

Recruitment and Retention Care Inspectorate

1. Introduction

The Care Inspectorate is the official body responsible for inspecting standards of care in Scotland. That means we regulate and inspect some 14,000 care services to make sure they meet the right standards and help them improve if needed. We also carry out joint inspections with other scrutiny bodies to check how well different organisations in local areas are working to support adults and children. We help ensure social work, including criminal justice social work, meets high standards. Across all our work, we provide independent assurance and protection for people who use services, their families and carers and the wider public. In addition, we play a significant role in supporting improvements in the quality of care, and reducing health and social inequalities, in Scotland.

From our inspections, regulatory activity and reviews of quality, the Care Inspectorate can offer an informed and evidence-based perspective on issues of interest to the Health and Sport Committee. We have based this submission on information that has been reported to us and evidence we have obtained from our own scrutiny and regulatory activities.

2. Recruitment and retention

We are aware that difficulties in recruitment were highlighted in Scottish Care's Social Care Providers Survey Report on Recruitment and Retention 2015, In The Front Line, with 60% of respondents finding recruitment more difficult than in the previous year.

We are also aware of the 2015 Benchmarking Report for Voluntary Sector HR Network and CCPS, commissioned by the Coalition Of Care And Support Providers In Scotland in conjunction with the University of Strathclyde, which identified that, compared with the 2014 report, "recruitment pressures were increasing among the majority of organisations", with 84.5% of respondents stating that recruitment for front-line staff was very or quite difficult.

In our annual returns we ask care services to tell us about vacancy levels and difficulties recruiting staff. Among recent findings:

- At December 2014, 34% of services reported having vacancies, up 4% from the previous year. For almost every type of service, there was a higher proportion reporting vacancies in 2014 compared to 2013.
- This varied by service type (for example 58% of care homes for older people; 56% of housing support services and 50% of adult care homes).
- Proportions of services with vacancies varied by local authority area, with Aberdeen City, Inverclyde, West Dunbartonshire, Aberdeenshire, City of Edinburgh and East Renfrewshire all having 40% or more of services in their area with vacancies.

- This proportion increased in most areas over the previous year, for example from 44% to 54% in Aberdeen City.
- In Aberdeen City, City of Edinburgh and Renfrewshire, over 80% of care homes for older people reported vacancies.

Services were asked whether they had problems filling vacancies:

- At December 2014, 36% of services with vacancies reported having problems filling them, up 6% from the previous year. This increase was observed among most service types.
- Care at home services (63%), secure accommodation (60%), nurse agencies (57%) and care homes for older people (49%) were among those service types with a high proportion of services reporting problems filling vacancies in 2014.
- These figures vary across local authority area – there were particularly high proportions of services reporting problems filling vacancies in Aberdeen City (69%), Aberdeenshire (51%), Perth and Kinross (48%), Shetland (47%), Argyll and Bute (42%), and City of Edinburgh and Midlothian (both 40%). Most areas saw an increase in the figure between 2013 and 2014 but this was most pronounced in Aberdeen City, Shetland, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, East Lothian, Orkney, Perth and Kinross, and West Dunbartonshire.

Services were asked why they had found services hard to fill.

- A common theme among those reporting problems filling vacancies was too few of the following: applicants (54%); applicants with experience (59%); and qualified applicants (48%). These were seen as the main reasons in most local authority areas.
- 63% of care at home services with hard to fill vacancies reported problems finding candidates to work the hours needed. This was reported in a high proportion of care services in North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and Renfrewshire.
- Competition from other service providers was reported as a reason by 50% of care at home services and 63% of nurse agencies with hard to fill vacancies. Clackmannanshire and Dumfries and Galloway both had a high proportion of care services reporting this as a major problem.