

**White  
Paper  
Publication  
2023**



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# Introduction

This White Paper Publication presents the results from the first annual Catalyst Care Group survey, conducted in 2023. The survey results include responses from 200+ support workers, commissioners, and families, showcasing the current state and challenges in the UK health and social care community. We express our deepest gratitude to everyone who participated in the survey, for sharing their voice and helping us build an up-to-date picture of the current sector challenges.

Catalyst Care Group is grateful to every respondent who took the time and effort to complete the survey, providing valuable information about the success and gaps in current health and social care practices. By sharing your voice and experiences, you have helped in reshaping our initiatives for transforming the future of the health and social care sector. Your insights will serve as a foundation for continuous improvement in our journey towards excellence in providing care and support.

This White Paper Publication provides the results, and it consists of four sections:

- **Demographics** - includes data on who the survey respondents are and related information about response counts and rates.
- **Responses from support workers and healthcare professionals** - including current experiences, challenges and benefits from working in health and social care.
- **Responses from families** - including the type, place and quality of service provision, as well as the underlying challenges regarding the health and social care services they receive.
- **Commissioners and local authorities** - including personal experiences, current challenges and gaps in the health and social care sector.

## About Catalyst Care Group

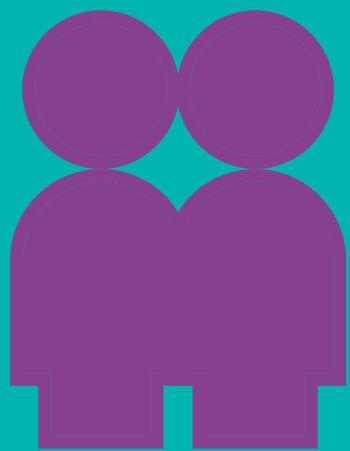
Catalyst Care Group is a family of organisations that provides CQC-regulated, tailored complex care and specialist health and social care staffing solutions.

We are focused on transforming how care is delivered in the UK, facilitating conversations, and shifting perspectives across the sector on how we can work together to support people out of long-stay institutionalised care and building capacity in the community to meet the emerging needs of our population, ultimately enabling care-at-home to be the first port of call.

We work with people who share the same vision and mission of transforming health and social care for the better.

Our company culture is rooted in the core ethos of Family, Impact and Teaming, which empower us to work together in supporting and implementing a human rights-based model of care.

Our pursuit of excellence is a journey committed to continuous learning and improvement, which can be achieved by observing how our organisation and the healthcare sector is evolving.



# Support workers

# Support Workers

Our survey explores the responses of support workers about their roles, challenges and future career goals and expectations in the health and social care sector.

This section incorporates the settings in which support workers carry out their responsibilities, providing valuable insights into the varied work environments within the care sector.

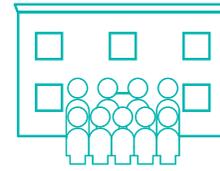
Below, the paper provides a better understanding of the sectoral engagement of support workers, highlighting the diverse ways in which they contribute to healthcare, whether through private entities, public sector services, charity organisations, or a combination of all.



Based on the results, about **70%** of our respondents work in the private sector.



and **25%** work in the public sector.

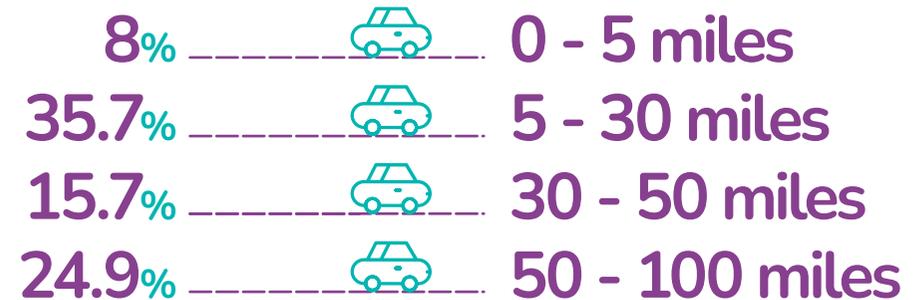


Further numbers show that **40%** of the support workers in our survey work in hospitals, nursing and residential homes,



while **30%** of the respondents work with people in home care settings.

