

# More Needs to be Done to Attract Men Into Social Care

**In the UK currently, there is a distinct lack of male nurses, male childcare experts and male adult social carers. In fact, there is a shortage of men in the social care sector altogether – they are hugely outnumbered by women. UK Government statistics show that a staggering 84% of carers in England are women, and just 16% are men<sup>1</sup> - figures that have barely changed since 2012.**

Yet, by 2025, it is estimated that 1 million more care workers will be needed to cope with the UK's ageing population<sup>2</sup>, men could help to plug this gap. The National Minimum Data Set assessed the amount of people employed within the social care sector, finding that 82.2% of employees were women and only 17.8% were men<sup>3</sup> - reinforcing the belief that men are not even applying for jobs within the social care sector. Yet, the core values that underpin social care – dignity, compassion, choice and respect – apply just as much to men as they do to women.

As part of our review within our social care recruitment at Cohesion, we analysed data covering 27,000 job applications within this sector. Encouragingly, our findings showed a more positive gender split - 40% of applicants were male and 60% of applicants were female<sup>4</sup>. We believe that this is largely due to our high-quality recruitment strategies which include unique and innovative solutions to support candidates from application to interview and beyond. But there is no doubt that men are dropping out of the recruitment process and need greater support during interview stages.

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We need to support men throughout the entire recruitment process to help the disproportionately higher drop-out rate during both the application and interview stage. Helping candidates with application forms, providing prep sheets and video tutorials before interviews, are just some of the ways we can support applicants.

I believe that social care organisations could also do a lot more to simplify the application process by introducing shorter and 'mobile-friendly' forms which would also appeal to a younger audience. I also believe that the introduction of more 'values-based interviews' could support men more, instead of basing interviews purely on previous experience and role competencies.

There has been a wide recognition particularly recently, on the key role doctors and nurses play in the NHS, but more needs to be done now to highlight the value of those working across the social care sector. This in turn will help with the much-needed national recruitment drive and showcase the wide-ranging and fulfilling opportunities available to both men and women.

Men may struggle to be recruited for roles because of gender stereotypes amongst these traditionally female-led jobs, and this gender-based stigma is hard to shake. However, men can play an essential part in the social care sector, especially when caring for men from the older generation. Some men would rather be cared for by another man, especially if the care they require is quite personal. A male carer can also sometimes help to put residents at ease, as they may feel comfortable communicating with someone of the same gender. Men can also be physically stronger than women which can assist with lifting residents safely and gently. In fact, our clients sometimes request men where the service is made up of more male service users, or to balance out diversity where they have more female carers in place.

Whether you're male or female, the facts remains that the social care sector



**Will Shepherd**  
Will Shepherd, Chief Executive of leading social care recruitment specialist, Cohesion

offers a huge number of benefits including job security, a sense of reward and 'making a difference', as well as the opportunity to progress up the career ladder within an organisation.

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## References

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34103302>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/field\\_publication\\_file/perspectives-nhs-social-care-workforce-jul13.pdf](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/field_publication_file/perspectives-nhs-social-care-workforce-jul13.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/NMDS-SC-intelligence/Workforce-intelligence/documents/State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector/2State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-and-workforce-2017.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Cohesion Data

