

2017

# Recruitment & Retention in Social Services

Unlocking the Sector's Job Creation Potential

A report by Social Services Europe  
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# Social Services Europe

## ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

*This research project has been commissioned by Social Services Europe (SSE) and carried out in collaboration with Jane Lethbridge, Director at the Public Services International Research Unit (PSIRU) at University of Greenwich (United Kingdom). PSIRU investigates the impact of privatisation and liberalisation on public services, with a specific focus on water, energy, waste management, health and social care sectors. Other research topics include the function and structure of public services, the strategies of multinational companies and influence of international finance institutions on public services. PSIRU is based in the Business Faculty, University of Greenwich, London, UK. Researchers: Prof. Steve Thomas, Dr. Jane Lethbridge (Director), Dr. Emanuele Lobina, Prof. David Hall, Dr. Jeff Powell, Sandra Van Niekerk, Dr. Yuliya Yurchenko.*

## ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICES EUROPE:

*Social Services Europe is the largest European umbrella organisation representing non-profit social and health care providers. Our members are at the forefront of ensuring accessible, affordable and quality services for all people in Europe and believe that investing in people brings both social and economic returns. Social and health care services enable people to live with dignity and care but also support people to engage in economic activities that contribute to growth.*

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# 1. Executive Summary

*This report was commissioned by Social Services Europe to present the case for increasing investment in the social services sector so that new jobs can be created to meet the growing demand for social services. The recruitment and retention of workers is a problem that faces the sector now and in the future but it is also an opportunity to develop social services which meet changing social needs. To do this, the social services sector will need investment, a supportive legislative framework, an active social dialogue and recognition of its value to the economy and society.*

*The term 'social services' has slightly different meanings across Europe but it is defined in this report as including:*

- *Long-term care and support for older people;*
- *Care and support for people with disabilities;*
- *Child care;*
- *Other social services, for example, family support, services for people with mental health problems, substance abuse, homelessness, which all promote social inclusion.*

*European countries are facing extensive demographic changes, with a growing older population, longer life expectancy and higher rates of disability and morbidity (European Foundation, 2009; European Commission, 2015). Although life expectancy has been increasing in many countries, these extra years will not necessarily be spent in good health because people, especially women, develop limiting long-term conditions which affect their mobility and ability to live independently. The consequences of the differences between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are seen in the growing demand for social services. For people in low income groups, levels of life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are even lower.*

*With the growing demand for social services, this sector has become one of the most rapidly growing economic sectors, generating 7% of total economic output in EU28. This rate has remained stable even after the financial crisis of 2008, with an increase of 1.7 million jobs between 2008 and 2015. As the sector is one of the fastest growing economic sectors, it is becoming obvious that its economic potential has to be more widely recognised and should inform the development of employment strategies at national and EU level. An expanding social services sector not only benefits the provision of social services but as more people are employed and so consume more goods, this has a multiplier effect on employment and growth in other sectors. The context within which policies for recruitment and retention are implemented shapes the likely effect of these policies (Kroezen et al, 2015; European Social Network, 2016). The conditions of the job market, for example, levels of unemployment or structural problems such as skills shortages, will affect the ability of organisations to recruit social services workers. Consequently, the expansion of the social services sector has to be addressed in the context of wider employment trends at EU and national levels.*

*This report is informed by a series of interviews conducted with not-for-profit social services organisations, from six countries - Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany and Italy - about how they are addressing problems of recruitment and retention. These countries were chosen because they were representative of four different social welfare systems, identified by historical tradition, funding regimes and organisation of services provision. <sup>1</sup>*

*One of the most important findings of this research is that organisations have found that recruitment has to be the responsibility of the whole organisation, not just the human resources department. Both*

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<sup>1</sup> For further reading see [http://www.easped.eu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/SensAge/d4-social\\_welfare\\_systems\\_across\\_europe.pdf](http://www.easped.eu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/SensAge/d4-social_welfare_systems_across_europe.pdf)

management and front-line workers have to be involved in the process of deciding what types of jobs are needed and the expertise and experience required to do the job. In order to make recruitment and retention a central issue for the organisation, they have to be seen as part of the planning process. Wider involvement of all parts of the organisation in recruitment and retention has also shown that a more holistic approach to organisational development helps to integrate social services workers into the design and delivery of services. Organisations have to value their workers and should create structures, for example, new training departments, which bring workers and management together to identify organisational priorities and ways of implementing new organisational strategies.

Social services organisations that work closely with local educational institutions and universities can provide extra opportunities for placements and work experience. The interaction between organisations and vocational training has led to ways of influencing training programmes, becoming involved in curriculum design and a greater responsiveness and matching of qualifications and skills to user needs.

In order to encourage young people, especially more men, to consider a career in social services, some social services organisations have become involved in schemes that promote volunteering and placements which help to change the way in which young people perceive social services. These help to increase the number of young people entering the sector and so balance ageing trends in the sector. There are also several continuing barriers to improving recruitment and retention. One important issue that society needs to understand is that social services are not like other service sectors. There is a triangular relationship between service users, State authorities and the providers of social services. Quality social services depend on the development of a trusting relationship between these three groups.

Social services often lack resources to address the growing range of needs in society. Austerity policies have led to a reduction in funding from governments, especially in local governments, which limit pay levels, working conditions, training, career paths and do not enhance the image of the sector among potential new entrants and the general public. Social services deliver services to people with support needs, which may be on a temporary or permanent basis. Increasingly, society has to recognise that family members and friends will need social services at some time in their lives. The value of social services and the workers who deliver them has to be seen in a more positive light by wider society. Social services work is still seen as low status in many countries. This will only change if working conditions, training and pay are improved so that social services work is valued as a profession and if the millions of informal carers who are left to fill the gaps, which society and social services leave behind, are recognised and valued.

In order to expand the recruitment of social services workers, related professional groups, for example, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, should be encouraged to work in social services. Increasingly, multi-disciplinary forms of social services delivery are seen as more effective. State authorities have an important role to play in making social services workers more valued through the way in which they promote and reward them as well as changing social attitudes towards social services. Although, service users should be at the centre of service design and delivery, state authorities could also contribute to a wider awareness of the importance of changing the management of organisations so that workers can take more responsibility for designing and delivering services.

## 2. Introduction

This report was commissioned by Social Services Europe to present the case for increasing investment in the social services sector so that new jobs can be created to meet the growing demand for social services. The recruitment and retention of workers is a problem that faces the sector now and in the future but it is also an opportunity to develop social services which meet changing social needs. To do this, the social services sector will need investment, a supportive legislative framework, an active social dialogue and recognition of its value to the economy and society. This report examines how the social economy and not-for-profit sector currently addresses recruitment and retention with the aim of disseminating successful solutions as well as linking to the potential of the sector to generate jobs. The report will be used to inform lobbying for policy change at European and national levels.

## 3. Growing demand for social services

### Demographic and social change

European countries are facing extensive demographic changes, with a growing older population, longer life expectancy and higher rates of disability and morbidity (European Foundation, 2009; European Commission, 2015). Although life expectancy has been increasing in many countries, these extra years will not necessarily be spent in good health because people, especially women, develop limiting long-term conditions which affect their mobility and ability to live independently. The consequences of the differences between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are seen in the growing demand for social services. For people in low income groups, levels of life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are even lower.

With increasing rates of female participation in the labour force and other changes that support increased gender equality, family patterns of care are changing. Informal carers provide a large amount of care, unpaid and unsupported. As the number of older people with some form of ill-health increases, the burden of informal and unpaid care will grow. Carers need support in order to continue to provide care. They need professional support for increasingly complex caring activities, for example, dealing with dementia. Informal care most often provided by women, can no longer be depended on to support older people, people with disabilities or children. More high quality formal care is needed.

The term 'social services' has slightly different meanings across Europe but it is defined in this report as including:

- Long-term care for older people including residential care;
- Care and rehabilitation for people with disabilities;
- Child care;
- Other social services, for example, family support, services for people with mental health problems, substance abuse, homelessness, which all promote social inclusion.

## Social services and social attitudes

Social services have several common characteristics. They focus on the care of the individual or groups who are in need of support in order to function within society. Support might be needed on a short- or long-term basis because levels of dependency may vary over time and so social services need to be delivered in a flexible way. Many social services are delivered to people in their homes, communities or other types of organisation. The change from institutional care to more community- or home-based services has been one of the biggest transformations in social services in the last two decades. However, this transformation is not complete and some forms of institutional care are still provided. At the same time, as the demand for services has increased, so has the demand for different ways of delivering formal services with a more individualised approach at home or in the community. This requires the delivery of services by multi-disciplinary teams which, for example, combine rehabilitation with prevention (Leichsenring, 2012).