The survey provides a detailed overview of respondents' current working conditions and experiences in the health and social care sector. The paper explores the geographical reach and number of miles travelled to work, pay rates, challenges and expectations of care and support workers in their job roles. Understanding the working patterns of health and social care workers is essential for evaluating job satisfaction and potential challenges in service provision.



Job satisfaction is influenced by financial aspirations and expectations in relation to support workers' roles. The majority of respondents expressed salary expectations in the range of £15 - £20 per hour. This suggests a prevalent expectation for moderate compensation within this bracket. A smaller percentage indicated salary expectations in the range of £40 - £50 per hour, representing a segment of clinicians with higher salary expectations among the survey participants.

# Choosing a Career in Care

In this section, we delve into the motivations that drive support workers to choose a career in care. The responses provide valuable insights into the diverse reasons that attract individuals to the healthcare sector.

Making a difference, interest in healthcare, career progress, and additional income are the most common answers to our questions.

**To make a difference and effect positive change in people's lives.**

Over 50% of the respondents said they chose a career in the care sector because they feel an inner passion for making a difference in people's lives, empowering them to thrive and have a better quality of life.

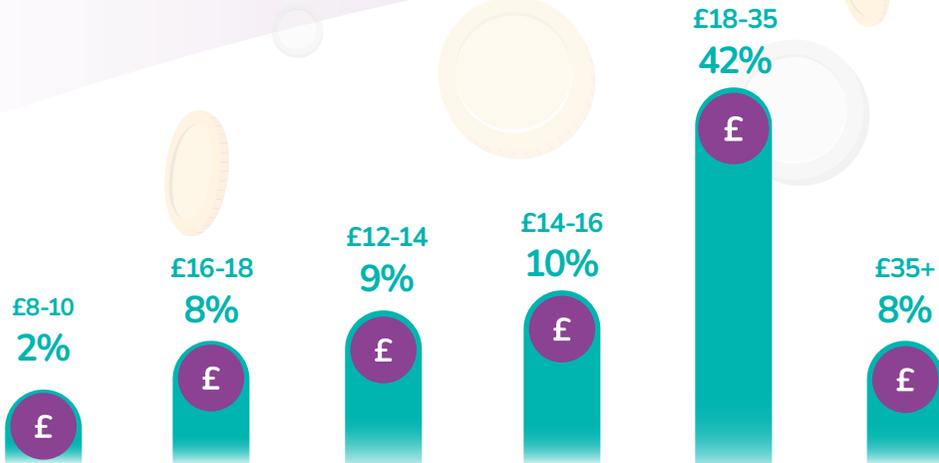
**Interested in working in the healthcare sector.**

About 30% responded that working in the healthcare sector and caring for people makes them feel proud and fulfilled.

**Additional income and opportunity for career progression.**

Almost 20% of the participants saw the health and social care sector as an excellent opportunity for career progress and a way of earning additional income.

*"Because I want to make a difference in an individual's life so they can thrive. Having personal experiences with mental health and as a carer, I know the struggles and have seen what recovery, and the right support can do."*



In our survey, we explored the age groups of individuals that support staff work with, providing insights into the diversity of care recipients and the challenges and requirements associated with different age ranges.

Based on the answers, a significant number of support workers work with individuals aged **18-65**. This group encompasses a broad spectrum of adults with varying health and social care needs,

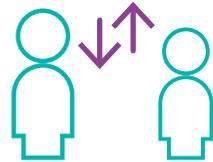


## The *Challenges* Support Workers Face

The next section highlights the various challenges support workers encounter in their roles, ranging from communication issues and skill mismatches to team inconsistencies. Understanding these challenges is crucial for the health and social care sector to address and improve the overall work environment for support workers.



