Creating a Sustainable Adult Social Care Workforce:

International Recruitment in West Midlands Learning & Evaluation

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Quarterly Report December 2023

Contents

Background

West Midlands Directors of Adult Social Care (ADASS) represents 14 directors running adult social care across West Midlands. The core purpose of West Midlands ADASS is to support improvement across the sector. West Midlands ADASS responded to the ADASS Time to Act Report (April 23) by taking agency to identify factors impacting adult social care between now and 2035 and to develop a range of 'future scenarios' that might require new skills, behaviours, or capabilities for resilience. From this scenario work West Midlands ADASS identified six 'building blocks' shown in figure 1, that collectively describe the capabilities needed to mitigate the impacts and to help the sector to be resilient in all scenarios.

Extending Collaborative Working - rather than any simplistic notion of 'integration', this is about collaboration around services and resources across sectors and organisations beyond traditional health & social care boundaries. Collaboration and shared learning are encouraged to promote open conversations, build trust, and explore resourcing options aimed at sustaining and improving adult social care into the future.

Strengthening Community Assets - enabling community-centred care that reflects various needs and preferences, strengthening the use of co-production between health and social care services and local communities through digital and face-to-face means. Mechanisms to support experimentation, learning, and sharing within local communities are also proposed.

Transforming Social Care Careers - improving the outlook for careers in adult social care – through more flexible, rewarding, opportunities, improved career pathways, qualifications, and educational pathways; maintaining a good supply of highly skilled workers to effectively meet sector demand.

Balancing Technology and Humanity - grasping the potential to enhance care through technology and artificial intelligence. Developing a cohesive plan to ensure equitable access to technological advancements, harnessing known good practices and sharing them rapidly; developing a common approach to cost-effective technology investments to avoid regional disparities.

Driving Change through Data and Evidence - developing a better and richer understanding of emerging needs through a shared approach to population health analytics; strengthening data capabilities to inform service planning, workforce development and prevention activities, and support a focus on reducing inequalities; ensuring data to inform action is complemented by robust evidence around what works, when and for whom.

Shifting the Narrative around adult social care – developing a clear and compelling narrative about the role and importance of Adult Social Care (ASC); increasing understanding of the sector and the needs it serves, the way it works, the wider social and economic benefits it brings.

Figure 1

Building Capabilities for Adult Social Care Resilience
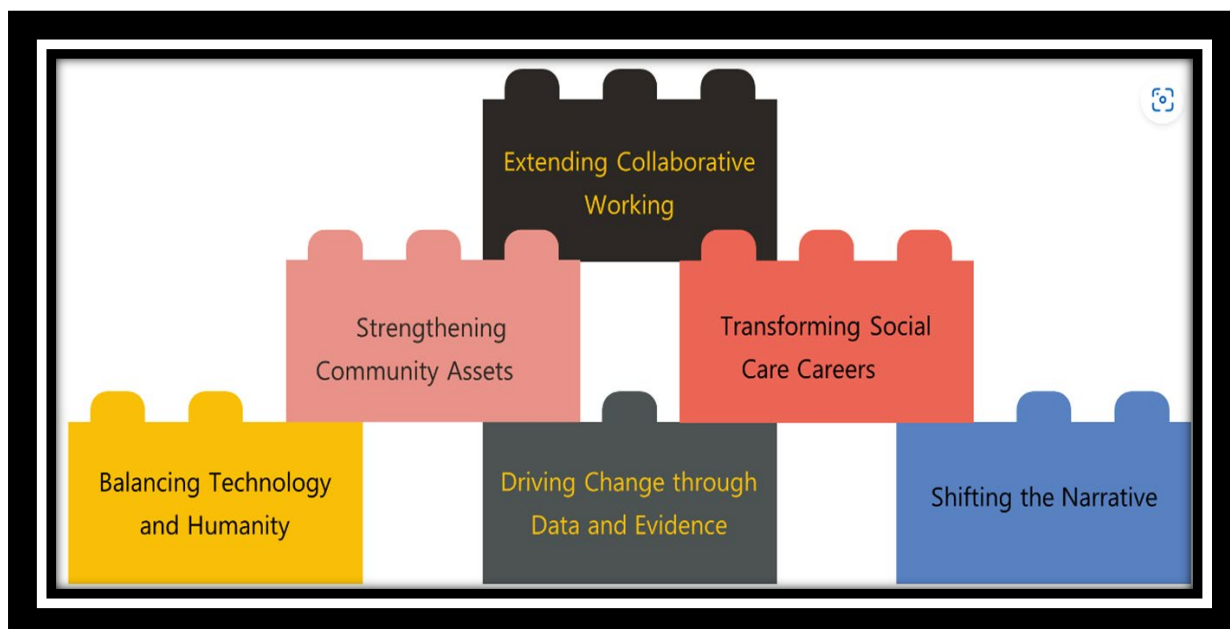
International recruitment into adult social care is an important contributor to the 6 building blocks. Local authorities commission adult social care mainly from independent providers, with a high proportion of providers classed as Small or Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with less than 250 employees, a turnover less than £25m, and gross assets less than £12.5m. A third of SME's considered exiting the adult social care market in 2022 due to workforce issues and cost pressures (Care England & Hft, 2023), and if this loss of 30% SMEs was realised it would reduce the ability of care providers to respond to the increasing population needs for adult social care.

In February 2022, care workers were added to the Shortage Occupation List and the Health and Care worker visa route. This meant that providing workers met the salary thresholds and had a licensed sponsor, they could be recruited to care worker roles in the UK. Between March 2022/23 it was estimated that 70,000 international recruits took up care roles in the independent sector in the UK (Skills for Care , 2023). The Skills for Care report on the state of the adult social care sector and workforce indicates that care providers have been able to recruit care workers internationally to reduce vacancy rates, and that international recruits have improved the care providers turnover rates. International recruits are more likely to work full-time and less likely to be on zero-hour contracts.

The Skills for Care Report (2023) has also highlighted some concerns about international recruitment in adult social care, with some providers being put off by the administrative cost and burden. There were also reported incidences of unethical recruitment and exploitation by recruiting agencies and providers.

NHS England has a rich history of recruiting international nurses with nearly 1 in 5 nurses working in NHS England recruited from overseas (Palmer, 2021). Research carried out by Huddersfield University highlighted learning from the experience of many international recruits and employers (Garside J.R., 2023). Recruitment process, accommodation and cost of living, language and communication, mental health and wellbeing, and career progression were all important factors for successful experiences with international recruits.

The International Recruitment Fund from DHSC provided an opportunity for Adult Social Care Directors in the West Midlands to shift the negative narrative about International Recruitment and to harness the learning from other sectors, explore the opportunities that this provides to strengthen the community care providers, using anchor institutions (local authorities; ICBs) to collaborate at regional and local levels with partners, such as care associations across the West Midlands, West Midlands Employers, Citizens Advice Bureau, and others to build a strong and resilient adult social care workforce and resultant services.

This report provides early insight into the learning from the development of an International Recruitment infrastructure within the West Midlands. Learning and evaluation is one of the enablers for this project to support local and regional colleagues to share their experiences and co-create ways to improve recruitment and development in adult social care.

Project Aims

The West Midlands International Recruitment Project uses a logic model (shown in figure 2) to set out the overarching National IR Fund vision and objectives, and how WM ADASS works with all stakeholders (inputs) to achieve the impacts and outcomes required. The logic model sets out the activities and outputs needed to achieve those impacts and outcomes. The logic model provides a structured way to review project progress and provides a simple structure to record learning as the project progresses and evaluation of the activities and outputs using the impacts and outcomes recorded across the project timeframe.

