

Written evidence submitted by Robert Johnstone (EPW0074)

Commitment area 1: Planning for the workforce

- One of the current Government commitments the panel is evaluating is the pledge to ensure staffing levels meet the needs of the service. Do you think this commitment is currently being met?

No the workforce is reducing and the demand for care is growing so staffing levels are not meeting the needs of the service, I turn down client enquiries for care daily

- The panel is interested to hear more about your experiences of workforce planning as part of the strategy in your workplace. Do you have any comments on this? Is there a systems and partnership approach to workforce planning with the strategy?

It really doesn't matter what strategy or plan you have there are not enough people interested in working in care in the UK, we have a recruitment plan and a retention plan but all employers are fishing in the same pond with limited numbers of carers available. For example I use Social Media, Indeed (Which is the most successful route for me) other job boards, marketing companies to advertise for me, agencies to try and find me carers etc etc and all I am managing to do is stand still, this is taking huge effort and huge amounts of money but still no more growth we are just about replacing the carers who leave.

Commitment area 2: Building the workforce.

This area is evaluating the Government's pledge of ensuring '1 billion pounds extra of funding, every year, for more social care staff and better infrastructure, technology and facilities.

- Part of this pledge was funding for more social care staff. What is your experience of funding availability for staff?

We had grants from the Government during the past year or so and have used it to pay for recruitment, bonuses and retention but this hasn't grown the size of the pool of care workers all we are doing is spending more money competing against each other for the pool of carers that are available.

- Part of the Commitment was to have better infrastructure for staff. Do you have any comments on this?

I don't understand the question, what is meant by "better infrastructure for staff" ?

- The extra funding also committed to provide better facilities. Do you have any comments on this?

Care workers in Homecare work in the clients homes so we could not provide better facilities, the facilities are whatever the client has decided to have in place in their home.

- Better technology for the social care sector was also promised as part of this commitment. What is your experience of technology in the workplace?

We are fully digitalised and stopped using manual care plans and log books 2 years ago, we have funded this ourselves with no financial help from anyone. I absolutely agree that technology in Homecare is a way to improve things going forward and I am personally looking at what new innovations we could put in place in our company.

Commitment area 3: Wellbeing of the workforce

- The commitment we are considering states that the Government will listen to the views of staff. Do you have any comments in relation to this?

I am not aware of any listening groups and obviously I wanted to be part of the "Roundtable Event" to express my companies workers point of view but I am writing this email instead.

- As part of the pledge to listen to staff, the commitment states that this will enable the Government to "to learn how we can better support them – individually and collectively." In your experience, do staff have appropriate access to support in the workplace?

Support in the workplace is not the major issue here, my staff have a very good environment to work in but this isn't because of anything the government has done this is because of the attitude and approach of the senior team in our company. It is very clear that the sector needs support to encourage people from outside of the sector to come and join us in social care, I see no evidence that this is happening. We have had government funded recruitment campaigns which have had no impact at all and are a huge waste of money.

In my view what we need is a 10 year plan to lift the status of care workers in society to get people from outside of the sector to come and join us, this would include a formal qualification for care workers, but it would need to be driven by LEADERS from across society, politicians, sports people, actors, singers and more.

When I started my business we did not recruit anyone from outside of the UK but the situation is so bad at the moment that I have obtained a sponsorship licence and am in the process of bringing in care workers from outside the UK, otherwise my business may not survive.

Finally, Care Workers do not need more training, so stop wasting money on training initiatives and most care workers have a decent environment to work in and their senior teams do a good job of looking after them in a difficult environment. What they need is better pay and improved view of their status in society and this is where people's attention and funding needs to be focussed.

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