**Lack of communication with care coordinators / leadership.**



**Skills mismatch.**

**Almost 40%**

of the participants reported a lack of communication with the care coordinators and leaders in the field as one of the main challenges they face at work.

**More than 30%**

of the respondents experienced skills mismatch in their careers. The results indicate that this issue is common in the health and social care sector.

## The Most *Rewarding* Aspects of Care Sector Work



**Helping people**



**Seeing people smile**



**Making a difference**



**Making people happy**



**Making an impact and positive outcomes**

*“Helping people, seeing them smile, making them happy, making a difference, and making an impact and positive outcomes are the intrinsic rewards that support workers find most fulfilling in their roles, shedding light on the positive aspects that contribute to their job satisfaction.”*

*“Advocating for people that need this support to obtain the best. The people I support teach me valuable life skills, educating me about themselves. If we take the time and show respect, they are our best teachers.”*

## Team Consistency among support workers



This section provides insights into team consistency among support workers. The majority reported working with a consistent team.

This suggests a stable and familiar work environment, which can positively impact collaboration and the overall quality of care.

However, a smaller percentage reported not working with a consistent team. This lack of consistency may present challenges in communication, coordination, and familiarity among team members.

## The impact of *inconsistent* teams on people with complex care needs

This section underscores the profound impact team inconsistency has on individuals receiving care, affecting their emotional well-being, routine stability, trust in caregivers, and the overall quality of care.

ANXIETY, FRUSTRATION, CONFUSION AND SADNESS FOR PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES.

### Around 40%

of participants responded that frequently changing support teams significantly negatively impact people receiving care. They report increased levels of anxiety and frustration among the individuals they support and their families.

DECREASED TRUST BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THEIR TEAMS AND WITHIN THE TEAM DYNAMIC.

### About 30%

of survey participants reported decreased trust and change in team dynamics due to frequent staff changes.

DIFFICULTIES ADJUSTING TO CHANGES IN ROUTINE AND APPROACHES, RESULTING IN UNNECESSARY INCIDENTS.

### Almost 50%

of respondents answered that a lack of consistent teams is particularly challenging for people who struggle with changes in routines, often leading to behaviour escalations and unnecessary incidents.

LACK OF PERSONALISED KNOWLEDGE OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S NEEDS.

Based on the answers, inconsistent teams lack knowledge and a deeper understanding of the challenges and the personal journey of the people they're supporting.

*"A change in routine for a person receiving care can cause a lot of issues and create negative experiences."*

# The impact of delayed discharges

This section explores the impact of delayed discharges on individuals, their families, and the teams providing care. From the support workers' perspective, delayed discharges significantly impact individuals, their families, and team members. This impact is particularly pronounced when individuals are ready for discharge but face delays due to the availability of necessary care. Clinicians emphasise the need for more funding and increased community capacity to address delayed discharges. Adequate funding is essential to ensure that individuals are not in hospital unnecessarily and can receive the appropriate care in a timely manner.



Anxiety, depression



Waste of resources and time



Negatively impacting trust in the system

1

**PEOPLE:** Delayed discharges can negatively affect the physical and mental well-being of individuals. Prolonged stays in hospitals or care facilities can lead to increased risks of hospital-acquired infections, reduced mobility, and psychological distress.

2

**FAMILIES:** Families often experience emotional and financial difficulties due to delayed discharges. They may have to adjust their lives and commitments to provide support to their loved ones, leading to increases in stress and anxiety.

3

**CARE WORKFORCE:** Delayed discharges put additional strain on healthcare staff. It can increase their workload, cause burnout, and affect the quality of care they provide. Staff may also face challenges in managing bed availability and coordinating resources effectively.

# Improvements in the care sector

The following section captures the insights of support workers regarding areas that need improvement in the care sector. Their perspectives provide valuable guidance for enhancing the overall quality of care and addressing systemic challenges.

