



# REC Social Care

The Recruitment & Employment Confederation's (REC) Health and Social Care sector group provides specialist support and advice to recruitment agencies who work across the health and social care space. It provides a forum for any recruiter supplying to the sector to discuss policy, market conditions and regulatory issues affecting their business.

## Social Care

Social care workers are a key part of the UK workforce, providing care to people across the whole span of their life; covering children and teenagers, people with learning disabilities, dementia, mental health issues, long-term conditions and those requiring end-of-life care. With significant advancements in healthcare, people are living longer than ever before. An ageing population brings unique challenges which have to be met by government. Despite social care having been traditionally provided informally by family and friends, the industry is now growing.

Despite the vital role of social care in the health and well-being of the nation, the sector has often been under-resourced, under-valued and has lacked clear training and defined career pathways.<sup>1</sup> There are currently 1.3 million people in the UK providing more than 50 hours of unpaid care per week, and three in every five people become a carer at some point.<sup>2</sup>

Age UK estimated that in 2012, £5.3bn was wiped from the UK economy as a result of the lost earnings of carers giving up work.<sup>3</sup>

*"Health and social care in the UK is a rapidly changing industry and with an increasingly older population, the demand to supply staff to the sector is likely to increase. More and more people want to be cared for in their own homes and communities, and the recruitment industry is well-placed to meet the need. The Health and Social Care sector group will continue to fight your corner and champion the positive impact we have on people's lives."*

Gary Taylor, Strategic Partnership Director,  
ICS Group Ltd

## Focus on skills shortage

The adult social care sector in England faces a gap of 200,000 care workers by 2020 because of restrictions on immigration and a failure to attract British workers. Longer term, the sector could face a shortfall of 1 million workers in the next twenty years.<sup>4</sup>

Approximately 1.45 million people work in adult social care in England, but it is already struggling to recruit and retain staff. Nearly 1 in 20 (4.8%) of positions in England are currently vacant – nearly twice the vacancy rate in the UK's labour force as a whole (2.6%).<sup>5</sup>



# THE REC GUIDE : SOCIAL CARE

The social care sector is dominated by older workers, and is heading for a crisis if it fails to attract younger people. The marked reduction of temporary assignments offered to the under 35's<sup>6</sup> means those who have just entered the profession and are in the early stages of their careers, are finding it harder to adequately develop their skills in the workplace.

Local authorities are focussing their efforts on addressing crisis situations, rather than on long-term planning for the future of the sector. The Health and Social Care sector group will be calling for local authorities to do more to offer appropriate assignments and training to those with less experience or who have just entered the profession; equipping both them and the sector for the future.

Our asks of government:

- Extra investment in training, apprenticeships and career development to make social care an attractive career choice.
- Adding highly skilled roles within the adult social care sector to the Shortage Occupation List, making it easier for employers to recruit from overseas when they have exhausted UK sources.
- Allow lower skilled but vetted migrant workers to enter the social care workforce by opening up the Tier 3 visa route.
- Seek clarity on the long-term status of EU nationals currently working in social care in the UK.

The REC's Health and Social Care sector group has a strong history of analysing policy developments, finding solutions and campaigning for change.



Our ask of government is extra investment in training in social care.

## Get Involved

The REC's Health and Social Care sector group provides specialist support and a forum for members working in the health and social care sector – both clinical and non-clinical. There are currently over 800 members of the health and social care group.

If you are interested in finding out more about the group or about future meetings look at the website for regular updates or talk to your Account Manager. For more information email [info@rec.uk.com](mailto:info@rec.uk.com) or call 0207 7009 2100.

[www.rec.uk.com/health-and-social-care](http://www.rec.uk.com/health-and-social-care)

<sup>1</sup> REC (2015) Getting on: what progression looks like for low-paid workers today. Available at: [https://www.rec.uk.com/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/260255/Getting-On-2015-progression-for-low-paid-workers.pdf](https://www.rec.uk.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/260255/Getting-On-2015-progression-for-low-paid-workers.pdf) <sup>2</sup> House of Commons (June 2016) Backbench business debate on carers. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-06-09/debates/16060925000001/Carers> <sup>3</sup> Age UK Care in crisis: more than £5.3 billion wiped from the economy. Available at: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/archive/care-in-crisis-more-than-53-billion-wiped-from-the-economy/> <sup>4</sup> Independent Age (2015) Available at: <https://www.independentage.org/news-media/press-releases/care-sector-faces-crisis-as-huge-new-care-workforce-gap-revealed-0> <sup>5</sup> International Longevity Centre-UK (2015) Moved to Care. Available at: [http://www.ilcuk.org.uk/index.php/publications/publication\\_details/moved\\_to\\_care](http://www.ilcuk.org.uk/index.php/publications/publication_details/moved_to_care) <sup>6</sup> Comensura (December 2015) Social Care Index. Available at: <http://www2.comensura.com/socialcareindex/issue3>