

Adult Health & Social Care
Independent Provider Workforce Strategy
2025 - 2027

March 2025

Document Control

Title	Adult Health & Social Care Independent Provider Workforce Strategy
Document Type	Strategy
Author	Matthew Logan, Strategic Lead Integrated Commissioning
Owner	Community Commissioning Team
Subject	Independent Provider Workforce
Date Created	February 2025
Approval Date	March 2025
Review Date	March 2027

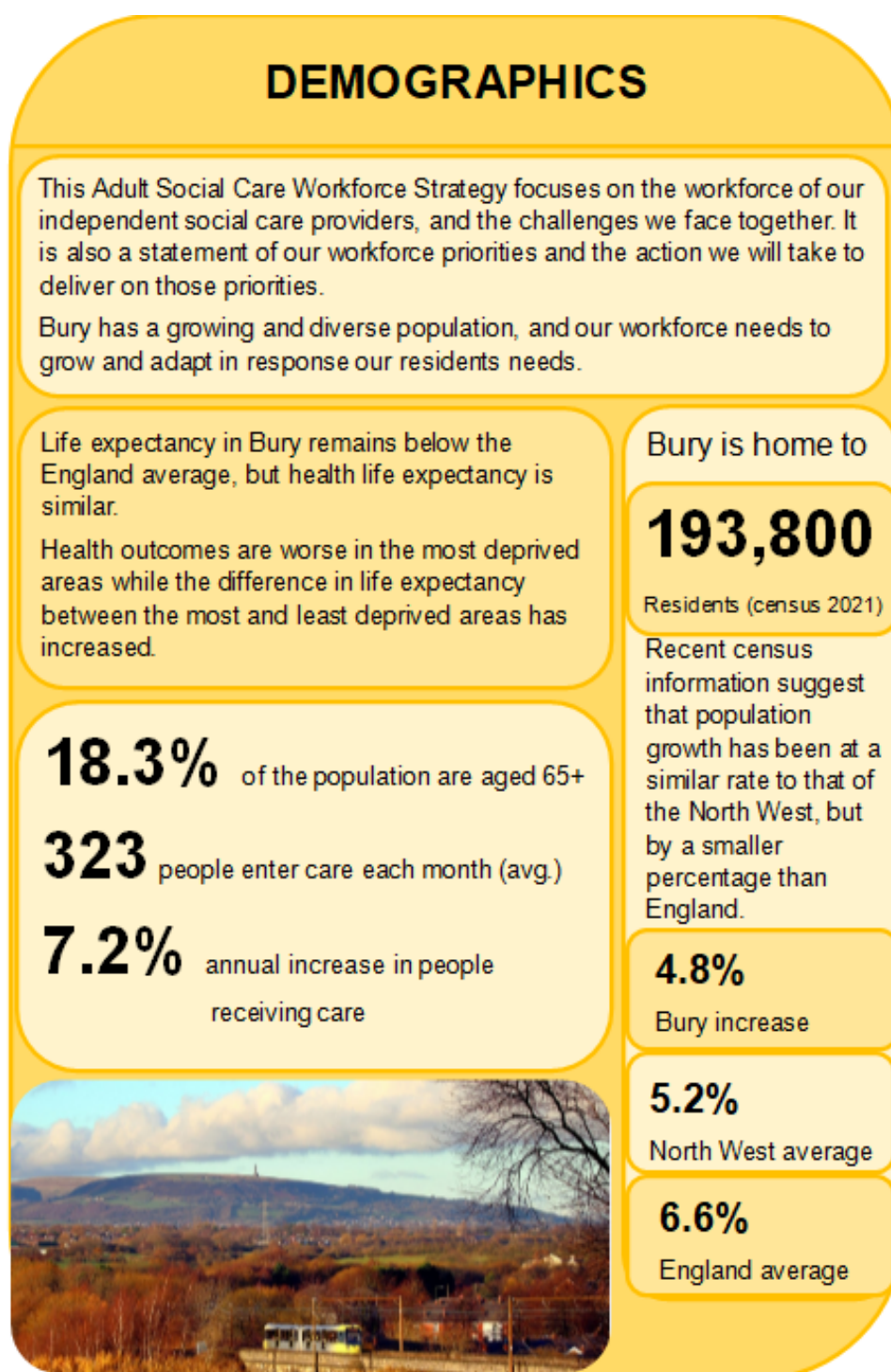
Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Context	5
3. Challenges	9
4. Strategic Priorities.....	9
5. Connectivity.....	12
6. Governance.....	12
7. Annex A.....	14