Value

Percent

Being paid more

68.7%

More training

48.7%

More funding for people in need

66.0%

Better housing

47.3%

Leadership support

48.0%

Improved legislation

41.3%

Healthier work environment

60.0%

Improving personal wellbeing

68.7%

*“Better collaboration and joint working between different sectors, agencies, and services. More suitably qualified professionals. Not just raising of standards but the monitoring, supporting and delivery of improved standards.”*

*“Data collection, analysis and use in advancing the work of clinicians.\*”*

## Recognition for good practice

The degree to which support workers feel recognised for their good practice by their current employers is directly correlated with job satisfaction and can contribute to a positive and motivated workforce.



Never  
5%

Often  
18%

Not so often  
21%

Yes  
56%

## Current level of qualifications and additional training

It is important to identify the additional training needs and aspirations of support workers in their current roles to ensure continuous professional development and optimise the quality of care provided. Many support workers express a need for training at PBS Level 5. This suggests a desire for advanced skills in positive behaviour support, emphasising a person-centred approach to managing behaviours of concern. In the Learning Disability and Autism subsector, a significant percentage of care workers identify the need for training in Autism Awareness. This underscores the importance of equipping support workers with the knowledge and skills to support autistic individuals effectively.

“PBS level 5, Diploma in practice leadership in reducing restrictive practises, mental health first aider, full first aider, how to deal with challenging conversations, teaching / training qualification.”

## The *future* of the care sector through the eyes of support workers

According to the last question in the survey, the future of the care sector is in good hands, as 88% of respondents envision themselves working in the care sector five years from now.



Lack of great leadership



Retirement



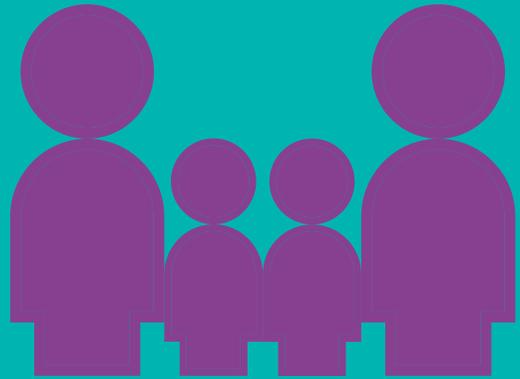
Loss of core values in the care sector

However, 12% of respondents would leave the care sector as a result of losing core values, lack of effective leadership, retirement, and a change of a provider's priority from person-centred to profit-driven.



Change of a provider's priority from person-centric to profit

These are the main reasons respondents do not see themselves in the care sector in 5 years.



Families

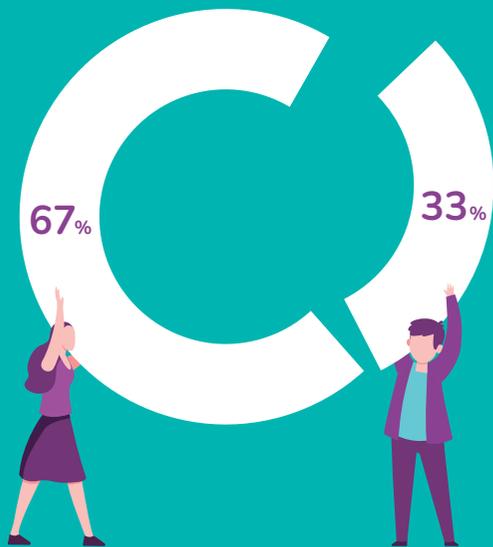


# Recipients of Health and Social Care Services

The survey included answers and experiences of individuals or families receiving health and social care services in the UK. Data analysis provides the overall picture of the quality of the service provision and the need for targeted improvements to ensure comprehensive and accessible health and social support for everyone.

The results also explore the care settings, challenges, and positive impact that care recipients and their families experienced in the private and public care sectors.