Figure 2. IR Fund vision, objectives, and the WM International Recruitment Logic Model

WM ADASS Vision 2022
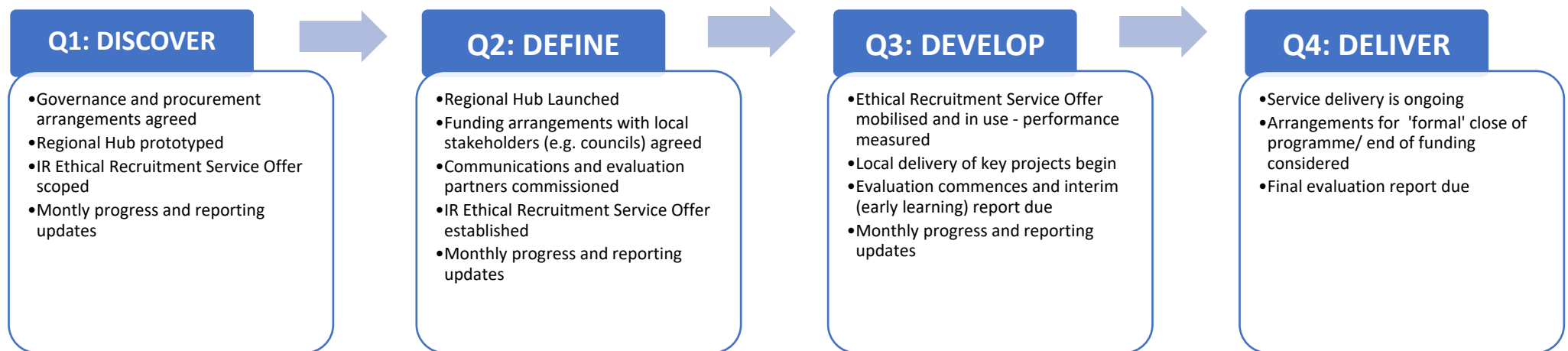http://wm-adass.org.uk

International Recruitment

IR Fund Vision: This fund is being established to enable a support offer to be set up at regional or sub-regional level which can be made available to all providers within the area. These include administrative complexity and costs but also challenges with issues like pastoral support, housing and travel. DHSC's aim is to promote collaborative arrangements which reduce administrative complexity and burden, particularly for SME providers.

Objectives
1. Apply national standards to establish minimum recruitment and selection requirements — with a focus on ethical recruitment practice
2. Establish a HR Advisory/Support Hub to support care providers to ensure provision of consistent and equitable information and advice
3. Work collaboratively with local authorities and care providers to deliver extended support to aid transition to UK social care practice including a pastoral support offer
4. Work collaboratively to develop and capture new learning on how common barriers to international recruitment can be overcome

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Impacts	Outcomes
14 Directors of Adult Social services and their teams	Establish, manage and maintain a regional IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer working jointly with WME and WM ADASS	• New ethical recruitment service offer comprising: HR recruitment service, employment law support and a framework of approved ethical recruitment agencies	• More confidence and capacity with recruiting internationally including support for providers to source & screen candidates, interview, etc	• More capacity and capability in the region to recruit ethically internationally
WM-ADASS Workforce Network	Develop and co-ordinate activity via Regional Hub of IR information, advice and guidance for councils and adult social care providers	• WM ADASS and WME microsite set up with information, advice and guidance.	• A 'one-stop-shop' of tailored ASC information, advice and guidance for providers and councils on IR, supporting equity of access	• More providers recruiting ethically from overseas leading to a more diverse and sustainable market
WM-ADASS ProgrammeTeam	Devolve funding to sub-regions / local areas to lead specific initiatives — particularly focused on pastoral support, training and development, housing, support for refugees	• A range of focused and collaborative IR initiatives underway by councils & providers focusing on key areas of DHSC fund	• Local initiatives that meet local context, challenges & demographics and build on what works to provide maximum impact	• Recruitment and retention improved
West Midlands Employers				
Regional Care Associations and Providers	Commission communications partner to develop a comms plan that ensures regional offer is well understood and accessible to all	• Comprehensive communications plan	• To help ensure a fair, accessible and equitable offer of support for the region, with all providers communicated with	• Increase in safety, quality and people's outcomes being met due to increased market capacity
Department of Health and Social Care				
Skills for Care	Commission an evaluation partner for an independent assessment of the programme's reach and impact	• Independent evaluation of impact of regional offer and fund — including final report	• Evidence of impact for funders as well as regionally. Best practice understood and captured for scaling, barriers to IR better understood	• West Midlands is seen as an attractive region and adult social care recruiter, recruits want to & are equipped to stay
HR Leads Forum				
Programme budget 3rd party funding and/or support	Ongoing programme management and liaison with DHSC team for progress updates and reporting	• Development of core programme management team, quarterly reporting to DHSC	• Robust governance, financial & programme management and evidence for DHSC of progress & impact	• A greater understanding and new learning on how common barriers to IR can be overcome

Project Method/Approach

The International Recruitment project development is set out in 4 phases over 23/24 using the 4Ds model: Discover; Define; Develop; Deliver. This provides a structure to assess the learning and evaluation of the project process over the timescale.
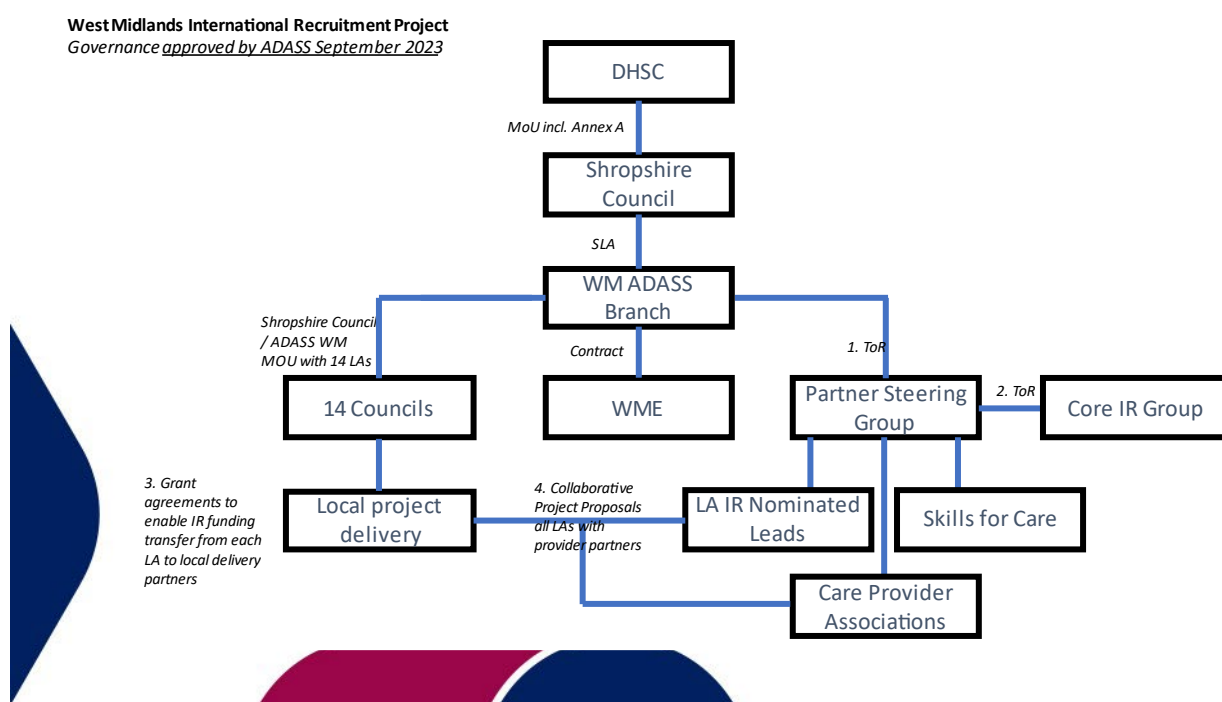
Figure 3: 4Ds International Recruitment Model 23/24