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local authorities are required to develop a market that delivers a wide range of sustainable, high-quality care and support services that will be available to our communities. The tools for achieving this market shaping duty are our own strategic commissioning and contracting practices. Workforce shaping and commissioning is vital in this as it will help put in place a workforce that will deliver the right outcomes for people being supported.
- 1.2 Bury Council and the Bury Integrated Care Partnership are committed to creating a culture of collaboration across all health and care sectors in Bury including our Independent Provider sector. We are encouraging a collaborative market sustainability approach in addressing the sectors workforce challenge; ensuring they are able to meet the needs of Bury's residents now and in the future.
- 1.3 Over the last few years several short-term funded workforce initiatives and the Market Sustainability Improvement Fund (MSIF) have enabled opportunities to adopt a more collaborative approach to address the sectors workforce challenges with the implementation of collaborative workforce solutions. However, to truly embed this approach and maximise the benefits to the sector there needs to be a longer-term strategy to tackle the size and scope of workforce challenges with a sustained workforce offer. This strategy aspires to do just that.
- 1.4 The strategy aims to outline how together, we will address the challenges faced by our Adult Social Care Providers, including recruitment, retention, training and career development. It will outline our vision for a skilled, resilient and supported workforce that can meet the current and future needs of the residents of Bury and how this will be embedded into our quality improvement work moving forward.
- 1.5 The strategy also looks to maintain connectivity with the workforce programmes being established across the locality including the Bury Locality Workforce Strategy, and the Greater Manchester Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy as well as the Skills for Care Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy.

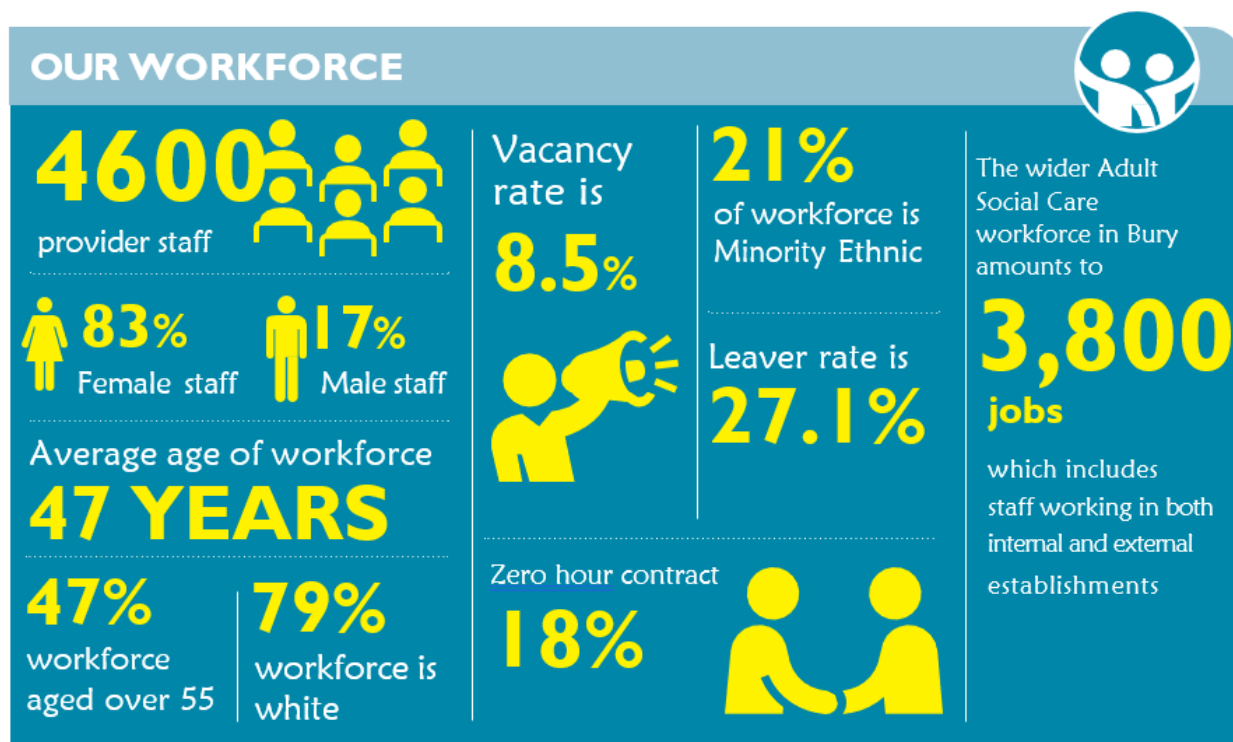
2. Context



2.1 Our Independent Provider Sector

- 2.2 The Independent Provider Sector in Bury is diverse with 93 providers ranging from large national care providers to small local charities. Each provider is a separate employing organisation with its own employment terms and conditions, employing approximately a total of 4,600 staff. This workforce provides care and support to people in various settings with a range of support needs including:

