

BIGMOTIVE

The Care in Practice Framework:

*Discovery of Social Care Managers' Attitudes,
Needs, and Expectations*

Full Project Report
December 2023

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Introduction

Background

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (SCC) is developing the Care in Practice (CIP) framework to provide Social Care workers with structured opportunities for continuous professional learning and development. This framework aims to improve the care and support provided to service users, promote staff retention, and increase the appeal of Social Care as a long-term career. The SCC is also developing the Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate, the proposed starting qualification for Social Care workers entering the workforce.

The SCC seeks to understand the attitudes, needs, and expectations of Social Care Managers regarding the design, implementation, and integration of the two initiatives prior to launch. Insights generated by this study will be used by the SCC to refine the initiatives with the purpose of maximising their relevance, acceptability, and impact.

Objectives

- Engage with a diverse sample of Social Care Managers who represent the diversity of the Social Care workforce across service areas and geographical areas.
- Capture Social Care Managers' views and generate actionable insights regarding the proposed CIP framework and Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate, with a particular focus on areas including: Attitudes, Needs, and Expectations.
- Provide Social Care Managers with the opportunity to reflect upon, and provide input regarding areas related to feedback received from frontline Social Care staff in the previous round of research.

The Approach

An overview of steps taken

The Approach



Workshops

Big Motive conducted 4 workshops in the following areas:
Belfast, Ballymena, Derry/Londonderry and Armagh.



Survey

A survey was distributed across the sector to capture valuable insights from those unable to attend the in-person workshops.



Theming + Synthesis

Insights were themed and analysed in order to report key findings and recommendations from all research conducted.

Target Areas of Insight

- **Career Motivations & Aspirations**
How did managers get into their role? Is it a long term career? Are there opportunities to progress? What are their career goals?
- **Barriers to Progression**
What prevents managers from progressing in their careers?
- **Managers' L&D**
How important is L&D to managers? Do they have a L&D plan? Is there anything that prevents them from engaging? Does everyone have the same opportunity?
- **Frontline Staff L&D**
How important is L&D to their frontline staff? Do they have a L&D plan? Is there anything that prevents them from engaging? Does everyone have the same opportunity?
- **The CIP**
Potential impacts on managers and their staff, best elements and any concerns/uncertainties or questions
- **The Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate**
Potential impacts on managers and their staff, best elements and any concerns/uncertainties or questions

●●●● Rutledge



Platinum SCS



Self Employed



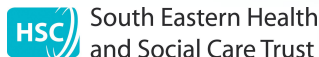
PSC Management



43



Organisations Represented



Fairhaven Residential

Workshop Demographics

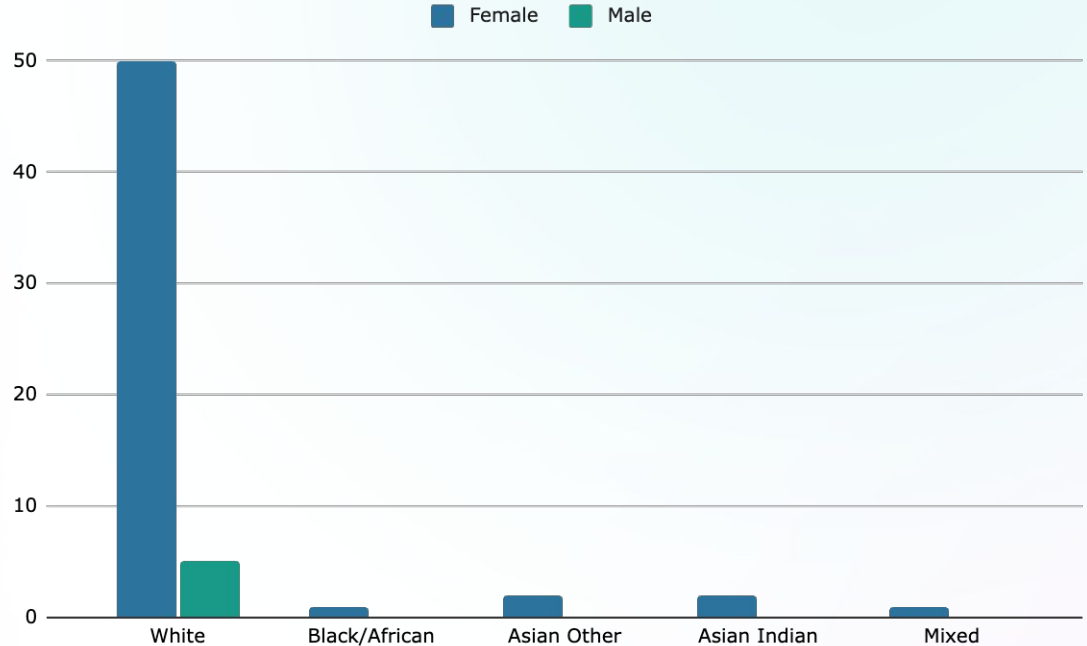
Total Attendees: 68

Gender

Male: 8.2%
Female: 91.8%

Ethnicity

White: 90.2%
Asian [Other]: 3.3%
Asian [Indian]: 3.3%
Black/African/Caribbean: 1.6%
Mixed /Multiple: 1.6%



*Note: The workshops had a total of **68 attendees**. Workshop demographic percentages are based off the total number of individuals who provided optional demographic data.*

Workshop Demographics

Type of Service & Sector

Daycare / Day Opportunities: 4

Independent / Private Sector: 1
Statutory Sector - e.g. HSC Trust: 3

Domiciliary Care: 24

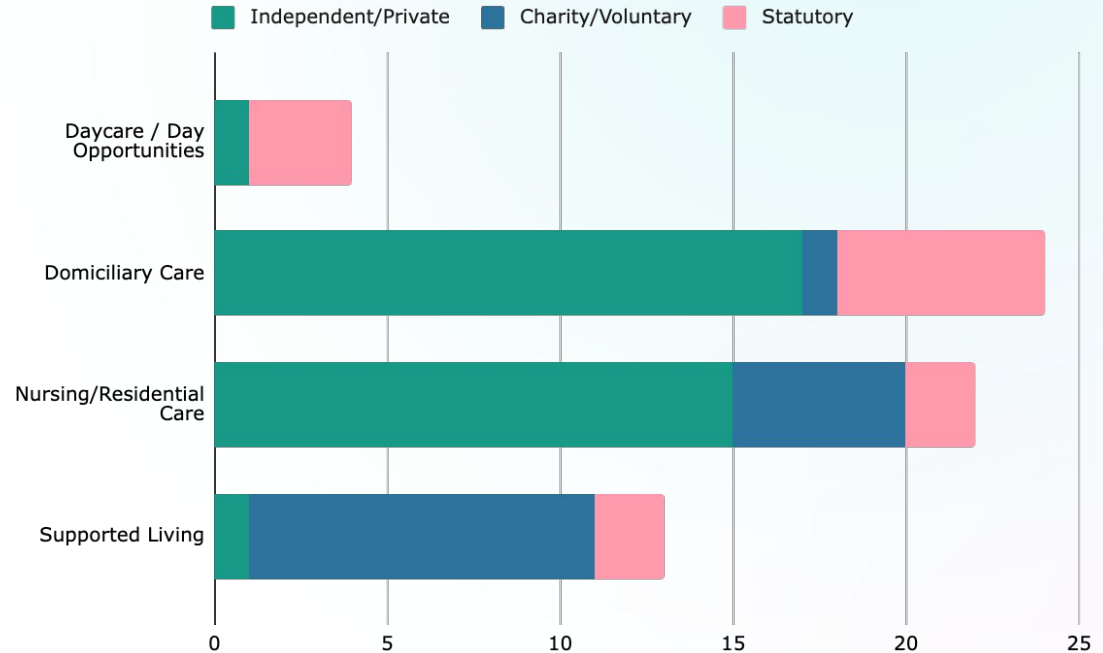
Independent / Private Sector: 17
Charity / Voluntary Sector: 1
Statutory Sector - e.g. HSC Trust: 6