Q1: DISCOVER
- Governance and procurement arrangements agreed
- Regional Hub prototyped
- IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer scoped
- Montly progress and reporting updates

Q2: DEFINE
- Regional Hub Launched
- Funding arrangements with local stakeholders (e.g. councils) agreed
- Communications and evaluation partners commissioned
- IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer established
- Monthly progress and reporting updates

Q3: DEVELOP
- Ethical Recruitment Service Offer mobilised and in use - performance measured
- Local delivery of key projects begin
- Evaluation commences and interim (early learning) report due
- Monthly progress and reporting updates

Q4: DELIVER
- Service delivery is ongoing
- Arrangements for 'formal' close of programme/ end of funding considered
- Final evaluation report due

Programme Governance

West Midlands ADASS established clear governance for the International Recruitment Fund and Project. It was crucial to get this right at an early stage of the project so that accountability for the public funds and the project delivery was agreed with all partners. Financial Accountability is governed using a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DHSC and WM ADASS. WM ADASS are hosted by Shropshire Council and Shropshire Council agreed to act as the banker for the funding distribution for the project governed under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between WM ADASS and Shropshire Council.

WM ADASS is made up of 14 local authority Directors of Adult Social Care and is governed as a Branch Committee. The Lead Sponsor for International Recruitment is the Director for Adult Social Care in Shropshire. The Development Director for WM ADASS supports the Lead Sponsor in her role, underpinned by a Programme Management Office (PMO).

The International Recruitment Project governance is set out in Figure 4 below:

Figure 4.

There are 2 main parts of the West Midlands IR project, the 1st as a regional collaboration for the establishment of a West Midlands International Recruitment Hub, providing a regional infrastructure of advice and support to all local authorities; care providers and recruits. The 2nd part is the devolved support to local authorities' collaborative projects focused mainly on support to providers and recruits. This is underpinned by governance and programme management.
The funding distribution to West Midlands Employers is governed in a contract between West Midlands ADASS/Shropshire Council and West Midlands Employers. The funding distribution to local ICP projects is governed through MOUs in place between WM ADASS/Shropshire Council and 14 local authorities.

Programme management has been established to support the project and all the partners, with regular review of objectives and opportunities to learn and share as the implementation of both Regional and Local projects develop as shown in Figure 5:

Figure 5.

International Recruitment Programme Delivery Governance

Programme Objectives outlined in MoU incl. Annex A

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │      DHSC       │
                    └─────────────────┘
                             │
                    ┌─────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │  WM ADASS SRO   │      │  Programme Office:    │
                    │  Pete Jackson   │      │  Project Manager      │
                    └─────────────────┘      │  Communications       │
                             │               │  Lead                 │
                    ┌─────────────────┐      │  Learning & Evaluation│
                    │Programme Director│─────│  Lead                 │
                    │   Gill Kelly    │      │  Finance Lead         │
                    └─────────────────┘      │  BI support           │
                             │               │  Admin                │
                    ┌─────────────────┐      └──────────────────────┘
                    │WM IR Partnership│
                    │  Steering Group │      ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
                    │(Programme Board)│──────│Core IR Group (Programme          │
                    └─────────────────┘      │Management Group)                 │
                       │         │           └──────────────────────────────────┘
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Project Objectives outlined in SLA   *Project Objectives outlined in SLA*

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        ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
        │ WME Project Lead│      │ ICS Local Project│
        │                 │      │     Leads        │
        └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
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Learning & Evaluation

A learning and evaluation lead has been commissioned as part of the programme management team and attends the International Recruitment Steering Group; Core Group; and PMO meetings to ensure that all learning is being captured throughout the 4D phases of the project. The logic model is reviewed to track progress against the actions, outputs, impacts and outcomes.

Each project commissioned within the International Recruitment programme is led by a named project lead and attends regular monthly meetings with the Learning and Evaluation Lead to hear the progress of the project against the outcomes and metrics agreed. The focus is on both quantitative and qualitative data. All project leads are encouraged to share learning through case studies illustrating impact for care providers and international recruits.

Logic Model Evaluation November 2023

Activities	Progress	Comments
Establish, manage, and maintain a regional IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer working jointly with WME and WM ADASS.	Secured services with specialist HR firm to go live 1ST January to 30th June 2024.	Includes: Helpline; Webinars; Metrics; Case studies; Legal updates
Develop and co-ordinate activity via Regional Hub of IR information, advice and guidance for councils and adult social care providers.	Secured support and services with specialist firm for independent law employment advice and support to go live 1st January to 30th June 2024.	
Devolve funding to sub-regions / local areas to lead specific initiatives – particularly focused on pastoral support, training and development, housing, support for refugees	International Recruitment (IR) Adult Social Care (ASC) Programme Local Grants Process was established and run during September and October. £750k has been devolved to 8 local initiatives across the region, with 1 additional potential scheme currently being agreed.	Plans are jointly developed between councils and adult social care providers with funding received by a lead local authority and devolved to other delivery partners as required. All proposals have met the DHSC grant criteria (see appendix 1).
Commission communications partner to develop a comms plan that ensures regional offer is well understood and accessible to all.	West Midlands Employers commissioned as communications partner	
Commission an evaluation partner for an independent assessment of the programme's reach and impact.	Evaluation partner in place and capturing the learning and evaluation across the whole project.	
Ongoing programme management and liaison with DHSC team for progress updates and reporting.	Programme management secured and embedded through governance (see figure 5).	

Project Development Evaluation – 4Ds Model

Discover Phase is complete:
• Governance and procurement arrangements agreed.
• Regional Hub prototyped by WM Employers.
• IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer scoped.
• Monthly progress and reporting updates in place.

Define Phase is partially complete:
• Regional Hub is in progress.
• Funding arrangements with local stakeholders (e.g. councils) agreed.
• Communications and evaluation partners commissioned.
• IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer commissioned.
• Monthly progress and reporting updates in place.

Develop Phase is ongoing:
• Ethical Recruitment Service Offer commissioned and due to start 1st January 2024
• Local delivery of key projects have started in some areas.
• Evaluation commences and interim (early learning) report developed.
• Monthly progress and reporting updates in place.

Delivery has started:
• Service delivery is ongoing
• Arrangements for 'formal' close of programme/ end of funding under consideration
• Final evaluation report due end April 2024

Collaboration with Partners

Extending collaboration is one of the West Midlands ADASS building blocks for resilience in adult social care and has been a principle used within the International Recruitment Project. It is through collaboration that some significant work to create an International Recruitment infrastructure across West Midlands has been achieved. Here we look at early learning from that collaboration, illustrated by the development of an International Recruitment Sponsors Dashboard; the development of a Regional Hub in collaboration with West Midlands Employers; and the collaborations that have been developed at local authority and Integrated Care Board geographies with care associations; Citizens Advice Bureau and local providers.

WM ADASS International Recruitment Sponsors Dashboard

WM ADASS engaged business intelligence advice support as part of the IR programme to consider what intelligence was available to support local authorities and care providers with adherence to legislation, sponsorship regulation and ethical recruitment. Early intelligence from Sandwell Local Authority indicated that incidents of non-ethical recruitment through a few recruitment agencies were emerging and would potentially impact local care market quality and sustainability. Understanding what early intelligence could assist local authorities and care providers was therefore a priority for WM ADASS.