Another issue that faces the future of social services is the attitude of society towards the groups that benefit from social services. As a larger percentage of population becomes older, people who have benefitted from the welfare state, will have higher expectations of living an active older age. They will challenge more conventional attitudes to older people, which assume that people are defined by their health problems rather than by what they can still contribute to society. Attitudes towards people with disabilities are changing with European and national legislation raising awareness of the rights of disabled people, but public services are still not always designed to make services more accessible, physically and socially. At the same time, attitudes towards people living in poverty remain hostile and recent welfare reforms have introduced punitive measures which have made the position of very poor people more difficult.

One defining characteristic of social services is that there is a high level of interaction between social services workers and clients, which requires good communication skills and high levels of empathy and compassion. These skills are not easy to learn and many people working in social services have a strong commitment to working with people who are disadvantaged. The problems that social services workers face in trying to deliver services which are often underfunded or where there are no appropriate social services to meet the particular needs of a client, make workers dissatisfied with their work. Control over working environment is also an important determinant of job satisfaction (Eurofound, 2014). Lack of control contributes to high levels of turnover and problems of recruitment. Social services work is emotionally and physically demanding, labour intensive and often not well-paid.

## Sector expansion

However, with the growing demand for social services, this sector has become one of the most rapidly growing economic sectors, generating 7% of total economic output in EU28. This rate has continued even after the financial crisis of 2008, with an increase of 1.7 million jobs between 2008 and 2015. Between 2008 and 2013, total employment in the EU fell by 2.9% among the working age group (15-64) with a loss of 6.3 million jobs. In contrast, the number of jobs in the human health and social work sector, among working age groups (15-64), increased by 1.3 million between 2008-2013, with 22.8 million jobs in total (EC, 2014). A Eurofound report (2014) on sectoral working conditions found that sectors such as residential



care settings and social work activities (without accommodation) recorded the highest rates of growth between 2008 and 2012, with the majority of organisations having up to 250 workers and so defined as small and medium sized enterprises.

Although, the social services sector is one of the fastest growing, this growth is not evenly spread across the EU. In Portugal the number of jobs increased by 20% but fell in Bulgaria by 4%. The share of employment in the human and social work sector also varies from country to country, with variations from 20% to less than 5 % (Table 1).

**Table 1: Percentage share of employment in human health and social work by country**

<b>% Share of employment in human and social work sector</b>	<b>Countries</b>
15-19%	Denmark, Finland and Sweden
10-15%	Belgium, France, UK, Germany, Ireland
<5%	Romania, Bulgaria

*Source Eurostat LFS/ (EU employment and Social Situation 2014)*

The majority of workers delivering social services are women aged over 40, who work part-time, often unsocial hours and for a relatively low pay. Across the EU, women form 78% of the employment in the human health and social work sector. 81% of the new jobs created between 2008 and 2013 were held by women. Although, women form the majority of the workforce, there is also a significant gender pay gap. The difference between the gender pay gap in the social services sector and the overall economy is largest in Italy (20.6% points) and Bulgaria (16% points). In Sweden and Denmark, the gender pay gap is smaller than in the overall economy (EU, 2014). These differences reflect a process often found in the social services sector where men enter the workforce and more often move into supervisory or managerial jobs, which are better paid. Only in Sweden and Denmark are women more often found in managerial positions.

The share of human health and social workers aged over 50 increased from 27% to 32% between 2008 and 2013, with Germany, France, Denmark, and Belgium showing increases of over 1.5 percentage points and Bulgaria, UK and Italy showing 1.0 percentage points increases.

Although, the human health and social work sector has maintained a positive growth rate since the economic/financial crisis, the austerity measures introduced by national governments have reduced spending on social services. In most cases service users do not buy the social services. There is a triangular relationship between service users, governments and the providers of social services. Quality social services depend on the development of a trusting relationship between these three groups. Social services often lack resources to address the growing range of needs in society. Austerity policies have led to a reduction in funding from governments, which limit pay levels and do not enhance the image of the sector among potential new entrants or the general public.

As the sector is one of the fastest growing economic sectors, it is becoming obvious that its economic potential has to be more widely recognised and should inform the development of employment strategies at national and EU level. The context within which policies for

recruitment and retention are implemented shapes the likely effect of these policies (Kroezen et al, 2015; European Social Network, 2016). The conditions of the job market, for example, levels of unemployment or structural problems such as skills shortages, will affect the ability of organisations to recruit social services workers. Consequently, the expansion of the social services sector has to be addressed also in the context of wider employment trends at EU and national levels.

## 4. EU policies and the social services sector

European Union (EU) employment policies, such as the Europe 2020 strategy, aim to stimulate employment in many economic sectors, but the social services sector should be more widely acknowledged as a target for investment in EU policies. There are several EU level employment policies, which have the potential to affect the social services sector and these are set out below.

### European Semester

The European Semester provides a detailed analysis of the economic and financial plans of EU Member States which informs country specific recommendations for the next 12- 18 months. These contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth. The decision in 2015 to streamline the European Semester, so that it has a stronger focus on employment and social performance with enhanced democratic dialogue and promoting convergence by benchmarking and pursuing best practices should provide an opportunity to highlight the importance of the social services sector to economic growth, if there is active participation by all Member States.

### Annual Growth Survey

As part of the European Semester, the Annual Growth Survey (2016) set out what can be done at EU level to support national level strategies for supporting growth, creating jobs and strengthening social fairness. It acknowledged the problems faced by the EU where overall public expenditure on education has fallen 3.2% and almost half of Member States recorded a decline in expenditure on education. It points out that “Modernisation, better alignment of skills and labour market needs and sustained investment in education and training, including digital skills, are essential for future employment, economic growth and competitiveness in the EU” (EC, 2015: 3). However, more investment in social infrastructure is still needed.

This has been addressed through the ‘Blueprint on Digital Innovation in Health and Social Care Transformation’ (2017) that aims to use the new techniques and capacity that digital skills can contribute to solving some of the perceived problems of existing health and social care systems. These include improving the coordination between service providers, citizens, patients, carers, professionals and making these stakeholders at the centre of innovations to increase health promotion, self-management of long term conditions and new patient pathways. Digital innovations, if designed with user involvement, are considered a way of solving some of the problems that European health and social services systems face, including

lack of workers (EU, 2017). Yet, there is still much to be done to unlock the employment potential of the social services sector.

## Reforms

The 2016 Annual Growth Survey recognised that reforms are needed in the health and social services systems in Europe. Sustainable financing and “encouraging the provision of and access to effective primary health care services, thus reducing the unnecessary use of specialist and hospital care.... And improving health promotion and disease prevention” are three of the priorities for 2016 (EC, 2015: 43). Although national governments are asked, as part of a strategy to improve patient centred care service, to promote “the transfer from institutional care to community-based care, by developing and assuring new quality standards and by increasing staff levels”, there are no clear recommendations about how to achieve this. Although some Member States have improved support for informal carers, more formal paid care workers will be needed and measures have to be put in place to recruit, train and retain new social services workers.

## New Skills Agenda for Europe

The need for training more social services workers could be addressed through the EC Communication ‘New Skills Agenda for Europe – modernisation of labour market’ (2016) which aims to improve the quality and relevance of skills formation, make skills and qualifications more visible and comparable and improve skills intelligence and information so that people can make better career choices. The EC is proposing to revise the European Qualifications Framework so that EQF level qualifications will be underpinned by common principles of Quality Assurance, support the use of EQF by social partners, public authorities and other stakeholders and work to ensure that qualifications are comparable between countries in and outside the EU. An EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals was launched in June 2017 which will help people develop a skills profile and agencies working with third country nationals to provide support and guidance (EC, 2017). This will help to facilitate integration into the labour market by third country nationals, which will be of benefit to the social services sector.

## EU Investment Plan

The EU Investment Plan is an important initiative developed by the European Union and the European Investment Bank (EIB) to help access to finance (loans) for enterprises, including social service providers. It works in three main areas. The European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) aims to encourage over €300 billion in investment over three years into European small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) and infrastructure projects. Advice and support for stakeholders through the European Investment Advisory Hub (EIAH) and the EU Investment Project Portal (EIPP) Facilitating Legal Frameworks will also support economic investment (EASPD, 2017). However, the EU Investment Plan is still in its early implementation phase and there is still much to be done to deliver significant loans to social services providers.

