

BIGMOTIVE

The Care in Practice Framework:

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

Summary Report

November 2023

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Introduction

Who are we

- Big Motive is a design company based in Belfast
- We work with other organisations to help them tackle challenges by speaking to their audience
- This helps us understand experiences, attitudes, needs, and behaviours of target audiences
- We advocate for these audiences, ensuring that new initiatives are “user centred” in their design

Background

- The NISCC 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 Big Motive team aimed to capture 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.

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

Fairhaven Residential



Platinum SCS



PSC Management



43



Organisations Represented



Self Employed

Workshop Demographics

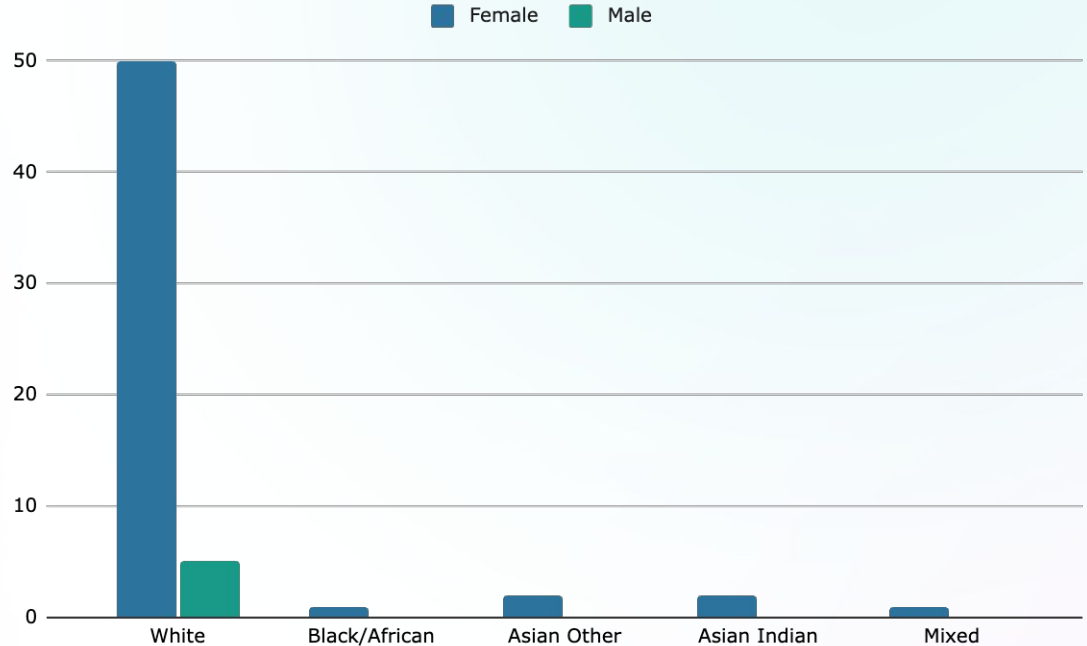
Total Attendees: 68

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

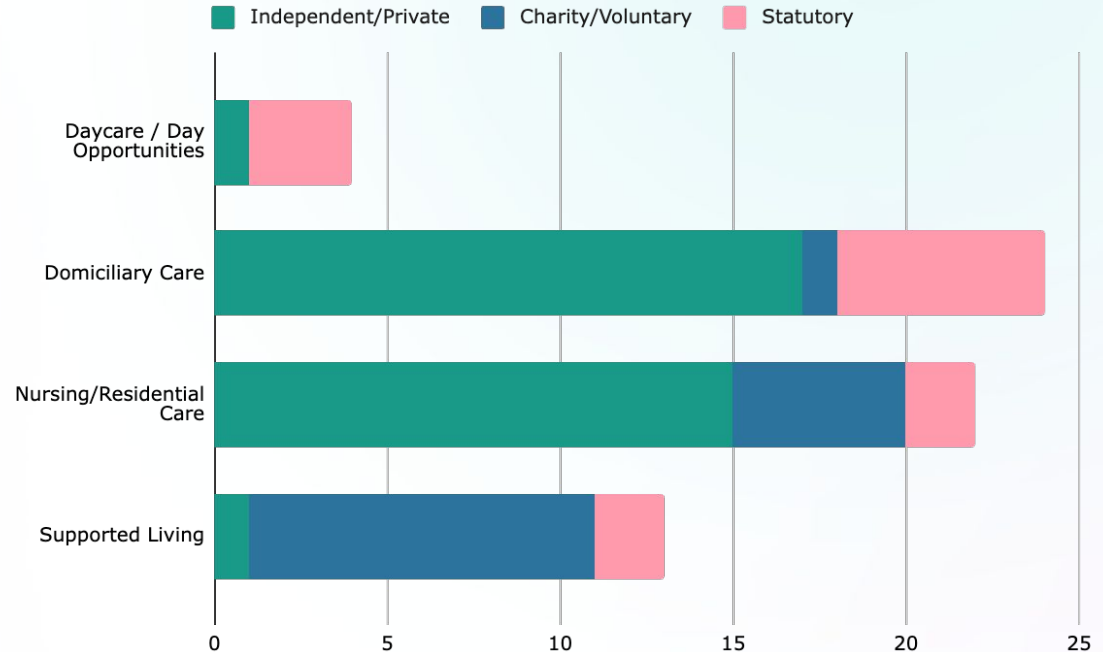
Independent / Private Sector: 17
Charity / Voluntary Sector: 1
Statutory Sector - e.g. HSC Trust: 6