The significant work that has been undertaken is set out in detail here. The work has been received positively by the 14 local authorities and there is interest from other regions and from DHSC as potentially this can be expanded to cover all England.

Problem Statement

1. Local Authorities recognise the importance of international recruitment to the care system, with recruits adding much needed capacity. However, data about international recruitment is limited and not sufficiently granular to allow local authorities to maintain oversight of the extent of IR activity within the local care market.

2. Often the first indication that a local authority has of the involvement of international recruits within their market is on receipt of a formal notice of licence suspension or revocation from the Home Office – by which time the risk of worker displacement is significantly heightened.

Proposed Solution:

An "International Recruitment Sponsors Dashboard" combining Home Office and CQC datasets to present a full picture of CQC-registered sponsor organisations, registered care locations and licence suspensions and revocations. The dashboard is intended to help "make International Recruitment a success" within Adult Social Care.

Approach:

WM-ADASS became concerned about a small number of cases within the region of sponsor organisations operating outside of the terms of their licence. It was apparent that there was no easy way of identifying the scale of the problem, with the information held in the daily Home Office list of licenced sponsor organisations being insufficient to develop meaningful insights. WM ADASS compiled a list of questions needed from the data and sought to identify the number and location or sponsor organisations that were likely to be active within the ASC market, by "matching" the organisation name within the Home Office IR Sponsors List against the CQC Active Directory of Registered Providers. This helped us establish the extent and distribution of IR sponsorship within the care market.

We were able to use the CQC data to identify all CQC registered locations associated with registered providers that are also IR Sponsors. We knew that many providers operate from multiple registered locations, often in several local authority areas and indeed regions. The inference from this was that recruits might be deployed by the sponsor across several registered locations – meaning the risk of "displacement" in the event of licence revocation could present in several LA areas.

We processed the data from these two principal sources within a Microsoft Power BI dashboard to create helpful visualisations of the data, enabling dynamic searching by a range of features to provide greater market insight.

We incorporated data from West Midlands records of suspensions and revocations to provide intelligence on "recruits at risk of displacement" and have asked for similar data relating to other regions to be made available.

We demonstrated the IR Sponsors dashboard to DHSC and the DASS regional IR Leads, gathering feedback on the presentation and usefulness of the dashboard and suggestions or requests for enhancement.

We have set up a "test user" group to trial the use of the dashboard and have a rollout plan to make the Dashboard available to nominated users in each region (and potentially, to each LA).

We have initiated a "change request" within the NECS Capacity Tracker, recommending the collection of data about international recruits at location level.

Potential uses for the IR Sponsors dashboard

- Provides oversight of IR Sponsorship activity within region and LA boundaries, including awareness of the scale and distribution of international recruits;
- Supports development of targeted support offer to sponsor organisations;
- Supports development of targeted place-based support offer to international recruits;
- Supports risk mitigation / contingency planning, particularly for areas with high concentrations of IR activity;
- Supports sharing of early warning (suspension) and issue escalation (revocation) notifications and implementation of risk mitigation plans aimed at redeploying recruits at risk of displacement

IR Sponsors Dashboard User Guide

Access to the dashboard is enabled through a Microsoft Power BI "App". Authorised users are sent a link to the App together with the user instructions, below.
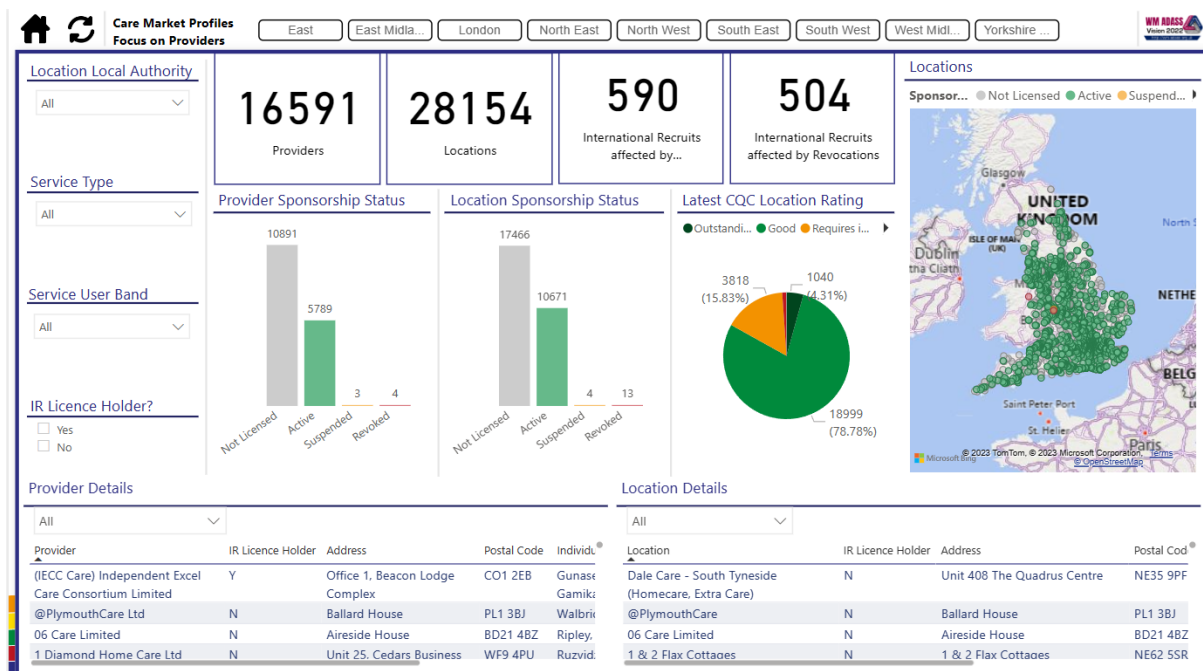
The dashboard incorporates a range of filters and features, with the "default" view set to show the status at the national level. To change this view, use either the "Region" tabs or select an LA from the drop-down list. Holding the "Ctrl" key whilst filtering allows you to choose multiple regions / LAs, with the data then being presented at a consolidated level.

Other filters are provided to present the data by e.g. Service Type; Service User Band; IR Licence Holder status (Y/N).

Providers & Locations

These two cells show the number count according to the filters selected. In this case, all CQC registered Providers and Locations in England (including both licenced sponsors and those that aren't licenced).

Sponsorship Status
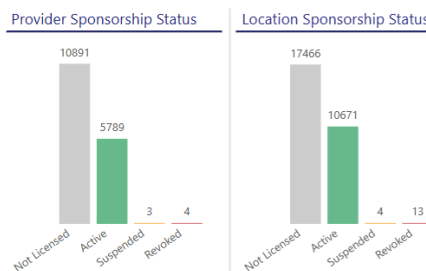
Bar charts show the number of Providers / Locations within each "sponsorship status" (not licenced; active; suspended; revoked) for the filters selected. Hovering your mouse over the bars in the chart will show the % of providers / locations for each status. Selecting a bar by 'clicking' on it will update the visuals to reflect all data for that status only.

Provider and Location Details

These tables update to reflect the filters chosen - so if you want to see a list of only those Providers with an active sponsor licence, use the relevant filter (or the green bar from the status

charts). Scroll bars reveal all the fields held within each table and you can use the "Focus Mode" button at the top right of the table to see a full-screen version of the relevant table.
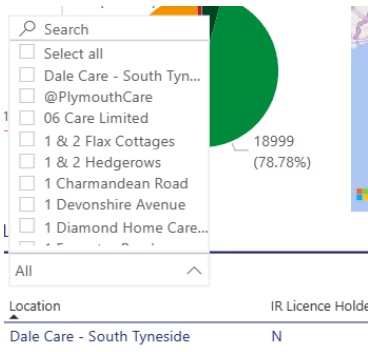
Individual Provider and Location detail lists can be searched using the drop-down - use the 'down' arrow to the right of the "All" selection then either select the relevant provider/location from the list or type the name in the search dialogue box.