Nursing / Residential Care: 22

Independent / Private Sector: 15
Charity / Voluntary Sector: 5
Statutory Sector - e.g. HSC Trust: 2

Supported Living: 13

Independent / Private Sector: 1
Charity / Voluntary Sector: 10
Statutory Sector - e.g. HSC Trust: 2



Note: based on completed demographic detail responses from 63 participants

Workshop Demographics

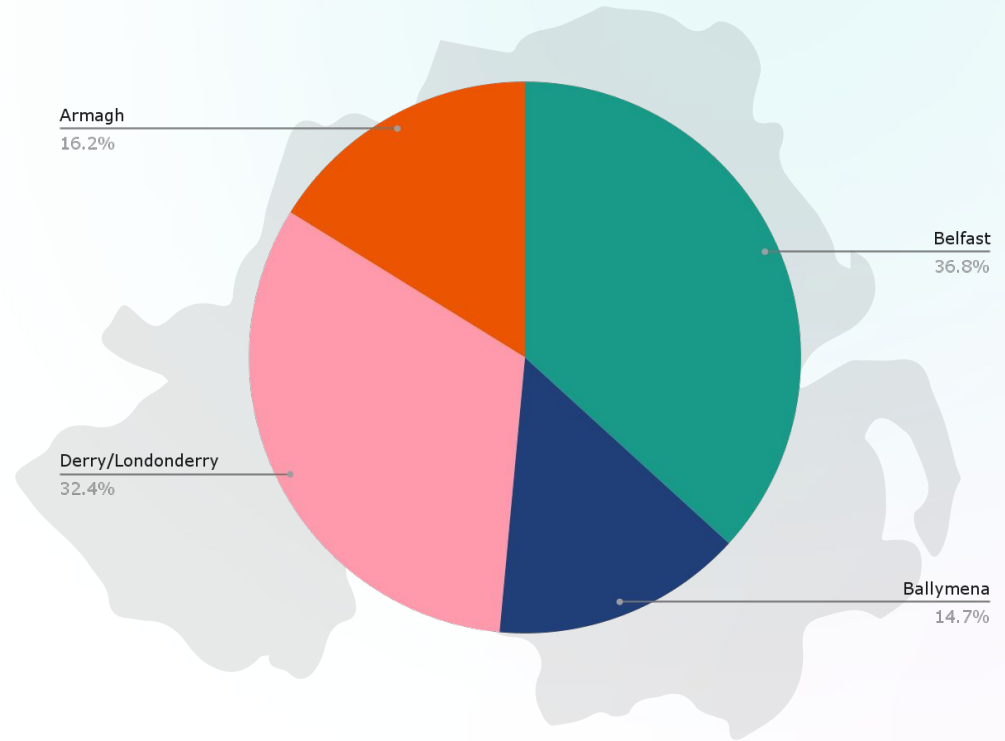
Location

Belfast - 25 participants

Ballymena - 22 participants

Derry/Londonderry - 10 participants

Armagh - 11 participants

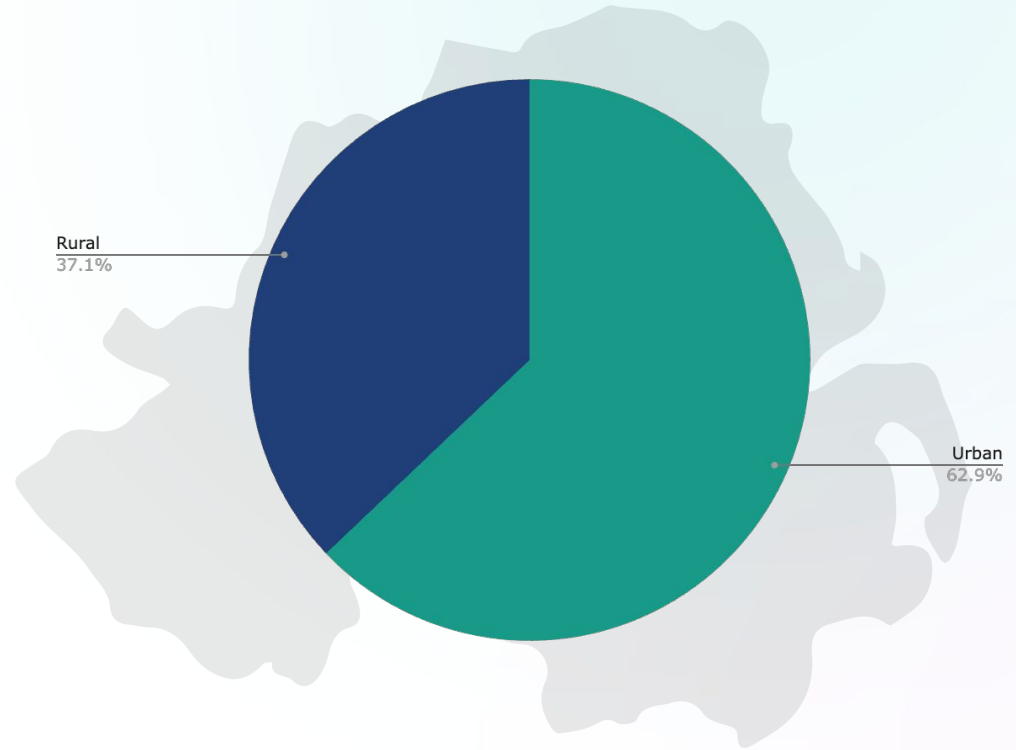


Workshop Demographics

Urban / Rural

Urban: 62.9%

Rural: 37.1%



Survey demographics

Number of eligible responses: 76 / 92*

Date: 12.12.2023

Employment status

Full time: 70
Part time: 4
Other (zero-hours/self-employed): 2

Sector

Independent/Private: 31 40.8%
Statutory: 27 35.5%
Voluntary: 18 23.7%

Working Location

Co. Down: 26
Co. Antrim (Outside of Belfast): 20
Co. Antrim (In Belfast): 17
Co. Tyrone: 12
Co. Armagh: 7
Co. Derry / Londonderry: 8
Co. Fermanagh: 5

Time in current role

Less than 1 year: 9
1-2 years: 6
3-5 years: 21
6-10 years: 16
11-15 years: 15
16-20 years: 5
21+ years: 4

Time with current employer

Less than 1 year: 7
1-2 years: 4
3-5 years: 11
6-10 years: 11
11-15 years: 15
16-20 years: 8
21+ years: 20

*Note: Total number of responses was 92, however, 16 responses were deemed ineligible as they were from individuals who indicated that they do not manage or supervise social care staff and/or social care services.