- 49 Care home providers (nursing and residential),
 - 24 Care at home providers
 - 18 Supported living providers.
- 2.3 Our Independent Provider sector sits under the commissioning responsibilities of Bury Council and plays a key role in our Bury health and care system in supporting discharges from our borough hospitals and our intermediate care services.
- 2.4 Having the right level of workforce capacity and capabilities in this element of the system is crucial to ensure people are supported in the right place at the right time.
- 2.5 Over the last several years there has been increasing levels of acuity and a general growing need for more complex care provision including nursing and residential dementia support with a reduction in needs for standard residential placements. Therefore, there will be a need to support the shift in the care market and its workforce to provide this change in level of provision with the necessary skills and competencies.
- 2.6 Bury have worked hard over the last two years alongside providers to improve the quality of service available to the people of Bury. Intensive support has been provided to those 6 homes that were rated Inadequate by CQC, with 3 of those receiving that rating in the “Well Led” domain. This highlighted the need to assess the skills and competencies of the workforce and their leaders ability to support development requirements. We are now in a position where no commissioning provider is rated Inadequate with CQC.
- 2.7 **Sector workforce data**



- 2.8 Workforce data for the sector relies on each individual provider signing up and completing the Workforce Data Set (WDS). There are just under 45% of our Bury providers signed up to completion of the WDS, placing Bury 125th out of 151 local authorities in England. Therefore, there is a very limited workforce data set for this sector to assist in workforce planning/modelling. This is being tackled by the updating of provider contracts to make completion a contractual requirement and support being offered by the Council and Skills for Care to providers in completing their submissions.
- 2.9 Additional key data available according to Skills for Care (data for 22/23) for the Independent Sector is:
- **Contracts:** 1% of care staff are on temporary contracts and 20 % of the workforce on zero-hour contracts which is lower than the regional/national average.
 - **Flexibility:** 50% split of Full/Part time workers.
 - **Recruitment:** 53% of recruitment is currently from within the sector itself.
 - **Experience:**
 - in sector is an average of 10.6 years with 41% at 10 years/more, 36% 3-9 years and 23% at less than 3 years' experience
 - in role is 7 years on average, 41% with less than 3 years, 35% at 3-9 years and 23% with 10 years or more experience in role.
 - **Pay rates:**
 - Bury did commit to being a Real Living Wage paying authority and this includes for commissioned services. While sign up to the commitment from Providers was voluntary, 56% of Bury care Providers have signed up to pay all their staff at least the Real Living Wage.
 - The average hourly pay rate for the sector is £11.07 ranging from £11.14 for nursing homes to £10.81 for care homes. For roles the average hourly rate is £10.41 for support/outreach to £11.79 for Senior Care Workers.
 - **Qualifications and training**
 - For social care qualifications - only 45% hold a level of social care qualification with 1% at entry level, 21% at level 2, 16% at level 3, 7% at 4 and above.
 - For the care certificate - only 26% have completed this, 10% are in progress, with 64% yet to commence.
 - Training data is limited with low level of recording for mandatory programmes including Moving and Handling, Infection Control and

Safeguarding Adults which shows of those recording approx. 70-80% have completed this.

- **Leadership**

- There are approximately 98 Owners/Registered managers.
- In terms of CQC Domain: 'Well led' there are 3 Inadequate and 8 Requiring improvement

2.10 **National Context**

2.11 While the local context is important when determining the actions to take to best support the borough's provider market, upcoming national changes will greatly impact on the workforce within Adult Social Care.

2.12 The upcoming Employment Rights Bill in England is set to have a significant impact with the key points being:

- a) **Establishment of the Adult Social Care Negotiating Body:** This body will set pay and conditions for adult social care workers. It will include representation from unions and sector employers, and its agreements will be binding once ratified by ministers.
- b) **Changes to Zero-Hours Contracts:** The bill aims to tackle exploitative zero-hours contracts by introducing rights for workers to receive reasonable notice of shifts and payment for cancellations. It also proposes guaranteed hours contracts that reflect the hours regularly worked.
- c) **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) Reforms:** The bill will abolish the lower earnings limit for SSP eligibility and make SSP payable from the first day of absence.