This will filter the data to show results only for that Provider or Location.

Recruits affected by Suspensions and Revocations

The dashboard shows the number of international recruits whose sponsoring organisation has had their IR sponsorship licence either suspended or revoked. The data shown currently relates only to Providers based in the West Midlands - data from other regions is yet to be added.

Knowing the number of people at risk of displacement should help LAs take action to understand more about the cohort and to consider what support to provide to mitigate the risk.

Other features
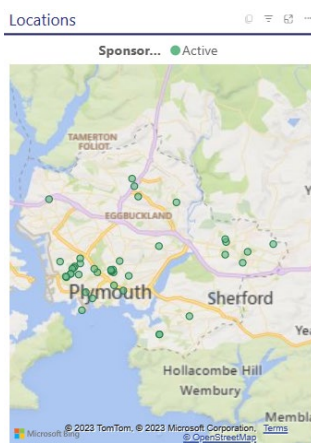
The Location Map can be used to give a general sense of the distribution of sponsor organisations and, where there is risk from suspensions and revocations, to identify "hot-spots" where more focused support might be needed.

Latest CQC Location Rating
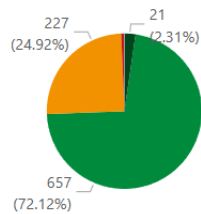
● Outstandi... ● Good ● Requires i... ▶

227
(24.92%)

21
(2.31%)

657
(72.12%)

Figure 1: All Active Sponsors, WM Region

Latest CQC Location Rating

● Good ● Requires improvement
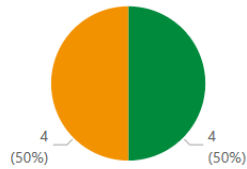
4
(50%)

4
(50%)

Figure 2: Suspensions and Revocations, WM Region

The CQC Ratings chart is provided to understand more about the quality credentials of sponsoring organisations and to compare, for example, "all active sponsors" with "suspended and revoked sponsors".

This early learning and development of a Dashboard will provide significant intelligence to support International Recruitment effectively not just in West Midlands but potentially across England.

West Midlands Employers – Developing an IR Regional Ethical Recruitment Service & Hub

Developing a Regional Ethical Recruitment Service and Hub

Working in partnership with WM ADASS, Shropshire Council and the Department of Health and Social Care, WM Employers are developing a new ethical recruitment service offer for all CQC accredited care providers and councils operating in the West Midlands. There are five key components set out below:

1. HR subscription service
2. Independent employment law support and advice service
3. A framework of 'approved' ethical recruitment managed service providers/agencies
4. International Recruitment Regional Service
5. Develop and host new WM ADASS and WME IR microsite. Known as the Regional Hub'

WME Projects – Draft High Level Time-Line (TBC)

Workstream	SEP/OCT	NOV/DEC	JAN/FEB	MAR	Complete
HUB	Launch Data Updates	Data Updates /reshape	Data Updates /relaunch	Data Updates	Sustainable Model BAU Data/ Monitoring / Evaluating
LEGAL	Scope ICP needs ITT	Procure Contract	Webinars Launch service	Data collect Evidence examples	
ETHICAL FRAMEWORK	Research IR end to end process best practice NHS list	Guidance to use Framework NHS list	Test Guidance with Stakeholders Upload on to Hub	Launch - Best Practise IR Event with Agencies & ICPs	
HR	Scope ICP need Plan	HR firm identified			
LA IR FEASIBILTY	N/A	Scope interest LA/Trusts	Make proposals to LA/Trusts	Agree pilot/ project	

Wider Programme Governance & Dependencies with ADASS Deliverables – ADDAS Lead

Wider Programme Communications – ADASS Lead

West Midlands Employers Audit Tool for Care Providers

WM Employers Audit Tool for Care Providers

WM Employers have co-created an audit tool with partners and stakeholders to support Independent **Care Providers** to have a better understanding of the steps and information needed when "**making a decision"** on agency supplier. Following extensive research, and information that has come to light in recent months in respect of displaced workers, licence suspension/revocations WM Employers designed these tools to enable and empower care providers to have everything in one place and use this as a robust tool with a vision of **best practice** being undertaken. Going forward this will bring about changes that can support and embed **knowledge** and bring about a **reduction** in displaced workers, suspensions, and revocations. It will be a legacy beyond this project.

There are 3 parts to the audit tool to complement the IR Hub with the products and services on offer to care providers.

Part 1 provides an IR specific programme questionnaire for use with agency suppliers already on the approved list of **Ethical Recruiters NHS.** Whilst the suppliers will have gone through a process to confirm their understanding of the IR Code of Practice(legislation) the questions used do not look at some of the practicalities of recruiting Internationally but focus on the knowledge around the Code of Practice only.   The questions cover: supplier information; services and sourcing; training; legislation, best practice, and safeguarding.

Part 2 is a tool for Independent Care Providers to cross reference supplier answers with legislation, policy, safer recruitment, and best practice for international recruitment

The questionnaire and reference document can support quality assurance and enable care providers to have a clear understanding of their requirements when choosing a supplier. Parts 1 and 2 are designed to work alongside **Part 3 the Ethical Recruitment E-Booklet**, which has " prompts" for care providers to ensure all areas are covered from licences ,visas ,sourcing, compliance, onboarding, and pastoral care.

Figure 6: WM Employers Audit Toolkit for Care Providers Part 1

Figure 7: WM Employers Audit Toolkit for Care Providers Part 2

Figure 8: WM Employers Audit Toolkit for Care Providers Part 3 E-Booklet

Pastoral care for International Recruits: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

West Midlands Employers were cognizant of the importance of providing pastoral care to international recruits to help people to settle into their new community and their new workplace. Learning from research on recruitment of overseas nurses highlighted the importance of pastoral care to include assistance with settling into accommodation, making sure people knew how to access public services, that people and their dependents were safe, able to access food, and communicate with their community (Palmer, 2021). Without this support the research indicated a significant risk to the mental health of international recruits and their dependents.

To ensure that the needs of international recruits were a priority for recruiting agencies and care providers, WM Employers in partnership with WM ADASS and stakeholders developed Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to guide support to international recruits. This is illustrated in the E-Booklet for care providers to guide choices of agency suppliers (see figure 10).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs was also used as part of the assessment criteria for the West Midlands local IR grant application process to ensure that the local initiatives would target support to the International Recruits for pastoral care as well as for higher needs such as training and development.
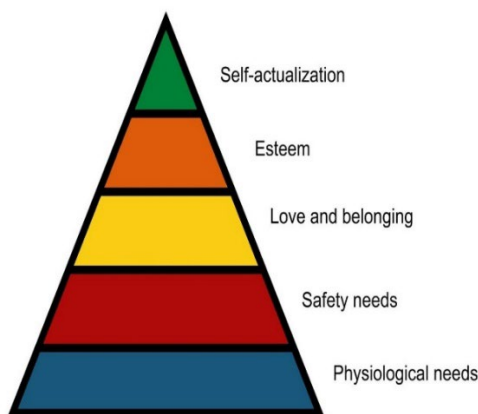
Figure 9. Maslow's hierarchy of needs

The model is shown as a pyramid. On the lower levels, there are basic human needs that must be met before a person can move up to the peak of the pyramid and enjoy their full potential.