## European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) plays an important role in providing skills training, creating employment and promoting social inclusion. Encouraging social entrepreneurs, local partnerships, social inclusion and fighting marginalisation, the ESF already contributes to the development of social services. It has played an important role in providing training and labour market entry programmes for thousands of social services workers over the last 60 years. In Germany, the "Tailwind" (rückenwind) programme aims to maintain and support the employability of workers in the social economy as well as supporting integrated and sustainable organisational development in social services organisations. This includes providing human resource development to improve staff adaptability and employability and to enable social services organisations to better respond to demographic changes. In Germany, "Tailwind" targets young people, disadvantaged groups and people without paid employment with support from ESF funding programmes at federal and state level, taking the characteristics of the local labour market into consideration when funding employment projects (European Social Fund, 2017). Social services organisations, such as Caritas, Diakonie and the Red Cross, have participated in "Tailwind" programmes and provide a range of services that can help people re-enter the labour market. Social services organisations will be able to support the expansion of employment in the social services through ESF programmes across Europe.

## Civil & social dialogue

### **Civil dialogue**

European NGOs already play an active part in civil society dialogue with EU institutions. They play an important role in lobbying for a stronger social policy framework in EU policies working towards social inclusion and an economic model, which is based on social, sustainable and inclusive investment. The social services sector will be an integral part of this more social Europe and so should feature in civil dialogue social policy discussions.

### **Social dialogue**

Social dialogue is defined as the 'dialogue between management and labour' and is an instrument, which is promoted at local, national, and European levels. The social services sector faces a number of problems, which will have to be addressed in order to maintain a rate of growth that can meet the demand for services. Delivery of services will depend on establishing a sustainable workforce. Labour issues, such as maximum working hours, maternity/ paternity leave, and terms and conditions of workers in outsourced services, will be addressed most effectively at European level. Social dialogue would help to create agreement on a range of instruments, codes of conduct, guidelines and frameworks for action which could be adapted to the social services sector at national and local levels.

Social dialogue on EU level will help to share successful models of good practice and solutions to problems facing the social services sector, e.g. recruitment and retention of workers and public procurement issues. Common problems exist across European countries and will be most effectively addressed by providing exchanges of information at EU level between social partners, which would contribute to a better understanding of changes taking place in the sector and how to safeguard the social value of social services. The Tripartite Social Summit

for Growth and Employment, which meets annually, contributes to social dialogue by ensuring the effective participation of social partners in implementing EU social and economic policies, which should also apply to the social services sector.

## European Pillar of Social Rights

The proposal for a European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), launched by the European Commission in April 2017 sets out a number of key principles and rights to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems. Social services providers play an instrumental role in delivering and impacting the principles put forward in the EPSR, and could use this as an opportunity to push for higher standards of social rights and potentially help improve the well-being of vulnerable groups across Europe. The proposal for the EPSR was accompanied by a so-called 'social package', including concrete proposals for legally binding initiatives aimed at improving work-life balance for parents and care-takers, and social protection for all workers. If the EPSR is implemented in all EU Member States, it could therefore also play a significant role in improving working conditions within the social sector in the EU.

## 5. Social Welfare Systems

Social services provision in Europe is characterised by a mix of family, civil society, church, market and state provision. All countries have some informal care, complemented by various types of formal services, funded by taxation, social insurance and/or private insurance. Services are increasingly delivered at home and in the community with a reduction in institutional settings (EC, 2011). The interface between health services and social services is an important influence on both the financing and provision of social services in many countries, because they are often financed in different ways. The role of the not-for-profit and the for-profit sectors have expanded in the last 20 years in almost all countries in Europe, often because of a restructuring of the role of the state in delivering social services. This is characterised by local governments becoming commissioners of social services rather than a provider of services. Not-for-profit and for-profit providers have expanded their provision by being contracted by the state.

There are extensive debates about how to classify national social services systems and the extent of the similarities and differences between countries (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Arts and Gelisson, 2002). In this report, six countries, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany and Italy were chosen, because they were representative of four different social welfare systems, as identified by historical tradition, funding regimes and organisation of services provision. In order to set the research findings in context, short profiles of the social welfare systems in the six countries will follow, to illustrate some of the challenges that national welfare systems face.

**Table 2: Countries and social services systems**

Country	Type of social services system	Characteristics
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Family support model	Reforms since 1990 with move from institutional care to community/ home based care. Expansion of not-for-profit and for-profit sector.
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Family support model	Move from institutional care to community/ home based care but slow development.
<b>Finland</b>	Taxation with some out of pocket costs	State funded system changing to for-profit and not-for profit providers.
<b>France</b>	Social insurance & some taxation	Strong tradition of social economy provision
<b>Germany</b>	Social insurance	Strong tradition of social economy provision
<b>Italy</b>	Family support to state funding of social services	Strong tradition of social economy provision

Table 3 shows the population, % GDP social protection, number of workers in social services and estimated value/ growth rate of the sector. Bulgaria and the Czech Republic have the lowest percentages of GDP spent on social protection.

**Table 3: Number of workers in social services and value/ growth of sector**

Country	Population (million) (2015)	% population aged 65+ (2014)	% GDP social protection	Number of workers in social services	Value of sector/ growth rate
<b>Bulgaria</b>	7.2	19.6	18.5%	30,000	n/a
<b>Czech Republic</b>	10.5	17.4.	19.7%	100,000	0.7% GDP
<b>Finland</b>	5.4	19.4	31.9%	185,800	3.7% jobs growth
<b>France</b>	65.8	18.0	34.3%	980,000	7% jobs growth rate 2000-2007
<b>Germany</b>	80.7	20.8	29.1%	1,788,656 and 222,943 (without social insurance)	€1.5 billion Gross added value 6.7% 16.2% jobs growth and 8.1% jobs growth (without social insurance)
<b>Italy</b>	60.7	21.4	29.9%	480,634	Economic impact of not-for-profit sector estimated at 4% GDP

Source: PESSIS reports (PESSIS, PESSIS 2, PESSIS 3) and Eurostat

## Bulgaria

The Law for Social Assistance (LSA), adopted in 1998 and amended several times since then, defined social services as 'activities aimed at supporting the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups and helping them to live in dignity'. The LSA provides social services in the community (family or family-like environment) and in specialised institutions. New service providers, which include not-for-profit and for-profit providers has reduced the dominance of the public sector as a provider of social services (Tomev *et al*, 2014).

The decentralisation of social services provision to municipalities, with funding through delegated budgets, has changed the basis of funding, making it more locally focused. Policies to promote deinstitutionalisation have resulted in the closure of institutions and the creation of new community-based services as an alternative to institutional care. There is an emphasis on making services more individualised, integrated and flexible while attempting to target services to those most at risk (Tomev *et al*, 2015).

## Czech Republic

The Social Services Act (2007) informs the way in which social services are defined and delivered. They are defined as: 'activity or a set of activities according to this Act ensuring help and support in order to social include or prevent social exclusion.' Social services aim to help people to live their life in an ordinary way – 'enable them to work, do shopping, visit schools and churches, participate in leisure time activities, take care of the household and other common things that are usual *until the time when some status or incident eliminates that*'. The term "social services" covers social care, social prevention and advisory services. Social services are meant to increase the levels of social inclusion and are provided to 700,000 users which is about 7 % of the Czech population, although they are not uniformly available across the whole country. Accessing services is easiest in urban areas. Public social services are financed from the public budgets and are defined in the legislation. There has been an increase in the number of not-for-profit providers (Horecky, 2015).

## Finland

Under the Social Welfare Act (710/1982) municipalities became responsible for the organization of social services as required by the local population. Social services arranged by municipalities cover:

- Services for the elderly, domestic help services, sheltered housing and residential nursing care activities;
- Services for people with disabilities, general social services are primary and special services (housing, assistive device, transportation and interpreter services) are used if necessary;
- Services for children and families, day care, domestic help services, residential and professional family care activities for children and young people;
- Support, treatment and rehabilitation services for substance users and their families as well as housing services for people with mental health problems.

The Finnish social welfare system, in its current form, began in the 1970s and 1980s. The changes in the social welfare system expanded the range of services available and differentiated services by target groups. As with many other countries, most institutional care was replaced by services in the community. Today non-institutional care services are a priority in services offered to all target groups. Institutional care should be used only when the non-

institutional care services are not sufficient to guarantee the necessary treatment and care. The aim is to help people to live at home for as long as possible. The for-profit sector and the not-for-profit sector began to deliver services by the early 1990s (Vuorenkoski, 2008).