2.13 The bill aims to improve workers' rights and conditions; however, the successful implementation will likely depend on substantial government funding and a clear strategy to support providers through these changes

2.14 The risks to providers include:

- a) **Funding and Financial Burden:** Implementing the proposed reforms, such as improved pay and conditions, will require substantial funding.
- b) **Implementation Timeline:** The timeline for implementing these changes is a concern with the need for clear guidance and sufficient time to adapt to the new regulations. .
- c) **Representation and Inclusion:** There is a need to ensure that the establishment of the negotiating body adequately represent the diverse range of voices within the sector. Ensuring that all care provider organisations, including those providing ancillary services like cleaning and catering, are included in the negotiations is crucial for equitable agreements.

- 2.15 These concerns highlight the need for comprehensive funding, clear timelines, and inclusive representation to ensure the successful implementation of the Employment Rights Bill.

3. Challenges

3.1 Through workshops, providers forums and quality assurance reviews, Providers have shared their current workforce challenges:

- All services across Bury trying to recruit from the same pool of candidates.
- Managers and senior staff members dedicating endless hours to the recruitment process, taking them away from other priorities.
- Those who apply who are not truly looking for work and the time is taken to sift these out and turn up rates to interviews are low.
- Turning around the negative perception of working across adult care and attracting people to the roles.
- Working around the desired shift patterns of candidates, childcare considerations of candidates
- Time to turn around DBS and referencing and losing candidates in the process as it takes too long.
- Not having someone who is dedicated, or the right person dedicated, to the recruitment processes.
- Validating prior training so new starters do not have to repeat prior learning.
- Attracting people who are looking to commence a career in health/care.
- Demonstrating career pathways and progression routes.
- Retaining staff
- Spiralling agency costs filling workforce gaps.
- Having the time to step back as leaders to analyse what is working and what needs to be improved to inform workforce strategy planning.

4. Strategic Priorities

- 4.1 Through a number of Provider Workshops, where the aim was to co-design solutions to the sectors workforce challenges; the top 3 priorities that providers identified as requiring coordinated effort were established and this strategy has aligned them to the Skills for Care Workforce Strategy for Adult Social Care:

4.2 Attract and retain

- 4.3 In order to support providers in attracting new staff to their service, as well as to the sector and support retention **the Council will:**

- Develop its “Be the difference in Bury” recruitment campaign and add focus to attract candidates to hard to fill positions that will be managed by a centralised recruitment process.
- Fund a centralised recruitment support team who can advertise roles and support providers in identifying suitable candidates, reducing the administrative burden placed on providers and ensuring they only interview quality candidates.
- Commissioning a series of workforce and talent surveys that will aim to understand “movement within” and movement outside of the sector of workforces to identify workforce experiences to propose retention initiatives.
- Develop an **Influencer Programme**. Recruit and manage a small team of care staff currently working in Bury providers who will have the skills to work alongside Council and system colleagues to deliver a structured and influential presence both in person and online. They will promote careers within the providers, to secondary and further education and job seeking and careers advice settings. They will:
 - Work with providers to include all the ranges of career paths available and collate information and materials to present and distribute. Align this to open vacancies on a “student or school leavers” job opportunities section within a careers page hosted via the Bury Integrated Care Partnership website.
 - The influencers will be responsible for accurately showcasing the work that the sector provides and give a true account of the day-to-day tasks, the skills and the attitudes of being employed as a care and support worker. The branding to support the Influencer programme will match the “reality” of working in the sector and pull-on stories of people working and progressing careers within the sector.

4.4 Transform

- 4.5 In order to support providers in managing the intensive recruitment process **the Council will:**

- Commission a person centred, centralised permanent and a flexible workforce offer; “**Bury Flex**”. The aim of this centralised process will be to offer more

opportunities to a wider market and signpost candidates into the system who want to work in permanent contracted positions or want to work with 100% flexibility across the bank or blend both bank and contracted hours. This will also reduce the need for providers to utilise costly agency staff.

- The flexible workforce would prioritise the hard to fill shifts initially and then open the bank up to all required hours. It also has the potential to not only look at care and support roles but also including nursing, therapy and social work shifts required in the provider services.
- Build a centralised resource centre into the Bury Integrated Care Partnership website that will allow providers to not only access information to support services with recruitment and retention information but also view and process attendance to centralised events and 1-2-1's, group training, and coaching opportunities.
- Develop digital training resources, webinars and links to funded training, expert whitepapers and expert led workshops into the site. An annual programme of events of in person workshops and digital webinars and video content that will target topics around the core challenges they have identified within the key recruitment challenges and priorities
- Work alongside Providers and Partners to develop a **Social Care Careers Academy**; pulling together disparate support and development offers under one programme that will both attract new staff into the sector and support career progression.
- Establish a **Provider Excellence Programme**. Informed by the results of the Council Quality Assurance Reviews, safeguarding, complaints, feedback and wider intelligence, we will hold quarterly learning events covering specific high priority themes.

