

# nmds-sc briefing

## Issue 4 - QUALIFICATIONS

“ Our vision is that by 2020 we will have a highly skilled, valued and accountable workforce. To be excellent the workforce needs to be properly trained and skilled.

*Options for Excellence 2006 (Dept of Health, DfES)*

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The Care Standards Act 2000 set out how inspection of social care services would be carried out against Regulations and National Minimum Standards (NMS). The National Minimum Standards set targets that by December 2005:

- Registered Managers should obtain NVQ Level 4 or equivalent in both Management and Care.
- At least half the staff in each care home should have the NVQ Level 2 in Care
- Domiciliary Care: 50% of all personal care by the provider to be delivered by workers NVQ qualified by 1st April 2008.

This edition of *NMDS-SC Briefing* reviews what initial findings can be drawn from the employee returns about qualification achievement. It is difficult to take a firm position on targets as the NMS are guidelines and were to have been revised by the Department of Health. This has been postponed to await the new inspection regime, the Care Quality Commission. However if we consider these initial guidelines – How is the sector progressing towards the goal of “a well trained and appropriately qualified and motivated workforce”, outlined by David Behan.

The latest Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) report ‘The State of Social Care in England 2005/06’ provides data at a registered service level and shows an improving situation with regard to the percentage of registered services meeting or exceeding the NMS qualifications target. The NMDS-SC however, provides a view of the qualification levels of the whole care workforce and allows analysis by job role, worker demographics, length of service, etc.

With regards to the National Minimum Standards it would appear that there is significant progress in terms of Registered Managers. However the data suggests that the sector still needs to make progress with regard to Care Workers.

In reading this issue of Briefing it should be noted that the quality of information received on qualification levels to date has been variable. As such the levels of no information or no qualifications held is probably overstated. As employers come to update their initial returns, the quality of the data will improve.

By the end of May 2007 there were returns from nearly 2,000 Registered Managers in the NMDS-SC, 57% of whom held a qualification at NVQ Level 4. This varies slightly across settings and is lowest in domiciliary care settings (see table below).

Highest Qualifications Held	All Services	Care Home Only	Care Home with Nursing	Domiciliary Care
<b>Registered Manager (Base)</b>	<b>1,966</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>171</b>
Level 4 or above	57.2%	55.6%	57.2%	47.4%
Level 3	16.9%	15.2%	19.9%	16.4%
NVQ Level 2	1.5%	1.4%	0.3%	4.7%
Entry or 1	-	-	-	-
Other relevant qualifications	19.4%	17.2%	17.3%	21.6%
No relevant qualification or non-recorded	22.6%	26.2%	22.2%	26.3%

\* column totals may sum to over 100% because 'other' qualifications cannot be assigned to an NVQ Level

There were also 22% and 20% of Registered Managers in Care Homes and Care Homes with Nursing who were working towards qualifications at Level 4 or above. Overall the figures do suggest progress towards the target in the National Minimum Standards.

The picture is less positive for Care Workers. Numbers holding qualifications at Level 2 and above are somewhat below 50% (see Level 2 sub-total row in table below).

Highest Qualifications Held	All Services	Care Home Only	Care Home with Nursing	Domiciliary Care
<b>Care Worker (Base)</b>	<b>48,642</b>	<b>16,629</b>	<b>12,707</b>	<b>9,422</b>
Level 4 or above	1.2%	1.3%	0.8%	1.0%
Level 3	5.6%	5.5%	3.7%	4.2%
NVQ Level 2	18.0%	20.9%	12.6%	19.2%
<b>Sub Total – Level 2 or Above</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>27.7%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>24.4%</b>
Entry or 1	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
Other relevant qualifications	11.1%	12.4%	6.9%	10.4%
No relevant qualification or non-recorded	68.1%	64.5%	79.2%	67.9%

\* column totals may sum to over 100% because 'other' qualifications cannot be assigned to an NVQ Level

The likelihood of the target being achieved appears worrying – however given the high turnover and pay levels of Care Workers, this is to be expected (see Issues 2 and 3 of Briefings). There is currently a significant proportion of data in the 'no relevant qualifications / non-recorded' – as data quality improves this picture will be come clearer.

## Question...

### Are employers sufficiently aware of the qualification levels of their Care Workers?

We do not know how many Care Workers currently in training (see table below) already meet the NMS target, but if we assume those doing qualifications at Levels 3 and 4 already have a Level 2 this would leave only 12% of Care Workers across all services working towards the Level 2 target. The annual turnover rate in the sector as a whole (See NMDS-SC Briefing 2) is around 25%. This means that currently employers may be training fewer staff than they lose on annual basis.