### France

The term 'social action' is used to cover a range of social services branches that work with older people, people with disabilities, childcare as well as a wide range of other services. There have been some major changes to the way in which services are funded and accessed. A major reform to the French system of long term care took place in 2002, for example with the introduction of the *Allocation personnalisée d'autonomie* (APA), which provides cash for the care of frail older people. The APA is a national scheme, implemented at local level and covered by local taxes.

Nurses and nursing care attendants, who are independent workers or from not-for-profit organisations (services at home), are the main health professionals personal and medical care at home (Le Behan & Martin, 2010). Other social services are also provided by public and not-for-profit agencies, which offer cleaning services and personal assistants to care for older people, which are organised at local level. In 2002, a new category of residential care was introduced called institutions for the dependent elderly (EHPAD) which provide accommodation and health care (Le Behan & Martin, 2010). An increasing number of companies have become involved in setting up EHPAD beds.

### Germany

There is no legally binding definition of social services but social services aim to either restore or improve an individual's physical and emotional life and their quality of life (Heinze 2011: 169). The core of social service work is to provide help and welfare which is mainly offered and financed publicly by professional social service providers (Brinkmann 2010: 3). A new system of long term care insurance was introduced in 1994. It established a social long term care insurance (LTCI) and a mandatory private long term care covering the whole population. All insurance products are capped so, in addition, there are private co-payments and means tested assistance, especially for nursing home care. Social services providers come from public, for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, with the public sector having the responsibility for coordinating and contracting at the different levels of government – federal, state and municipal. The not-for-profit/ charitable sector is a major provider of social services. Funding comes from a diverse range of sources: social insurance, self-pay and state. (Hilbert *et al*, 2012).

### Italy

In 2000, the social services sector was subject to sectoral reform (Law no. 328/2000) and constitutional reform (Law no. 3/2001). This resulted in significant changes in the management and regulation of the social policy in Italy. The most important change has involved the creation of a system of social planning operating at regional, area and local levels, which involves state and not-for profit stakeholders working together (Cortese, 2014).

Social services covers a wide range of services including working to alleviate poverty, promote equal opportunities, support older people, people with disabilities, people with drug problems, migrants and refugees and other forms of social action. The payment of cash benefits forms an important part of social services supporting informal care in the home. All services are



provided by both public social services and not-for-profit organisations. The local public sector often outsources the management of social services through the contracting out to not-for-profit organizations (Cortese, 2014).

Although, these six countries have slight differences in their social services systems, there are many similarities; There is a growing demand for social services; The move from institutional care to home or community based care has been taking place for over two decades, but there are still institutional and social attitude changes needed before people with different types of disabilities can live active lives from their own homes; There is a growing pressure for more individualised services, with more home care services. Several countries have introduced reforms of the organisation and funding of social services but the long term sustainability of the social services sector is still not secure in any of these countries. However, the demand for more social services workers will continue to grow. The employment potential of the social services sector is shared by many countries and needs to be considered within wider strategies for economic growth at national and European levels. There are several issues, which need to be addressed before the full potential of the social services sector as a source of employment, a provider of social services and promoter of social inclusion can be realised. One of the most important issues is the recruitment and retention of social services workers.

## 6. Recruitment and Retention

Organisations in the public, for-profit and not-for-profit sectors have to secure an adequate supply of labour in order to function effectively. The management of human resources, particularly for labour intensive activities such as social services, is key to the successful delivery of services. The recruitment and retention of a workforce is influenced by a number of factors, one of the main ones is demographic change. A growing ageing work force is presenting organisations with specific challenges of not just recruiting staff and retaining them for as long as possible but also building up a new younger workforce. The impact of wider societal changes, for example, in the work force, will lead to an increased demand in social service provision, particularly more formal care. The six countries which were the focus of this research have varying levels of unemployment, with the Czech Republic and Germany having levels of unemployment of below 4%. The provision and growth of employment in a country as a whole has an impact on the recruitment and retention of social services workers. The social services sector has traditionally been seen as part of social welfare services, funded by the government, and so part of public expenditure. However, there is now a growing awareness that as a labour intensive sector, the social services sector does contribute to the economy through the provision of jobs and the resulting consumer expenditure that this creates. Consequently, this sector should be seen in the context of wider economic growth and employment policies by the EU and national governments.

## Effective interventions

Previous studies of recruitment and retention have developed analytical frameworks to help understand the interventions used (Webb & Carpenter, 2012; Frerichs *et al*, 2015; Schulz & Geyer, 2013; Eurofound, 2016). What has emerged from the key informant interviews is that there are several different types of interventions that work within organisations and/or operate outside the organisation. Some of the interventions may be classified as aiming to change both the organisation and society. This demonstrates that recruitment and retention interventions have wide ranging goals. They try and change internal organisational dynamics, how the organisation is perceived externally and, more widely, how the nature of the social services work is perceived by society. Effective recruitment and retention is a fine balance of all these interventions.

**Table 5: Analysis of types of interventions**

Type of intervention	Organisation	Organisational Development	Changing social attitudes
Changing the organisation so everyone is involved in recruitment and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Das Rauhe Haus (Germany)</li> <li>• Slezska Diakonie (Czech Republic)</li> </ul>	YES	YES
Developing an organisational 'brand'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verband diakonischer Dienstgeber in Deutschland (VdDD) (Germany)</li> </ul>	YES	YES
Training and continuous professional development – working with educational institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verband diakonischer Dienstgeber in Deutschland (VdDD) (Germany)</li> <li>• Caritas Czech Republic (Czech Republic)</li> <li>• Cooperative La Rete (Italy)</li> </ul>	YES	YES
Developing shared organisational values/ participation in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KVPS (Finland)</li> </ul>	YES	
Changing social attitudes towards social services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante (France)</li> <li>• Slezska Diakonie (Czech Republic)</li> <li>• Czech Republic Association of Social Services (Czech Republic)</li> </ul>		YES
Expanding the workforce to include men, third country nationals, young people, service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evangelisch-Lutherisches Diakoniewerk Neuendettelsau (Germany),</li> <li>• Concorzio Sol Co (Italy),</li> <li>• KVPS (Finland)</li> </ul>	YES	YES
New technology and digitalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AIAS Bologna (Italy),</li> <li>• Cooperative La Rete (Italy)</li> </ul>	YES	YES

Although the organisations interviewed have varying levels of staff turnover, all are involved in regular recruitment. Many of the examples of good practice in recruitment and retention show that organisations are not just changing the way in which they recruit but also the way in which the organisation works. Successful recruitment and retention has to address issues of internal and external communication, job quality and the external image of organisation as well as the nature of social services work.

## Changing the organisation

**Das Rauhe Haus** has adopted several ways of increasing recruitment, for example, targeted advertisements in specific networks and recruiting interns, but **Das Rauhe Haus's** best practice in recruitment lies in how the organisation has had to change the way it works in order to refocus on how it recruits. This has involved a subsequent change in attitude and mind set. Rather than seeing recruitment as the responsibility of the human resources department, **Das Rauhe Haus** realised that it had to be recognised as a shared responsibility across the organisation. "Recruitment is team work." Job vacancies are developed by the teams delivering social services, who are most aware of what is required. Job descriptions have become more precise and are made available on the organisation website. **Das Rauhe Haus** has established systems which ensure that any job applicant can easily make contact with a member of staff who is knowledgeable about the job and able to deal with enquiries. **Das Rauhe Haus** has recognised that the organisation is in competition with other organisations in recruitment process and so must react quickly to expressions of interest.

## Branding

**Verband diakonischer Dienstgeber in Deutschland (VdDD)** has developed the concept of employer branding to inform a new way of recruiting. Again, like **Das Rauhe Haus**, this has been built on the foundations of improved communication throughout the organisation which brings a shared understanding and sense of responsibility from all workers and affects how the organisation operates internally and externally. Joint working between the marketing and human resource departments has been particularly important. **VdDD** has changed the way in which it presents itself to the outside world. Instead of explaining why the organisation is "good and great", it now explains what an employee will gain from working at **VdDD**. The success of this approach depends on an 'authenticity' between what is presented externally with what happens within **VdDD**.

These two examples show that developing a brand and other new approaches to recruitment involve not just the use of different methods of communication but a fundamental change in how the organisation views potential applicants. Everyone in the organisation has to be involved.