Key Insights

Insight Categories

- **Motivations & Aspirations**
- **Barriers to Progression**
- **Managers' L&D**
- **Frontline Staff L&D**
- **The CIP**
- **The Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate**

Key Insights

High-Level Overview

Motivations & Aspirations:

Insights Overview

1

SCMs are primarily motivated by the desire to help others

2

Many SCMs have naturally progressed from lower bands into management, and have been in their careers for many years

3

Many SCMs were motivated to become a manager to improve the Social Care sector

4

Support and encouragement from friends, family, or employers, has played a significant role in SCM progression

5

Many SCMs originally joined the sector due to work-life balance and flexibility

6

SCMs believe that the nature of the job makes it a long-term career

7

The majority of the SCMs we engaged with were happy in their role, and felt that it was an enjoyable long-term career

8

Several SCMs reflected upon the challenges, uncertainties, and stress associated with being a SCM

9

SCMs offered mixed levels of desire to progress in their career. This was often related to stage of life

Barriers to Progression

Insights Overview

1

SCMs believed that the L&D opportunities to progress varies by sector and employer

2

A lack of available senior roles prevents many SCMs from progressing, and may require moving to a new employer

3

Some participants described a lack of support from senior management

4

Participants in the private sector described a lack of access or budget for L&D opportunities

5

The workload and demands of SCMs roles is a key barrier to progression

6

Many SCMs described a lack of confidence in themselves or their academic ability as a barrier to progression

7

A fear of increased responsibility and a loss of work-life balance prevented many SCMs from progressing their career

8

Many participants in the private sector described the need to fund additional L&D themselves as a key barrier

Managers Learning & Development

Insights Overview

1

Managers value their L&D, and believe it is important

2

Managers face difficulties in engaging with L&D opportunities

3

Spaces on L&D opportunities are limited and are not always accessible due to geographical location

4

Whilst everyone has regular L&D plans and the opportunity to engage in learning and development, there are some discrepancies between the public and private sector

5

Participants commented that L&D opportunities are not always relevant

6

Personal circumstances, outside job responsibilities and work life balance are challenges to engagement in L&D

7

The introduction of e-learning in L&D has a number of shortcomings

Frontline Staff Learning & Development

Insights Overview

1

SCMs recognise the importance of their staff engaging in L&D opportunities

4

SCMs believe the extent of L&D engagement largely relies on an individuals' own motivation

7

L&D plays an important role in empowering frontline staff to progress in their careers

2

SCMs believe that a proportion of their frontline staff do not see L&D as a priority

5

There is opportunity to improve the uptake of L&D by providing a better sense of recognition and more support to frontline staff

8

Cost is a limiting factor to frontline staff being able to access L&D opportunities

3

SCMs believe that continuous L&D of frontline staff is crucial for maintaining compliance, competency within their roles, and staying up-to-date with industry standards

6

Current L&D opportunities available to frontline staff are both formal and informal, including mandatory training, qualifications, managerial training

9

Diverse learning abilities and styles may be barriers to staff fully engaging with L&D opportunities

Frontline Staff Learning & Development

Insights Overview

10

Managers felt that time constraints and staffing issues often limit their frontline staff from engaging in L&D opportunities

11

Managers highlighted a lack of quality and value with L&D opportunities at times

12

Managers value face to face time with their frontline staff and ensure staff's L&D plan is discussed during appraisals and regular supervisions

CIP (Care in Practice Framework)

Insights Overview

1

Managers see the CIP as a means to professionalise the workforce, instil a sense of value across frontline staff, and establish standardisation across the board

2

The CIP framework offers improved guidance for L&D and outlines a potential career progression route.

3

The CIP framework creates transferability and cohesion across the whole sector

4

Many believe that the CIP framework would enhance learning, knowledge levels, and boost engagement and motivation

5

SCMs believed that the transition to the CIP Framework may result in increased pressure and workload

6

SCMs displayed mixed feelings around the impact that the CIP may have on recruitment and retention

7

Participants felt that an increased level of support will be needed with the introduction of the CIP framework

8

SCMs expressed concerns around how accessible this will be for non-native English speakers, and also those of lower academic ability

9

Many SCMs had not heard about the framework before, and several common questions arose

CIP (Care in Practice Framework)

Insights Overview

10

SCMs desired additional clarity for several areas of the framework

11

Timeframe, costs, governance and responsibility were all raised as concerns for the CIP framework the Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate

The Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate

Insights Overview

1

Recognition of frontline staff, in addition to improved confidence, and knowledge were key aspects

2

Participants praised the increased support for career progression through increased opportunity and a clear pathway

3

Participants felt that this certificate would address their staffs needs, and noted a number of similarities between this and their current induction training

4

The transferability of the certificate was a key benefit, which was praised for its standardisation and ability to ease movement within the sector

5

Participants noted that there are inevitable dependencies on progression such as time availability and motivation of the individual on whether they want to progress

6

Participants had questions around the timeframe required to complete the certificate, and expressed their concern for the amount of time this may take to train staff

7

Potential difficulties may arise depending on how the certificate needs to be completed e.g access to a computer

8

SCMs noted concerns about the Safe and Effective Care Practice Certificate being a deterrent to those joining the workforce

Motivations & Aspirations

Motivations & Aspirations:

Insights Overview

1

SCMs are primarily motivated by the desire to help others

2

Many SCMs have naturally progressed from lower bands into management, and have been in their careers for many years

3

Many SCMs were motivated to become a manager to improve the Social Care sector

4

Support and encouragement from friends, family, or employers, has played a significant role in SCM progression

5

Many SCMs originally joined the sector due to work-life balance and flexibility

6

SCMs believe that the nature of the job makes it a long-term career

7

The majority of the SCMs we engaged with were happy in their role, and felt that it was an enjoyable long-term career

8

Several SCMs reflected upon the challenges, uncertainties, and stress associated with being a SCM

9

SCMs offered mixed levels of desire to progress in their career. This was often related to stage of life

SCMs are primarily motivated by the desire to help others.

Many of our participants described a "need" or "passion" to care for others, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Many described it as a "needed profession" which has a profound impact and provides reward.

Several participants described a desire to help other carers provide better care, and to share their knowledge

“I have a passion for caring for others”

“I wanted to make a positive difference to older people and to share my knowledge with my learners”

“We can see the impact that it makes in people’s lives”

Many SCMs have naturally progressed from lower bands into management, and have been in their careers for many years.

Many described Social Care as an "accidental career" intended to be short-term, but turned into a long-term career as enjoyment and compassion grew.

Many participants described the transition to management as "natural", "gradual", and "by default", with many getting the opportunity when a vacancy arose.

Many SCMs applied for a managerial role as they wanted to try something different, progress, have a challenge, and prove their capability.

"I wanted to prove my capability in a new role"

"It was only because the manager left quickly that I fell into the role"

"I started off as a care worker, progressed through the years and achieved level 4 in leadership and management"

"I foolishly took on leadership for whatever reason"

"We all started from the ground up and progressed in our roles"

"I had a desire to have a managerial role - I left the NHS to get that because it wasn't available"

"I am quietly ambitious"

"It started as just a job, but I then grew to enjoy it"

Many SCMs were motivated to become a manager to improve the Social Care sector.

Several SCMs spoke of wanting to be involved in the progression and reform of the Social Care sector.

Some wanted to improve upon the management practice they had experienced as a social care worker.

“There was a constant negative mentality of 'You didn't do this or that' - I went into the manager role to try and improve this and make it more positive”

“I want domiciliary care to progress and benefit the people in the future”

“I'm a control freak! I can do better”

“I want to see progression and reform of the industry”

“Anyone who I put into a role, I think, 'Would I want them to look after my granny?’”

Support and encouragement from friends, family, or employers, has played a significant role in SCM progression.

