



Not A Man's World

Specialist recruitment agency Cohesion has examined the gender split of job applicants for roles within the social care sector from its own data. Here, it outlines its findings and recommendations for the future.

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. UK Government statistics show that a staggering **84% of carers in England are women, and just 16% are men** – figures that have barely changed since 2012.

By 2025, it is estimated that **one million more care workers will be needed to cope with the UK's ageing population**. Yet, 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** – reinforcing the belief that men are not 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 Cohesion's own review, we analysed our own data covering 27,000 job applications within this sector. Encouragingly, the findings showed a more positive gender split - 40% of applicants were male and 60% of applicants were female. We believe that

this is largely due to their high-quality recruitment strategies which include unique and innovative solutions to support candidates from application to interview and beyond.

Commenting on the findings, our Chief Executive, Will Shepherd, said: "Our experience in recruitment highlights the need to adopt new strategies to help attract male applicants, but also to support men throughout the interview process – our data shows that men have a disproportionately higher drop-out rate during the application and interview stage and require greater support.

"I believe that social care organisations could 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 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 - a man may prefer to be cared for by another man as sometimes the care they are required to give can be very personal. A male carer can also put residents at ease as they may feel comfortable communicating with someone of the same gender. Men are also sometimes physically stronger than women which can assist with lifting residents safely and gently.

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