As well as improving recruitment, organisations have to address how to retain the staff who have been recruited. Many social services workers are highly motivated by the social cause or mission of their organisation but there are many reasons why workers leave their jobs which are related to job satisfaction. A Eurofound (2012) report into sectoral working conditions and trends in job quality in Europe found that there are four indicators of job quality:

- Earnings/pay;
- Working time quality (duration, scheduling, discretion over working time and short time flexibility);

- Prospects – job security, career progression and contract quality;
- Intrinsic job quality – skills and discretion, good social environment, good physical environment, work intensity (Eurofound, 2012).

Many organisations focus on the more intangible aspects of job quality which relate to career progression and working environment and use interventions which improve the way in which the organisation works. This may be the introduction of new units or improving communication within the organisation, which underpin a greater involvement by workers in organisational decisions and extending more control over the working environment, which reflects a better use of the high intrinsic motivation of many workers in the sector.

**Slezska Diakonie** introduced round-table discussions which covered ways of improving recruitment, retention and the motivation of staff. An underlying principle is that all workers within **Slezska Diakonie** can make a contribution to the organisation. However, part of the intervention was to help managers understand the motivation of staff, learning from both good and bad practices. These initial round-table discussions have evolved into a series of Innovations Working Groups which will deal with recruitment and retention as one of many issues. This shows that effective recruitment and retention strategies have to be at the centre of an organisation and are also integral to strategic development and external relationships.

## Training and lifelong learning

Education, training and life-long learning are seen as one of the major opportunities for solving problems of recruitment and retention. Education of the existing workforce is seen as essential for developing, enriching and valuing the experience of the workers. This is particularly important during a period when the needs of service users are changing.

The role of training and education in recruitment and retention covers many types of initiatives and relationships between organisations and educational/ training institutions. Some organisations have a history of providing their own training and have set up their own Universities in the past. This provides an organisational context for training and continuous professional development. Federations have a stronger tradition of developing their own training and running their own training schools or universities.

### Special study programmes

The **VdDD** University of Applied Science has developed a special study programme and advanced training for the heads of human resources and for staff responsible for training within the organisation so that they can develop tools for recruiting, retaining and training staff. Continuous professional development in recruitment and training is also provided through regular events and seminars. Training has become an integral part of improving the practice of recruitment and retention.

**Caritas Czech Republic** runs its own University School for Social Work and many of its graduates become workers with Caritas. Organisations that have their own universities and vocational training colleges can use them in several ways to provide social services workers. Directly, students will be trained and encouraged to work with **Caritas Czech Republic** when they finish training. As vocational training has a high component of practical work, students often have placements or internships with **Caritas** organisations. This provides both the student and the organisation experience of working with each other which can facilitate an

offer of employment. Organisations access different sources of funding for training. **Caritas Czech Republic** has used European Social Fund (ESF) funding to provide staff with professional training in skills and knowledge. The organisation has found that international cooperation is good for motivating staff who can speak other languages.

### **Working with universities and other partners**

Many organisations have recognised that the social worker training reforms are dependent on students having direct contact with service users. **Cooperative La Rete** considers it good practice to work with its local university, the University of Verona, and to offer placements for social work students. Recent training reforms have emphasized the need for students to have direct contact with service users as part of their training. **Cooperative La Rete** is able to provide this experience. As a result, students from the Bachelor Degree in Social Work are recruited to **Cooperative La Rete** after they graduate.

Some organisations, for example, **Cooperative La Rete** have the training needs of teams evaluated by a team coordinator. Lifelong learning is considered important because the needs of services users change over time. In 2017, a five day training course was organised with **fiu.PSD**, an Italian Federation of Organisations for Homeless People, which shows how training opportunities are often expanded though the links created in a national level umbrella organisation.

The ability of social services organisations to work with colleges and universities is crucial to the development of new training initiatives. In France, although the **Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante (FEP)** does not have many links with local training colleges it has recently developed a new initiative to run three social work training courses in pedagogy, philosophy and social practice, which inform more progressive approaches to delivering social services. These new dimensions of training will change the way in which people work and develop a new understanding of training. **Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante (FEP)** aims to make the Diploma recognised by the French government. These three courses already have authorisation agreements which have been validated and will grant a Diploma qualification. Providing workers with access to this type of training makes their work more attractive.

### **Internships and placements**

Two years ago, **Caritas Czech Republic** developed a new policy on internships. The organisation now offers a number of hours of internship, which cover social work, direct care and management. The intern has a mentor allocated from within the organisation. The internship provides 350 hours of practical skills. This initiatives has been developed in partnership with the main Czech universities.

Some organisations are explicit about encouraging workers to consider other organisations in the same federation as a form of career development. From an organisational perspective, this is a way of growing and developing a workforce by providing new opportunities for workers. This is the type of intervention, which is open to federations rather than individual providers.

## Organisational development

Many of the recruitment and retention examples of good practice involve organisational development, but some organisations focus on organisational development as a way of transforming working practices. **KVPS** is a Finnish organisation providing services for people with learning disabilities. Staff have a range of different professional backgrounds, for example, practice nurses and social workers. **KVPS** focuses on improving the well-being of staff by supporting their underlying motivation through providing opportunities to use existing skills in different ways. Staff are encouraged to develop new activities and services. This approach is underpinned by the promotion of shared values through training, which creates a common understanding of values, structure and activities within **KVPS**. There are four core values: human respect, reliability, renewal and, effectiveness. A shared understanding of these values leads to staff becoming more committed, which is reflected in the results of an annual staff survey. Staff appreciate the opportunities to use their skills not just in working with a client but in the development of the whole organisation.

Great attention is paid to management and leadership, especially the idea of having a manager close to workers and clients. There is a lot of training for managers of services so that links are made between well-being of workers and well-being of users. The aim is to focus on the role of the organisation as an employer, which has to take care of workers. There are many activities which support the well-being of work communities so that people enjoy working there. **KVPS** tries to create career paths so they can recruit people for other jobs in the organisation, for example, practice nurses becoming managers.

This overall approach to staff satisfaction and motivation is being taken onto a different level with the creation of a new department which will focus on increasing and changing knowledge. As one of the core organisational values of **KVPS** is renewal, the new training unit will help staff to reflect on their current practices. Staff plan and design their own training. An integral part of this process involves service users, who contribute to defining shared organisational values. Training and education are organised through this new centre. Staff become motivated to develop their own knowledge. There is a mix of web-learning and traditional training in order to be attractive to a range of staff.

## Changing external factors

One of the problems that not-for-profit social service organisations face in the recruitment of staff, is the poor perception of social services work within society. These attitudes will take time to change because it is not just a question of raising awareness of the value of social services work, but to change attitudes towards people receiving social services. There are several types of interventions. Many of the interventions, which are delivered through the organisations, for example, pay increases and training, will have some effect on the image of social services, but more fundamental changes are needed. These will have to be led by state authorities or large institutions. Some organisations are already trying to initiate these attitudinal changes.

**Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante** created an inter-generational exhibition in September 2017 which brought people together to exchange stories about social services work. The organisation has also lobbied the recently appointed Commissioner for Social Work in France

about this issue. The Commissioner has an understanding of this problem and recognises that attitudes will have to change. This is an example of trying to change social attitudes towards social services and the workforce.

Some other organisations are using social media to change the image, which they present to the outside world as part of a process of making society more aware of the positive aspects of social services. In the Czech Republic, as in other Eastern European countries, there is still a lot of prejudice in relation to institutions providing social services even though the way in which social services are delivered has changed a lot. The general public do not realise this and so do not recognise the status of professionals even though legislation sets quality standards and professional standards. **Slezska Diakonie** has used a video newsletter to inform the public about the social services they provide, and to help overcome people's prejudice against people using these services.

As well as changing the image of social services work, some respondents felt that there were signs that younger workers were becoming interested in working in a sector which reflected their values and goals. This is part of a wider change in society where the goals of money are replaced by gaining fulfilment through work. Therefore, campaigns to change attitudes about social services work are a significant part of this cultural change. An example of an intervention, which was designed to make people question what they wanted from a job and what they could contribute to a new field of work was the website *Watchado.com*. To use this website, people enter a page in order to look for a job, for example an engineer. The individual is then asked questions about what s/he does in order to build up a job profile. S/he may then be routed to another section of the website where there are jobs, which seem more suitable for their profile. In this way, the website is trying to change the way in which people are thinking about jobs and showing that they have the skills and expertise to do different work, which may be working in the social services sector.