Our participants were often influenced by friends or family already working in the sector, which motivated them to join and apply.

Additionally, many SCMs had supportive leaders who recognised their potential and encouraged career advancement.

“The company saw my potential”

“I had a very supportive manager”

“My seniors saw the potential in me”

“I was initially a caterer, senior management saw the potential in me to become a social support worker, I did my exams, and now I'm a band 5”

“I was influenced by family members who are already in the profession”

Many SCMs originally joined the sector due to work-life balance and flexibility.

However, many feel that progression to more senior roles has led to reduced flexibility and more stress.

“As we moved into senior management - it's not as flexible, there's more stress”

“The job initially came with a lot of flexibility”

“The job had flexibility (initially)”

“The job suited around my family life (initially)”

SCMs believe that the nature of the job makes it a long-term career.

SCMs reflected upon the benefit of long-term careers, highlighting that the SCM role is not one that can be left easily.

Some highlighted the enjoyable nature of the job, and the commitment felt once entering the care sector.

Other SCMs described being too long in the role for a change to be feasible.

“I don't think these jobs are something you can get out of very quickly”

“Once you get into care, nobody wants to leave”

“We feel that it probably is a long-term career; by the nature of the job, you can't just dip in and out”

31.6% of survey respondents have been in a managerial position for more than 10 years.

56.6% of survey respondents have been with their current employer for more than 10 years.

The majority of the SCMs we engaged with were happy in their role, and felt that it was an enjoyable long-term career

57% of workshop attendees have been in a managerial position in social care for 10 or more years.

“We feel like we belong in this industry”

“I view it as a long-term career, I have been in domiciliary care for the last 25 years - it has been my life”

“I'm happy in my career - I moved quickly from a band 1 - 5”

“Yes, I totally want to stay in care”

“Yes we view as a long term career because of the difference that we make”

“It's hard to find a job we enjoy (as much as this one)”

“We did question our careers due to COVID - but we thought 'What else can we do'? Our heart and loyalty keep us there”

“I would need to leave my company to progress to a more senior role, I am not willing to do this.”

Several SCMs reflected upon the challenges, uncertainties, and stress associated with being a SCM

Observations included a belief that the level of pay did not equate to the level of stress staff are under.

“I have questioned whether to remain in the industry”

“Long-term, it will be stressful”

“I have a feeling it is getting harder as time goes on.”

“Yes, I totally want to stay in care”

“In my last post I didn't feel like I was being paid my worth, I was doing above and beyond what my job description was, so I moved roles”

“I have worked for other sectors which was less stress (9-5) - but we are dealing with people's lives here and the wages don't reflect this”

SCMs offered mixed levels of desire to progress in their career. This was often related to stage of life.

SCMs had varying motivations for career progression. Many were highly motivated, aiming to reach the 8a level if the opportunities arose.

For others, progression looked like a better work-life balance. Some were content in their current roles or focused on enhancing their skills, and a few were hesitant to progress due to increased responsibility.

Some expressed interest in returning to hands-on work, while others saw retirement as their next progression.

“It is challenging moving into new roles, but motivating.”

“I would like to achieve a better quality of life and a better work life balance.”

“Personally, I'm at the stage that I'm happy with where I am.”

“I'd like to go back to just doing the work I did before - I don't get to spend time with the people we took the job to work with.”

Barriers to Progression

Barriers to Progression

Insights Overview

1

SCMs believed that the L&D opportunities to progress varies by sector and employer

2

A lack of available senior roles prevents many SCMs from progressing, and may require moving to a new employer

3

Some participants described a lack of support from management

4

Participants in the private sector described a lack of access or budget for L&D opportunities

5

The workload and demands of SCMs roles is a key barrier to progression

6

Many SCMs described a lack of confidence in themselves or their academic ability as a barrier to progression

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A fear of increased responsibility and a loss of work-life balance prevented many SCMs from progressing their career

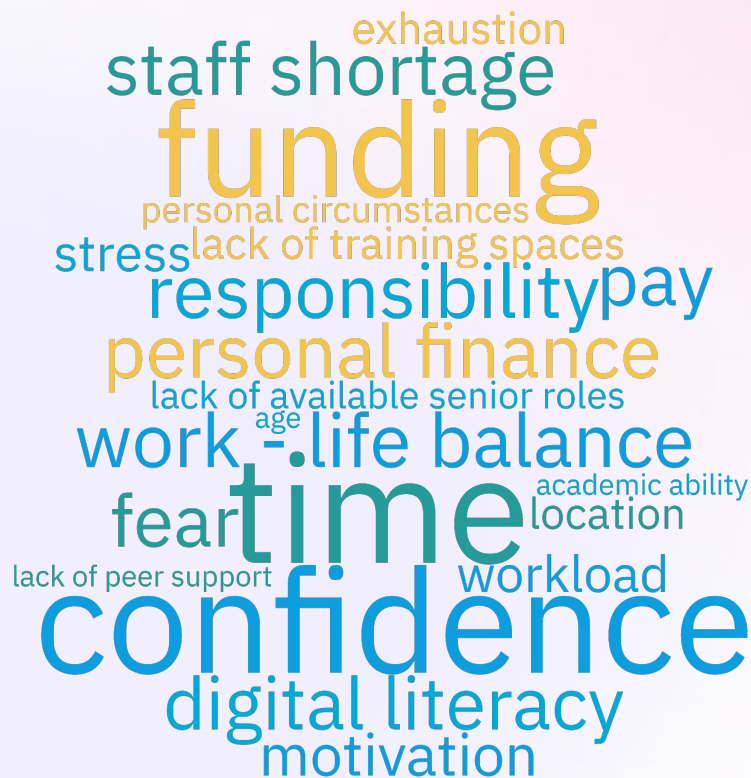
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Many participants in the private sector described the need to fund additional L&D themselves as a key barrier

Barriers at a glance

This word cloud summarises the most common barriers stated by participants.

It can be seen that time, confidence, and funding were the most common barriers stated.



SCMs believed that the L&D opportunities to progress varies by sector and employer.

Many participants felt that they were very supported by their managers to continue to learn and develop.

Participants believed that there were more opportunities for L&D and progression in NHS Trusts than in the private sector.

“I have progressed from a domiciliary carer to coordinating staff, and now I am a registered manager”

“I feel very supported to learn by my manager”

“No matter how long you are in the job, you are learning something new every day.”

“The private sector has a lack of opportunities for progression.”

“There are training opportunities, but it depends on the company.”

A lack of available senior roles prevents many SCMs from progressing, and may require moving to a new employer.

Some felt unable to advance due to limited job openings and often need to wait for a senior's retirement or consider changing employers.

Additionally, many were unaware of opportunities with other employers. There are also challenges in domiciliary care. Shrinking margins and poor growth, were seen as contributing factors.

“Yes there are opportunities, but they are limited as most managers who are in care homes / domiciliary care stay for long periods”

“I would need to leave my company to progress to a more senior role, I am not willing to do this.”

“Someone has to leave their role for you to progress. You can take a sideways step, but it's hard to move forwards.”

“My company structure can be a barrier.”

“The number of positions available as you progress get smaller and smaller.”

Some participants described a lack of support from management.

Some participants believed that senior staff and colleagues may not want to see managers progress in case they move to a new role or employer.

“If you are looking to develop your career, that's for you. It won't necessarily benefit the company.”

“Colleagues and managers do not want you to progress in case you leave”

“There is a lack of support from people around you”

Participants in the private sector described a lack of access or budget for L&D opportunities

Participants highlighted several training challenges. These included limited training course availability, insufficient funding to access desired training.

