

#letsbeheard



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The quotes presented throughout this document are the views of individual members extracted from National Care Association's 'Let's be heard' member survey.

Survey conducted on 08/04/2016

National Care Association is the most respected independent voice of independent health and social care providers in the country. Our primary membership consists of small and medium sized care providers and supply partners who work with them. The association is the most established of the provider organisations having been founded in 1980. We work, on behalf of our membership, with local and national government to promote quality care services to some of the most vulnerable mem-



Nadra Ahmed OBE
Executive Chairman
National Care Association

Key messages

There is no doubt that providers of health and social care provision, whether they offer residential or home based care services, face a real watershed moment in the history of the sector. Whilst the demographics are clear that the need for these services **will** increase, however the climate, both financially and politically is creating substantial barriers for stability or growth to meet the predicted demand. As the organisation which seeks to represent the 84% of the sector classed as small and medium sized enterprises (SME's) National Care Association is mindful that these community based services are most at risk. The vast majority of these services are family owned businesses who have invested vast amounts of their time and energy to create safe environments for those who are most in need and are often the central hub of the community as one of the largest employers.

"It is no longer a person centred care approach but a pennies saved care approach "

It is important to recognise that these are small businesses who have to maintain 'break-even' to ensure stability through a viable business plan and provide investors with a return on their investment. These are NOT charities although very often they are projected as being classed in the same category. A charity, in addition to bank loans, will access funding through many means which are based on good will, grants, fundraising, legacies etc: an SME care provision is reliant on personal investment, bank loans and returns for reinvestment.

We polled our membership to ask them how they felt the future looked based on the current climate in social care. The results make difficult reading. We have used the actual comments of respondents to highlight the concerns. No comment has been edited.

"Total exclusion of Care Providers in any meaningful decision making."

The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the impact of the changes on care providers on their ability to remain viable whilst delivering the quality of service we demand of them as a society. There have been many reports on the state of the sector from academics and sector commentaries but we were keen to hear the messages from the people who are actually delivering the service and what the future looks like for them. It is really important that the messages in this report are heard and reflected on by all decision makers.

"Providers feel scared and alone and unsupported"

#letsbeheard is a clear message which underlines the reality of caring for vulnerable members of our society on an unrealistic budget set by local and national government over a sustained period of time. It demonstrates the unrealistic ambitions of the commissioner to increase demands whilst reducing cost; creating aspirational care standards without any regard for their ability to fund it.

There is little evidence of any integration between health and social care at a local level. Indeed the messages clearer indicate that health, with their challenges, are systematically abrogating all responsibility they may have for the frail and vulnerable. Despite clear legislative guidelines which state that the loan of equipment for assessed needs should be available in care settings as they are in a person's own home we find that even the most basic of health care needs are ignored by the NHS. This puts additional pressure on care providers who are then under scrutiny for not being able to meet assessed care needs.

"Local authorities and NHS expecting a seven star service for a three star price."

"Can this situation be sustained and for how long?"

There are some clear messages about the lack of transparency in the implementation of the integration agenda. At a time when the sector is being recognised as under substantial pressure, the NHS who would undoubtedly benefit from a closer working relationship with social care provision in their locality is further damaging it.

Providers want to be heard; 30% of respondents raised concerns about regulation and the associated costs. There is a clear challenge on the attitude of the regulator and their ability to deliver consistent reports around the country.

#letsbeheard highlights the desire of small and medium sized providers to be treated in a fair and equitable way. They are telling us that the challenges they face are being ignored and if anything being added to. It is time that people listened to the people who are actually delivering services and not rely on their information being supplied by those who have a view.

Concerns for the Future

The care organisations surveyed were asked to identify the primary concerns their business faces.

The common areas discussed by respondents fall into three main categories as identified below. These are not stand alone issues and the areas discussed do overlap.

