Care Sector Skills Gap and Training Needs Survey

In February/March 2013 a survey was carried out to identify skills gaps and training needs for the local care sector. This survey was the second sector specific survey undertaken by Skills Guernsey. It follows on from the survey undertaken of the construction sector. A full programme of training needs analysis for the next twelve months will be published in a few weeks.

The survey provided an opportunity for feedback on current training gaps, but also on the challenges that are faced by Guernsey’s care sector which seeks to support the Bailiwick community from cradle to grave. The survey indicated that the Care Sector operates within a complex context that is both challenging and dynamic. It identified that it needs to respond to the following factors:

- Technical developments; changes in legislation and regulatory requirements; the growing evidence base; the increasing specialisation of services; the availability of funds for the service; the ageing population; changes in the way health and social care is provided; the difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff with the right skills and attributes.

Scope and structure of the survey

The scope of the survey was to:

a) Identify the skill gaps which exist within the sector,

b) Establish the types of education and training provision that employers currently access,

c) Consider how political, economical, legislative, social, technological and environmental factors may influence the skill set that will be required by employees delivering care services in the future.

Guernsey’s care sector is extremely diverse. This is graphically illustrated on Figure one (page 4) of the report. A representative sample of 72 employers was contacted to undertake the survey. Employers were invited from the following categories:

- HSSD and Housing;
- Voluntary sector;
- Medical practices;
- Physiotherapists;
- Pharmacies;
- Nursing and residential homes;
- Dental practices;
- Preschool nurseries;
- Nursing agencies.

Nineteen employers completed the survey giving a 26% response rate. Although a small response it is considered to be both representative and valid.

Key characteristics of respondents:

- The respondents employed varying numbers of staff:
  - 7 organisations employed between 6 - 25 people
  - 6 employed between 26 -50 people
  - 5 employed between 51- 100 people
  - 1 employed in excess of 100 people.

- They also employed a varied range of staff with the majority being registered nurses and health care assistants.

- The age profile of the workforce employed by the respondents appears to be evenly spread between the ages of 19 and 65, although 9 of the respondents indicated that they employed people beyond the age of 66 years.
Findings

Conclusions
The care sector is large and varied with many employers from the private, public and tertiary sectors. The employees within the sector are equally diverse in terms of the type and level of their qualifications and skills sets.

Whilst education and training is accessed by employers, there is a concern that staff do not always have the knowledge and skills to deliver the service.

There does not appear to be a consistent approach to the way training and educational needs are identified by employers, or the way in which the budget for these purposes is calculated and managed.

Employers recognise that there are challenges ahead which may further impact on their workforce and the skills they will need to deliver services in the future.

Training
18 respondents stated that they supported their staff to gain the requisite qualifications for their role.

17 of these employers undertaking a formal process to identify the training needs of the staff.

9 respondents felt that the education and training provision on the Island was good and met their needs.

3 accessed specialist courses off-island,

Respondents identified the following training needs that couldn’t currently be met through local provision;

Seating and postural management ; Contraceptive & sexual health ; Simulation training for specialist areas; Dementia and elderly care; Post-graduate courses; Safeguarding

Recruitment
17 respondents employed people from outside the Bailiwick with 13 stating that the main reason for doing so was due to the inability to find people with the right skills.

7 stated that they could not always find enough people locally to deliver the services they provide.

Factors influencing the future skills of the workforce
Respondents identified a number of regulatory or legislative requirements that currently influence the skills required by the workforce, these included the following:

- Registered health and social care professionals are regulated by UK bodies such as NMC, HCPC, GMC, IBMS
• Some roles require specific specialist qualifications
• There are standardised requirements for the skill mix in nursing homes.

Respondents identified the following technical advancements as being key in influencing future skills within the care sector:

• Changes in equipment ie wheelchairs and other medical devices.
• Changes in therapies in line with the expanding evidence base.
• The need for everyone to be IT literate
• Development of the e-environment for education and training

**Development of future services**

Respondents identified issues which might inhibit future developments;

- 25% of respondents: The local workforce lacking certain skills
- 40% of respondents: The local workforce do not have the right type of skills
- 30% of respondents: There is insufficient education and training available locally

**Possible Service developments**

Finally the respondents identified the following service developments they could pursue if they had staff with the right skills or appropriate training was in place;

• Generally improve the quality of service provision
• Reduce risk
• Expand service provision, by being open for longer hours and providing an out-reach service
• Employ a health advisor
• Reduce the number of agency and locum staff
• Improve staff retention
• Develop career pathways
• Reduce the problems associated with short-term licences
• Offer a career structure from Band 2 through to Band 7 and develop a local, sustainable workforce.
Themes arising from the semi-structured interviews

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with employers from 3 different categories of care provision. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and identified the following key themes:

1) Meeting training needs – an eclectic approach
2) A dynamic context
3) Future Care skills

Meeting training needs – an eclectic approach

The interviews highlighted the eclectic mix of training and development being accessed by employers in the Care sector. Formal programmes such as vocational qualifications and higher education programmes are accessed and supported by all three employers. They organise in-house training which can take the form of ‘skills and drills’, simulation, ‘on the job learning’ and input from the wider multi-disciplinary team.

A dynamic context

All three employers recognised the changing context within which the Care Sector sits. The ageing population is presenting some real challenges for those providing long-term care. Due to changes in the certification criteria, individuals requiring nursing home beds are now frailer than they were previously. Clients with long standing conditions are living longer and are now developing the symptoms associated with old age.

Future care skills

Respondents highlighted the importance of employing the right person into the Care Sector. Prospective employees not only need the capacity and capability to do the job but should also exhibit compassion and empathy. Other skills such as those associated with palliative care and the implementation of the re-enablement model were highlighted as being essential for future service provision. It was recognised that the roles occupied by staff demanded a broad range of skills.

Recommendations

1. To encourage employers within the care sector to use a formal training needs analysis process to identify more specifically the skills gaps which exist in their workforce and to share this data with Skills Guernsey and local educational providers.

2. To develop a formula to help employers to identify the financial resources which should be allocated for education and training within their organisation. This could also extend to the way employers plan their workforce numbers to ensure that staff can be released for education and training.

3. To evaluate the impact of education and training on service provision to determine how far these initiatives have developed employees that are fit for purpose.