A notable obstacle for older staff was their lack of digital literacy when engaging with online learning and development.

“Funding prevents us progressing to the next level of our training.”

“I don't believe our training budget covers all necessary aspects.”

“There is a lack of relevant training courses.”

“The local Trust books up all of the available training slots, leaving very few, if any, for us.”

“Online training is something that has to be learned for certain people”

“My training budget has to cover a whole remit, it seems like a big budget at the start then can disappear quickly.”

The workload and demands of SCMs roles is a key barrier to progression.

SCMs stated that they frequently prioritise the advancement of frontline staff over their own due to tight deadlines and time constraints. Staffing problems stemming from attrition worsen this situation.

These challenges, along with personal issues like childcare, collectively contribute to feelings of exhaustion and reduced motivation

“It's stressful, as management we are not switching off”

“It's hard to prioritise your own career.”

“There are constant work pressures and fire fighting.”

“We are both doing a Level 5 and finding it hard to find the time to complete the course (phones ringing at work and then family needs once home)”

“It is very difficult to get released from work to attend L&D opportunities due to staff shortages.”

Many SCMs described a lack of confidence in themselves or their academic ability as a barrier to progression.

Some participants had a lack of self-belief, leading them to question their abilities and hesitating to pursue career advancement.

Several participants described themselves as a “jack of all trades”, whilst others described the stress, anxiety, and overwhelming feeling of change or starting something new.

“I find it difficult to identify my skill set.”

“Questioning my ability is a big barrier.”

“I have a lack of self-confidence and I doubt myself.”

“We feel like a jack of all trades and a master of none.”

“The overwhelming feeling of starting new.”

“The fear of change causes stress and anxiety.”

A fear of increased responsibility and a loss of work-life balance prevented many SCMs from progressing their career.

Many participants debated if the salary increase was worth the increase in stress and responsibility, and reduction in work-life balance.

Others expressed fears that they would need to maintain their current role duties in addition to their more senior role duties if they progressed.

“I worry about work-life balance - is it worth the stress of that responsibility?”

“People don't want to give up their personal time.”

“There are limited family friendly hours as a manager.”

“You might see an opportunity, but you know if you become more senior, no one fills your role - coming up from the bottom you are taking on manager and role below”

Many participants in the private sector described the need to fund additional L&D themselves as a key barrier.

There was a belief amongst SCMs in the private sector that NHS Trust-based employees have more opportunity and access to paid courses.

This was in contrast to the private sector, where many SCMs described needing to pay for additional training themselves.

The cost of courses was described as a key barrier.

“In the private sector, you would have to fund it yourself.”

“The Trusts have paid courses and time off to attend them.”

22.4% of survey respondents felt that L&D opportunities are too expensive.

Managers' L&D

Managers Learning & Development

Insights Overview

1

Managers value their L&D, and believe it is important

2

Managers face difficulties in engaging with L&D opportunities

3

Spaces on L&D opportunities are limited and are not always accessible due to geographical location

4

Whilst everyone has regular L&D plans and the opportunity to engage in learning and development, there are some discrepancies between the public and private sector

5

Participants commented that L&D opportunities are not always relevant

6

Personal circumstances, outside job responsibilities and work life balance are challenges to engagement in L&D

7

The introduction of e-learning in L&D has a number of shortcomings

Managers value their L&D, and believe it is important.

Managers feel their L&D is essential to ensure they develop and maintain a high standard of safe practice and to keep up with changing regulations within the industry.

Due to the nature of the job, managers also value emotional check ins and time for reflective practice.

“It's really important for me”

“It puts you in a better position”

“It's extremely important to ensure you are confident with safe practice and regulations”

“At the management level, we are constantly dealing with crisis”

0% of survey respondents felt that L&D opportunities would not be of benefit to them.

78.9% of respondents wanted to continue their L&D in order to improve how they work.

67.1% of respondents wanted to continue their L&D to improve the care they provide.

65.8% of respondents wanted to continue their L&D to feel more confident in their role.

Managers face difficulties in engaging with L&D opportunities

A lack of time, service pressures and high demands of the job as well, as limited resources and financial issues mean some managers don't engage in L&D as much as they would like.

Managers tend to prioritise their staff's training which in turn, can lead to neglecting their own L&D.

Sometimes as a manager you are so busy getting your staff trained that you forget about yourself."

"As managers we tend to put everyone else first"

"It's hard to find staff to cover you to go and attend"

"Lack of resources, lack of facilities"

"It can get pushed down the road and rescheduled due to very busy schedules, then results in stress if you have not done it"

Spaces on L&D opportunities are limited and are not always accessible due to geographical location.

Attending L&D opportunities is difficult for some due to a lack of public or private transport to get to a specific location.

Participants expressed how accessing L&D is difficult at times due to a limited spaces or no availability on the course.

“At the facility where training is held - some staff have no car or public transport not accessible to venue.”

“Community workers cover such a large geographical area so rely on staff to do training online but there is a reluctance”

“[There are] lots of opportunities - it's getting placements on courses”

11.8% of survey respondents felt that L&D opportunities are not available.

Whilst everyone has regular L&D plans and the opportunity to engage in learning and development, there are some discrepancies between the public and private sector.

There is opportunity across the sector to engage in L&D, however those in the private sector felt funding and opportunities were limited.

“Yes, all staff are given the same opportunity to learn to their capability within their roles”

“In private sector, profit comes before development”

“In private sector there are not as many opportunities for managers”

“It depends on the general interest of each individual”

Participants commented that L&D opportunities are not always relevant

Managers expressed that some L&D opportunities do not align with their career progression goals, or may feel they've already reached the highest level in their current positions.

L&D initiatives are occasionally perceived as checkbox exercises with limited real-world relevance or value.

“Is it relevant or irrelevant to what we're doing?”

“Once you reach the top of management, the only thing left for you to do is to get a degree”

“Choices in courses is sometimes not in keeping with where we are in our career”

“Is it a tick box exercise, is there value in it - this remains to be seen...”

Personal circumstances, outside job responsibilities and work life balance are challenges to engagement with L&D.

Managers, as well as their frontline staff, feel they must prioritise family commitments and maintain a healthy work-life balance, which occasionally hinders their ability to participate in L&D.

“Staff are reluctant to do any L&D outside of their working hours”

“People don't want to give up personal time”

“Uncertainty on expectations of when training should be done - in work vs home”

“We have family obligations”

56.6% of survey respondents felt time was a key challenge in completing L&D opportunities.

The introduction of e-learning in L&D has a number of shortcomings.

Managers noted that the digitalisation of L&D presents limitations, particularly in the context of practical learning.

They value face-to-face contact time and consider in-person L&D to be the most beneficial to their staff.

In addition, SCMs described the struggles of the older workforce when accessing e-learning, and the are drawbacks for staff without access to computers.

“Digital opportunities can be difficult for some staff”

“Idea of e-learning puts older generation within the workforce off”

“Death by zoom”

“People can just turn their camera off with online learning”

“Face to face training has been pivotal”

Frontline Staff L&D

Frontline Staff Learning & Development

Insights Overview

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Frontline Staff Learning & Development

Insights Overview

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Managers felt that time constraints and staffing issue often limit their frontline staff from engaging in L&D opportunities

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Managers highlighted a lack of quality and value with L&D opportunities at times

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Managers value face to face time with their frontline staff and ensure staff's L&D plan is discussed during appraisals and regular supervisions

SCMs recognise the importance of their staff engaging in L&D opportunities

Managers play a pivotal role in reinforcing the importance of L&D amongst their staff

Managers see ongoing L&D as essential for equipping their staff with the knowledge and skills needed in a dynamic workplace, and improving teamwork.

