

The King's Fund research into young people in the adult social care workforce
Participant information sheet

Background

Workforce is a key priority for social care with very high levels of vacancies which are having profound impact on people who use, provide and commission services, as well as on partners such as the NHS.

Social care has a particular problem recruiting and retaining younger staff. Younger people (aged 18-25) make up only 8% of all staff and 11% of careworkers. The average age of those joining the social care workforce is 35. Those who do join the sector at a younger age leave their roles early: in 2021/22, turnover rates amongst those under 20 was 53% and for those aged 20-29 it was 43%.

The government and sector workforce body Skills for Care recognise the problem: they are currently working with social care employers to develop initiatives to encourage younger people to join, and remain, in the adult social care sector.

The King's Fund has [previously undertaken research](#) (commissioned by The Prince's Trust) to start to fill a gap in evidence about young people who are employed in the health and care workforce. Now, to expand our understanding of the challenges and opportunities in adult social care specifically, The King's Fund is undertaking a major new piece of research focusing on the perceptions and experiences of young people in the adult the social care workforce.

This project will provide analysis, insight and recommendations for the adult social care sector and policymakers that helps answer the central question: **how can the social care sector most effectively recruit and retain younger workers?**

The research

The King's Fund is undertaking [a research project](#) looking at perceptions of adult social care and experiences of working in the sector, focused on younger care workers aged 18-25.

The research will seek to explore issues such as:

- The size and distribution of the current under-25 workforce in adult social care
- Routes into adult social care for younger people – education, the jobs market, the benefits system – and what was attractive about the role
- The experience of younger people of working in adult social care: what keeps them in the job and what makes them leave
- The experience of providers in employing younger workers
- The attitudes and experiences of younger people ('Gen Z') more broadly and whether these affect their willingness or ability to work in adult social care
- Efforts to recruit and retain younger workers in adult social care

As well as speaking with provider organisations, users of social care services and young people in education, the work will include research with 18-25 year old care workers in adult social care.

Why we would like to speak with you

We feel it is vital that our research incorporates the views and experiences of 18-25 year olds currently working in the adult social care sector in England. We would really appreciate speaking with you about your views and experiences of working in the sector and what we might learn from this about how to recruit and retain younger care workers in the future.

What will be involved?

If you register your interest in taking part in this research, we will get in touch with you, confirm your care work experience (asking for some evidence that you currently have a care worker role or have had a care worker role recently, for example, a payslip) and set up a 60 minute interview. Depending on how much interest we receive in the project, we may not be able to follow up and arrange interviews with everybody.

We will arrange to speak at a time that suits you. Interviews will be carried out by a researcher from The King's Fund by video call (Teams or Zoom depending on your preference). We can also organise to conduct the interview by telephone if a video call is not convenient.

We want you to feel able to candidly and honestly express your views. To encourage this, your comments and our reporting of the findings will be anonymised: we will not identify you or your organisation in anything that we publish. You may withdraw from this research project up until the end of the interview without giving reason and your data will then be destroyed. We do not envisage that participants in this research will come to any harm as a result of participating.

In recognition of your time, you will be paid £40 for your participation in this research. This payment will be made via bank transfer or Amazon voucher depending on your preference.

We hope that your input and the outputs we produce will influence future developments in policies about younger people in adult social care at local, regional and national level.

How will my information be used?

With your agreement, the interview will be audio/video recorded and transcribed by a professional service that will convert the conversation into a written transcript. The audio/video recording and transcript of the interview will only be accessible to The King's Fund research staff allocated to this specific research project (whose details can be found at the end of this document) and the transcription service.

Quotations may be used in our published report but will not be used in any way that identifies you or where you work.

Storage and transfer of this and other data we or our transcription partner collects as part of this research project will be governed by strict agreements in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Audio/video files and written transcripts will be destroyed after seven years.

Further information about the secure storage and handling of your data can be found in the accompanying privacy statement.

What will happen to the findings of the research project?

We envisage that the results of this research project will be published on The King's Fund website in a report and other outputs (including blogs and multimedia outputs) during the summer of 2024.

We will share these outputs with you if you are happy for us to do so.

The King's Fund project team and contact details – in case you have any questions

If you would like to speak with a member of the project team:

Nicola Blythe, Researcher
nblythe@kingsfund.org.uk

If you would like to make a complaint about the research, please contact:

Sally Warren, Director of Policy, s.warren@kingsfund.org.uk ; 02073072561