4.6

Train

4.7 **The Council will:**

- Establish specific workshops and provide the centralised access to resources including a leadership programme for current and future managers.
- Build resources around what career progression looks like and importantly the access to the career pathways specifically within Social Care. Resources that detail information around Apprenticeships, Health and Social Care Levels of qualification and subsequent career options.

5. Connectivity

- 5.1 This document links to the Bury Locality Workforce Strategy (Appendix B). This was developed with Health and Care partners in Bury and is a shared vision for where Bury aspires to be by addressing key health and care workforce challenges.
- 5.2 The Bury Locality Workforce Strategy aligns to the Skills for Care Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy and its 3 areas:
- Attract and Retain
 - Transform
 - Train

6. Governance

- 6.1 The Independent Provider Workforce strategy delivery will be overseen by Bury Strategic Workforce Group with regular updates provided to Bury Integrated Delivery Collaborative and Bury Council Adult Social Care Senior Leadership Team.
- 6.2 We will establish a Provider Steering Group to work alongside the Council in informing this strategy, the action plan and identified key themes to tackle.
- 6.2 Regular monthly reporting by those providers commissioned to enact the plan in line with the metrics, key progress and risks against the plan will be provided to the Community Commissioning Team.
- 6.3 The Bury locality workforce strategy group will provide oversight for the elements of workforce support delivered by system collaborative programmes. These will be cross partner delivery programmes and aligned to the locality workforce strategy delivery plan. The Bury Integrated Care Partnership board will receive bi-monthly updates on the delivery and monitor risks.

7. Annex A

The Bury Council Adult Health and Social Care Independent Provider Workforce Strategy – Year One – Year One Commitment Milestones Grid

The commitment milestones will be reviewed annually, updated and revised as necessary.

“WE WILL”

Priority 1: Attraction and Retention	
‘We Will’	Start
Develop its “Be the difference in Bury” recruitment campaign and add focus to attract candidates to hard to fill positions that will be managed by a centralised recruitment process	Year One
Develop an Influencer Programme . Recruit and manage a small team of care staff currently working in Bury providers who will have the skills to work alongside Council and system colleagues to deliver a structured and influential presence both in person and online. They will promote careers within the providers, to secondary and further education and job seeking and careers advice settings	Year Two
Commissioning a series of workforce and talent surveys that will aim to understand “movement within” and movement outside of the sector of workforces to identify workforce experiences to propose retention initiatives.	Year One
Commission a centralised recruitment support team who can advertise roles and support providers in identifying suitable candidates, reducing the administrative burden placed on providers and ensuring they only interview quality candidates.	Year One
Further develop and strengthen the pathways for student to access excellent work placements within Adult Social Care settings	Year One
Priority 2:	

Transform	
Commission a person centred, centralised permanent and a flexible workforce offer; “Bury Flex”. The aim of this centralised process will be to offer more opportunities to a wider market and signpost candidates into the system who want to work in permanent contracted positions or want to work with 100% flexibility across the bank or blend both bank and contracted hours. This will also reduce the need for providers to utilise costly agency staff.	Year One
Work alongside Providers and Partners to develop a Social Care Careers Academy ; pulling together disparate support and development offers under one programme that will both attract new staff into the sector and support career progression.	Year Two
Establish a Provider Excellence Programme . Informed by the results of the Council Quality Assurance Reviews, safeguarding, complaints, feedback and wider intelligence, we will hold quarterly learning events covering specific high priority themes	Year One
Build a centralised resource centre into the Bury Integrated Care Partnership website with an Eventbrite and digital calendar function that will allow providers to not only access information to support services with recruitment and retention information but also view and process attendance to centralised events and 1-2-1’s, group training, and coaching opportunities.	Year One
Develop digital training resources, webinars and links to funded training, expert whitepapers and expert led workshops into the site. An annual programme of events of in person workshops and digital webinars and video content that will target topics around the core challenges they have identified within the key recruitment challenges and priorities	Year One
Explore other innovative solutions that can further address the challenges identified, including linking to best practice	Year Two
Priority 3: Train	
Review current Council Adult Social Care Provider Training Partnership	Year One

Establish specific workshops and provide the centralised access to resources including a leadership programme for current and future managers	Year One
Build resources around what career progression looks like and importantly the access to the career pathways specifically within Social Care. Resources that detail information around Apprenticeships, Health and Social Care Levels of qualification and subsequent career options.	Year One

