

# **Impact evaluation of Skills for Care**

2018/19 – 2020/21

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## Executive Summary

Skills for Care is the strategic workforce development and planning body for social care in England and a delivery partner for the Department of Health and Social Care. The organisation works with social care leaders and employers, the Government, and partners across the social care system, to respond and adapt to the emerging trends and needs within social care, using data and evidence to drive forward widescale change.

Skills for Care has a unique role which includes:

**Workforce planning** using data and evidence and working with partners to make sure that social care attracts and recruits the right people and builds the workforce for the future.

**Defining good practice standards** for skills, knowledge, competencies and behaviours in social care, including influencing the curriculums and provision of learning and development.

**Developing the learning market:** Skills for Care supports the learning market so that there is high

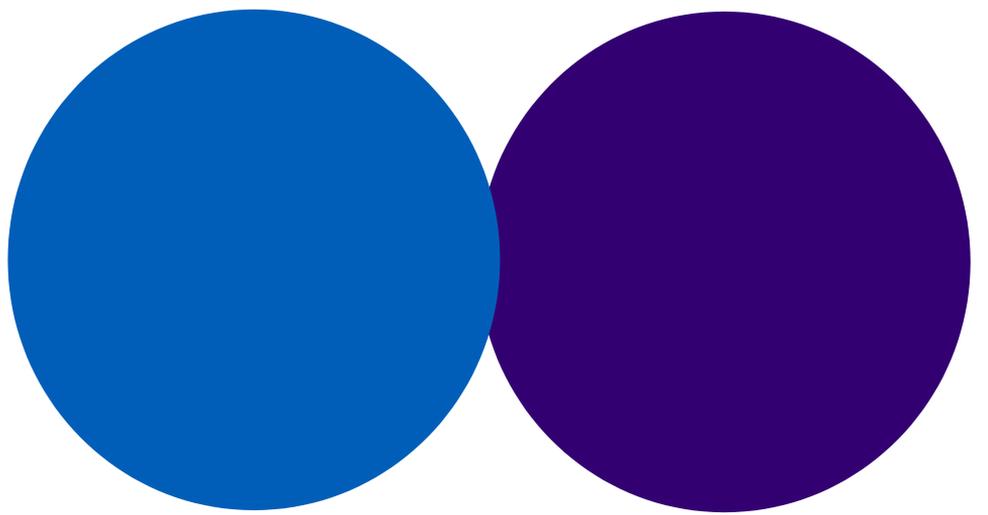
of employer assists provided and the number of qualifications, learning programmes and digital modules provided

outcomes assessed including:

- increases in the skills of social care leaders, workers, and potential recruits to social care

- improvements in the quality of care

- employment outcomes





needs in the sector. Programmes have consistently had a positive impact upon the individuals and organisations that participate and, by extension, those who receive care. Programmes are innovative, responsive and developed with central aim of meeting the needs of the sector. Across the 18 evaluated programmes, we identified nine different types of outcomes achieved by Skills for Care:

**Increase in leadership skills** - Skills for Care has supported those in leadership roles (including Registered Managers) to further develop their skills and their capabilities and capacities as leaders.

Evidence of impacts included:

In the Leading Change Improving Care (LCIC) programme, comparisons of pre- and post-programme surveys demonstrated that progression was made in all seven measures of self-belief, confidence, and knowledge. The area in which there had been greatest progress was 'knowledge of how to use peer coaching to find collaborative solutions to improvement challenges' with post-programme self-assessment scores rising by 1.5 points on a seven-point scale. The second greatest area of progress observed was in 'knowledge of how to use coaching skills in my leadership practice' with post programme self-assessment scores rising by 1.27 points. In the Rapid Response Action Learning Sets project, all the respondents found Action Learning Sets useful with two-thirds of respondents at the time of the follow up survey (n = 11) finding them very useful.

Those in the Registered Managers' Supported Year pilot reported improvements over the year in their management skills with 94.1% of participants surveyed stating that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that they had had enough opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills gained through the programme.

**Social care workforce skills increase** - Skills for Care has supported people who are employed in the social care workforce (non-leadership) to develop their skills and grow in their capabilities to effectively support people and provide care.