## Hospital Admissions with / without a Diagnosed Mental Health Condition



The survey showed that **67%** of respondents had never been admitted or had a family member admitted to hospital, whilst **33%** had direct experience.



Further numbers show that **26%** of our respondents have had experience of themselves or a loved one being admitted to a hospital without a formal mental health diagnosis compared to **74%** with no such experience.

# Understanding the *Mental Health Act*

The survey explored respondents' awareness about the legislation within the Mental Health Act 1983.

The results show that only half of our survey participants were fully informed about key legislation. In contrast, the other half responded that they are lacking of have incomplete knowledge about The Mental Health Act.

*\*The Mental Health Act of 1983 is a delegated regulation that involves the assessment, treatment and rights of people with mental health disorders. People detained under the Mental Health Act require urgent care and support for a mental health disorder or behaviour of concern that poses a risk to themselves or other people. In most cases, people are asked to give their consent for treatment in a hospital or another mental health facility. However, under specific circumstances defined by the Mental Health Act 1983, people can be detained, also known as sectioned and treated against their agreement. If you or a loved one has been admitted to a mental health hospital or facility, make sure to be informed about all your goals and choices when detained under the Mental Health Act.*

## Hospital Admissions - *Inpatient* Experiences

We explored people's awareness of the reasons for a mental health admission and the right to a follow - up discharge plan, respectively. More than 62% of the respondents denied receiving information about the reasons for hospital detention and a suitable discharge plan.

**38% Yes**    **63% No**

Consequently, the survey found that over 66% of participants had concerns before hospital admission.

**67% Yes**    **8% Maybe**  
**25% No**

Our white paper study explored the personal experiences of people being detained in a hospital. The numbers indicate that 66.7% found this environment unsupportive, 22.2% felt neutral, and only 11.1 % reported a positive experience.

**67% Unsupportive**  
**11% Supportive**  
**22% Neutral**



We further explored the distance people travelled to visit their family member in a hospital. Based on the results, 50% of the families had to travel at least 50 miles to visit their loved one, in contrast to 37.5 % who travelled within 100 miles and 12.5% within 300 miles.

**13% Within 300 miles**    **38% Within 100 miles**    **50% Within 50 miles**

When asked about the impact of long-distance placements, almost all the participants responded that having a family member so far from home had very difficult and stressful consequences for the whole family. Only 1% of respondents answered that the long travel hours required for visits were not a major issue.

# Expectations of Hospital Treatment



Behaviour strategies implemented



Discharge plan developed on admission



Supportive environment



Effective assesment



Reduction of symptoms/behaviour



Medication assesment and review



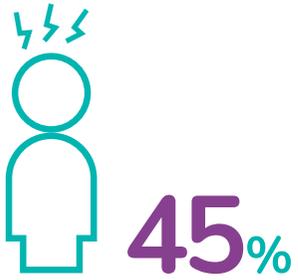
Effective treatment



## Delayed Hospital Discharges

We further explored the consequences of delayed hospital discharges through multiple choice answers. The results showed that prolonged hospital stays have detrimental effects on people's health, leading to intense feelings of isolation, stress, anxiety, and depression.

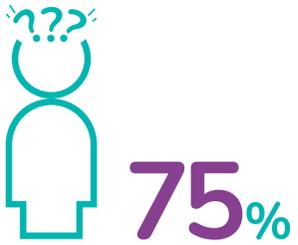




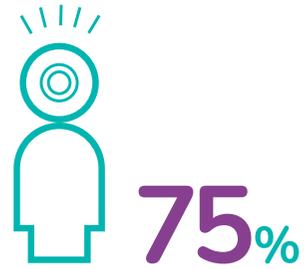
Trauma



Stress



Anxiety



Depression



Lack of trust in professionals



Isolation

Prolonged hospital detention highlights several gaps in the health and social care service provision. Based on the answers, people reported that lack of high-quality care, resources and lack of communication were the main barriers they faced when experiencing delayed hospital discharge.