“It's vital due to being service user led”

“It's important to have a lot of touchpoints”

“Vital to ensure the workforce is skilled”

“If a manager doesn't promote then staff will just tag along”

SCMs believe that a proportion of their frontline staff do not see L&D as a priority.

Managers believe that their staff sometimes view L&D as a routine task rather than recognising its broader significance.

Participants commented that training can feel like a tick box exercise, and is not always relevant to what staff are doing.

At times, frontline staff have to be prompted by SCMs to complete L&D opportunities such as training.

“It's not a priority to them - don't understand the accountability if something goes wrong”

“Depends on the staff member - some find it great, others "what's the point”

“Is it a tick box exercise?”

“We do encourage but some don't turn up on the day”

“People can see training as not relevant, even the likes of health and safety which is a legal requirement”

SCMs believe that continuous L&D of frontline staff is crucial for maintaining compliance, competency within their roles, and staying up-to-date with industry standards.

Managers commented that frontline staff must stay compliant with RQIA standards to ensure the safety of their service users.

“Disaster can happen when people aren't properly trained”

“The focus on mandatory training is what we develop people in”

“It is a much more complex service user base than it has been in previous years, important to be competent”

67.1% of survey respondents noted that they source L&D opportunities for their staff.

88.2% responded ‘Yes’ when asked if their staff have a L&D plan.

SCMs believe the extent of L&D engagement largely relies on an individual's own motivation

Participants felt that an individual's motivation and level of proactivity will depend on whether opportunities are availed of.

It was noted by participants that providing incentives for engagement with opportunities would boost engagement.

“Some are keen for opportunities, some avoid it”

“It depends how motivated they are”

“Some people are just happy ticking along”

“Depends on if they are willing to learn”

“Some can hide behind lack of training, use it as an excuse - ‘I haven't done that training’”

“Managers are constantly chasing staff training”

“Maybe if everyone got paid to do it, they would see it as a bit more important”

“Some people are encouraged by recognition, name being in the role of honour and incentives to be represented”

There is opportunity to improve the uptake of L&D by providing a better sense of recognition and more support to frontline staff

Staff may lack confidence and so it is important that they have the ability to discuss L&D opportunities with a manager.

Some participants felt that more recognition for staff's L&D achievements is needed.

“We will only retain staff if they feel supported; if you're not confident it will scare you - makes it more likely to make mistakes”

“Recognition would inspire people”

“If staff feel like you have got their back, it will make them more inclined to train in certain areas”

Current L&D opportunities available to frontline staff are both formal and informal, including mandatory training, qualifications, managerial training

Frontline staff have opportunity to discuss the various L&D options with their manager.

A number of managers mentioned more specific L&D opportunities their staff had been involved in, such as the dementia bus and opportunity to learn in hospital settings.

One organisation felt they were not always clear on what opportunities were available.

“Plenty of opportunity to discuss”

“Yes, it's a mandatory requirement - it's very role dependent too”

“We're not always clear on what's available in schools”

L&D plays an important role in empowering frontline staff to progress in their careers

SCMs stated that L&D allows them to compare capabilities of their frontline staff against service needs, and is beneficial for the identification of skills gaps.

Additionally, SCMs stated that L&D enables them to identify individuals who may be candidates for progression within their organisation.

“It improves your worth to the organisation”

“Some staff like to progress. We have learning directories for different vocational courses.”

“Definitely find that people are willing to progress”

Cost is a limiting factor to frontline staff being able to access L&D opportunities

Limited funding and costs involved with L&D opportunities including the training/course itself as well as the cost of travelling to attend is a barrier to staff engaging.

“Money is a limiting factor, especially if it involves travelling”

“Anything that's funded is an opportunity”

“[It comes] down to funding”

Diverse learning abilities and styles may be barriers to staff fully engaging with L&D opportunities.

Difficulties such as literacy issues and challenges for those accustomed to face to face learning were mentioned.

A range of academic ability across the sector means that certain L&D opportunities may be perceived as unattainable by certain individuals.

“People have different learning abilities”

“Challenging for some people who are used to face to face learning”

“There are different types of learning skills and styles”

Managers felt that time constraints and staffing issues often limit their frontline staff from engaging in L&D opportunities.

Staff shortages makes it difficult at times for managers to release their staff to allow them to engage in L&D opportunities.

Managers reported that due to their busy schedules, they struggle to identify opportunities that are beneficial for their frontline staff to participate in.

“There are issues getting staff covered to allow them to go to training”

“Not enough staff, not enough time, not enough money”

“I’m busy and then have to find time to find opportunities for members of staff”

“It’s time consuming for line managers to organise”

“Time to attend could be difficult”

“Does everyone have the same opportunity? No - work demands, time demands...”

Managers highlighted a lack of quality and value with training at times.

Negative feedback from individuals attending certain training opportunities in the past has led to a pessimistic perception and hesitance amongst others to participate.

Concerns around the quality of training was highlighted, including issues such as repetitiveness.

A small number questioned the value of certain L&D opportunities.

“Opinions from other people who have taken part in training and have a negative view - can really influence how others feel about it”

“Not enough staff, not enough time, not enough money”

“I’m busy and then have to find time to find opportunities for members of staff”

Managers value face to face time with their frontline staff and ensure staff's L&D plan is discussed during appraisals and regular supervisions.

Overall, managers offer regular communications and support for their frontline staff.

Performance and development is discussed between managers and frontline staff.

Managers value their relationship with their staff highly, and appreciate face to face time.

“It's important to managers to put a name to a face and for their frontline staff to build relationship with them”

“Workshops and in person events where different businesses get the opportunity to meet is valued”

“We have an open door policy”

“Every meeting we talk about performance and development”

88.2% of survey respondents said they discussed staff's L&D needs at 1:1 meetings or supervisions.

CIP
(Care in Practice Framework)

Summary

The CIP (Care in Practice) framework was well received by SCMs. SCMs can see the value and impact that the framework would have across the sector but had a number of questions and uncertainties.

CIP (Care in Practice Framework)

Insights Overview

1

Managers see the CIP as a means to professionalise the workforce, instil a sense of value across frontline staff, and establish standardisation across the board

2

The CIP framework offers improved guidance for L&D and outlines a potential career progression route

3

The CIP framework creates transferability and cohesion across the whole sector

4

Many believe that the CIP framework would enhance learning, knowledge levels, and boost engagement and motivation.

5

SCMs believed that the transition to the CIP Framework may result in increased pressure and workload.

6

SCMs displayed mixed feelings around the impact that the CIP may have on recruitment and retention

7

Participants felt that an increased level of support will be needed with the introduction of the CIP framework

8

SCMs expressed concerns around how accessible this will be for non-native English speakers, and also those of lower academic ability

9

Many SCMs had not heard about the framework before, and several common questions arose

CIP (Care in Practice Framework)

Insights Overview

10

SCMs desired additional clarity for several areas of the framework

11

Timeframe, costs, governance and responsibility were all raised as concerns for the CIP framework the Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate

Managers see the CIP as a means to professionalise the workforce, instil a sense of value across frontline staff, and establish standardisation across the board

SCMs believed that the CIP framework will provide and promote a more standardised approach to the social care sector.