The **Association of Social Services (Czech Republic)** set up a 'Social worker Employer of the Year' award to raise the prestige of social services and its workforce. This is aimed at making the media more interested in writing about social services work, working indirectly to change attitudes in society. This award will contribute to raising awareness of the need for improved pay for the social services workforce which the **Association of Social Services** is currently lobbying the Czech government to fund.

## Making jobs more accessible

### Third country nationals

The recruitment of third country nationals is determined by national circumstances, but social services organisations face some common issues. The lack of recognition of qualifications obtained in the countries of origin, and the difficulties in getting access to training are two major issues. Some European countries are also losing social services workers because they are recruited by other European countries, an issue which could be addressed by raising salaries and improving working conditions in the social services sector in general.

In Germany, the **Evangelisch-Lutherisches Diakoniewerk Neuendettelsau** started a project to integrate nurses from Vietnam. A group arrived in July 2016 to work in social

services. but had to work as care assistants because they did not have the language or clinical skills to practice in Germany. The project is providing training once a week in language and clinical skills to support their application to register as nurses in the future. Former East Germany has had historical links with Vietnam and organisations use these links to recruit nurses, providing training to facilitate their integration into the health and social services system.

In 2016, **Eurodiaconia** produced a report on 'The education, training and qualifications of nursing and care assistants across Europe' (2016) which mapped qualifications and training standards of nursing and care assistants in each national system. These national profiles provide a comparison between countries, which are important for organisations considering recruiting third country nationals and workers from other EU countries.

### Young people

The recruitment of young people into the social services sector is crucial to establishing a sustainable social services workforce in almost all countries. As many young people have a lack of knowledge of social services, several social services organisations have set up schemes, which encourage young people to volunteer and gain experience of social services work. The creation of apprenticeships is another way of encouraging young people into the sector.

Another approach, to changing attitudes of young people is to encourage young people to use a 'gap' year as a way of experiencing social services work. **Evangelisch-Lutherisches Diakoniewerk Neuendettelsau** has a large volunteer centre with 120 volunteers who are placed in **Evangelisch-Lutherisches Diakoniewerk Neuendettelsau** after they have completed secondary school. This is a type of 'social services' year for personal development and orientation. They might be placed in a kindergarten, work with older people or people with disabilities. They are recognised as volunteers, have insurance and attend special courses on personal development. About a third of the students go onto vocational training in **Evangelisch-Lutherisches Diakoniewerk Neuendettelsau** having decided that they want to work in social services.

In Italy, **Consorzio Sol.Co**, a network of Sicilian social enterprises, provides inter-generational mentoring and support for its workers. Workers are grouped according to their jobs and each group has a facilitator who has extensive experience in the particular area of work. The facilitator works with members of the group to develop their competences and expertise and to support recent recruits to the organisation. This complements a system of tutoring, which each new recruit takes part in during the first few months of employment.

In 2014, the **Youth Guarantee** was launched as an EU initiative to provide young people under 25 with access to employment, continued education, apprenticeship, or traineeship. The emphasis is on supporting young people to enter the real labour market rather than finding alternatives to work. **Youth Guarantee** also works to reform national employment systems and policies to create specific measures to support young people into work. National projects help to make young people aware of training opportunities, provide support in making career choices as well as identifying barriers to employment, such as low qualifications. The **Youth Guarantee** can contribute to raising awareness among young people about developing a career in the social services sector.



### Gender balance

Women workers form the majority of the social services workforce throughout Europe. The low level of participation by men in social services takes basis in cultural attitudes to men taking a personal caring role, since caring in most societies was traditionally done by women. Although, there is a gradual change taking place in relation to child care, with more men taking caring responsibilities, working with older people or people with disabilities, still requires a strong sense of commitment. The low pay, lack of career opportunities and training in the social services sector can also be a barrier to recruiting men because they often have expectations of earning higher salaries, especially in regions where men remain the traditional breadwinners. Many organisations have attempted to recruit more men but often with limited success, although all recognise the importance of creating a workforce, which is more gender-balanced.

**Verein Stadmission Hamburg** works with homeless people, who are from other European countries. It employs about 50% male workers, a relatively high proportion of men for social services work. It aims to recruit teams with a balance of men and women. The nature of work with homeless people is seen as higher risk work than other forms of social services work and this seems to influence the perception of potential applicants.

### Recruiting clients

Social services cover many different types of services and also work with a range of disadvantaged groups. To illustrate that social services are designed to support people who are going through difficult periods of their life and then can return to contributing to society, several organisations interviewed in this research gave examples of where clients had become volunteers or paid workers. In Italy, **Consorzio Sol.Co** has recruited services users, often homeless people or refugees, to become partner-workers in the cooperative. In Finland, **KVPS** has also recruited services users. The process may be gradual with service users becoming involved in the recruitment of workers or the training of social workers in local colleges. These processes start to raise the awareness of the service users about the nature of the work in the organisation. As service users, they also have an insight into what constitutes a high quality service.

## Digitalisation/ New technologies

Recent developments in new technologies and the use of artificial intelligence are still being assessed for many sectors. Although, current predictions for the demand for different types of jobs in the future are subject to some wide variations, there are some consistent themes emerging. OECD (2015, 2016, 2016a) identified an increase in demand for high-skilled non-routine jobs and for low-skilled non-routine jobs. High skilled non-routine jobs cover information skills, interpersonal skills and problem solving. Low skilled non-routine jobs cover caring and personal services. Both these types of low skilled non-routine skills are significant for the social services sector and suggest jobs will continue to be needed.

A recent report by Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) on automation in the United Kingdom came to similar conclusions. It highlighted that a demand for social services jobs would continue. The human health and social work sector which has a 12.4% employment share in

the UK was predicted to lose 17% of jobs to automation. This is a much lower proportion than the wholesale, manufacturing and transportation sectors which are predicted to lose at least 45% of their jobs to automation (PWC, 2017). These trends suggest that a polarisation of the labour market may be taking place between routine and non-routine jobs (OECD, 2016, 2016A).

Another way of looking at future jobs, is to analyse the task content of individual jobs rather than average task content. This more individual focus shows that a lower number of jobs will be affected (Arntz, Gregory and Zierahn, 2016). Jobs which have higher levels of face-to-face interaction are less vulnerable to automation than those with lower levels of face-to-face interaction. Social services jobs have a high percentage of face-to-face working.

The job requirements for the human health and social work sectors are usually for higher levels of education. This is in contrast to the wholesale sector which have larger numbers of workers with low levels of education. People with low levels of skills and education are most vulnerable to a loss of jobs. This has implications for the social services sector. Social service workers cover both highly educated and less well educated workers, but there is a growing awareness that all social services workers need some form of vocational training to develop the skills and expertise necessary to deliver social services. The promotion of new forms of vocational training will not only raise the status of working in the sector but will also create a workforce which is highly skilled and educated and so make them less vulnerable to job loss.

### **Changing the way services are delivered**

There is already evidence to show that new technologies are changing the way in which social services workers collect and store information about their clients. iPads, tablets and other ways of collecting information by social services workers are beginning to be used more widely. This brings benefits because social services workers are able to share data about clients between sectors and agencies, which can improve the way in which social services are coordinated and delivered.

**Cooperative La Rete** has used new technology to bring together different sets of data on clients from a range of agencies. It has used the database 'Anthology' which builds detailed folders on service users, which then allows workers to spend more time with the service users, rather than collecting data. It has led to the opening of a new centre with the resources freed up by the use of this technology.

### **Assistive technology**

The use of new technology in the provision of social services, which has the potential to change the nature of social services work and to reduce some of the demand for workers is only at an early stage of development in many organisations. A recent European Social Network report (2017) stressed that some technological innovations may make social services work more attractive by providing some services, such as washing and drying, which remove the need for individual social services workers to provide these services. There are already examples of new technologies supporting the ways that people with disabilities operate through computer assisted technologies, which help individuals to move and communicate. These adaptations of new technologies have implications for the training of social services workers and for the clients themselves. There is the potential to create new services.

In Italy, **AIAS Bologna** has used assisted technology for over 20 years. **AIAS Bologna** has a team of 25 people with a mixed background of professions and skills, including occupational therapists, educators, information technology communications specialists, and social workers, who all work with people with disabilities. They are a very specialised team, and have training on the job because there are not many specialised assisted technology courses. Workers are recruited from an existing group to become an educator in assistive technology and service delivery. There are several agreements with the local University to train occupational therapists in the region. Sometimes members of this team go into people's houses to do an assessment to see how people use technology and to identify barriers. The team operates as an independent advice centre, paid for by the public health trust.