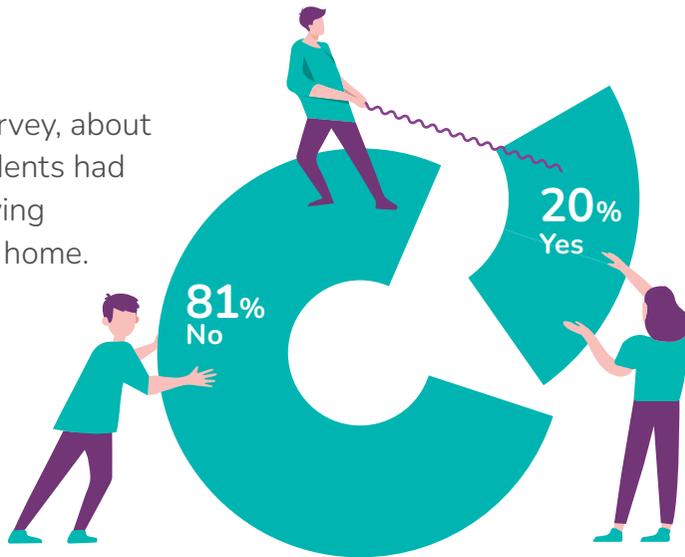
Based on the answers, the main concerns of being detained in a hospital include fear of more time/risk of neglect by staff and loss of contact.

Autistic people, people with learning disability or mental-ill health have, at times, spent around five years in a mental health hospital when detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, and in many cases even longer.

# Tailored Complex support in Home Settings

Bespoke complex care support at home provides personalised and person - centred support to people with physical or mental health needs, With support and care at home, people have a bigger opportunity to recover and gain independence and reach their full potential.

According to our survey, about 20% of the respondents had experience of receiving bespoke support at home.



## Home Care and Support Ratings

The results show that 39% of the participants rated bespoke complex care services as excellent, 29% rated as very good, while small percentage answered with good or poor.

39%



Excellent

29%



Very good

14%



Good/Poor

## The experience of having support workers / nurses in *home settings*

“Good coping strategies and booklets”

“It allowed me to have a life purpose”

“Some good sometimes very poor”

“Sometimes I found it intrusive other times extremely helpful”

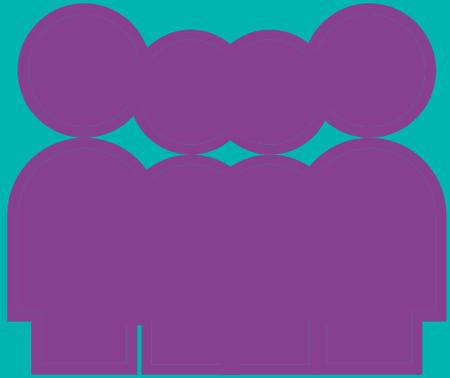
“Sometimes I feel I have to mask around them”

Most respondents reported significantly improved quality of life with bespoke homecare services. Others responded that they had slight or no improvement in their quality of life with personal support at home.

Further,100% of the participants answered that living in the community has helped them gain independence, freedom, trust and multiple social integration opportunities.

Also, respondents wanted the chance to be at home, having received support and advice on better coping mechanisms.

When asked about the downsides of the home care model of support, some of the participants responded that without experienced and tailored support they had felt abandoned and isolated.



