

nmuds-sc briefing



issue 10 - adults with learning disabilities

This edition of the NMDS-SC briefings focuses on the care-providing establishments and the care workforce who work with adults (aged 18 to 64), particularly adults with learning disabilities. The briefing looks at the types of establishments providing care to adults with learning disabilities in addition to drawing out information on the workers working with these service users.

The NMDS-SC shows that the workforce working with adults with learning disabilities has a different profile to much of the workforce on whom data is held in the NMDS-SC overall. This workforce has more men, better pay and is more likely to hold relevant qualifications. The care-providing establishments are more likely to be from the voluntary sector, to be very small establishments, have lower turnover rates and are more likely to provide care for this service user group alone.

Government policy stresses the need for the integration of social care with other services, and nowhere is this more apparent than in meeting the needs of adults with learning disabilities. These service users have usually made the transition from services for children with disabilities. This means that we can predict more accurately the numbers and needs of this group, and should therefore be able to plan more effectively.

Emmerson and Hatton¹ predict there will be a “significant increase in the numbers of adults with learning disabilities”. They estimate an additional 47,000 to 113,000 adults with learning disabilities will require services in the next 10 years (in 2006/07 there were 828,000 adults in England with a learning disability of which 137,000 accessed adult care services). The reasons they offer for this growth in numbers are (i) Decreasing mortality rates (ii) The impact of changes in fertility in the general population (iii) Ageing “baby boomers” with higher incidences of learning disabilities. There is therefore a growing need for workers in this area of the sector.

It is expected that individual budgets and changes in response to the government policy, Valuing People Now (Dept of Health 2008) will alter provision. The readiness of service users to respond to these initiatives is clear:

“Direct payments have transformed his life, particularly access to leisure services”.

“The individual budget scheme is excellent...it will help make me more independent and access the things I want to do”.

Telling it like it is, Learning Disability Coalition, 2008

¹ Estimating future need for adult social care services for people with learning disabilities in England, Centre for Disability Research, Emmerson & Hatton, 2008

specialist or generalist establishments

Supporting the care provided by families, the NHS and others there are 12,605 establishments offering care and support to adults with learning disabilities in the NMDS-SC. Of these, 3,412 (27%) are specialist providers, providing care for this service-user group only (this figure was 11% for services for older people with dementia - see Briefing 9). For adults with mental health needs the figure is 13%. Our focus will be on the 3,412 specialist providers for adults with learning disabilities.

main service provision

The main services offered by these establishments are shown in the table below – 75% of these establishments are offering some form of residential provision.

Main service group	Any adults services	Adults with learning disabilities
Care home without nursing or care only	49%	56%
Any other adult residential care service	17%	16%
Domiciliary care or home care	9%	12%
Any day services	6%	5%
Any adult community care service	8%	5%
Care home with nursing	5%	3%
Any other adult domiciliary care service	3%	2%
Any other services	2%	2%
Base (all establishments)	7,518	3,412

size of establishments

In this area of adult social care, a greater proportion of establishments in the NMDS-SC are micro establishments than in the adult social care sector as a whole (see table below).

Establishment size group	Any adult services	Adults with learning disabilities	All NMDS-SC
Micro (1 – 9 employees)	41%	48%	23%
Small (10 – 49 employees)	49%	43%	54%
Medium (50 – 249 employees)	6%	3%	13%
Large (250+ employees)	<1%	<1%	1%
Not allocated	5%	5%	9%
Base (all establishments)	7,518	3,412	24,130

The average capacity for care only homes offering provision to adults with learning disabilities only is 11 beds – the average for all adult services is 21 beds. In care homes with nursing the average capacity is 12 beds, for all adult services it is 41 beds. The move to personal budgets and expected law changes to enable more adults with learning disabilities to make use of this provision is likely to increase the number of people employing their own care and support staff.

turnover rates

The table below shows turnover rates for key NMDS-SC job roles. The figures show that turnover is less of an issue in adult settings than in the NMDS-SC as a whole. The table also shows that turnover is far less of an issue for workers working with adults with learning disabilities than those working with older people with dementia.

NMDS-SC job role	Any adult services	Adults with learning disabilities	Older people with dementia	All NMDS-SC
Registered Managers	8.9%	9.5%	12.3%	10.6%
Senior Care Workers	9.8%	9.9%	12.1%	10.2%
Care Workers	17.0%	16.0%	22.8%	21.5%
Base (all establishments)	7,518	3,412	922	24,130

The need for a reliable and consistent relationship for this group of service users is very clear.