FUNDING & COSTS

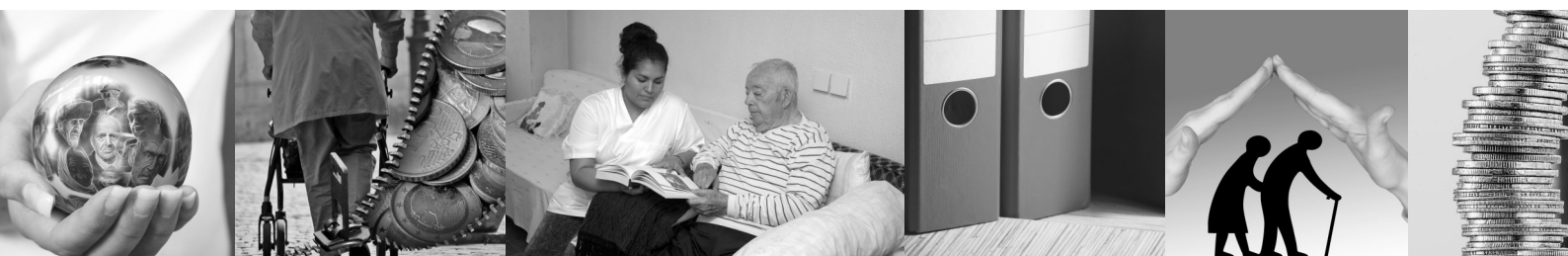
- Lack of funding in relation to the quality of care provision being demanded
- Low or no increases in funding from Local Authorities—funding not matching the cost of care
- Absorbing the increasing costs of pension provisions and the living wage increases

STAFFING

- Staff retention and recruitment
- The cost and amount of training

REGULATIONS

- Increasing 'red tape'
- High demands and increasing costs



“Funding and lack of qualified nurses are our main concerns. The last wage increase has cost us over £20000.00 per annum and we received a 3.5% increase from our local authority which is only the second increase we have had for years so we have really been struggling with minimum wage increases and then the enforced pension contribution. If we cannot recruit nurses we have to have agency staff and pay ridiculous amounts of money. We have been operating for 25 years this year and are the only family run home left in our area I am really concerned for the future. “

FUNDING AND COSTS

69% of respondents identified the lack of local authority funding was a significant risk to the future of their business. Running costs for their business have continually increased without any significant increase in funding levels.

"the money that the local authorities pay is no where near the bed price we are a Charity, so we are not in the profit making business, the price of the beds is what is supposed to keep the home running."

33% said the recent increases in the National Living Wage and Pension contributions have caused a substantial increase in their wage bills. The common complaint with this regard was that there had been no realistic funding payments to accommodate the increases.

"with funding we have seen NO increases in the last 5 years, this linked with the introduction of Pensions, the new Living Wage, Care Certificate training and admin along with general cost increases coupled with the reduction in call packages is quickly making the industry as a whole become a nonviable sector for many providers."

14% of respondents were concerned about the rise in general running costs of their business, namely training, tax, equipment and fuel bills. Additionally respondents were concerned about the rising costs related to adhering to changing regulations and the associated fees.

"The money offered is not **sustainable**"

"If the increase in funding does not match the **increase in wages** then **quality of care** becomes harder to afford."

"considering we receive less (funding) for 24/7 care, full board and laundry than a pro rata 1 night stay in a Travelodge, that perspective is causing us to seriously contemplate **closing** after nearly 30 years."

"increase in **rates of pay**, rate of tax, increase in equipment, pension contributions, cost of training, **no increase** in local authority pay to providers"

"if the local authorities do not pay the Care Providers a **realistic payment** to meet their costs I feel that many Care Organisations will diminish"

"It will become increasingly difficult to **cover the costs** of providing care. Will I still be in this business in five years time - sadly no"

"Higher standards **for less** money"



STAFFING

58% of respondents stressed their concerns over recruitment and retention, the availability of qualified staff at affordable rates along with the costs of training and an increasing wage bill.

"We have had our costs increase every year for the past 5 years. This year Our staff costs have increased by 8% by the implementation of the National Living Wage. We welcome it but need a reflective proportionate increase to our fees"

Respondents noted increased costs associated with the Living Wage and Pension Contributions have had a significant impact on their business viability.

"being able to meet the Living Wage requirements but give all other staff appropriate pay rises to differentiate between roles. We estimate this will add £30,000 pa to the wages bill every year to 2020 - over £120,000 altogether which is certainly not coming from funded clients at the moment."

Much of the issues raised here were also linked back by respondents to funding issues and the moderately low funding increases comparable to associated rising costs.

"The last wage increase has cost us over £20,000 per annum and we received a 3.5% increase from our local authority which is only the second increase we have had for years so we have really been struggling with minimum wage increases and then the enforced pension contribution."