From the bottom to the top, the pyramid shows the following needs:

- physiological needs
- safety needs
- love and belonging
- esteem
- self-actualization.

For international recruits their most important needs on arrival will be practical ones such as food and warmth, accommodation, access to finances, and safety. Moving up the hierarchy, international recruits will also need to build connections and engage with their new communities. The workplace will be an important part of their community. Once their more basic and

fundamental needs are met, ongoing support can help a person build confidence and self-esteem, resulting in personal fulfilment.

Figure 10. Extract from WM Employers Audit Toolkit for Care Providers Part 3 E-Booklet
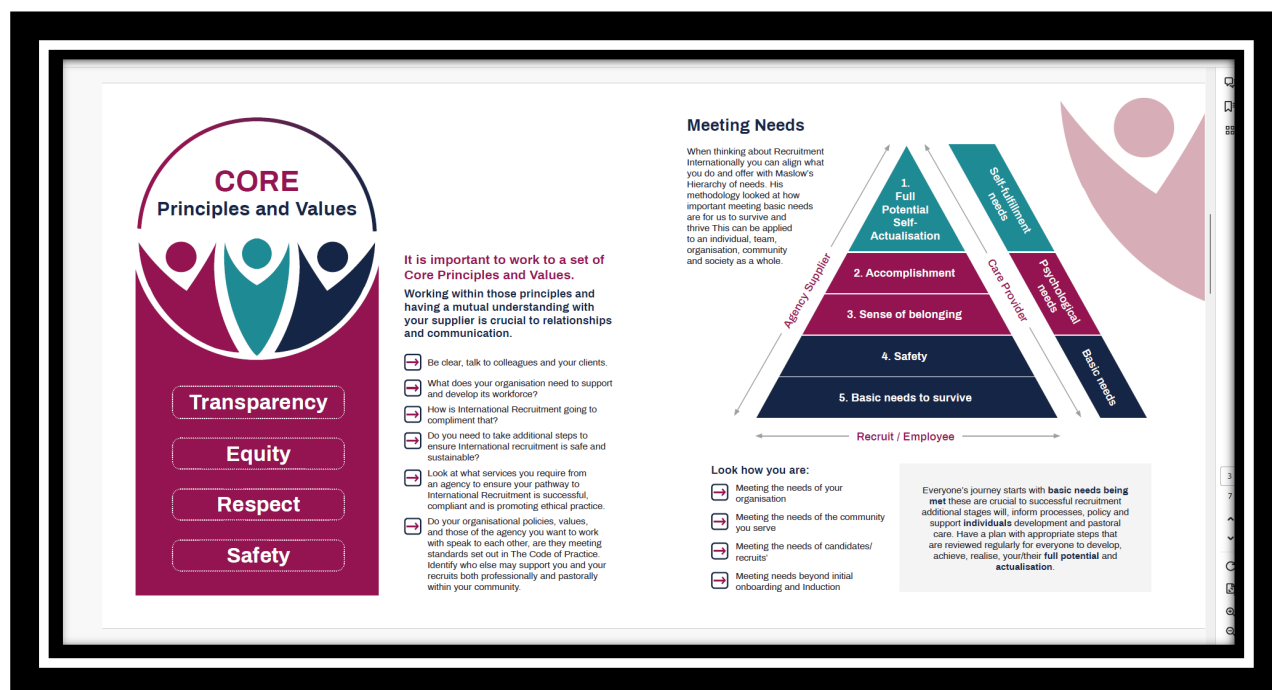
West Midlands ADASS Local International Recruitment Projects

A significant part of the WM ADASS International Recruitment Programme is the local collaborative projects which have been granted funding. The grant funding process took place during September and October and submissions were assessed using the DHSC Grant Conditions in appendix 1. The focus was on collaborative projects and the devolved funding was made possible by extending the existing Memorandum of Understanding that WM ADASS holds with 14 local authorities. Whilst the funding is devolved to named local authorities for each project, the emphasis was on collaboration, between local authorities and partners, such as Citizens Advice Bureau, training providers and care associations. The projects are in an early stage of implementation and the learning and evaluation will be monitored with leads on a monthly basis. A summary of the initiatives and early learning is given here:

Case Study: International Recruitment in Domiciliary Care Providers

Solihull is working in collaboration with domiciliary care providers who provide ethical recruitment to international recruits to create good practice guide and support for all providers.

We are hearing of good practice for induction training of International Recruits that is also improving the training and development of local recruits and existing social care staff. Providers are recruiting from a variety of countries where there are different routes to training and qualifications. In Solihull there is good practice in the development of a 12-week programme to ensure all new recruits are at the same standard. The training includes emotional intelligence training and development to ensure that recruits are competent in communication skills and culturally aware of behaviours to support their clients.

We are also hearing of good practice in supporting international recruits through the recruitment process and onboarding. One large domiciliary care provider that operates across different counties has a dedicated person linked to each international recruit to take them through the recruitment process. All recruits are expected to drive; have a good command of English; receive accommodation provided by the employer for 3 months to settle in; and are provided with support to access community such as faith groups; schools; GPs; community centres, so that they can settle into their community and are not lonely.

They operate a 5-day face-to-face classroom induction, and each recruit is given a buddy and shadows the buddy in care provision until signed-off as competent. Then the recruit will only do double-handed cases until fully confident and competent to work alone.

The experience of recruiting overseas social care staff was reported as extremely positive for the service; for the existing workforce in being able to take up some of the strain and allow flexible employment opportunities to locally recruited staff, who mostly prefer part-time hours, as opposed to international recruits who want to work full-time. The recruits have brought more diversity into the workforce and enables the provider to support the diverse populations it serves.

The manager of the service stated, 'It has had a massive positive impact on the workforce, we have 200 international recruits and retention rate is 100%. We are recruiting people with higher qualifications than the domestic workforce and this is having a positive impact on the service we offer.'

Coventry & Warwickshire

Coventry & Warwickshire are collaborating to support IR employees at risk of losing their sponsorship and connect them with alternative employers before the cut-off date and support refugees / migrant workers with right to work into ASC employment building on the existing work around supporting the local labour market already underway in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Questionnaire sent to care providers to scope number recruiting International Recruits; and creating a tracker to support early warning system for suspension of agency suppliers (note combining efforts with Regional Data Dashboard); working with ethical employers to support displaced International Recruits back into employment; collaborating with migration teams across Coventry & Warwickshire to provide support to international recruits.

West Midlands Care Provider Association

West Midlands Care Provider Association has established a service to pay and organise for DBS checks for new international recruits. The DBS is a regulatory requirement and an additional cost to care providers. WMCA is a DBS umbrella organisation so had the necessary infrastructure in place to start it straight away.   The funding will provide approx. 1000 searches for providers based within West Midlands, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Warwickshire.

Shropshire & Telford & Wrekin

Shropshire & Telford & Wrekin are working collaboratively to support ethical recruitment and employment for international recruits who have found themselves in difficult situations where they may have lost their initial licence or be at risk of this happening.

Herefordshire Care Association

Herefordshire Care Association is establishing an international buddying scheme for internationally recruits employed in any registered care service in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The scheme is offering both onsite buddying and an online buddy chat service.

Herefordshire

Herefordshire is establishing ethical recruitment training and development opportunities for the social care provider workforce; promoting inclusive recruitment; the establishment of reverse mentors; and building cultural competence for all workers.

Staffordshire & Stoke

Staffordshire and Stoke international recruitment initiative:

1. Grant funding to recruit 20 qualified nurses to care homes with maximum value £2,000 per applicant to cover / contribute to flight cost, accommodation.
2. Targeted grant support to international recruits to support sustained employment with transport for work; communication training and other training; accommodation and household essential.
3. Investment in the resettlement teams for sustainable support of international recruits.

