

Employee engagement in **health and social care**

Looking after every person in
your organisation



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Introduction

Thanks for downloading this eBook from WorkBuzz on employee engagement in the health and social care industry. We know HR professionals in this sector have unique challenges – from how to engage a deskless workforce to how to attract and retain the best people – and we want to help.

We'll cover how to go about fixing these problems, how to effectively reach and engage your deskless employees, and a few ideas for how to improve employee engagement at your organisation.

We'll also hear from Home Instead on how they improved customer satisfaction by 15%, as an outcome of prioritising employee engagement.

If you're interested in talking to us about how we can help make your employee engagement strategy better, don't hesitate to get in touch.

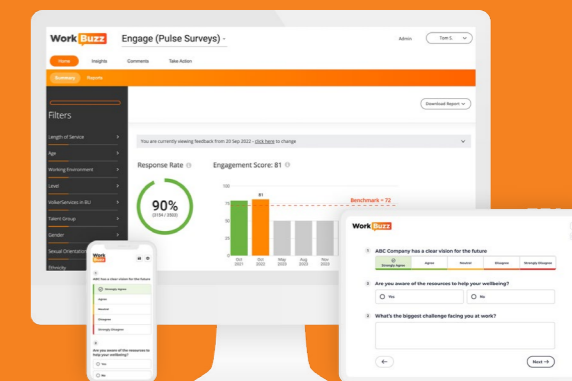


About WorkBuzz

The simple, flexible, customisable way to reach your Everyday Heroes.

Our employee engagement surveys give you regular, real-time feedback from all your people – wherever they are, and whatever they do.

Listen to your unsung heroes. Understand their concerns. Act on areas of improvement. Build a culture all your people can thrive in.



3 key people challenges in the health and social care industry – and how to fix them



The health and social care industry faces unique people challenges, with caregivers required to be both business-savvy while maintaining a caring, human side when interacting with residents and patients.

That skillset is difficult to acquire, and the industry is struggling to keep up – with an estimated 480,000 more posts needing to be filled by 2035 in the social care sector alone.

Here, we'll discuss the key people challenges in the health and social care industry, as well as strategies for addressing them in order to create a successful work environment that motivates employees.

The key people challenges facing the health and social care industry:

1. Attracting the right people

One of the significant challenges that HR professionals face in the health and social care industry is attracting talent. The industry is stereotyped as one with long hours and low pay, despite the training and qualifications needed.

Recruiting and finding the right people for

your health and social care workforce can be a challenge but, with the right strategies in place, it doesn't have to be.

- Develop an attractive recruitment process. It's important to have an efficient and effective recruitment process that is tailored to the needs of your organisation. In addition, make sure there are opportunities for people to apply in-person, as well as online.
- Leverage social media to attract potential candidates. Social media can be a powerful tool for recruiting and retaining the best talent. Utilise platforms such as LinkedIn to build relationships with potential candidates and promote job openings.
- Offer competitive compensation packages. Offering competitive pay is essential in order to attract and retain qualified individuals. Consider offering incentive-based compensation plans or bonuses to create an attractive package that will entice employees to stay with your organisation.
- Create a positive work environment. Implementing initiatives that will increase employee engagement and satisfaction

can go a long way in creating a successful workforce. Consider introducing activities such as team building exercises or offering flexible work hours to foster camaraderie and boost morale.

2. Keeping hold of existing employees

According to a report by Gallup, the health and social care industry has one of the lowest employee engagement levels – with only 32% of employees reporting feeling engaged at work. Disengaged employees are unhappy, unproductive, likely to be looking for a job somewhere else, and may even negatively affect their colleagues.

Organisations in the health and social care sector may also have diverse workforces, with employees from different cultures and backgrounds. This can create challenges related to communication, cultural differences, and managing expectations – which can further impact engagement levels.

Employee engagement is clearly linked to recruitment, and should be the number one focus for HR leaders who want to keep hold of current employees.

The bottom line is that regularly listening to your employees, understanding their needs, and acting on their feedback, is the only way to guarantee improvements in engagement – and to retain your top talent.