## 7. Conclusion

This study has found that there are many innovative approaches to recruitment and retention being developed in the social services sector in the six countries, which have been studied: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany and Italy. What emerges from the findings is that there are many good practices in recruitment and retention of social services workers, which would benefit from wider dissemination.

### **Key features of good practices in recruitment and retention**

One of the most important findings of this research is that organisations have found that recruitment has to be the responsibility of the whole organisation, not just the human resources department. Both management and front-line workers have to be involved in the process of deciding what types of jobs are needed and the expertise and experience required to do the job. In order to make recruitment and retention a central issue for the organisation, they have to be seen as part of the planning process. For example, management and front line workers have to work together to identify recruitment needs and ways of designing job descriptions. Wider involvement of all parts of the organisation in recruitment and retention has also shown that a more holistic approach to organisational development helps to integrate social services workers into the design and delivery of services. Organisations have to value their workers and should create structures, for example new training departments, which bring workers and management together to identify organisational priorities and ways of implementing new organisational strategies.

Social services organisations working closely with local educational institutions and universities can provide extra opportunities for placements and work experience. The interaction between organisations and vocational training has led to ways of influencing training programmes and becoming involved in curriculum design. Services users have often responded positively to taking part in the process of recruitment and training. They have a

good understanding of quality social services and their experience of recruitment, in some cases this has led to a decision to apply for a job in the organisation.

In order to encourage young people to consider a career in social services, some social services organisations have become involved in schemes that promote internships and placements, which help to change the way in which young people perceive social services. These help to increase the number of young people entering the sector and so balance ageing trends in the sector. Many organisations are beginning to work creatively with media and social media platforms to make social services work better understood. This is gradually helping to change the public perception of social services work.

### **Barriers to recruitment and retention**

This research has also identified several barriers to recruitment and retention. One important issue that society needs to understand, is that social services are not like other service sectors. In most cases service users do not buy social services. There is a triangular relationship between service users, governments and the providers of social services. Quality social services depend on the development of a trusting relationship between these three groups.

Social services often lack resources to address the growing range of needs in society. Austerity policies have led to a reduction in funding from governments, which limit pay levels and do not enhance the image of the sector among potential new entrants and the general sector. Social services deliver services to people who are unable to cope alone, and who may need temporary or permanent support. Increasingly, society has to recognise that many people will need social services at some time in their lives, and that the value of social services and the workers who deliver them should be acknowledged in wider society. At the moment, social services work is still seen as low status in many countries. This will only change if working conditions, training and pay are improved so that social services work is valued as a profession.

### **What is the need that has been identified in this report?**

In order to extend the recruitment of social services workers, related professional groups should be encouraged to work in social services. Increasingly, multi-disciplinary forms of social services delivery are seen as more effective. New health and social services professionals from within countries and internationally should be encouraged to work in the sector. State authorities have an important role to play in making social services workers more valued through the way in which they promote and reward them. State authorities also have to play a role in changing social attitudes towards social services and the workers delivering them, by publicising the importance of the work and how it is delivered.

A wider awareness of the importance of changing the management of organisations so that workers are more closely involved in designing and delivering services is needed. This approach has the potential to improve retention. Training to support workers in these new roles is therefore needed.

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## 9. Appendix 1: Research Development

Following a competitive selection process, a research plan for a European study of existing and effective interventions in the field of recruitment and retention of staff in the social services sector at national level, was discussed with a steering group from Social Services Europe (SSE). A number of key issues were identified and five research questions were agreed:

1. How can the social services sector address problems of recruitment and retention?
2. What are the existing recruitment and retention policy interventions?
3. How do these impact on national social services systems?
4. What are the most effective recruitment and retention interventions for umbrella groups and for individual providers?
5. What are the needs of the social care workforce?

Following discussions with the SSE steering group, six European countries, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany and Italy, were chosen to provide a cross-section of experience in the social economy and not-for-profit sector.

A semi-structured interview schedule was drawn up, which reflected some of the issues raised by the steering group, of particular interest to their members, and wider issues that had been identified through a literature review.

Interviews of 20 social services social economy or not-for-profit providers, most of whom are members of Social Services Europe, were conducted in six countries. Interviews were conducted either by Skype or telephone in the period May-July 2017. Three interviewers, with knowledge of the social services sector in Germany, France and Italy, were recruited to undertake some of the interviews in these three countries. All other interviews were conducted by the researcher. The question guide can be found in Appendix 2 and a list of organisations interviewed in Appendix 3. Interviews were transcribed. An analysis of the interventions which social economy and not-for-profit organisations had introduced to improve recruitment and retention were made in relation to internal organisation issues and the development of external relationships.



## 10. Appendix 2: Question guide

### **Recruitment and Retention in Social Services in Europe**

Does your organisation/ sector have problems of recruitment and retention?

If yes, please can you give details?

What policies has your organisation/sector put in place to improve recruitment & retention?

If yes, please could you give details?

Do you have examples of good practice for recruitment and retention of social services/ care workers – from your own organisation or from organisations locally?

Do you have examples of good practice that cover one or more of the following issues?

Pay/ terms and conditions;

Continuous professional development and skills development;

Lifelong learning

Flexible working;

New technology;

Occupational safety and health – changes to the workplace, changes to ways of working;

Recruitment of new workers involving service users;

Developing inter-generational mentoring and support;

Working with third country migrants;

Working with local educational colleges/ universities;

Targeting male care workers;

Any other specific issues?

How would you like to address problems of recruitment and retention?

What are the opportunities/ barriers to doing this?

Thank you

## 11. Appendix 3: Organisations interviewed

### Types of organisations interviewed

Country	Organisation description	Umbrella organisation/ Single provider
Bulgaria	ICSS Foundation – provides social services	Single provider
Czech Republic	Association of Social Services	Umbrella
Czech Republic	Caritas Czech Republic	Umbrella
Czech Republic	Slezska Diakonie	Umbrella
Finland	KVPS works with people with intellectual disabilities	Umbrella
Finland	Caritas Finland –works with migrants	Single provider
France	Federation Entrade Protestante (FEP) – managing services for older people, disabled people, homeless, migrants	Umbrella
France	NEXEM – network representing employers from not-for-profit organisations	Federation
France	FNAAFP/CSF – represent non-profit employers	Federation
France	Epnak – services for children and adults with disabilities	Single provider
Germany	Caritas Germany – Federation of social services organisations	Umbrella
Germany	Evangelisch-Lutherisches Diakoniewerk Neuendettelsau – services for older people in Southern Germany	Single provider
Germany	Verband diskonischer Dienstgeber in Deutschland (VdDD) - a nationwide association of Protestant institutions working in social services.	
Germany	Das Rauhe Haus – social services provider	Single provider
Germany	Verein Stadtmission Hamburg – for homeless people	Single provider
Italy	AIAS Bologna – services for people with disabilities	Single provider
Italy	Opera don Calabria – works in education and training for people with mental health problems	Single provider
Italy	Consorcio Sol.Co – network of social enterprises in Sicily	Single provider network
Italy	Cooperative “La Rete” – social cooperative which supports homeless people and others experiencing distress	Single provider
Italy	Fio-PSD – Italian federation of organisations for homeless people	Umbrella

## 12. Appendix 4: Literature review

The research started with a review of recent research into recruitment and retention in the health and social care sectors in Europe. Organisations in the public, for-profit and not-for-profit have to secure an adequate supply of labour in order to function effectively. The management of human resources, especially for labour intensive services such as social services, is key to the successful delivery of services. The recruitment and retention of a workforce is influenced by a number of factors, one of the main ones is demographic change. A growing ageing workforce, is presenting organisations with specific challenges of not just recruiting staff and retaining them for as long as possible but also building up a new younger workforce. Recruitment and retention in one sector is influenced by a wider demand for labour in the economy. The development of a sustainable workforce in the social services sector is influenced by the demand for labour in the wider economy and has to be seen as part of a wider employment strategy for European economies. The impact of wider societal changes is felt by the social services sector in terms of demand for services as well as the structure of the workforce.

### Job quality

How workers view their work has an impact on whether they want to remain in a particular job. This might be related to pay and terms and conditions as well as the nature of the work. In understanding how to address the problems of recruitment and retention, this review now looks at some of the factors that influence job quality. Green & Mustafa (2012), in a Eurofound report into sectoral working conditions and trends in job quality in Europe, found that there are four indicators of job quality:

- Earnings/pay;
- Working time quality (duration, scheduling, discretion over working time and short time flexibility);
- Prospects – job security, career progression and contract quality;
- Intrinsic job quality – skills and discretion, good social environment, good physical environment, work intensity (5<sup>th</sup> European Working Conditions Survey).