The CIP serves as a basis to promote social care practice as a professional career choice.

“This gives staff a sense of achievement and belonging to a large organisation”

“It promotes the professional aspect of caring”

“Standardisation is needed in the industry”

“I think this is exactly what this sector needs and deserves- a professional pathway that is clear and standardised.”

94.7% of survey respondents noted that the framework would help managers to support their frontline staff in their L&D.

The CIP framework offers improved guidance for L&D and outlines a potential career progression route.

The framework provides a clear future pathway for those coming into the industry

Beneficial to guide those in education to point out a potential career pathway and qualifications needed

“I think this is absolutely fabulous for new people joining social care”

“Theoretically staff should hit the ground running”

“In schools (career talks), I will able to point out a clear career pathway and show the qualifications needed”

“Really puts a clear pathway for people to be able to look at”

“Provides structure, and is an excellent starting point for us going forward”

“Good to have accredited course for the new workforce”

“Allows for better promotion in the education sector”

“If I was doing a supervision or appraisal i can see where they are at and show them their next steps”

The CIP framework creates transferability and cohesion across the whole sector

Standardisation through this new framework is welcomed across the sector and participants feel it will improve the overall quality and standard of the sector.

Managers commented that this will bring a joined approach and link organisations better together.

Some concerns that transferability will encourage individuals to 'job hop' more frequently and negatively impact the original company.

“I love the concept of it, every organisation should have this”

“People might stay in the sector, but move around companies more”

“I like that it's transferable - but there's two sides to that. Will that make staff stay where they are, or encourage them to move more easily”

75.0% of respondents felt the framework would encourage them to stay in social care long term.

Many believe that the CIP framework would enhance learning, knowledge levels, and boost engagement and motivation.

It could encourage individuals to move up in the sector due to having a clearer view of potential progression pathways.

Managers indicated that the overall quality of the social care workforce may see an enhancement as a result of the CIP, and filter out individuals who are not genuinely committed and invested in a career in care

67.1% of respondents stated that the CIP Framework would motivate them to progress in their career.

“It will help filter those who are not wanting to invest in social care”

Potential Impacts

SCMs believed that the transition to the CIP Framework may result in increased pressure and workload.

Managers commented on the additional pressures this would cause for themselves and their frontline staff

Participants expressed concerns for the increased pressure this would have on the older workforce

“I feel like it would put our staff under pressure a bit”

“It may put staff off - e.g. amount of paperwork”

“Maybe someone has been in the care area for 30 years, it would be concerning for them”

“Issues with older people who have stayed away from this their whole career, could be off putting”

“Pressure on staff who do not want to upskill, but are good care staff”

SCMs displayed mixed feelings around the impact that the CIP may have on recruitment and retention

SCMs suggested that the CIP framework may improve recruitment levels due to the professionalism of the workforce as well as a clear pathway for those in education

Others suggested that the CIP could create barriers to roles and make it harder to recruit staff

Some SCMs expressed concerns for the impact this would have on the older workforce and individuals in low hour contracts, and potential to put them off joining or remaining in the sector

“Unsure whether this framework will create barriers to roles as well as opportunities”

“Might improve staff commitment but could also put people off”

“It is a downfall too, for older people, mums taking on part time work - huge amount of paperwork already even for just 4 hour contracts - this deters people”

“We can't afford to deter any more candidates”

“This could discriminate against someone who has just retired and wants to do some care work”

Participants felt that an increased level of support will be needed with the introduction of the CIP framework

Participants expressed that increased support and protection of staff time would be valuable with the introduction of the CIP framework

Backup and support from NISCC during the rollout of the CIP was seen as a possible benefit

“Hopefully staff will be more supported with a clearer pathway”

Concerns and Uncertainties

SCMs expressed concerns around how accessible this will be for non-native English speakers, and also those of lower academic ability

Some individuals expressed concerns about the accessibility of this for workforce members whose first language is not English.

It was raised that those of a lower academic ability may struggle with this L&D framework, but still have the qualities necessary to be a compassionate caregiver

There is concern that frontline staff at a lower level may struggle to understand the diagram

“It may put staff off - e.g. amount of paperwork”

“Are we over intellectualising care?”

“Might add barriers to people get in to it that aren't academically minded”

“A lot of our carers are people who just want to make a difference in someone's life for a couple of hours, this is a lot to ask of them”

“Certain people are good at caring but maybe not so good at a learning/educational career path”

Many SCMs had not heard about the framework before, and several common questions arose

Managers expressed feeling apprehensive around the implementation of the CIP, primarily due to the multitude of questions they had concerning it.

SCMs believed that further engagement is necessary in order for them to have a deeper understanding of the framework.

“I’m worried that any new training will fall on managers to deal with - that’s bad for everybody.”

“It’s making me nervous - it’s really making me nervous”

“The effort it takes to embed can be hard, could cause confusion”

SCMs desired additional clarity for several areas of the framework

Additional clarification is needed in the diagram, in order to enhance the overall understanding of different terms and available pathways.

Uncertainty as to what pathway individuals need to take, and limited understanding on the right and left side of the diagram.

“I’ve seen this diagram on a number of occasions and I am still confused on what the left hand side means, personally I would just prefer the right hand side (one pathway).”

“If we were showing this to people outside of a certain level I’m not confident they would understand it”

“I feel like I’m back in science I don’t really understand it”

“There’s a lack of clarity”

53.9% of respondents had heard of the framework before, whilst 46.1% had not.

A proportion of respondents felt that they would ‘somewhat’ (53.9%) or ‘to a great extent’ (21.1%) require support to engage with the framework.

Timeframe, costs, governance and responsibility were all raised as concerns for the CIP framework and the Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate

Questions around the expectation of an increased rate of pay, funding for different training opportunities and cost implications within organisations was noted.

Participants were curious as to how the framework is to be enforced, if it will include a legislation change and who will be expected to govern and monitor this.

“Is there any funding towards this, could impact on finances.”

“Who is going to fund this?”

“I know we're not here to talk about money, but that's one thing that will really encourage uptake. Better pay after it, or payment during.”

The Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate

The Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate

Insights Overview

1

Recognition of frontline staff, in addition to improved confidence, and knowledge were key aspects

2

Participants praised the increased support for career progression through increased opportunity and a clear pathway

3

Participants felt that this certificate would address their staffs needs, and noted a number of similarities between this and their current introduction training

4

The transferability of the certificate was a key benefit, which was praised for its standardisation and ability to ease movement within the sector

5

Participants noted that there are inevitable dependencies on progression such as time availability and motivation of the individual on whether they want to progress

6

Participants had questions around the timeframe required to complete the certificate, and expressed their concern for the amount of time this may take to train staff

7

Potential difficulties may arise depending on how the certificate needs to be completed e.g access to a computer

8

SCMs noted concerns about the Safe and Effective Care Practice Certificate being a deterrent to those joining the workforce

Summary

The Safe & Effective Care Practice Certificate was well received. SCMs were positive about the potential impact the certificate may have on themselves and their staff, describing a range of benefits.

Recognition of frontline staff, in addition to improved confidence, and knowledge were key aspects.

Participants valued that the Safe and Effective Care Practice Certificate would improve overall confidence and knowledge of staff.

“The staff will hopefully feel empowered and confident in their job role, now they hold a recognised certificate”

“Staff will hopefully feel empowered and confident in their job”

“Impact on new staff - professionalisation, commitment to NISCC profession.”

“It will allow staff to feel valued, and give them a sense of achievement.”