Case Study: The Sandwell Welfare Hub & Modern Slavery Guidance

Sandwell Modern Slavery lead is working in collaboration with the WM ADASS International Recruitment Programme to understand the risks associated with modern slavery for International Recruits in the care sector.

Sandwell is leading the way on the development of guidance for domiciliary care providers to recognise and act on modern slavery risks and indicators. The draft guidance is shown in appendix 2 and is about to be published. This will be an important guide for all national care providers.

When Sandwell became aware of unethical recruitment patterns with agency suppliers, the authority set up a Welfare Hub with community partners to offer immediate support and guidance to those affected and to gain intelligence on what was happening for people.

The welfare hub was well attended and is set out here in summary. It is a model that could be adopted in other areas.

The Sandwell Welfare Hub on 10th October 2023 was a collaborative effort of 20 agencies & services. The event witnessed:

Diverse Participation: >50 professionals & volunteers dedicated their time and expertise to facilitate the event's operations, demonstrating their commitment to making a positive impact.

Wide Outreach: 69 skilled care workers from 9 different care agencies attended the event, reflecting the widespread reach and significance of the need for support.

Comprehensive Assistance: Attendees received a comprehensive range of services and assistance, including advice, assessments, and essential services spanning housing, health, immigration guidance, human rights advocacy, exploitation screenings, scams awareness, and financial advice.

Immediate Relief: Crucial welfare provisions, including food, clothing, and shopping vouchers, were made available to ensure immediate relief for attendees.

The Sandwell Welfare Hub yielded valuable insights into International Recruitment:

Diverse Attendees: The event brought together individuals from 9 different care agencies across various locations, underscoring the widespread need for support.

Financial Challenges: Eight individuals courageously disclosed that they had paid substantial sums to come to the UK, highlighting the financial challenges faced by many.

Skilled Workforce: 95% attendees assessed by West Midlands Care Association (WMCA), possessed the skills and qualifications necessary for employment in the care sector, emphasising the untapped potential within this group.

Immediate Support: Families left the event with essential provisions, including food, clothing, and supermarket vouchers, providing much-needed assistance.

Referrals for Ongoing Support: 3 individuals were referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for further support and assessment, emphasising the importance of ongoing assistance.

Safe Accommodation: One individual was placed in safe accommodation due to modern slavery concerns and continues to receive support.

Follow-Up Appointments: All 69 individuals have follow-up appointments with agencies for immigration advice, health screening and support, and modern slavery and exploitation support, ensuring continued assistance.

Left in destitution: 54 individuals disclosed they had come to the UK to work, and the care agency did not have work to give them, leaving them without work/financial security, many had been here since last year and not given any work

Changing trend: Workers stated that they were initially given work, but when more people started to arrive, their work declined from 30-40 hours to just 20 hours.

Non-Compliance with Sponsorship License: No individuals were working the 39 hours directed by the sponsorship license and, as a result, were not paid the £20,400 salary that is a condition of the sponsorship license.

The impact of the Welfare Hub is best articulated through the feedback received from attendees:

"I have never experienced this level of support and care in the UK. I am overwhelmed with gratitude."

"I found this really helpful, and I am no longer afraid. Thank you to everyone for all the welfare support."

directors of adass
adult social services
West Midlands

WM ADASS
Vision 2024
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Legacy & Sustainability: International Recruitment as a Trailblazer of the Capabilities for Resilience in Adult Social Care

Extending Collaborative Working: The governance established in West Midlands to implement the International Recruitment infrastructure supports collaboration around services and resources across organisations. It reaches beyond the usual co-operation between local authorities into innovative collaborations between local authorities, care associations, independent providers, third sector, Citizens Advice Bureau. It has pushed forward the need for more collaboration between DHSC, local government, the Home Office, and Independent Care Providers. The development of the International Recruitment Dashboard illustrates the shared learning, the opportunities to promote open conversations, build trust, and explore resourcing options aimed at sustaining and improving adult social care into the future.

Strengthening Community Assets: The West Midlands International Recruitment model is targeted at harnessing and strengthening community-centred care providers through a resilient and competent workforce. We have heard how local homecare providers have recruited new significant skills into the social care workforce, with international recruits often having higher qualifications than required for care work. We are seeing local providers working in partnership to establish buddying schemes for international recruits to help them to settle within their new communities. The presence of international recruits has had a positive impact on the care provided to a diverse population, with domiciliary care providers telling us that the training and

development of the whole workforce to understand different cultures and respect the diversity of the communities it serves is improving the care offered to their clients.

Through co-production with local stakeholders, WM Employers has been able to scope, develop, and commission a HR and legal IR infrastructure that can be accessed remotely, enabling reach into rural and urban communities, and crucially to the wide range of SME care providers. An infrastructure providing the mechanisms to support experimentation, learning, and sharing within and between communities.

Transforming Social Care Careers: We have heard from domiciliary care providers how recruiting international care staff since the changes in February 2022 has transformed their capacity to offer flexible working for local recruits. International recruits tend to work full-time and thus provide the much-needed capacity to enable providers to respond to local recruits' needs. This has improved retention and enabled providers to offer more care packages to local authorities and health systems. Bringing new skills into the social care workforce through international recruitment is also improving the outlook for careers in adult social care to maintain a good supply of highly skilled workers to effectively meet sector demand.

Balancing Technology and Humanity: The International Recruitment programme is providing a great opportunity to enhance support for social care staff, unpaid carers and those receiving care. WM ADASS is working with tech companies and data analysts to develop AI signposting and support that can offer different languages and culturally specific support. This will be developed over the coming months.

Driving Change through Data and Evidence: WM ADASS has a track record of developing intelligence to support local authorities e.g. CQC readiness. This work has been built upon during the first stages of the International Recruitment programme to respond to the local authorities requests to better understand the emerging risks to international recruits and agency suppliers and care providers. By strengthening data capabilities for international recruitment we will be better able to inform service planning, workforce development and prevention activities, and support a focus on reducing inequalities; ensuring data to inform action is complemented by robust evidence around what works, when and for whom.

Shifting the Narrative around adult social care: The International Recruitment programme provides a significant opportunity to invest in the adult social care workforce through the development of a regional hub, with access for all care providers to HR advice and legal advice to promote and support ethical recruitment and retention.
The local IR initiatives are promoting the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of the international workforce. These initiatives are also supporting locally recruited adult social care workers and the ambition is that it will impact stress, burnout, and turnover, providing appropriate resources and support, and recognising and rewarding the contribution and achievements of the workforce.

