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# nmuds-sc briefing

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## issue 6 - retention and its relationship to age, gender and experience

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“social care is fundamentally about building a strong and trusting relationship between workers and service users and carers”

Ivan Lewis and Parmit Dhandu, Ministerial Foreword, Options for Excellence 2006 (Dept of Health, DfES)

Previous NMDS-SC Briefings have shown that there are relatively high staff turnover rates in some parts of the sector (Briefing 2). This lack of continuity of care can contribute to service users not receiving the quality of service they deserve and require. This edition looks in more detail at issues that affect workers' length of service in the sector as a whole and the length of time in their current roles. It also refers to the findings of the National Survey of Care Workers Report (November, 2007), which was commissioned by Skills for Care and is available at [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk).

### key findings of nmuds-sc data analysis for this briefing

- Senior level staff are more likely to have been in the sector and in their current role for longer than workers in other job roles.
- Full time and part time staff have similar lengths of time in social care and in their current job roles. This highlights the importance of flexibility in working hours in retaining a skilled workforce.
- Staff in domiciliary care settings are less likely than their counterparts in other service settings to have been in their current role for over five years.
- Staff remain in their roles longer with small and micro employers than with medium and large employers.
- Women are more likely to have over ten years experience within the sector
- Staff with the most experience in the sector are also better qualified
- Staff change roles within the sector – approximately half those who began in the sector between the years 2000 and 2002 are already in different roles.

## relationships between time in sector / time in current role and other nmds-sc variables

### job role

A third of Registered Managers started working in the sector before 1990. This compares with 9% of Senior Care Workers and 4% of Care Workers (though levels of 'Unrecorded' are high). This suggests that those workers that progress to higher grades are more likely to stay in the sector, emphasising the need for progression routes for those that seek them.

There is a similar relationship with length of time in current role. Approximately 70% of Care Workers have been in their current role for less than 4 years, and 50% started in 2005/06 or more recently. In contrast, over one third of Registered Managers started in their current role before the year 2000, compared with 21% of Senior Care Workers and just 11% of Care Workers (see table below).

	Year started in sector				Year started in current role			
	All job roles	Registered Manager	Senior Care Worker	Care Worker	All job roles	Registered Manager	Senior Care Worker	Care Worker
2007-08	1.2%	-	0.5%	1.7%	6.7%	3.1%	3.9%	8.1%
2005-2006	10.3%	1.5%	6.2%	13.7%	37.1%	22.3%	26.2%	41.5%
2003-2004	7.9%	2.1%	9.6%	9.6%	20.8%	17.2%	23.1%	20.7%
2000-2002	8.0%	4.9%	12.7%	8.7%	13.6%	15.9%	19.1%	12.1%
1995-1999	7.4%	12.3%	13.6%	6.8%	9.1%	16.6%	13.9%	6.9%
1990-1994	4.4%	12.4%	8.0%	3.7%	3.6%	9.9%	5.0%	2.5%
1985-1989	2.9%	11.8%	4.6%	2.1%	1.6%	6.0%	2.0%	1.1%
1980-1984	1.5%	7.4%	1.9%	1.0%	0.4%	1.8%	0.6%	0.3%
1970-1979	1.6%	10.0%	1.8%	0.8%	0.2%	0.7%	0.2%	0.2%
Before 1970	0.6%	3.2%	0.3%	0.2%	*%	-	*%	*%
Unrecorded	54.2%	34.4%	41.0%	51.8%	6.7%	6.4%	6.0%	6.6%
<b>Base</b>	<b>117,076</b>	<b>2,801</b>	<b>9,871</b>	<b>64,323</b>	<b>117,076</b>	<b>2,801</b>	<b>9,871</b>	<b>64,323</b>

The National Survey of Care Workers (2007) commissioned by Skills for Care, shows that 88% of Care Workers said they were either happy or very happy in their work, and 64% expected to stay in this work for the next 5 years. NMDS-SC data suggests that this is not happening in these volumes – **What factors are making them leave?**

### age

Of the 117,000 worker details analysed less than 1% were from staff aged under-18, whilst around 7% were from staff aged over 60. It would be good to attract more young staff (see Briefing 5 on Age and Gender) whilst celebrating our ability to attract older workers. Of those aged 18-24 at the time of NMDS-SC response, 22% started working in the sector between the years 2000 and 2004. **What could we learn from this group about what keeps them in the sector?**

### employment status

Full time and part time staff display similar patterns, both in terms of length of time in the sector and length of time in current role (see table below). This suggests that part time work is preferable for many staff.

	Year Started in Social Care			Year started in current role		
	All workers	Full time	Part time	All workers	Full time	Part time
2007-08	1%	1%	2%	7%	6%	6%
2005-2006	10%	14%	13%	37%	37%	34%
2003-2004	8%	11%	10%	21%	22%	20%
2000-2002	8%	11%	10%	14%	14%	15%
1995-1999	7%	10%	9%	9%	9%	10%
1990-1994	4%	6%	6%	4%	4%	4%
1985-1989	3%	4%	4%	2%	2%	2%
1980-1984	1%	2%	2%	0%	0%	1%
1970-1979	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Before 1970	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Unrecorded	54%	37%	43%	7%	6%	8%
<b>Base</b>	<b>117,076</b>	<b>43,996</b>	<b>35,373</b>	<b>117,076</b>	<b>43,996</b>	<b>35,373</b>

\* missing data made up of employee records lacking enough data to ascertain employment status or year started in social care

The National Survey of Care Workers reported that flexibility was the second most chosen reason after “enjoying working with people they serve” for starting in the sector. In practice 74% found that the job was indeed flexible, and 40 % felt it fitted in with their responsibilities outside work.