Evidence of impacts included:

Across all three Workforce Development Fund streams, increases in staff knowledge, skills and confidence were reported. For example, 95% of employers supported by the mainstream fund said it had improved the skills/qualification levels of their staff team. 85% of employers supported by

the fund also stated that the fund had addressed the most pressing skills gaps in their organisation. As a result of this, 84% of employers stated that they had become more interested in staff training and 83% of employers stated the support from the Fund had increased productivity.

**Increasing the skills of potential recruits to social care** - Skills for Care has enabled individuals who are not currently employed in the social care workforce to develop their skills and find out more about the opportunities and career pathways available to them in the social care sector.

Evidence of impacts included:

Four-fifths of Seeing Potential participants (n=246) received non-accredited training as part of the programme.

Participants in projects funded through the Integration Innovation Fund increased the skills needed to secure and sustain a job in social care and increased confidence and empowerment.

Graduate learners across all three cohorts on the Integrated Graduate Management Programme for health and adult social care showed an increase of 2.45 points on the seven-point scale in the post-programme self-assessment of their knowledge of 'how to apply systems leadership to improve outcomes for people who need care and support'.

**Care service improvements** - Skills for Care has had a direct impact on care services which have demonstrated observable and measurable improvements following involvement with a Skills for Care programme.

Evidence of impacts included:

Skills for Care delivered the CQC Working with Regulated Providers pilot. Four providers were re-rated during or after the pilot intervention, three services had an improved overall rating with two reaching a 'Good' rating.



One notable example of the enhanced recruitment provided by this approach was that a vacancy that had been open for six months was filled as a result of the programme.

**Sector workforce retention** - Skills for Care has supported care services and Individual Employers to better retain their social care workforce.

Evidence of impacts included:

63% of respondents to a survey (n=40) about the assessed and supported year in employment for social workers (2018) stated that the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme 'had a positive impact on the retention of social workers beyond their first year'.

70% of employers who had been supported by the Workforce Development Fund stated that the support from the funded had improved staff retention.

28%

and challenges the care sector faces and its' capabilities to effectively support its workforce.

## Programme Beneficiaries

Across the 18 evaluated projects/programmes, four distinct beneficiary types were identified. These were:

- social care workforce
- registered managers
- services rated as 'requires improvement'
- prospective social care workforce.

Analysis of the evaluation reports demonstrated that the vast majority of Skills for Care's £21.9m expenditure was spent on programmes targeted at the social care workforce (£16.4m) with further £3.9m spent on programmes that focused on the prospective social care workforce. £1.7m was spent on programmes targeted at Registered Managers while a further £0.7m was spend on programmes targeted towards services rated as 'Requires Improvement'. A total of £1.6m was spent on beneficiaries designated as 'other'.<sup>8</sup>

## Stakeholder priorities

Care Research identified five separate stakeholder groups that were considered important to Skills for Care:

- Care providers
- The Department of Health & Social Care
- The Department for Education
- The Department for Work and Pensions
- The NHS.

In addition to these stakeholders' priorities, we also looked at long-term sector wide priorities.

It is clear from the evaluated programmes that Skills for Care consistently delivers programmes that meet several governmental stakeholder priorities. Skills for Care is a key strategic partner in delivering programmes and initiatives that support

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<sup>8</sup> Please note that, as multiple programmes met multiple beneficiary types, these expenditure amounts total to more than the £21.9m spent across the evaluated programmes. Please see the Skills for Care Key Outcomes and Expenditure excel document for more details and figure 4.1 for more details.

several government departments in meeting their national policy objectives.

## Impacts

The longer-term impacts of Skills for Care's work for the adult social care sector are harder to quantify and directly attribute to its work, given its size and the range of other factors that shape and influence the care sector. There was some evidence in the evaluations that Skills for Care's activities will have benefitted the sector by reducing skills gaps, increasing staff productivity through investment in workforce development and supporting services to recruit and retain their staff. Other impacts are harder to determine from the data available.

## Economic Analysis

Where the unit costs for activities could be calculated the unit costs appear reasonable for the activity provided, indicating that Skills for Care money has been spent economically and efficiently. Using the figures 1.75 TpreW\*nBT/F4 12 Tf1 0 0 1 201.41 637.4