"budgets are so tight the money rewards are not **sufficient** for the job these people do."

"They can earn more stacking shelves in a supermarket, and not have the emotional, physical, and physiological stress that the care job entails."

"A lack of available carers and **appropriate funding** to pay them a wage befitting the work they do"

"This lack of staff will impact on the **quality of care**"

"Finding the **right staff** to provide the best care"

"This **lack off staff** will impact on the quality of care that we can provide and this again will **affect out abilities** to meet the ever increasing pressures from CQC."

"We have been operating for 25 years this year and are the only family run home left in our area I am really **concerned for the future**"



REGULATIONS

30% of respondents were troubled by the impact of the CQC regulations on their business—red tape, raised expectations, the associated cost of remaining compliant and the rising cost of CQC fees.

“With all the new paperwork that staff have to do there is less time to spend with residents. To be able to give residents the quality of care they deserve we need to have a higher staff ratio, which means to break even the cost of the beds would need to go up. If bed prices have to be raised too much then it will become impossible to fill the beds and the home would close.”

The increasing wage bills and recruitment issues are raising concerns that CQC expectations cannot be met—low staff ratios and challenging recruitment of qualified staff.

“This lack off staff will impact on the quality of care that we can provide and this again will effect out abilities to meet the ever increasing pressures from CQC.”

Form filing and documentation in order to comply with the CQC was also highlighted through a number of responses as a worrying issue for their businesses.

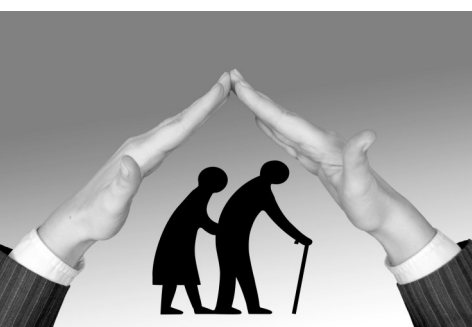
“We found that our last inspection did not focus on the **quality of life** for the residents or the innovation of the service, it focused solely on the paperwork behind the scenes, and with no regard for successes and positive attributes, the focus purely on challenging inadequacies that don't truly reflect real life and had little or no impact.”

“concerns with regulations being a poor/unfair reflection of our service”

“The **attitude** of inspectors when something isn't right is appalling..... very little effort into actually giving **constructive help.**”

“We **NEED** to examine the examiners! **No consistency**”

“I am slowly decreasing the number of referrals from the councils as the money offered is not sustainable. We value the care we provide to our 13 service users. Training, keeping up with the CQC all costs money to stay viable we need £500 per bed.”



Background data

130 businesses were surveyed

78% of respondents owned 2 or less homes and 10% were domiciliary care providers.

22% of respondents surveyed had homes under 10 bed, 44% homes under 20 beds

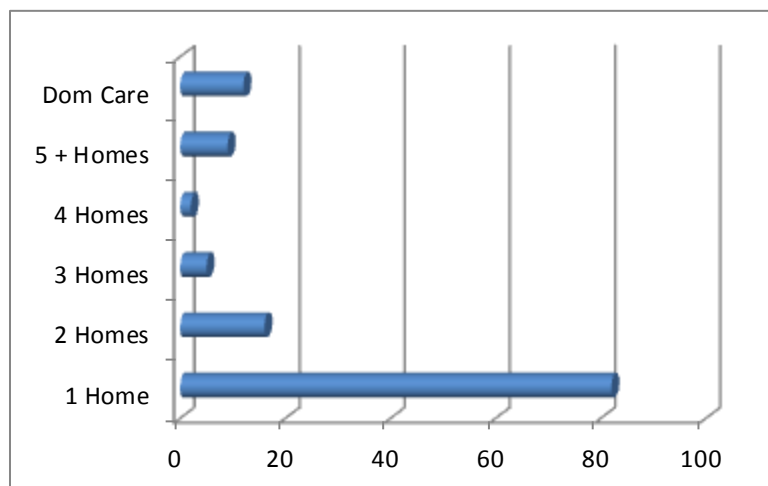
94% of respondents contract with Local Authorities

96% of respondents have seen a rise in the cost of delivering care in the last 3 years

