

Sustaining our vital Adult Social Care Workforce: Be The Difference in Bury.



In partnership with



BURY
INTEGRATED CARE
PARTNERSHIP

Over the last 3 years Bury Council alongside Bury Integrated Care Partnership and their Recruitment and Development Partners, Unique Training Solutions have built initiatives that have proactively encouraged people to join and develop skills within our local Adult Social Care Workforce. It is no secret that the demand on this workforce is growing and there has been a number of challenges in recent years that have impacted nationally and locally, the ability the sector has to attract and retain great people.

Together we are making a positive impact on increasing access to jobs, supporting people into jobs, increasing skills to progress within the sector and widening access to resources and tools that will strengthen workforce growth. We wanted to outline some of the collaborative work we are doing to shine the spotlight on these challenges and the support Bury is giving to our Social Care Providers.



Burys Adult Social Care Workforce Challenges

In May 2023, Matt Logan, Strategic Lead Integrated Commissioning Team, Bury Council alongside Emma Arnold Workforce Transformation Lead, Bury Integrated Care Partnership and in partnership with UTS hosted a provider event that enabled the private voluntary and independently owned, care services within Bury to openly share recruitment and retention challenges and share ideas with a team of experts to collectively agree on a set of impactful prioritised solutions.

Our services experienced significant challenges in attracting candidates;

- ✓ Candidates not meeting service employability criteria with regards to shift requirements and pay, the right to work in the UK, no UK drivers licence and distance to travel. Many applicants were unable to work split shifts, unsociable hours, commit to weekends in addition to core hours. Many applicants were restricted to work a number of hours around other lifestyle commitments or financial benefits.
 - ✓ Domiciliary providers exposed to greater challenges in hiring, hit harder by increased cost of living, car insurance and petrol.
 - ✓ Many applicants were from alternative local services, which means talent is revolving as opposed to growing.
 - ✓ Employees feeling the “pressure” of the sector and leaving to find less stressful employment in other areas.
- ✓ “Fishing” from the same talent pond: Services were consistently identifying the same applications.
 - ✓ An aging workforce with only 7% of total workforce across all Social Care under the age of 25.

Impact of Challenges

The overwhelming negative impact of these challenges were;

- ✔ Increased agency costs and reduction in consistency and quality of temporary staffing provision.
- ✔ Increased unfilled vacancies in sector.
- ✔ Reduced attraction to work in sector.
- ✔ Increased workforce retention from acquisition to 9 months of onboarding .
- ✔ Increased costs of recruitment.
- ✔ Decreased diversity of workforce.
- ✔ Decreased access to workforce.
- ✔ Decreased growth of workforce and growth of care provision.

Priority Objectives

Providers set the following objectives:

- ✔ Increase in our care workforce to keep up with the pace with growth in demand.
- ✔ Increase the access to experienced talent who can meet needs of the growing demand for greater complex provision.
- ✔ Attract and influence more people (with an emphasis on early careers , under 25) to the local social care workforce in Bury.
- ✔ Decrease reliance on agencies.
- ✔ Increase access to high -quality learning and development for all providers.
- ✔ Drive an honest and positive narrative/image around working in Social care in Bury.

Funding

UTS/ Bury Council/BIPC also added the following objectives based on observations across local sector providers and data collated (UTS) and provided by Skills for Care.

- ✔ Increase competency-based hiring, increase emphasis on transferable skills, competencies to work in care and support jobs.
- ✔ Drive greater provider collaboration in resolution of the recruitment/retention challenges.
- ✔ Better mirror the workforce capacity, capability and needs for greater flexibility.
- ✔ Drive initiatives to providers that had fair pay scales that met the National Living Wage standards (or more) and encourage others to address their pay rates.
- ✔ Significantly improve application and onboarding processes.
- ✔ Use technology to improve capacity within workforce transformation.
- ✔ Meet funding objectives.

It's essential that each Recruitment and Retention strategy meets the objectives of the Workforce Development and Market Sustainability and Improvement Funding. Fundamentally, each initiative has to ensure people are joining employment in social care and/or progressing careers and developing health and social care skills for the benefit of the sector.

Solutions

The solutions developed enabled us to reach as many touchpoints within the priorities and objectives as possible. We built a centralised service that has become accessible to all private, voluntary and independent providers

- ✓ Centralised Permanent Recruitment function.
- ✓ Centralised Shared Workforce Function “Bury Flex”.
- ✓ Centralised Early Careers placement function.
- ✓ Centralised Coaching and Advisory service.

