



**CENTRE
FOR
WORKFORCE
INTELLIGENCE**



IN FOCUS

**WORKFORCE PLANNING RESOURCES FOR
INDEPENDENT PROVIDERS**

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This *In Focus* paper – *Innovations in recruitment* – provides unique insights into some of the **workforce planning¹ challenges** facing social care providers. In this paper a representative from Voluntary Organisations Disability Group member **Certitude²** describes how they have **recruited and trained for social care work**, helping to build workforce capacity in the organisation.

Good **workforce planning** is a systematic process that involves **identifying future need and demands** and **recruiting and training to these requirements**. Workforce planning is not an easy task, and is more challenging for social care providers in the current financial and commissioning context.

Recruitment of the social care workforce has long been a critical issue for social care providers. The topic was given special attention in the white paper for social care, *Caring for our future: reforming care and support*. The Government **aims to recruit more apprentices** – with the aim of doubling the number to 100,000 by 2017. It will also be **developing tools to support recruitment**, and resources for jobseekers looking to work in social care.





WORKFORCE PLANNING CHALLENGES

Certitude supports over 1700 people a year with **learning disabilities or mental health support needs** in London boroughs and neighbouring counties. Over 650 staff are employed and the group has a combined turnover in the region of £25million.

Certitude faces, like other social care organisations, **a number of workforce planning challenges**. Certitude aims to recruit, retain, develop and reward its workforce in line with its vision and values and provide enough support to people with a range of needs, some of which may be profound and complex. The current economic climate places pressure on our services to meet these challenges.

The personalisation agenda and the cultural challenge of **moving from traditionally delivered support to one of co-production** is particularly challenging, especially when new and TUPE³ related services are brought on stream in short time periods. These challenges, however, also provide the opportunity to do things differently and for the organisation to originate change.

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In the case of our **mental health services**, we were recruiting individuals who could bring a wide range of life skills, experience, local knowledge and in some circumstances lived experience to our support roles. We needed to quickly recruit a significant number of staff to support newly commissioned and TUPE services. Yet we recognised the difficulties faced in recruiting people into social care and that normal recruitment timescales would prohibit new services from becoming operational on time. This challenge required a different approach to recruitment, induction and deploying staff to meet service requirements – we felt it was time to take a fresh look at our workforce planning.

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Given the economic climate and, in particular, the potential supply of workers who are unemployed, we approached the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Through this approach, Certitude staff met with representatives from the relevant borough job centre and discussed our needs. The DWP nominated a lead contact and in conjunction with Certitude staff we planned a new recruitment strategy.

The emphasis on the **recruitment strategy** was to solicit a broad interest base as opposed to specific experience and qualifications. Using the CVs of candidates from the job centre, an identified shortlist was created of over 60 potential applicants who were then invited to complete an application tailored to the purpose of the work involved. Managers were re-briefed on the selection process and interview panels arranged over a number of days. A third of the shortlisted applicants were successfully offered posts.


The posts were offered on variable hour arrangements and workers deployed across a range of services in the borough. Given the broad range of candidates' backgrounds, **development training** was adapted to induct staff prior to them working directly with people using our services. This training provided the essential knowledge and skills that staff require to fulfil their role, and also helped to recognise that the staff had been recruited to bring a different set of knowledge and skills to supporting people. Access to Certitude's Mental Health Learning Pathway is also available to support ongoing development needs.

The creation of our peer support roles recognised the value of bringing people's direct experience of using mental health services and managing their own recovery right to the forefront of supporting people in the community. This approach recognises that, from time to time, staff may need someone to talk to, or to go to for support. Our approach involved channelling selection to people who had made good progress on their own recovery and were motivated to help others. We also built on our learning from earlier initiatives, including Wellbeing Trainees, and adapted the selection process accordingly.

An **adaptable approach to workforce planning** has helped Certitude not only to deliver services, but to do so in a way that reflects the values and ethics that underpin co-production. The changing context of care commissioning requires providers to be flexible and responsive.

The learning from our experience described in this paper has been used to **further develop our workforce planning** and we are now **using trainee apprentices** – we have doubled the intake of apprentices in this financial year alone. Our approach has moved from seeking specific experiences and qualifications to a broader range of competencies and we are actively seeking life skills and wider interests for our staff to bring to work. In turn, this is helping to create a diverse workforce and is improving our services for the people we support.

Our **next step** is a cultural change programme with our existing services to further promote and embed the values of person-centred care in all we do.



The Centre for Workforce Intelligence is working with the Voluntary Organisations Disability Group (VODG) to promote and share examples of good workforce planning. VODG members collectively employ more than 70,000 social care staff.

The In Focus series provides an opportunity for employers to showcase developments in workforce planning and capacity building. This thought leadership series will be of interest to:

- ➡ business managers, HR specialists and workforce planners in the independent social care sector
- ➡ strategic planners and policymakers in local government, including commissioners and those shaping the market for social care services
- ➡ people with a wider interest in workforce development and planning.

The In Focus series does not provide all the answers, but does aim to provide insight and a stimulus for discussion and debate.

¹Workforce planning is the process of ensuring that a business or organisation has the right number of employees with the right knowledge, skills and behaviours in the right place, at the right time.

²Certitude is a group of organisations which provide support to people with learning disabilities and mental health needs. Services are progressive and wide ranging. We are focused on working alongside clients and where possible their families to improve their lives and increase independence. We take a personalised approach. We listen to the needs and aspirations of the people we support and we co-produce a programme to suit their particular requirements. We want people to make the most of their lives and we support them however we can. This could be by sourcing appropriate housing, providing new skills and education, finding employment or simply helping someone manage their day-to-day life. (www.certitude.org.uk)

³ The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) protects employees' terms and conditions when a business or undertaking, or part of one, is transferred to a new employer.



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