complex needs of the population



Good Organisational Environment to Support Retention

1. Promoting and supporting good leadership in social care and health
2. Ensuring staff wellbeing and good mental health
3. Articulating clear career pathways within the sector



Increase the Potential Workforce Pool



Increase Qualifications and Accreditation



Specific Skills Developed Through Training



Good Organisational Environment to Support Retention

Activity

- Raising the profile of social care with people who are under-represented in the sector and economically inactive people
- Inspire people about social care and health careers
- Support sector to embrace flexibility

- Encouraging understanding between training providers and the sector about the challenges of engaging with accredited training
- Promotion of accredited training
- Establish impact measure for completed training on care

- Explore options for bringing together training providers and sector to discuss training needs & barriers
- Map training to meet sector and residents' future needs
- Amplify employer voice
- Lobby DH&SC for access to Skills Passport Data

- Embedding the Care Workforce Pathway
- Celebrating the sector's good practice and impact
- Providing opportunities to support leaders and managers
- Engage people who access care

Measures

- Skills for Care Workforce data – age, ethnicity, length of time in sector, sector recruited from
- Partnership project data on participants, outputs and outcomes

- Apprenticeship and further education data
- Skills for Care data
- Project participant/learner feedback
- Feedback and data from sector, those who receive care and their families

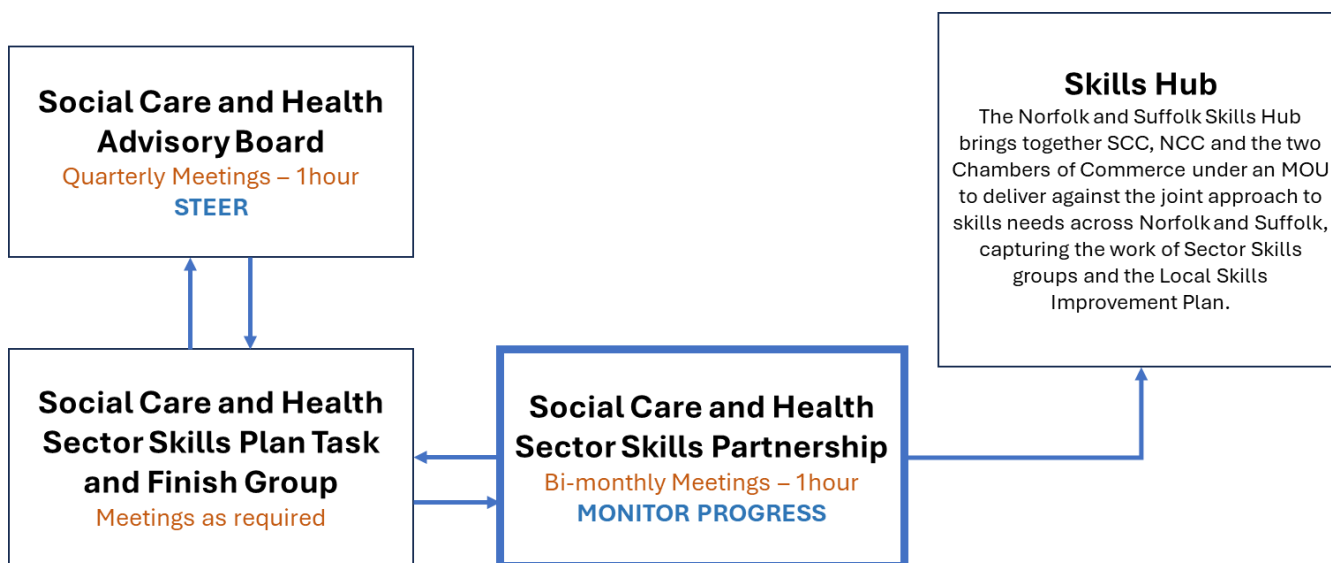
- Training uptake
- Uptake of Workforce Development Funding
- Project participant/learner feedback
- Feedback and data from sector, those who receive care and their families

- Lightcast data - vacancies
- Skills for Care – turnover
- Qualitative data from managers and leaders
- Feedback and data from sector, those who receive care and their families
- Decline in the unmet needs of people who access care

5. Governance

Governance Structure

The diagram below outlines how the sector skills plan will be governed.



Monitor

The Social Care and Health Sector Skills Partnership has been established to oversee and coordinate the aims of the Norfolk and Suffolk Social Care and Health Sector Skills Plan. The group provides a mechanism to monitor the key priorities of the plan in the context of activities undertaken across the sector.

The Partnership will oversee, and routinely measure progress against the priorities of the Sector Skills Plan, ensuring they are embedded in all appropriate Council-related areas of work / responsibility. They will drive, enhance, and coordinate current and new activities which support the priorities of the Sector Skills Plan and contribute to an understanding of the impact of that activity.

Review

The Social Care and Health Sector Skills Partnership will undertake an annual review, designed to provide effective oversight and evaluation of the progress, quality, and outcomes of the sector skills plan's priorities. The review period will be 1 – 31 October each year with a completion date of 31 October. The first review will take place in October 2025.

In conducting their review, the Partnership will:

- Encourage open communication, allowing members to share insights and feedback
- Evaluate progress against priorities and objectives, identifying areas of success and potential improvement
- Identify any barriers to success and discuss strategies for resolution
- Document actions and follow up on them to ensure continuous improvement
- Recommend to the Advisory Board when priorities need to be amended or refreshed.