“Children with learning disabilities are often socially excluded and 8 out of 10 children with a learning disability are bullied”.

Mencap Factsheet

These early life problems need to be overcome as adults with learning disabilities need help and support to make informed decisions and so express their choice. In its “Introduction to the Mental Capacity Act 2005”, Mencap state that workers should -

“Communicate with the person in an appropriate way...Use the most appropriate person...Make the person feel at ease”.

Factors which encourage low turnover are therefore critical, especially as filling posts in this sector seems to be more difficult, with overall vacancy rates of 4.5%, as opposed to 2.6% in services for older people with dementia.

establishments providing services to adults by sector

The voluntary sector plays a larger part in the provision of services for adults than in other areas, such as care for older people (see Briefing 9). This is particularly the case in services for adults with learning disabilities where the NMDS-SC shows 41% of establishments are in the voluntary sector (compared to 22% in the NMDS-SC as whole).

Establishment type	Any adult services	Adults with learning disabilities	All NMDS-SC
Statutory local authority	9%	9%	15%
Private sector	48%	45%	58%
Voluntary or third sector	37%	41%	22%
Other	6%	6%	4%
Not recorded	<1%	<1%	1%
Base (all establishments)	7,518	3,412	24,130

pay rates

We have seen in earlier NMDS-SC Briefings that in the voluntary sector median pay rates are generally higher and turnover rates generally lower than in the sector as a whole. These patterns are reflected in services for adults with learning disabilities.

Median pay rates for care workers and senior care workers working with adults with learning disabilities are higher than the median pay rate for all workers in the NMDS-SC, and considerably higher than for their equivalents working with older people with dementia. Registered Managers working with adults with learning disabilities get paid less than their equivalents working with older people with dementia.

NMDS-SC job role	Any adult services	Adults with learning disabilities	Older people with dementia	All NMDS-SC
Registered Managers	£26,000	£25,500	£28,000	£26,526
Senior Care Workers	£7.38	£7.50	£6.60	£6.93
Care Workers	£6.54	£6.68	£5.85	£6.20

N.B table shows pay data for workers whose pay data was received or updated between March 08-April 09

gender

The pay differentials may in part explain a difference in the gender balance in the workers for this group of service users (see table below). Men account for 24% of senior care workers working with this group (as opposed to 12% for all NMDS-SC) and 22% of care workers (as opposed to 12% for all NMDS-SC).

NMDS-SC job role	Any adult services*		Adults with learning disabilities*		All NMDS-SC*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Registered Managers	23%	68%	22%	70%	15%	75%
Senior Care Workers	22%	70%	24%	71%	12%	79%
Care Workers	21%	69%	22%	68%	12%	78%

* do not total 100% due to levels of not recorded and not knowns

qualifications

Where qualifications data has been provided by employers it appears that workers working with adults with learning disabilities are better qualified than their counterparts elsewhere in the NMDS-SC (see table below). In adults with learning disabilities 55% of registered managers are recorded as having a Level 4 compared to 48% in the NMDS-SC overall. In addition both senior care workers and care workers are more likely to hold qualifications. It may be that lower turnover is enabling this workforce to gain qualifications and remain in the roles for longer.

The highest level qualification the worker has achieved	Registered Manager		Senior Care Worker		Care Worker	
	Adults with LD	All NMDS-SC	Adults with LD	All NMDS-SC	Adults with LD	All NMDS-SC
Entry Level or Level 1	0%	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Level 2	2%	1%	19%	22%	18%	17%
Level 3	15%	13%	30%	27%	8%	5%
Level 4	55%	48%	5%	4%	2%	1%
Other relevant social care qualification	2%	2%	4%	3%	7%	6%
No relevant qualification or not recorded	26%	36%	41%	43%	65%	71%

Whilst the percentage of “not recorded” means we must be circumspect about these findings, the higher rates amongst care workers, who are the main group with direct contact with service users is encouraging.

The need for integrated services supporting both formal and informal networks means that the data from the NMDS-SC is very useful in informing us of factors which help or impede progress. This need is clear from statements of both carers and leaders in this area of work.

“We don’t want government to do everything for us, but we do want them to provide the basic framework, so that our sons and daughters can have the best possible chance to lead a fulfilling life...and make their own contribution to society”.

Mike Claydon, parent of an adult with a learning disability

“We need to turn the rhetoric into reality”.

Dame Jo Williams, Co Chair, Learning Disability Coalition