



Scottish Care

Voice of the independent care sector

# INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT SURVEY FINDINGS BRIEFING REPORT



APRIL 2024

# BACKGROUND TO SURVEY

Scottish Care became aware of current challenges facing social care international recruitment through members reporting concerns. This was initially highlighted by Scottish Care's Independent Sector Lead in Fife through the work of their care at home collaborative and members raising concerns around applications for Certificates of Sponsorship being rejected by the Home Office.

The changes in requirements came from the Home Office making the decision to request additional documentation around contract agreements and frameworks. Care providers also experienced communication issues with the Home Office as they could not contact them directly but through email. Many providers began to receive rejections from the Home Office who advised that the contractual paperwork provided was insufficient to prove job vacancies with these organisations.

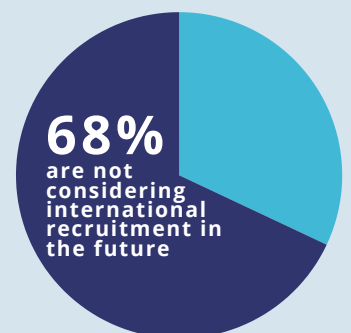
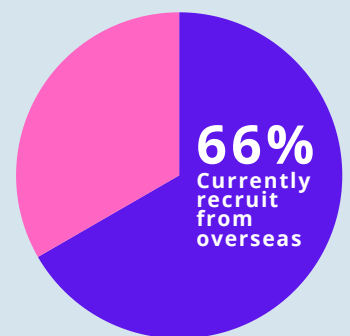
Scottish Care alerted Scottish Government to these concerns highlighting a potential high level of risk to independent care organisations and social care service delivery that could be experienced in certain areas depending on the percentage of staff currently employed from overseas. This was also due to the concern around the percentage of staff currently employed in the social care sector being from overseas and working with Certificates of Sponsorship. The initial work in Fife had highlighted that a possible average of 25% internationally recruited staff at risk of losing their employment.

We then sent out a brief survey to our full membership requesting high level data around overall head counts of staff and numbers of internationally recruited staff being impacted by recent Home Office decisions. This was to pull together evidence of the numbers of staff from overseas who are currently working in the social care sector whose employment would be at risk. This would give insight into the percentage of staff working in certain local authority areas that could be at significant risk.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

Scottish Care's initial question was to ask members how many of them were currently recruiting internationally and the responses we received showed that just over 66% of Scottish Care members in the independent and third sector are currently recruiting staff from overseas and utilising the international recruitment pathway. This is clearly a significant percentage of our membership organisations who have invested in international recruitment and have been supporting local staff recruitment with much needed workers from overseas.

We also asked how many care providers were considering recruiting internationally in the future to which 68% responded there were not. This we feel signals the impact of recent events surrounding international recruitment as members are less likely to feel that this is now a sustainable and financially viable route to recruit new staff members for the sector. Care providers were always concerned about the return of investment which now appears to be much less stable than before.



# ANALYSIS OF DATA RESPONSES

There were a total of 75 responses received which comprised of a mixture of care at home/housing support services and care home services. This equates to roughly 23% of Scottish Care's member organisations which includes private, not for profit and charitable organisations. We received responses from care providers across 25 of the 31 Health and Social Care Partnership areas which enabled us to highlight certain areas where we believe there to be a higher risk due to the number of staff being employed from overseas and being potentially impacted in their ability to continue to work within the social care sector.

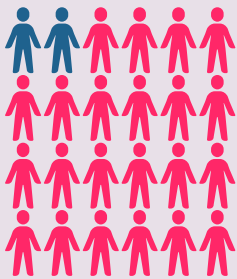
## MAIN HEADLINE RESULTS

**>15%**  
of staff from  
outwith the  
United  
Kingdom



1. There are a total of **14** Local Authority areas where the survey returns revealed that care providers are currently employing within their overall headcount of staff complement **over 15%** of staff from outwith the United Kingdom.

2. In **7 of those 14** Local Authority areas, care providers have reported over 25% of their staffing complement are international recruits and therefore at risk of losing their Certificates of Sponsorship and potentially having to leave the care sector. Evidence that a significant percentage of social care providers are employing over a quarter of their staffing complement from overseas has increased serious concerns about the future sustainability of social care delivery across Scotland.



3. We have had a number of care providers report through the survey that they have between **95 and 100%** of staff currently working in their services who are internationally recruited from outwith the UK. This is clearly a significant risk to the sustainability of those organisations and the overall delivery of social care services in those Local Authority areas. Should staff either decide to leave the sector or have no ability to access the required Certificate of Sponsorship this would immediately put these organisations at risk of continuing to deliver their current level of service provision.



4. The percentages of staff that we now understand to be working in social care organisations who are from outwith Britain is much higher than previously evidenced in workforce data reports. These percentages rise to very significant levels in certain Local Authority areas. This raises the question of whether we are meeting the needs of this workforce population with our current structures in place around staff support, wellbeing and learning and development requirements.

Due to the current level of vacancies and lack of capacity being experienced within the social care sector, this additional potential loss of staff could have a severe and dramatic impact on overall social care delivery throughout Scotland.

In addition, this potential pathway to recruit much needed staff members from overseas to help with the significant number of vacancies the sector has is becoming increasingly unstable and not financially viable for care providers to pursue.



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