3. Employee health and safety

The health and safety of employees should be a top priority for all health and social care organisations, as a lot of caring roles involve physical, mental and emotional hazards. Stretched workforces often lead to slips in safety procedures – leading to a rise in accidents, lower CQC ratings, higher staff turnover and increased costs.

HR professionals are, therefore, responsible for creating safer workplaces and developing safety protocols and policies that ensure employees' wellbeing.

- Provide adequate safety training. Employees should be trained on proper safety procedures and given refresher courses on a regular basis.

- Conduct regular risk assessments. This will help to identify potential hazards and risks and develop appropriate controls to mitigate them.
- Encourage employees to speak up about safety concerns. It's important people feel comfortable raising any concerns they have about safety, without fear of reprisal.
- Monitor and review safety performance. This will help identify any areas where improvements are needed and ensure the organisation is continuously improving its safety performance.

Understanding what employees really think about your organisation

Understanding what your employees think about your company is crucial – and that's where employee surveys come in. They can provide valuable insights into how your people perceive their work environment, job satisfaction, and opportunities for growth, and help health and social care organisations to identify problem areas and address them in a timely manner.

High levels of employee engagement translate to increased productivity, higher customer satisfaction, and lower turnover rates. Through employee surveys, employers can identify areas that may be causing low engagement levels and take corrective measures to address them.

Employee surveys also provide a platform for employees to voice their concerns and provide feedback on their work environment – including things like the effectiveness of training and development programmes, which we've already highlighted as a focus area.

By listening to their employees' feedback – and acting on it – health and social care organisations can identify workplace issues and implement changes or interventions that lead to a better work environment. Addressing workplace issues can enhance employee satisfaction and boost morale.

High employee turnover can significantly impact a health and social care organisation's performance and customer satisfaction. Employee surveys can identify factors contributing to high turnover rates, such as inadequate compensation, lack of opportunities for growth, or a poor work environment. By addressing these factors, health and social care organisations can reduce turnover rates and retain top talent.

Finally, as long as your organisation makes a clear effort to address the feedback received, employee surveys can strengthen communication and trust between employees and their employers. By seeking their employees' feedback and responding to their concerns, health and social care organisations can enhance their employees' sense of value and investment in the company – which, in turn, can improve loyalty and retention.

Why should you focus on employee engagement?

Employee engagement is a deep rational and emotional connection to your organisation and the work you do. It's the outcome of a great employee experience, and starts during the recruitment process – before you even turn up for your first day.

Engagement is important because it unlocks the potential of each individual, their



motivation, and maximises their discretionary effort. If they're engaged enough to become advocates for your organisation, engagement can live on long after employees leave – which has a tangible impact on commercial outcomes for your business.



How to reach and engage deskless employees in the health and social care industry

There are unique employee engagement challenges for the health and social care industry, not least due to the large number of caregivers working in 'deskless' roles not based in the office. Organisations in this sector must use innovative strategies to ensure their workforce is engaged, motivated, and productive.

The importance of listening to your employees

Employee surveys are a great way for organisations in the health and social care industry to understand employee sentiment and motivation, as well as to identify employee engagement issues.

Surveys can be used to gain feedback on policies, job satisfaction, employee recognition programs, and much more. They can also provide invaluable insights into employee morale and engagement levels.

Organisations should strive to regularly run employee surveys to ensure they're staying ahead of employee engagement issues and providing a positive work environment.

Making employee engagement programmes more accessible to deskless workers







Having a great employee engagement programme is a waste of time if your employees can't take part. It's important to make employee surveys accessible for deskless employees in the health and social care industry.

Many of these workers are unable to access employee engagement tools due to them being inaccessible or difficult to use on a smartphone or tablet – and many won't have access to a corporate email address.

To ensure employee engagement is successful, organisations should provide mobile-friendly resources and leverage platforms like WorkBuzz, which offers a 'kiosk' mode and unique entry code so employees can access surveys from their own device.