This analysis found that sectors such as residential care settings and social work activities (without accommodation) recorded the highest rates of growth between 2008 and 2012, with the majority of organisations having up to 250 workers (small and medium sized enterprises). Residential care settings and social work activities recorded lower than average scores for a positive working environment, 'characterised by high levels of social support and the absence of adverse social behaviour'. These two sectors recorded the highest levels of absenteeism and highest levels of female employment. Over 20% had recorded increased hours of work over the previous year. 40% of residential care setting respondents had experienced restructuring and the introduction of new IT over the previous year. Social work activities recorded a slightly lower rate at just over 30%. Semi-autonomous team work is more common than management-led team work in these two sectors. Autonomous multi-tasking was higher than in many other sectors. 24% of workers in social work activities and 23% of workers in residential care settings reported ill health. There were reports of workers continuing to work when ill. However the percentage of workers in these two settings who felt that they would be able to work at 60 was relatively high. This profile of the two main social services sectors shows that although they recorded relatively high levels of semi-autonomous team

working, there were also high levels of absenteeism and low scores for a positive working environment. These findings show that the four indicators of job quality are not being met consistently in the social services sector.

Research into recruitment and retention in the social services sector tends to look at factors that precipitate turnover of workers. There are some underlying theories which draw from economics, psychology and sociology. An economic model assumes that a worker will leave an organisation if the cost of staying outweighs the benefits. This decision is influenced by pay, the labour market and training. A psychological model views decisions made by workers in terms of job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. A sociological model draw on work related factors such as job (dis)satisfaction, perception of whether there are alternative jobs in the organisation or outside it and wider non-work values and roles (Webb and Carpenter, 2011). In reality, all these factors need to be considered in developing an understanding of recruitment and retention.

### **Experience of recruitment and retention**

Studies of related sectors provide some important insights into the problems of recruitment and retention. In a literature review of recruitment and retention in health care Kroezen *et al* (2015) identified four types of intervention: educational; financial; professional and personal support and; regulations. The nature of the organisation was important for understanding how to recruit and retain staff. Nurse retention is influenced by the presence of transformational leadership, a flat management structure and organisational structures which support professional autonomy. Policy interventions at national level have an impact on the health workforce and influence whether a country becomes a source or destination country for health care professionals in search of improved work. Policy interventions can also influence the geographical imbalances of health workers as well as and the types of health professionals trained. Although both organisational and policy interventions were found to have an impact on the workforce, there was little evidence to show how organisational and policy interventions interact. Nor was there much evidence to show the effectiveness of different interventions, either individually or in combination. However the review did identify a series of good practices in the recruitment and retention of health care professionals which can be classified as: context sensitivity; combined measures and; commitment and support base.

Context sensitivity: recruitment and retention interventions are dependent on economic, legal, political and /or organisational context and these contexts can act as both barriers and facilitators. This is particularly important when transferring interventions from one country to another. This finding was reflected in a report by the ESP 'Investing in the Social Services Workforce' which examined the social care workforce in Europe and its relationship to national Welfare States arrangements. It found that funding, regulation and coordination affected the workforce. Social work and social care professionals are strongly influenced by national systems.

Combined measures: When more than one intervention is introduced at the same time, this can trigger a multiplier effect. A review of recruitment and retention in the Nordic countries found that they use a combination of educational interventions and workplace interventions were used.

**Table 6: Recruitment and retention interventions**

Interventions	Recruitment	Retention
<b>Education</b>	Campaigns Increased recruitment New educational programmes	Mentoring programmes Reforms
<b>Workplace</b>	Recruiting internationally Campaigns	Employment terms Work life balance Working environment Continuing education and training Management Talent management

Source: Nordic Council of Ministers

Commitment and support base: The role of political authorities and organisational commitment in support of interventions can have a strong influence on the effectiveness of these interventions (Kroezen *et al*, 2015). The Nordic report found that there were tensions between the quantitative need for the number of health care professionals and the qualitative need for a skilled and competent workforce. There is a lack of understanding of how exactly health reforms have affected the supply of trained and experienced health professionals. In relation to the social services sector, public authorities have a similar power to influence the training and development of workers in the social services sector. Similarly, social services reforms have had some impact on the organisation of social services, which also affects the perception of the sector, which impacts on recruitment. The ESN (2016) report identified low pay and high levels of staff turnover as major problems and recommended that a sustainable workforce strategy for the social services sector should address pay, working conditions and workload, training, career progression and other ways to attract a more diverse workforce in terms of gender, age and ethnicity.

Schulz and Geyer (2013) looked at the demand and supply of long term care workers and highlighted three measures that have been used in the past to increase the recruitment of long term care workers. First, increasing the number of informal care workers has been attempted in many countries through the provision of care allowances and flexible working time for caring responsibilities. Second, the recruitment of long term care workers internationally is a solution which many countries have adopted although this can lead to shortages of care workers in other countries, which is not addressing the core problem of how to generate enough care workers. Third, there have been attempts to increase the domestic long term care workforce through a variety of measures. These cover pay increases, more flexible working times but a reduction in part-time working. The use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) have been used to reduce or change the nature of care work. Changes in the division of labour between nurses and care workers can free up the time spent by nurses (Schulz and Geyer, 2013).

Webb and Carpenter (2012) looked at the how US organisations provide recruitment and retention solutions in the social work field. Some of their findings are useful to consider in a

European context. Policy makers need to acknowledge the differences between 'organisational turnover' and 'professional wastage'. Organisations need to collect the views of workers to understand causes of organisational turnover. There is evidence to show that the experience of the first year working for an organisation is important for retention. Additional programmes are needed to support social workers into practice and to develop the use of reflective supervision. More research was needed on the effects of interventions which are designed to improve career progression opportunities or pay and remuneration. More needs to be understood about the impact of wider labour market changes on worker turnover decisions as compared to psychological/ sociological factors. More widely, more research is needed to understand the impact of retention strategies on the quality of service provision and service user outcomes.

### **Active ageing**

As well as looking at how sectors address the immediate problems of recruitment and retention, research that looks at how organisations treat an ageing workforce provide some insights into assumptions that are associated with older, often women, workers. Frerichs *et al* (2012) in a European study of how public organisations and small and medium sized enterprises dealt with an ageing workforce, found that training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer; flexible working; health protection and promotion and job design; career development and mobility management were the most widely used interventions. There were differences between European countries, with Germany and the Netherlands being more advanced.

Conen *et al* (2012) explored the attitudes of employers across Europe to an ageing workforce in a range of sectors. They found that employers were willing to encourage existing older workers to stay in the organisation but were less likely to recruit older workers. In countries with low unemployment rates, employers were more likely to recruit older workers and retain their existing older workers. Respondents felt that the most effective government intervention was the introduction of measures to combine work and retirement. Other government interventions felt to be effective were life-long learning and wage subsidies, particularly in small organisations.

### **Sustainable work**

Recruitment and retention also needs to be considered in relation to the concept of sustainable work. A Eurofound study of 'Sustainable work throughout the life course: national policies and strategies' (2016). Sustainable work through the life course is defined as 'living and working conditions are such that they support people in engaging and remaining in work throughout an extended working life'. This is a relatively new concept and only three countries were found to have adopted policies to support sustainable work (Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium). Other related policies such as decent work, quality of work/ working life and well-balanced work found in several countries.

Sustainable work has to satisfy the four dimensions of job quality (earnings/pay, working time quality, prospects and intrinsic job quality). Policies and interventions have to promote good job quality for all workers as well as focusing more specific interventions on different groups but measures are often fragmented and so do not meet the needs of all groups. The role of social partners is important but this is affected by the institutional and legal frameworks within which they operate. The circumstances within each organisation/ company have a strong

influence on sustainable work, particularly whether the voices of workers are heard and how they participate in decision making. Gender mainstreaming is also essential.

**Nature of research**

Research into recruitment and retention in the social services and health care sectors has found that although these are major issues for almost all organisations, there was little research into the effectiveness of existing interventions. There is a lack of controlled studies. It is difficult to identify the influence of one or more factors, such as the structure of the workforce, systems of payment and training on recruitment and retention. The experience of different but related sectors, such as health care, has some relevance for the social services sector.