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

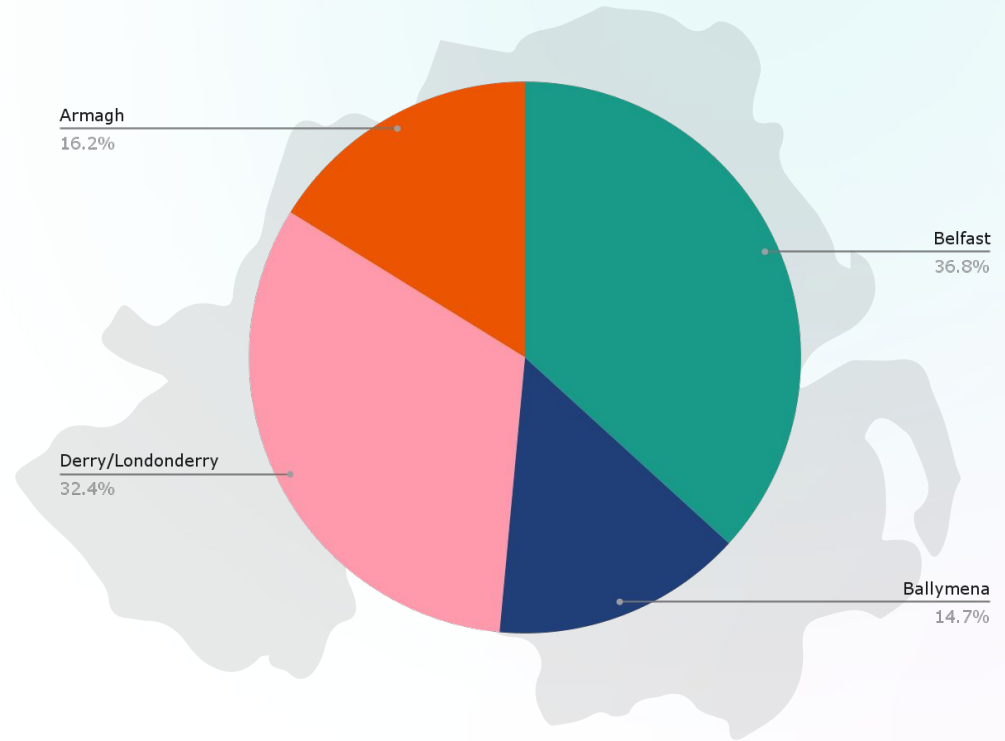
Location

Belfast - 25 participants

Ballymena - 22 participants

Derry/Londonderry - 10 participants

Armagh - 11 participants

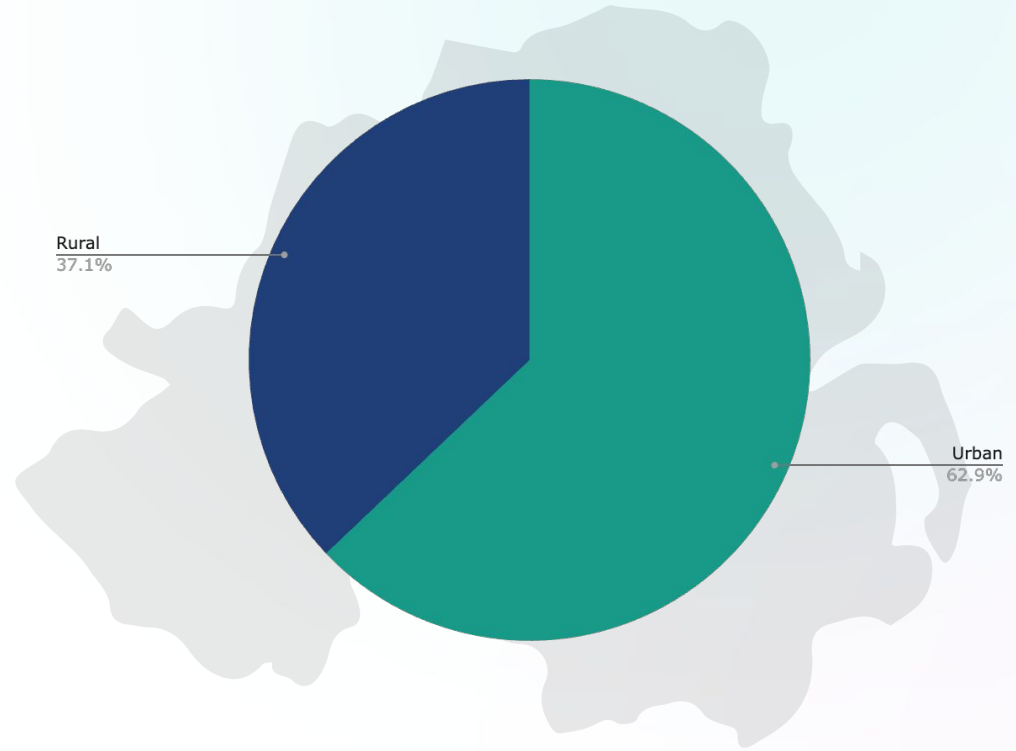


Workshop Demographics

Urban / Rural

Urban: 62.9%

Rural: 37.1%



Survey demographics

Number of eligible responses: 70 / 85*

Date: 6.11.2023

Employment status

Full time: 64
Part time: 4
Other (zero-hours/self-employed): 2

Sector

Independent/Private: 28
Statutory: 27
Voluntary: 15

Working Location

Co. Down: 25
Co. Antrim (In Belfast): 15
Co. Antrim (Outside of Belfast): 18
Co. Tyrone: 11
Co. Armagh: 7
Co. Derry / Londonderry: 8
Co. Fermanagh: 5

Time in current role

Less than 1 year: 9
1-2 years: 4
3-5 years: 21
6-10 years: 14
11-15 years: 13
16-20 years: 5
21+ years: 4

Time with current employer

Less than 1 year: 7
1-2 years: 3
3-5 years: 11
6-10 years: 9
11-15 years: 12
16-20 years: 8
21+ years: 20

*Note: Total number of responses was 85, however, 15 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**

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”

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”

31.8% of survey respondents have been in a managerial position for more than 10 years.