Appendices

Appendix 1: DHSC IR Grant Conditions 23/24

Grant conditions

- Local partnerships should consist of local authorities and care alliances or other groupings of local providers. The Skills for Care locality manager may also be able to support the partnership
- partnerships should cover a region or a subregion and make sure that the services offered through the partnership are available to all adult social care providers within that area
- the services offered through the partnership should aim to boost international recruitment for the local area
- participation in the partnership should ensure that all partners are engaged in the decision-making process, ensuring the grant money is spent in a way that adds value to the partners
- the services offered through the partnership will help ensure ethical recruitment and employment practice
- any recruitment activity supported by the partnership must adhere to the code of practice for international recruitment
- the main focus of the support services will be on the recruitment and employment of care workers. However, the interventions could also support the recruitment and employment of other adult social care staff, including nurses, occupational therapists and social workers
- partnerships will monitor the impact of the interventions and provide information to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to help evaluate the impact of the fund through a light touch quarterly return. The grant funding can be used in part to support local monitoring and evaluation
- partnerships should consider opportunities for working with the NHS to share good practice, for instance in relation to pastoral support. In some areas, it may work well to discuss these issues at the people board of the integrated care system (ICS)
- partnerships should engage Ukrainian, Afghan and other foreign nationals with a right to work in the region and employers to ensure that opportunities to work in the adult social care sector are promoted
- partnerships should consider how to spread existing good practice, as well as develop new innovative solutions
- grant expenditure should be focused on shared solutions that are available to all providers within the footprint of the partnership

1. Reporting Concerns

Any concerns or suspicions of modern slavery within domiciliary agencies should be reported promptly. The following agencies should be notified:

1. Reporting Concerns Through SHOP:

Through the Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP), concerns related to potential modern slavery within domiciliary agencies will be reported. The SHOP serves as a collaborative platform involving local partners, including:

- **Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA):** Concerns should be reported through the local SHOP contact. The SHOP contact will facilitate communication with the GLAA.
- **Police:** Suspicious activities or potential modern slavery cases should be reported to the police using the established Fib Form process. The police will investigate and take necessary legal actions.
- **HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs):** HMRC plays a role in addressing potential financial aspects of modern slavery cases, such as illegal wages and exploitation.
- **Immigration Authorities:** Reporting concerns to immigration authorities is crucial in cases involving potential immigration violations or exploitation related to immigration status.
- **Local Authority:** The local authority, as part of SHOP, plays a key role in coordinating responses, sharing information, and providing support to potential victims.

2. Extended Agency Engagement:

In addition to the core SHOP partners, extended agencies also collaborate in addressing concerns related to potential modern slavery within domiciliary agencies. These agencies include:

- **Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children's Social Care (CSC) Commissioning Teams:** Concerns should be shared with the ASC/CSC commissioning teams responsible for overseeing the services provided by domiciliary agencies. These teams will review the concerns and take appropriate action, including potential contract termination.
- **UK Sponsorship Team:** Any concerns related to breaches of sponsorship license conditions should be reported to the UK Sponsorship Team at SponsorComplianceTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk. This includes situations where individuals are charged fees unlawfully.
- **Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS):** If there are reports of recruitment organisations, agencies, or collaborations charging fees for work-finding services, these concerns should be reported to the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate. This is illegal under the Employment Agencies Act 1973. Reports can be made via email at eas@beis.gov.uk or by completing the online form for complaints about pay and work rights.
- **Care Quality Commission (CQC):** If concerns are raised about the quality of care provided by a domiciliary agency, they should be reported to the Care Quality Commission. Reports can be made through the CQC's online feedback form or by emailing enquiries@cqc.org.uk.
- **Jobs Aware:** Job scams or unfair working practices should be reported to Jobs Aware, which provides free help and advice to UK workers who have been affected. Incidents can be reported via the Jobs Aware website at https://www.jobsaware.co.uk/report.

2. Follow-Up and Investigation

Upon receiving the concerns, the respective agencies will initiate investigations as needed. This may include multi-agency meetings, interviews, site visits, and gathering evidence to assess the validity of the concerns.

3. Collaborative Action

Agencies involved will collaborate to ensure a coordinated response. This may involve sharing information, conducting joint investigations, and developing action plans to address the issues identified.

4. Support and Victim Care

Where individuals are identified as potential victims of modern slavery, they will be provided with appropriate support and care in accordance with established protocols. NRM referrals will be made, and local victim pathways would come into play.

5. Possible outcomes

suggested actions that each agency could take in response to potential modern slavery concerns within domiciliary agencies, including the addition of cease-and-desist orders for the police and local authority:

Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA):

- **Conduct Investigations:** Investigate allegations of labour exploitation, abuse, and violations of labour standards within domiciliary agencies.
- **Interview Workers:** Interview workers who may have been subjected to exploitation, taking care to ensure their safety and confidentiality.
- **Work with SHOP:** Collaborate closely with the Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP) to share information and coordinate actions.
- **Enforce Labour Laws:** Take legal actions against agencies found in violation of labour laws and exploitation of workers.
- **Raise Awareness:** Provide guidance and training to domiciliary agencies on labour standards and workers' rights.

Police:

- **Investigate Suspicious Activities:** Thoroughly investigate any reports of modern slavery, trafficking, or criminal activities within domiciliary agencies.
- **Collect Evidence:** Gather evidence related to potential crimes, exploitation, or human trafficking.
- **Interview Potential Victims:** Interview individuals who may have been victims of modern slavery, ensuring their safety and well-being.
- **Issue Cease and Desist Orders:** When necessary, issue cease and desist orders to domiciliary agencies involved in illegal activities.
- **Work with Other Agencies:** Collaborate with SHOP, local authorities, and immigration authorities to coordinate responses.
- **Prosecute Perpetrators:** Take legal actions against individuals and agencies involved in criminal activities.

HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs):

- **Review Financial Records:** Examine financial records of domiciliary agencies to identify potential irregularities such as illegal wages or tax evasion.
- **Investigate Pay Practices**: Investigate payment practices within domiciliary agencies, particularly looking for evidence of wage exploitation.
- **Enforce Tax Laws:** Take legal actions against agencies found in violation of tax laws and financial exploitation of workers.
- **Cooperate with Law Enforcement:** Collaborate with law enforcement agencies to share findings and support investigations.

Immigration Authorities:

- **Address Immigration Violations:** Investigate potential immigration violations within domiciliary agencies, including issues related to visas and work permits.
- **Assess Immigration Status:** Assess the immigration status of individuals involved, ensuring they are aware of their rights and obligations.
- **Provide Support:** Offer support and assistance to individuals whose immigration status may be compromised due to exploitation.

Local Authority:

- **Coordinate Responses:** Coordinate responses to potential modern slavery cases with relevant agencies and partners, including the SHOP.
- **Provide Support Services**: Offer support services, such as housing, healthcare, and social services, to potential victims.
- **Issue Cease and Desist Orders:** When appropriate, issue cease and desist orders to domiciliary agencies engaged in illegal activities.

Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children's Social Care (CSC) Commissioning Teams:

- **Review Contracts:** Review contracts with domiciliary agencies to ensure compliance with care standards and legal requirements.
- **Terminate Contracts:** If concerns are substantiated, consider terminating contracts with agencies involved in exploitation.
- **Support Victims:** Provide support and care services to individuals who may be victims of exploitation.
- **Human Rights assessments:** where possible where extreme destitution Human Rights assessments should be undertaken

UK Sponsorship Team:

- **Address Sponsorship Violations:** Investigate and address any breaches of sponsorship license conditions, including unlawful fees charged to individuals.
- **Take Legal Action:** Take legal actions against agencies found in violation of sponsorship license conditions through license revocations.

Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS):

- **Investigate Illegal Fees:** Investigate reports of recruitment organisations charging fees for work-finding services, which is illegal under the Employment Agencies Act 1973.
- **Take Enforcement Actions:** Take enforcement actions against agencies found in violation of employment agency standards.

Care Quality Commission (CQC):

- **Assess Care Quality:** Assess the quality of care provided by domiciliary agencies and address concerns related to care standards.
- **Take Regulatory Actions:** Take regulatory actions against agencies found in violation of care standards.

Jobs Aware:

- **Support Workers:** Provide support and advice to workers affected by job scams or unfair working practices.
- **Investigate Scams:** Investigate incidents of job scams and unfair practices and take necessary actions against offending parties.

These suggested actions highlight the roles and responsibilities of each agency in addressing potential modern slavery concerns within domiciliary agencies and ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals involved. Collaborative efforts and information sharing among agencies remain critical to an effective response.

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