This is a key consideration as 30% had other unpaid caring responsibilities in their home/family situation. Of this group 73% of them did up to 16 hours per week of this type of support. Given these statistics, it is not surprising that 20% of those interviewed would like to work fewer hours, rising to 27% for those with children.

### flexibility is therefore key in both recruitment of staff into the sector and retaining staff in the sector

#### size of employer

Staff appear to stay in the sector longer in small and micro organisations. Workers starting in the sector in 2000-2002 make up 11% of micro organisations (less than 10 staff); 10% of small organisations (10-49 staff); 6% of medium organisations (50-249 staff) and 1% of large organisations (over 249 staff).

While acknowledging the need to be cautious with this finding (there have been fewer NMDS-SC returns from large employers), it does suggest that the Department of Health Concordat “Putting People First” signed in December 2007 on Personalised Budgets, could lead to more staff staying in the sector. This will require a review of how career progression, supervision and staff training and support can be offered in these situations. Skills for Care’s research on direct payment recipients explores this issue (published in June 2008, see [www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk) for more details).

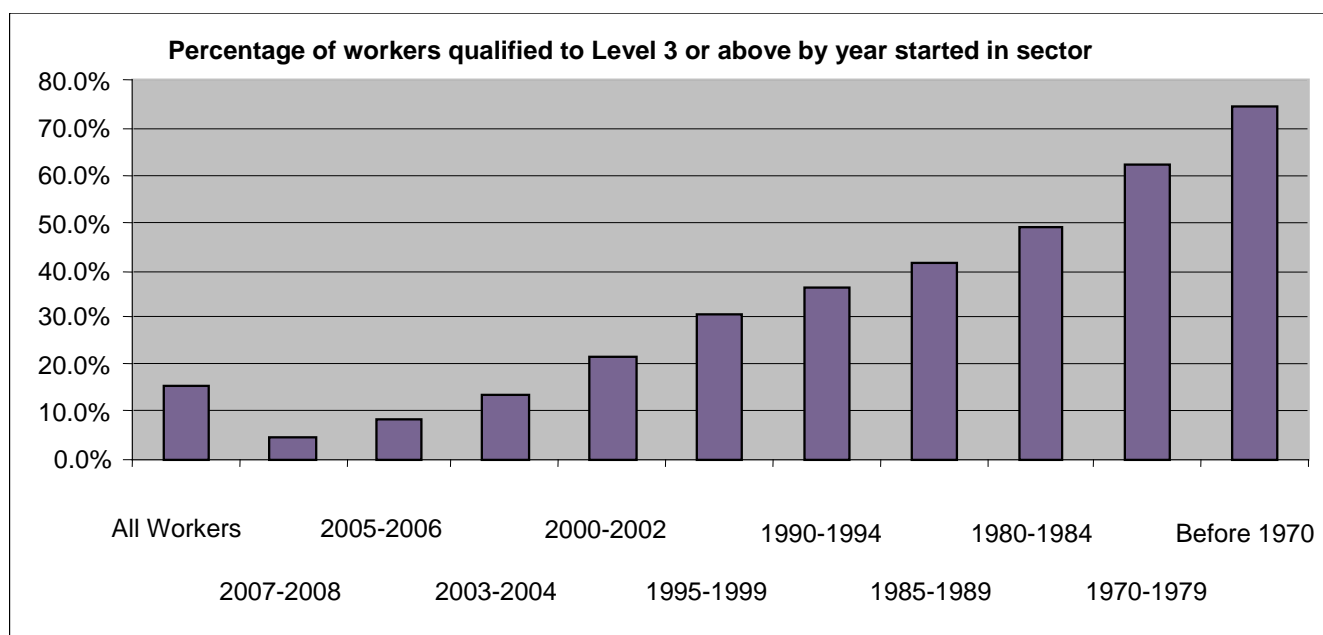
#### gender

Within the sector the gender breakdown of the workforce is 83% female, 15% male and 2% where no information was provided on this variable. It would however appear that women are more likely to have lengthy experience within the sector. Around 90% of workers with twenty years experience are female and 9% male – this does however mean a sizeable number of very experienced men working in the sector. The previous Briefing (Issue 5) on Age and Gender would suggest that these men will have reached more senior positions over these twenty years than their female counterparts.

## qualification levels

Workers with more experience tend to be better qualified. There appears therefore to be some relationship between length of time in the sector and qualification levels held. The most likely reason for this is that staff are benefiting from some form of professional development which is in turn helping to keep them in the sector.

In the workforce as a whole around 11% hold a relevant social care qualification at NVQ level 3, for workers with 5 – 7 years experience this rises to 17% and for those with 8 – 12 years experience it rises again to 23%. For staff with over twenty years experience, the figure is as high as 53% holding a relevant qualification at level 3 (see table below).



The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has stated that Continuing Professional Development and In Service Training, is a major factor in staff retention.

## overall

Analysis of the NMDS-SC data shows that care staff move around the sector:

- Of those entering the sector between 2000 and 2002, 53% are in the same role
- Of those entering the sector between 1995 and 1999, 41% are in the same role
- Of those entering the sector between 1990 and 1994, 30% are in the same role

The National Survey of Care Workers showed that 43% felt there was a possibility of promotion or career progression in within two years but the majority were not actively seeking promotion. Given that higher grades remain in the sector longer, continuing professional development and training would help retention.

**Analysis of NMDS-SC data shows that flexibility in working hours, the opportunity for continued professional development and career progression are key influencers on staff retention in the sector and in their current roles.**

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 over 19,000 establishments from across England. The figures quoted in this report are based on the analysis of just over 13,000 establishments and just over 117,000 worker records (analysis of data as at 1st January, 2008).

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.

We welcome and invite comments and observations on NMDS-SC Briefings – please e-mail us at [nmdsbriefing@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:nmdsbriefing@skillsforcare.org.uk).