



AT SCALE LTD: CASE STUDY

Social Worker Recruitment - A Social Care Academy, one strategy for your Social Worker shortage?

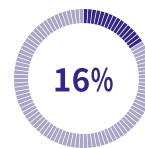


BACKGROUND

The latest workforce data from the Local Government Association shows that 4,995 social workers left their jobs in 2021, an increase of 16% from the previous year. This is the highest number of vacancies in five years.



Nearly 5000 social workers left their jobs in 2021



Increase of 16% from previous year



Highest number of vacancies in 5 years

Recruiting and retaining staff is one of the biggest challenges facing social care and one that has got worse since the pandemic. As a result, many councils are becoming reliant on agency staff.

A large London public sector organisation struggling with both recruitment and retention issues chose to make a commitment to invest and create a pipeline of local talent into social work careers through a Social Care Academy.

Their key priority was to promote a local Social Worker apprenticeship scheme.

WHY A SOCIAL CARE ACADEMY?

'We want to attract local people to join the Council and the wider social care workforce, be provided with a clear career path and proactively develop them through that path. In this way, the social care workforce will more closely mirror the communities it supports, and staff will feel rewarded and fulfilled and more likely to stay, reducing staff turnover.'

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S & ADULTS' SERVICES

A Social Care Academy can include a broad range of Social Care careers e.g., Social Workers, Care Assistants, Occupational and Speech and Language Therapists. The requirements of each career will differ. However, at the heart of the approach is paid employment by a service provider (possibly not just the local authority) and developing the necessary skills and knowledge to gain a degree qualification.

At Scale was commissioned to produce a robust Business Case for the introduction of a Social Worker apprenticeship scheme and to set out the need for a long-term commitment to an ongoing programme of recruitment for Social Workers within both Children and Adult Services over 4-5 years and beyond.

The Business Case also had to identify the issues with the current recruitment strategies and propose the next steps.

Working with the organisation's Social Work senior management team and partner universities, we identified and assessed the benefits and costs attached to the scheme, including any financial cost savings for the organisation.

A final report, outlining the business case and recommendations for progression was presented and ratified as an approach to develop a Social Worker workforce, which is drawn from its own communities and mirrors the communities with whom they work.

This model has been identified as a model for other public sector organisations across the UK.

At Scale recognise that addressing the issue of funding which is available to social care is only part of the solution. What is key, is creating a well-qualified and motivated workforce and Social Care Academies provide a way in which a wide range of careers in social care can be made attractive and promoted within the community they serve.