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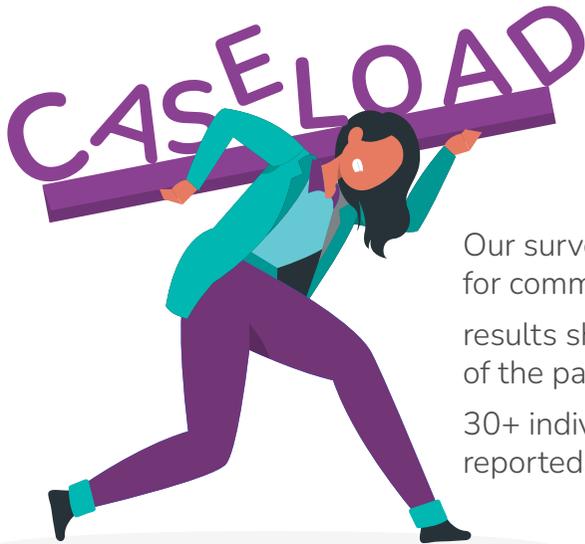
Commissioners

# Health and Social Care Commissioning Insights

Our sector relies on the effective commissioning of public funds. Therefore, we wanted to explore insights from commissioning colleagues across both health and social care.

This survey includes responses from commissioners, sharing more about their roles, current challenges and possible solutions for building a stronger care market.

People who choose to follow a career path in commissioning are passionate about developing initiatives to improve health and social care services and outcomes, ensuring access to great care and support.



Our survey evaluated the average caseload for commissioner participants, and the results show that more than **40%** of the participants have a caseload of 30+ individuals, whilst a further **40%** reported caseloads of 40+ people.

## How large is your caseload?



Additionally, **50%** of our respondents responded they have been working as case commissioners for 5-10 years. The remaining numbers are shown below.





Our survey analysed the population demographics our respondents were commissioning for, and results show

that **66.7%** of the respondents work within mental health,



with **60%** working in Adult Services



and **26.7%** working with children. Most respondents were familiar with the issue around effective transition periods for people.

Our definition of transitions was broad, encompassing the transition from Child to Adult Services, as well as transitions from hospital to community.

We explored the most common challenges that commissioners face when delivering on their duties, and the answers provide us with a comprehensive picture of the current state of the UK health and social care system.

**Our survey shows the following data:**

**80%** of commissioners reported a lack of funding as the main challenge

**30%** of commissioners selected “All the above” as an option when we listed the challenges

**40%** commissioners reported a lack of accommodation and community capacity for people

The survey focused on current provider market capacity regarding care placement availability. About 40% of participants reported a need for higher quality care provision, with a focus on complex needs. Sufficient and growing availability is required to meet population needs.

## What needs to be *improved* in the system?

Our final segment focused on the current gaps in the care sector, and what commissioners felt needed to be improved to ensure access to quality service provision for people.



## Additional Comments and Reviews



**Ashleigh Fox**  
Catalyst Care Group

It has been a privilege to be involved in the development of Catalyst Care Group's first white paper publication. We would like to thank every individual who participated in gathering this research, as well as those who have given their expert insights and feedback having analysed our findings.

Our goal at Catalyst is to work with everyone in our sector to bring about positive change, recognising the individual strengths, knowledge and commitment that every piece of our ecosystem brings to the national discussion. We all have a voice and a responsibility to identify what's not working, and commit to driving improvement through continuous learning and evolution.

Our CEO, Trevor Mapondera, is often heard talking about a shift in mindset within the care sector; a mindset that moves from accepting or complaining about the status quo to one that champions the pursuit of excellence from all.

The aim of this white paper is to share information with everyone in the sector, and spark discussions around where we go next in the world of providing human-centred care and support in people's own homes.

That has to be the future.

Without collective commitment to bring the best of ourselves and show up every single day, our care sector simply wouldn't exist.

We see you. We acknowledge you. And we are grateful to each of you.

Love,

Ashleigh



**Karolina Gerlich**  
Care Worker's Charity

I am pleased to see this excellent report. The insight that 50% of respondents are driven to pursue a care sector career to impact lives positively is echoed in our conversations with care workers at The Care Workers' Charity. Social care is often discussed as a vocation, reflecting a deep personal commitment. It is disheartening, though not entirely surprising, to learn that many of the respondents do not work with a consistent team and the impact of this on team morale and those drawing on social care. We know from applications to us and talking to care workers that levels of burn-out within the workforce are very high it is hugely concerning to us.

