

Browne Jacobson report sets out how care sector can future-proof workforce as visa changes restrict

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Innovating working patterns, supporting career progression and improving visibility among young people are key ingredients in making care jobs more appealing, according to a new Browne Jacobson report published a year on from a landmark workforce strategy.

These are some of the recommendations set out by the UK and Ireland law firm in its white paper, titled [Workforce strategies for care providers](#).

It builds on the first-ever [Workforce Strategy for Adult Social Care in England by Skills for Care](#), which was published in July 2024, by advising on how care providers can develop their own talent pipelines across three broad themes – train, attract and retain, and transform.

Insights were collected from a roundtable held by Browne Jacobson's employment and HR services team as part of its "Future of Care" series. It brought together leaders from independent residential care homes, domiciliary care providers, sector-aligned advisers and charities, and the NHS.

[Laura Chinyere-Ezeh](#), HR Consultant who leads Browne Jacobson's HR services team for the health and social care sector, said: "*Skills for Care's Workforce Strategy aims to ensure we have enough of the right people with the right skills to provide the best possible care and support for the people who draw on it.*"

"While this sets out policy recommendations at a macro level, it's vital that care providers are developing their own workforce strategies to ensure they can continue to deliver high-quality care over the coming decades.

"This requirement has been reinforced by the government's immigration white paper, which restricts care worker visas for overseas workers, who represent a significant proportion of the health and care workforce.

"Therefore, the care sector must work towards ensuring it has access to the people and skills needed to make it fit for the future.

"Despite the absence of formal government adoption and direct financial enhancements such as increased pay or investment, care providers have the opportunity as private businesses to innovate, adopt the recommendations in this report and future-proof their provision with a workforce strategy to meet an increasing demand for their services."

A wide range of challenges were brought to light during the roundtable and reflected in the report. A key issue is in attracting and retaining young people, with [King's Fund](#) research showing only 8% of the social care workforce comprises 18 to 24-year-olds.

Barriers include a perception that parents aren't supportive of young people's desire to join the care sector and a communications gap about what the job entails.

Related to this are challenges around flexible working and career development opportunities, which could be tackled by collaboration between the health and social care sectors to foster mutual respect and equitable treatment of employees.

The Workforce strategies for care providers recommendations can be broadly summarised, under the headings of the Workforce Strategy, as:

- **Train:** Invest in training managers and supervisors to be capable and competent future registered managers. Ensure this training and development is broad to include leadership, managing people, operations and the commercial aspects of running a business, while building on the traditional governance and care quality focus of registered managers.
- **Attract and retain:** Enhance the attractiveness and accessibility of the care sector by improving visibility among young people, promoting the rewarding nature of care work and career pathways, and by innovating working patterns to adopt flexible work – bolstering diversity and inclusion to reflect the breadth of people who draw on care services.
- **Transform:** As integrated care is promoted and collaboration between the NHS and social care is encouraged, care providers can advocate for their sector by fostering mutual respect between both sectors, by addressing any classism, and working to carve out career pathways as training and experience develop in this collaborative space.

Participants in the roundtable included Karolina Gerlich, of the Care Workers Charity; Rebecca Smith, of NHS Employers; Rick Canavan, of BA Healthcare; Shirley Hall, of Royal Star & Garter; Susanne Chatterley, of Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust; and Vishal Shah, of Banyan Care.

[Read the full Workforce strategies for care providers report](#) →

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