61% of respondents were offered an increase in funding this year

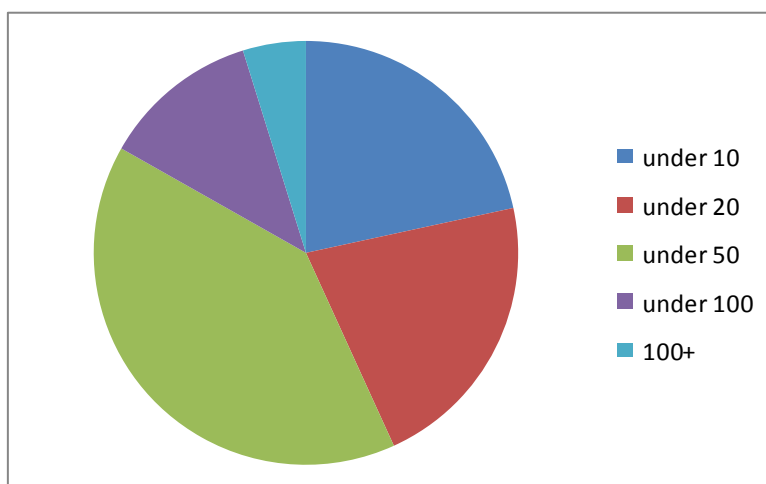
74% of respondents have struggled with recruitment

Number of homes owned by businesses surveyed



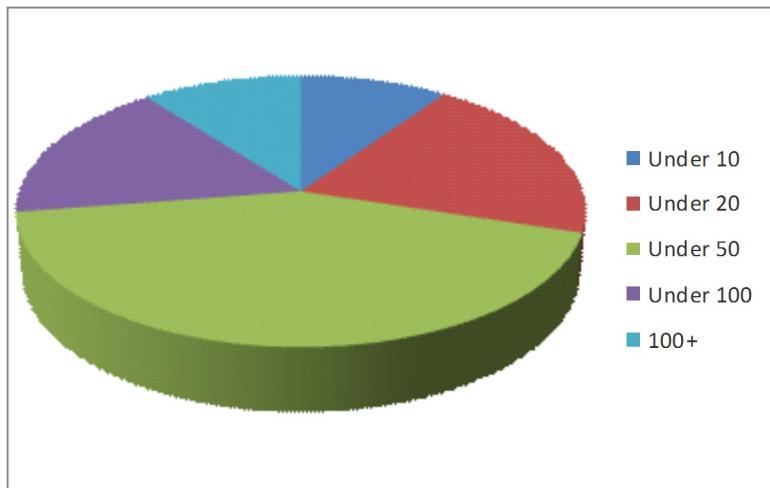
Number of homes owned %	
1 Home	65
2 Homes	13
3 Homes	4
4 Homes	2
5 + Homes	7
Dom Care	10

Number of beds per businesses surveyed



Number of beds %	
under 10	22
under 20	22
under 50	40
under 100	12
100+	5

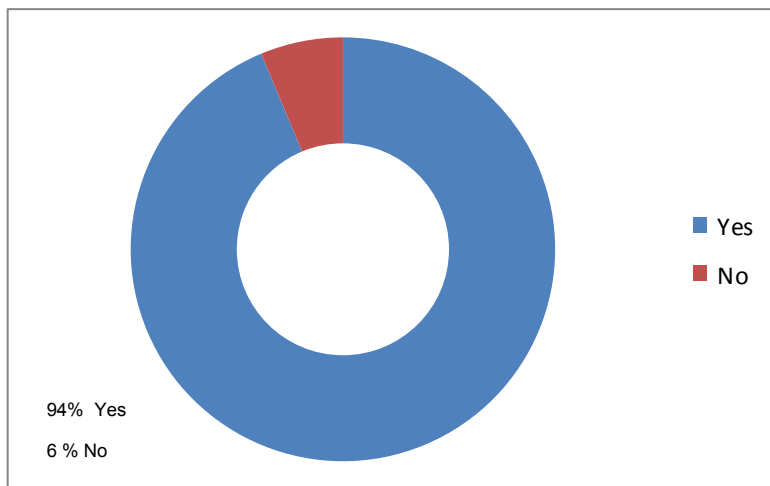
Number of staff employed by businesses surveyed