It is encouraging to see that 56% of employers acknowledge and implement good practices. However, we aim to see this figure reach 100%. Ensuring fair wages corresponding to increasing responsibilities and regularly expressing gratitude are crucial to creating a supportive work environment. Care workers, as highly skilled professionals, deserve recognition both for their expertise and as individuals with lives beyond their profession. Adopting a humanistic approach that treats care workers with the same dignity expected of those receiving social care is essential. This is currently lacking in the sector as a common practice as care workers are too often treated as tools that deliver care not human beings with their own needs and rights. This approach fosters a respectful and supportive work environment, enabling care workers to provide optimal support.

Continuing to directly ask about the experiences of care workers, as exemplified in this report, is crucial for understanding and improving their roles.



**Keryn Morris**

Locality Manager for BNSSG  
and Gloucestershire

**This Catalyst Care Group survey fits well with some recent research that Skills for Care commissioned to better understand the reasons why care workers leave jobs in social care, what factors motivate them to leave, what factors might have motivated them to stay, and their future intentions.**

To support the sector on 12 October 2023, Skills for Care announced plans to develop a new and comprehensive workforce strategy for adult social care.

We believe a strategy for adult social care will only work if it's created by the many organisations and people that have a stake in the future of social care - so we'll be working with a wide range of partners.

The strategy will identify the adult social care workforce needs over the next 15 years and set out a plan for ensuring the sector has enough of the right people with the right skills. It will help employers and commissioners with workforce planning, support the Government's reform agenda and complement the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan.

Keeping the people we have is also part of this strategy, keeping those people who've chosen to work in adult social care. We can see from the data it's a 'leaky bucket' we need to repair - significant numbers leave the sector each year.

Skills for care are also working with Department of Health and Social care on a new care workforce pathway.

Following the white paper, People at the Heart of Care, published in December 2021 which included the commitment to work with our adult social care colleagues, including employers, the workforce and people who draw on care and support, we will co-develop a universal framework setting out the knowledge and skills needed to work in adult social care, as well as a clear career structure for the workforce. We also committed to exploring options to embed the framework consistently across the sector so that it becomes a recognised tool for describing all adult social care roles.



**Kirsty Eastham**

Expert Commissioning  
Consultant

I cannot stress enough what a hugely important piece of work this research, by Catalyst Care Group, is. The survey provides invaluable insights into the ongoing challenges faced by the care sector. The paper not only gives a very rounded and informed picture of the range of issues that commissioners, care workers, families and individuals are facing but also, perhaps more importantly, gives a number of improvements that can be made to help address the main issues.

It will be no surprise to commissioners and people involved in providing care that care workers are motivated most by helping people and by knowing they are making a real difference to people's lives. Commissioners need assurance there are measures in place to recognise and reward care workers for the vital work they do. Changes also need to be made to ensure there is effective and consistent leadership in the care sector and that person-centred care continues to be prioritised above profit.

**It is also not surprising that families and individuals' value, above all else, being supported at home or as close to home as possible. Bespoke, individualised care which is centred on delivering independence and social integration provides the best outcomes and this is what people appreciate and want. Delays in hospital discharges continue to rise and pose one of the greatest challenges for commissioners and the care sector as a whole. The focus for commissioners needs to be, not only enabling swift and timely discharge from hospital, but also avoidance of hospital admissions in the first place and intensive support, information and guidance for individuals and families when hospital admittance is the only option.**

Funding of local Authorities and ICBs continues to be really challenging and this has led to increased caseloads and greater dissatisfaction amongst commissioners. There is a clear need for greater collaboration across the care sector and continued work to enable a diverse and strong provider market.



**Thank you for your  
engagement!**

Catalyst Care Group  
Head Office: 2510 Aztec West, Bristol BS32 4AQ

Email: [admin@catalystgrp.co.uk](mailto:admin@catalystgrp.co.uk)  
Company number: 03458942264