1. Centralised Permanent Recruitment function

Bury Adult Social Care, since early 2022 has a central recruitment team that providers can share all open, care and support vacancies with. The team advertises, screens and signposts relevant candidates into providers ready to interview. We average approximately 30 open vacancies a month spanning a wide range of positions, skill types and shift requirements. Our recruitment team work to clear performance indicators that ensure candidates meet expectations, attend interviews and are processed to job offerings.

Key achievements in the last 12 months, together we have secured;

- ✓ Permanent employment offers for over **75 people**.
- ✓ **1 in 2** people that have interviewed for open vacancies have secured an offer.
- ✓ **84%** have accepted the offer and started employment.
- ✓ **30%** of applicants offered have been new to the social care sector.
- ✓ **70%** of people offered, already have over 2 years’ experience in sector.
- ✓ All offers of employment have been within Bury commissioned services.



1. Centralised Permanent Recruitment function

The team, led by UTS are experienced recruiters and work to a competency screening framework that ensures we offer a “candidate-led” decision making process. This service enables applicants that want to start a career and/or explore career progression the opportunity to be honest and open about what hours they can work, the skills they have and need to develop, and various other factors that can prevent and contribute to a person working in Bury’s care sector. The team use technology to track vacancies and onboard applications

Bury Adult Social Care, now gather data around why people make recruitment decisions locally and enables us to provide expert advice to providers to improve their own recruitment processes. 89% of recruitment decisions are made based on “matching” job criteria with personal capacity and capability needs.

A large number of shift patterns, onboarding timescales, personal skills development, pay and benefits do not meet the needs and ambitions of the “talent marketplace”. Centralising increases this ability to match correctly. Signposting successfully screened applicants means they do not have to apply to multiple jobs that do not match their capabilities and capacity to work, thus saving time and money for employers who do not have to advertise and screen candidates who don’t meet the requirements of the service. It works to add structure to the “talent pool”.

With the increased demand for an enhanced community workforce its essential the team are educating applicants about the vacancies and progression available in community posts, and swiftly signposting drivers with cars to the domiciliary providers.

Case Study:

Female Care and Support Worker

No experience working in sector – lives in Bury

“She” had always wanted to work in care but did not have the confidence to train when she was younger, she also felt overwhelmed by how many jobs she could apply for and didn’t really know where to start. After a screening and wider career coaching session with the UTS recruitment team we were able to fully understand her ambitions and transferable skills from her previous experience caring for family members and being a foster carer for over 20yrs, she received the confidence boost that she needed to realise she had the ability and potential to excel in sector. She was offered an interview and accepted an offer of employment at Killelea House.

2. BURY FLEX: A Centralised Shared Workforce Function

We are hugely excited by the ongoing potential of Bury Flex. Since November 2023, Bury Council and BICP in partnership with UTS have designed, built and piloted a shared workforce initiative that allows providers in Bury access to a “ready to work” bank of flexible workers. The criteria for the current Flex Workforce is 9months+ UK experience in a care and support position, fully compliant with UK, RTW legislation and further CQC Regulation 19: Fit and better persons employment. The Flex Recruitment Team process all applications, compliance and training processes. Once a worker is “ready to work” we facilitate the introduction into contractual casual employment, directly to each provider. Each provider is then responsible for payroll and working time directive requirements.

The Bury Flex workforce:

- ✓ Flex's to meet the needs of care skills and skills provision required by providers.
- ✓ Flex's to fill the utilisation gaps caused by sickness, holidays and winter pressures.
- ✓ Flex's to match the needs of the workforce.

This service “levels up” access to additional staffing needs. Many smaller providers do not have the ability to add supernumerary employees to an already stretched financial commitments.

Flex enables employees of the care sector to build “portfolio careers”. It facilitates the ability to work across a diverse range of services, enhancing skills and sharing knowledge and capability with others. Flex is about ensuring employees remain working in sector or have the social care sector as a secondary employment opportunity.

Bury Flex uses a digital onboarding, scheduling and time management system to manage Flex workers compliant working hours. It enables providers to log shift requirements with Bury Flex and for us to quickly send push notifications to a growing workforce. It also enables providers to track who they have working and the hours that are due payment. The Flex team run consistent wellbeing and performance checks to ensure both worker and provider are receiving the best service possible.

During a small pilot phase across 2-3 providers, Bury Flex has been able to offer over **2000 extra hours into sector**. This is increasing as more workers are invited to join the Flexible service. Each worker currently **offers an average of 18 additional hours per week** and the ambition is to grow this, with additional funding available from May 24, **to support at least 900-1000 extra hours per week over the coming 12 months**.