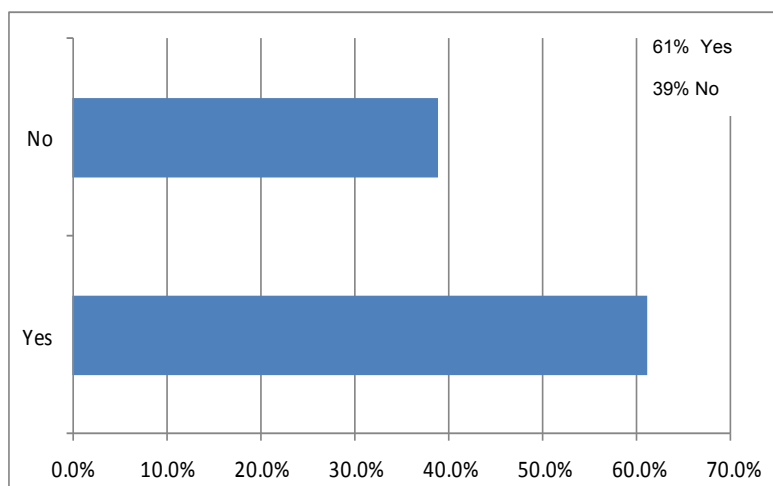
Number of staff employed %

Under 10	10
Under 20	20
Under 50	43
Under 100	17
100+	10

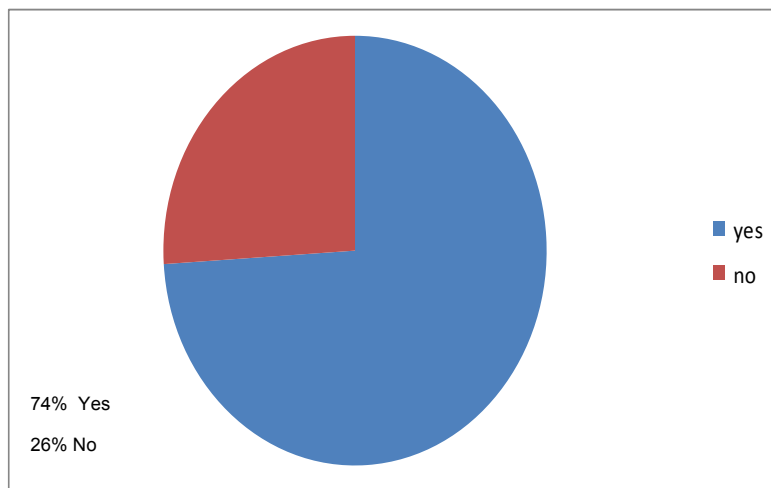
Percentage of respondents who contract with local authorities



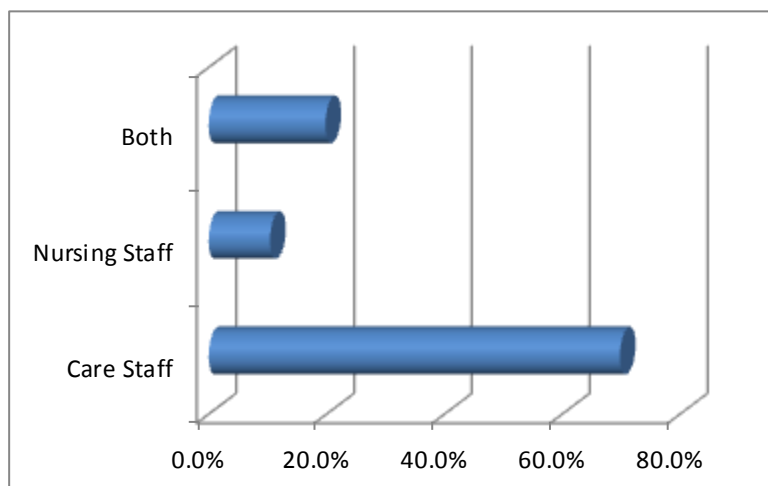
Percentage of respondents who have been offered an increase in funding this financial year



Percentage of respondents who struggle with recruitment



Who the respondents struggle to recruit



Care Staff 70%
Nursing Staff 10%
Both 20%

Percentage of respondents who have seen a rise in the cost of their care provision in the last 3 years