50.6% of survey respondents have been with their current employer for more than 10 years.

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.”

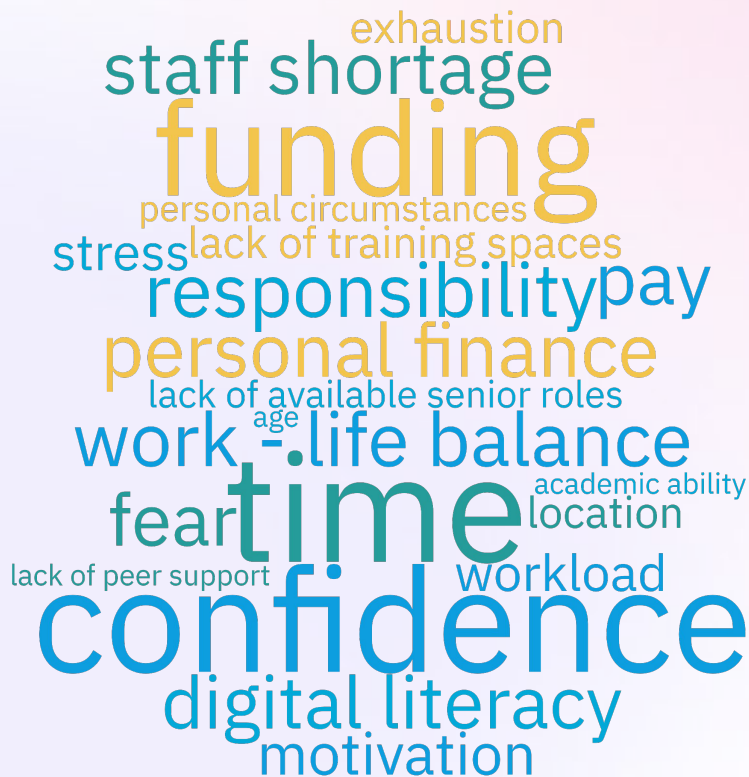
“I'd like to go back to just doing the work I did before - I don't get to spend time with the people we took the job to work with.”

Barriers to Progression

Barriers 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.



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

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

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.”

20% 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.

77.1% 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.

64.3% of respondents wanted to continue their L&D to feel more confident in their role.

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”

10.6% of survey respondents felt that L&D opportunities are not available.

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”

55.7% 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

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 issue 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

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”

68.6% of survey respondents noted that they source L&D opportunities for their staff.

88.6% responded ‘Yes’ when asked if their staff have a L&D plan.

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”

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”

78.8% of survey respondents said they discussed staff's L&D needs at 1:1 meetings or supervisions.

CIP
(Care in Practice Framework)

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.”

94.3% of survey respondents noted that the framework would help managers to support their frontline staff in their L&D.

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”

75.7% of respondents felt the framework would encourage them to stay in social care long term.

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”

52.9% of respondents had heard of the framework before, whilst 47.1% had not.

A proportion of respondents felt that they would ‘somewhat’ (54.3%) or ‘to a great extent’ (22.9%) require support to engage with the 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 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

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

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

“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”

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”

20.0% of survey respondents felt that the certificate could discourage some people from becoming a social worker.

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.”

87.1% of respondents felt that the certificate will provide a level of standardisation across the sector.

84.3% of respondents noted that the certificate will improve the care and support that new staff provide to service users.

Next steps



<https://nisc.info/learning-and-development-contact-form/>

or contact Alison: Alison.shaw@nisc.hscni.net

BIGMOTIVE

Thank you.

Georgia Gallagher

Design Researcher
Big Motive



georgiag@bigmotive.com

Jonathan Synnott, Ph.D.

Design Research Lead
Big Motive



js@bigmotive.com