Bury Flex is proving vital to supporting domiciliary work and night work **with over 80% of shifts covered** in home care.

With Bury Flex, “Sharing really is Caring”.

2. Centralised Permanent Recruitment function

Case Study:

Bury Flex Provider

Domiciliary Care Provider

A domiciliary care provider, within Bury Community has a large number of shifts that require out of core hour working. Offer both walking shifts, driving and double up shifts. All “in-home” care. Shift patterns are 7 days per week 7am-2pm and 4-10pm. We have been able to provide them with casual workers who can work these shift patterns both weekdays and weekends.

So far they allocate at least 10 shift rounds with us per week – approx. 250 hours per week is what they need short term.

Bury Flex have filled 80% of shifts, during the pilot. Flex workers have really enjoyed the shifts and work and the feedback has been excellent. As worker numbers increase we will be able to support further. This service works especially well for flex “international workers” that request 20 hours in addition to core working hours with their sponsored employers, as there is always a demand for out of hours work. UTS have been incredibly impressed with the Care Coordination team who have partnered with us from the get-go to ensure this pilot has worked for them.

“The overall feedback from the staff we have used from Bury Flex has been amazing, Very confident in the role using M&H equipment and with medication. Very engaging with the clients. Needed very little support from the on-call support team”

3. Centralised ‘Early Careers’ placement function.

In 2024 The “Bury Workforce Strategy Grow Programme” and UTS are working alongside Bury College, Health and Social Care educational departments to streamline the transitioning of Health and Social Care students into Burys’ Social Care providers for both course aligned, work experience placements and the opportunity to gain paid employment placements. Currently, there is a disconnect with students wanting to gain experience in sector but are not offered the experience in our health and care services for numerous reasons, such as young person safeguarding (under 18) so a large part of this initiative is to work with providers to understand the challenges of having younger people invited into the workforce and solutions to overcome and further encourage young people to work in our sector. It is also to gather as many opportunities as possible and present them as directly to the students as possible.

Together as a Bury community, we need to influence and provide employment opportunities to young people that have an educational interest in the social sector and enable and empower them to follow early career paths, or we lose them to other sectors such as hospitality and retail.

Good lessons can be learnt from observing the way other sectors encourage and engage young people into organisations and the early experiences they gain stepping on to the career paths and up through progression pathways.

4. Centralised Access to Workforce Resources

UTS alongside, the BICP Workforce Transformation Lead has supported the development of a central access point for workforce resources. This vital central access will allow everyone in the Health and Social Care in Bury to access information that can support workforce sustainability including Equality Diversity and Inclusion and Wellbeing resources. It also provides a destination to promote workforce training and development, funded initiatives such as Bury Flex and the central recruitment support.

5. Centralised Coaching and Advisory service

Every initiative the Council and providers engage with has a direct and indirect effect on developing skills in workforce management. Information shared in webinars, specific training sessions and just daily updates with providers means we are constantly sharing ideas and expert knowledge about the Adult Social Care talent market, current workforce benchmarking skills and planning and managing a critical workforce.

Impact of Solutions

The centralised provision of recruitment is having a positive impact on growing and sustaining Bury's, Social Care workforce.

- ✔ Increased access to temporary staffing provision – reducing requirement and spend from agencies. In time as more hours are available by Flex workers this will reduce spend on agency fees.
- ✔ Filled vacancies in sector, in Bury.
- ✔ Significantly increased access and attraction to employment opportunities in sector, in Bury, as able to attract experienced and non-experienced workers in to both permanent and/or flexible employment that suits them. Each applicant is signposted, significantly reducing rejections across the sector.
- ✔ Decreased average cost of hire by an average of 65%.
- ✔ Given valuable “care time” back to management as a high proportion of recruitment processing is managed by the UTS central team.
- ✔ With an increased access to available work that matches a talents needs it automatically increases diversity. As an example, The care sector in Bury has a high proportion of experienced talent that are working parents (85% female) so to increase flexibility, increases their ability to work, even if short hours (10-16) per week. Bury Flex have seen a keen interest from all ages and genders, which differs in comparison to perm hiring diversity. Flex has a strong interest from male workers for night shifts.
- ✔ Increased promotion and actual pay to the National Living wage standards as adopted by all providers using Bury council recruitment and retention initiatives.
- ✔ Enabled nursing students that lived in and around Bury to use education and experience to gain paid employment.
- ✔ Centralised recruitment services match the fair and flexible working practices, with fair pay and increase opportunity for greater diversity and employment standards in the workforce as laid out in the Good Employment Charter for GM.

To discover more about these centralised services
please contact emma@uniquetrainingsolutions.co.uk



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