



Institute  
of **Hospitality**

# CARE HOMES & SOCIAL CARE:

Challenges, Opportunities  
and Solutions 2023

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

 **planday**  
FROM XERO

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## BACKGROUND

The care industry is worth £50.3bn  
a year

It employs 1.8m but there are  
165,000 vacancies

Staff turnover is 29% – this is a  
sector in distress

The UK has an ageing population:  
there are 11m people over 65; in 10  
years' time that will be more than  
13m

"Our problems are not individual, specific to our homes, they are across the board. The round table has highlighted that we are all doing something different and perhaps we need to share information and knowledge more widely."

NICKY HAZELL | HOME ADMISSIONS ADVISOR  
**Cinnamon Care Collection**



## DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION

... and the industry needs to pull together to deal with this. The commonality between care and hospitality is huge – both in the difficulties they are facing and their need to address them.

## REQUIREMENTS

Collaboration

Bring more young people into the sector

Look after carers and provide a good working environment

Address low perception

Promote the benefits of working in this sector. The environment is changing and the sector has a strong focus on the care and wellbeing of both residents and employees

All the above needs a long-term strategy rather than sticking to what we have always done, which clearly doesn't work

## ENGAGE SCHOOLS

Inspire primary school children because a lot of secondary school education is preordained; primary school children will go home and talk to their parents about it

Parents are the stumbling block; they do not see care or hospitality as a 'real job' or career. It is more effective to engage them via their offspring than directly (see above)

Downside: employing teenagers involves arduous amounts of paperwork



## PERCEPTION

Working in a care home is seen as being a drudge, a combination of nurse and nanny, rather than looking after the grandparents someone is fond of and the foundation of our society. This can be – and is – hugely rewarding work

“A lot of people imagine they know what I do day to day and they’re completely wrong. I help residents by building communication with them, so that we can trust each other, and relationships take off from there.”

SADIE TORRES | CARE ASSISTANT

Care homes are viewed as an extension of a hospital

Perception is so bad, carers are now known as support workers, which removes the word care – not good





Media coverage of the sector ranges from scare stories about the low levels of care given to "Care workers not adequately valued or rewarded" (BBC News, January 2022) and the latter represents the common misconception that the work is demanding, unrewarding and low paid, with little career progression

Healthcare chef is not as aspirational as restaurant or hotel chef yet many chefs in healthcare came from hospitality

Like hospitality, care needs to embrace the gig economy; a young chef might work in a care home on Monday, a hotel on Tuesday, a pub on Wednesday. Older people are also starting to see the appeal; people's attitude to work has changed thanks to numerous lockdowns

Care is hard work – long hours and low pay BUT talk to people who are doing it and learn how rewarding it is

If there is development and progression, no one is talking about it



## TURNOVER

The problem is not care homes, it is the way they are managed.

High turnover means high cost – possibly £5K to recruit a carer

It is expensive to employ agency staff but for some, it provides flexibility not available in care home rotas

Experience suggests that 30% of those leaving are under 30 and have stayed less than two years. If they stay beyond two years, they remain in place longer and after five years, they are likely there for the long term

Carers feel undervalued and taken for granted; this is exacerbated by inflexible rotas communicated at short notice by email, making personal time difficult to manage. Unhappy people talk about it outside their workplace

Managers are also leaving, taking experience and training with them



## YOUNG PEOPLE AND HOW TO REACH THEM

Millennials choose their employer on values, ethos, environmental credentials; wellbeing is a priority

They learn about opportunities through word of mouth but because lack of young people in care means the word doesn't get out

Technology in the sector is not advanced but young people run their lives on their phones and expect it at work; they want to be in control of their schedule

"We do something different every day, we learn new skills from the job, and we do not only take care of elderly people, there are also young people with learning disabilities; there are so many opportunities for young people.

I recommend young people do not pay attention to what the media say; they always put the bad news at the top. We are making a difference, we are caring for someone's life, which is a huge responsibility but also very rewarding."

SADIE TORRES | CARE ASSISTANT



# TECHNOLOGY

One care home went 100% digital and in the law of unintended consequences, found:

They have a waiting list for carers wanting to join them; 50% of staff have degrees  
Carers can see on arrival which residents they are working with  
They can see which colleagues are on duty, providing the ability to share lifts

"I would like to see more technology put into the workplace to attract the younger generation into the sector and to make it simpler for support workers."

SADIE TORRES | CARE ASSISTANT

"We believe technology will make the job easier for staff, so that they can be more responsive to residents' needs, to provide the best care they can and have the best working environment. It will give them easy access to their data, a clearer idea of what their role is, what shifts they are working, their pay slips, and they will be able to manage their responsibilities much more easily. This is of huge benefit to our staff's wellbeing and will help solve the staffing crisis."

WILL GRAPHAM | DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION MANAGER  
THE GRAHAM CARE GROUP

## IN ADDITION

Older employees also enjoy the convenience and flexibility, they will embrace technology

There is free funding for technology but many owners and operators don't know this and resist installing it

Smaller care homes may shy away from the investment but the ROI is huge – this needs communicating

Downside: the sector has been burned by either choosing the wrong technology or being unable to use it to full advantage

Downside: new tech must be interoperable with existing tools or it causes more problems than it solves

Financial flexibility

Provide the ability for people to draw down money for unexpected large expenses

Make a bonus available as required, rather than at the end of the year

Pay people at the end of the week worked to encourage carers onto unpopular shifts

Similarly at weekends, pay a different rate



# FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY

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## ACTION

Videos on YouTube\*, TikTok and other social media, conversations with residents and workers of all ages, nationalities and backgrounds; people engage with the real world

Involve local councils and government. In Wales, there are radio advertisements and poster advertisements promoting care and the sector is introducing a care certificate and those who achieve it are given a pin, like a nurse. This is funded by the Welsh Assembly

There is positive activity, as above; ask a university student to research this – inform their degree / thesis; give them access to a fund of good news stories, which they will talk about; give them experience in the sector

Promote flexibility of rotas and financially; care workers have a right to be in control of their lives. This will reduce turnover, raise perception of the sector and most important, it will improve communication with residents and give care workers the time to look after them better

Hospitality and care are one sector; we need to put the 'care' back into the industry

The IoH sits on a Parliamentary group for business resilience and could act as a conduit into government

Government likes a quick win – this is what we have done, then we can ask for support

If care homes and social are looking to attract and retain staff, they should be able to supply to current and future employees tech that allows them better to understand their work commitments, shifts, annual leave, pay, etc. so that they can plan their personal life and balance their work commitments

Managers also want to be able to see employee availability, so that they can make informed scheduling in times of crisis and change



## WHAT'S NEXT

Be patient; it takes time to change people's perception but it can – and will – be changed.

Together we can encourage people to join this great sector; there are meaningful benefits attached to working in care. Watch this space for future webinars on how we can tackle the challenges together and shine the light on the heroes and future of UK care homes and social care.

\*Note: According to Statista, the leading entertainment and video streaming apps worldwide by downloads (millions) are: TikTok 672, Netflix 165, YouTube 154, Disney+ 147, Amazon Prime Video 123. And if there were any doubt as to the clout of the millennial and Gen Z generations (aged 18 to 29), 95% of them view YouTube, followed by 30-49 year olds (91%) and 50-64 year olds (83%) (GMI / globalmediainsight.com)

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