“It will encourage an ethos of learning”

“We just think it’s wonderful!”

80.3% of survey respondents indicated that the SECP Certificate would help new staff feel recognised and valued.

Participants praised the increased support for career progression through increased opportunity and a clear pathway

Participants felt that the certificate indicated the start of a career pathway for those coming into the social care workforce.

“For staff who feel that they don't have capacity to do stage 3 diploma, this might be more achievable”

“There is a clear progression pathway”

“Hopefully staff will be more supported with a clearer pathway”

“Shows staff that we are mindful of their professional development”

“This provides a good foundation for entry into social care”

Participants felt that this certificate would address their staffs needs, and noted a number of similarities between this and their current induction training.

Participants highlighted the additional need for bespoke training required in different organisations.

35.5% of survey respondents indicated that the SECP Certificate would support new members of staff to onboard faster.

“This mandates the training - that sort of already happens.”

“This addresses staff needs, there’s not one thing that we don’t do anyway”

“In some ways it addresses our staffs needs, but I don’t know if it’ll meet the specific needs of our clients”

“No this doesn’t completely address our staffs needs, it touches on some core L&D needs, however, there is far more involved, bespoke to each service”

The transferability of the certificate was a key benefit, which was praised for its standardisation and ability to ease movement within the sector.

This was described as allowing staff to meet their ambitions and move jobs more easily.

Participants highlighted that the certificate will reduce the amount of mandatory training by removing repetition of existing training.

Some participants had doubts around situations where staff may move from job to job more easily and felt this could be a negative.

“Standardised training may encourage more people”

“It allows staff to meet their ambitions and move jobs easier”

“Staff hold a universal, accredited qualification which is transferable”

“New staff will have a standardised level of training across all sectors.”

86.8% of respondents felt that the certificate will provide a level of standardisation across the sector.

85.5% of respondents noted that the certificate will improve the care and support that new staff provide to service users.

Potential Impacts

Participants noted that there are inevitable dependencies on progression such as time availability and motivation of the individual on whether they want to progress.

Although participants felt the certificate would be a benefit to the workforce, these factors were commonly cited barriers to engagement. Work must be done to engage with, and motivate, individuals who are less motivated to engage in these opportunities.

“Those who want to learn will respond well. Those who just see it as a way to make ends meet - not so much.”

“If staff wish to progress it will be a personal choice as there may be no money incentive or availability of a senior role.”

Concerns and Uncertainties

Participants had questions around the timeframe required to complete the certificate, and expressed their concern for the amount of time this may take to train staff.

Due to the pressure of the workforce, participants expressed an urgency to get their staff trained quickly.

“Timing will be difficult - getting staff in place is tough, adding more training will impact their onboarding”

“Is there going to be a secondment?”

“If this is going to take a long time to do - this will put people off the job - these are the people that are precious to the workforce”

“This could be a time drain for newer staff if we are reliant on them”

“Our current basic induction before active service is 1-5 days, will this delay us getting staff on the ground?”

Potential difficulties may arise depending on how the certificate needs to be completed e.g access to a computer

A preference was noted for hands on face to face training, due to digital limitations such as access for a number of staff

“Not everyone is able to complete online training”

“There are access issues to computers, and technology limitations”

“Will this be hands on?”

“How will this cover practical work?”

SCMs noted concerns about the Safe and Effective Care Practice Certificate being a deterrent to those joining the workforce

While the certificate was generally viewed favourably, some worried that the perception of increased expectation could discourage newcomers to the workforce.

“There are already a limited number of workers, don't want to deter people away”

“This could reduce application/interest”

“Might reduce interest for "part time workers (those only doing 4 hours per week)”

“It's an awful lot of hoops to jump through in your first few months of employment”

22.4% of survey respondents felt that the certificate could discourage some people from becoming a social carer.

Key Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Clarify and Simplify the CIP Framework Diagram

Our research has highlighted that a proportion of the target audience has difficulty in fully understanding the existing CIP Framework diagram. Several areas for improvement have been identified. These include:

- Clarifying the relationship / dependency / journey between the left and right side of the diagram
- Clarifying similarities and differences between the L&D opportunities currently offered by employers, and what will be required in the CIP Framework
- Clarifying which elements are optional, and which are mandatory

Should funding permit, it is recommended that the new version of the diagram undergoes a co-design process which involves a representative sample of the target audience.

This may be performed through a series of small workshops, or through 1:1 usability testing.

Recommendation 2

Establish L&D Champions to further promote the CIP Framework

Many of the participants who engaged in this research study were supportive, excited, positive, and enthusiastic about the CIP Framework. These participants saw the potential benefit and impact on themselves, frontline staff, and the sector.

We recommend leveraging this enthusiasm and support by establishing L&D (or CIP) Champions. These should be a sample of individuals who are representative of the workforce, and are individuals that others can relate to. Such individuals should be recruited from the pilot study.

Case studies with these Champions which demonstrate their implementation of the CIP Framework, and its impact, will assist in promotion, understanding, and may minimise friction towards uptake.

Recommendation 3

Provide an Employer Implementation Pack and FAQs

This study has highlighted several areas of uncertainty that SCMs and employers may have when introduced to the CIP Framework for the first time.

It is recommended that an Employer Implementation Pack and FAQ page is developed to address these areas of uncertainty, preparing employers, managers, and frontline staff for the rollout of the Framework.

The **employer implementation pack** should contain information and recommendations to employers regarding preparations that must be put in place in advance of the rollout of the Framework. This may include elements such as:

- Adjustments to existing recruitment and onboarding processes
- Identification of training providers
- Assessment mechanism
- Projected financial implications
- Legal implications, governance, timelines

The **FAQ page** should contain information suitable for any stakeholder viewing the CIP Framework for the first time. Initial suggestions for FAQs based on this study have been included in Appendix B.

We recommend continuing to add to the FAQ page as further insights are captured in the information workshops. The FAQ page may be best divided by stakeholder type, for example: employer, manager, frontline staff.

Recommendation 4

Increase awareness and engagement through a CIP Framework information and feedback hub

As the deadline for rollout of the CIP Framework draws closer, it is apparent that a proportion of the sector is still unaware of the CIP Framework.

Additionally, whilst this study has provided valuable insight, there is not currently a mechanism for the workforce to provide regular feedback on the Framework.

This initiative will help maximise awareness of the Framework, and will provide a mechanism for capturing ongoing insight and feedback attitudes, perception, and unmet needs.

We recommend that this hub includes (but is not limited to):

- A **re-designed CIP Framework diagram**
- **FAQs** based on areas of uncertainty identified within this study
- An **employer implementation pack**
- The promotion of **drop-in information / discussion sessions**
- An **anonymous feedback / data capture mechanism** to capture insight regarding these materials
- The collection of **web analytics data** to identify the level of interaction by members of the workforce throughout Northern Ireland, and the impact of promotional events.

Recommendation 5

Consider a careful balance between face-to-face and online L&D opportunities

Many participants in this research study reflected on the benefits and desirability of face-to-face L&D opportunities for the workforce, and expressed a fear that the CIP Framework would overly rely on online or e-Learning initiatives.

Whilst online and e-Learning opportunities provide a wide variety of benefits including scalability, cost, and flexibility, it is important to consider the attitudes, preferences, and needs of the workforce.

As it is clear that a vocal proportion of the workforce offer a strong preference for face-to-face L&D opportunities, it is important to provide these opportunities where possible in order to maximise desirability and engagement.

BIGMOTIVE

Thank you.