Highest Qualifications in Progress	All Services	Care Home Only	Care Home with Nursing	Domiciliary Care
<b>Care Worker (Base)</b>	<b>48,642</b>	<b>16,629</b>	<b>12,707</b>	<b>9,422</b>
Level 4 or above	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	0.4%
Level 3	4.6%	4.7%	2.7%	2.8%
NVQ Level 2	11.5%	13.3%	6.9%	14.1%
Entry or 1	0.1%	0.1%	-	0.1%
Other relevant qualifications	3.9%	5.5%	1.7%	2.0%
No relevant qualification or non-recorded	84.6%	77.3%	88.9%	81.0%

\* column totals may sum to over 100% because 'other' qualifications cannot be assigned to an NVQ Level

## Domiciliary Care Settings

Staff in Domiciliary Care are the next group to be set qualification targets. By the end of 2007, Registered Managers should have a management qualification at Level 4 or above (but unlike Registered Managers in care homes, not also a care qualification). In addition 50% of all personal care by the provider to be delivered by workers NVQ qualified or equivalent by 1st April, 2008.

Currently 47% of Registered Managers have a Level 4 qualification(s). The NMDS-SC also shows that 30% are working towards this qualification and a further 6% towards another relevant qualification. Again this suggests progress for this grade of staff.

For Care Workers in domiciliary care settings just over 19% hold a relevant NVQ at Level 2, with a further 5% holding qualifications at Level 3 and above. Again, while acknowledging levels of non-response – the data does suggest significant progress is still required.

Care Workers working towards Level 2 qualifications (which should be all workers not already qualified that began employment in the last 6 months and all existing workers employed for less than 2 years at the commencement of the standards, NMS) is recorded as 14%, with a further 2% doing other relevant qualifications. This is against an annual turnover rate of 28% for these workers.

These figures underline the impact of turnover and how it is preventing the sector from gaining the benefits from the increased investment and involvement in training that has occurred:

- Government spending on social care workforce development and training was £284 million in 2005/6, three times as much as the amount in 2002/3. (Options for Excellence)
- Over the last 3 years councils have received and directed training grants worth £48 million to improving the qualifications of care workers in private and voluntary sectors. The training grant for this purpose has been extended for another 2 years. (CSCI website).
- Options for Excellence suggested that this led to an increase of the overall number of care sector NVQ registrations from June 2005 to June 2006 of 22.4%, and of NVQ qualifications by 42.7%.

## Other patterns in Qualifications levels (All services):

(i) **Age:** Those in the 35-44 age group are the most likely to be qualified, followed by the 45-54 years group (both showing at least 38% qualified at Level 2 or above). It is encouraging that the most engaged age groups in working towards qualifications are the 18-24 and 25 -34 groups (both with 20% or more working towards relevant qualifications).

(ii) **Investors in People (IIP) Status:** Workers within IIP recognised establishments are both more likely to hold or be working towards relevant qualifications

(iii) **Full-time and Part-time:** Full time workers are more qualified and more likely to be working towards qualifications at Levels 3 and 4. Differences at Level 2 though are less pronounced, suggesting that training opportunities at this level are available to all.

(iv) **Length of Service:** It would appear that the target getting new staff inducted and into training within 6 months is having an effect, as there is a significant jump in Care Workers progressing a qualification after one year in service. The percentage both holding and working towards Level 4 and above qualifications increases consistently with length of service, showing that some staff are involved in training throughout their career.

## **The Sector Qualifications Strategy (SQS)**

Skills for Care is now engaged in producing the Sector Qualifications Strategy (SQS). The SQS will map out the standards, learning and qualifications required by the adult social care sector in England. This will enable a range of people including employers, workers, people who use services, carers, training providers, awarding bodies, CSCI, the General Social Care Council (GSCC) and the Learning and Skills Council to have a clearer understanding of the standards, learning and qualifications required for a competent workforce. To find out more go to the Skills for Care website.

## **In-service training and development is win – win**

For service users - It increases confidence in the workforce and service outcomes.

For workers - It increases the confidence of the workforce

For employers - It retains and improves the workforce.

The Social Care Institute for Excellence lists “**The opportunity for learning, improvement and personal growth**”, as second in the factors that influence staff to be committed. At the management grades with Level 4, we are beginning to see the impact of this. At the Care Worker level, the gains are being compromised by the high turnover rate.

The National Minimum Dataset for Social Care (NMDS-SC) has been collecting data since early 2006. At the time of writing the NMDS-SC has received information from 15,000 establishments from across England. The figures quoted in this report are based on the analysis of just over 8,600 establishments and just under 90,000 worker records (analysis of data as at May 31st, 2007).

Further copies of this report and a variety of other information and detailed analysis concerning different aspects of the NMDS-SC are available at [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk), follow the links for NMDS-SC. Since August 2007, existing NMDS-SC establishments have been updating their information via NMDS-SC Online. From November 2007 new establishments will be able to register with NMDS-SC Online. We welcome and invite comments and observations on NMDS-SC Briefing – please e-mail us at [nmdsbriefing@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:nmdsbriefing@skillsforcare.org.uk)

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