This approach should extend to your wider communication strategy. How do you better connect head office, leadership and the deskless workforce? You should consider:

What you need to know to better connect with your deskless employees:

- 
Who your deskless employees are
 Build a picture using demographics, role descriptions and the challenges they face.
- 
Why you need to talk to them
 What information will you need to share?
- 
When you'll communicate
 Take into consideration different shift patterns and time zones.
- 
How you'll communicate
 Choosing the right channel is essential – specifically designed apps, internal communications tools (like Slack or SharePoint), kiosk stations, printed materials, bulletin boards, in-person conversations, texts and calls are all options.
- 
What you'll say
 Tailor the content with clear impact and outcomes for your deskless audience.
- 
Make it a two-way conversation
 Ensure your strategy includes methods for employee feedback, either through regular pulse surveys or on an ad-hoc basis.

Digital platforms like **WorkBuzz** can be powerful tools for improving employee engagement in the health and social care industry. Organisations should look to leverage these platforms to listen to their employees, understand their needs, and act on their feedback.

How to improve the employee experience for care workers



Recruitment and retention are huge challenges in the care industry right now, with research highlighting how employee engagement among frontline staff has declined sharply in recent years. And, as large pay rises or flexible working often aren't possible, care industry leaders need to find other ways to prevent their best people from leaving.

The employee experience is therefore key, with a focus on making care workers feel valued, appreciated, and supported.

The state of engagement

Care workers experienced the full brunt of the pandemic, forced to cope with health and wellbeing concerns, including burnout. It's therefore unsurprising that 49 percent of organisations with mostly frontline workers have seen engagement decline dramatically since.

This is in sharp contrast to engagement levels in office-based companies that had remote working as an option, in which most organisations reported that employee engagement has increased. Many care workers are disengaged, demotivated, and

exhausted, and they're heading straight for the door.

Creating a world-class employee experience

There's an urgent need to improve the employee experience, with an emphasis on making every care worker feel valued and appreciated. Here's how:

Have an onboarding plan. The reason most care workers will leave their job in the first 90 days – and often the first few days – is because they feel lonely, isolated, and unsupported.

There needs to be a clear onboarding plan which makes new recruits feel welcome, starting with a handwritten welcome note from the employee's manager and colleagues to show that extra level of effort.

Providing every new starter with a buddy or mentor for support must also become standard.

Give employees a 'voice'. Decisions are often made far away from the frontline, and yet care staff can contribute a lot to decision making.

Interestingly, Germany has it written into law that when companies have more than five employees, a works council can be elected by the employees, thereby providing them with a voice. Many German care providers therefore consult with their workers on various matters, and this is an important lesson for the UK care market.

By continually requesting feedback from employees and then using these insights to inform decision-making, care workers feel valued and heard. This approach also delivers a number of business benefits, such as improved service levels.

Prioritise appreciation. Employees are unlikely to stick around if they feel taken for granted. It's therefore vital for leaders to get to know their teams on a personal level and be quick to give genuine appreciation.

A personalised thank you note from a manager to an employee can have a huge impact, for example, helping to build engagement and loyalty.

Develop your people. What are your employees' career aspirations and developmental goals? By providing

opportunities to learn and grow, care workers are more likely to remain loyal.

This could include providing workers with the opportunity to be mentors or involving them in the recruitment of new staff. Offering courses and training would also be well received.





How Home Instead improved its employee experience and customer satisfaction by 15%

Provide wellbeing support. What's in place to look after care workers' health and wellbeing? Leaders must regularly check-in with their people to see how they're coping physically and emotionally, while watching for signs of burnout such as loss of motivation, fatigue, and work avoidance.

Providing or signposting staff to mental health support services is also important.

Train managers. Most managers will never have been trained on how to be a leader. Spend time on training 'soft' skills, such as active listening, how to use blame-free language and effective recognition giving.

Put the right technology in place. Lack of 'mobile-first' technologies can mean care workers just don't have the means to effectively engage with their leaders, colleagues, and the organisation, heightening their isolation.

By using technology and apps that streamline communications and allow ongoing employee feedback, care workers will feel a greater sense of belonging and believe that their opinion matters.

In the face of 'The Great Resignation', it's time to rethink care worker recruitment and retention. By continuing along the same path, staff attrition will only continue, and so it's vital for the employee experience to become king.



Home Instead provides the highest-quality care for thousands of older people in the comfort of their own homes. With more than 200 offices in the UK and 10,000 CAREGivers, its vision is to become the UK's most admired care company through changing the face of ageing.

The problem

Against a backdrop of high attrition in the care sector, Home Instead sought to improve employee engagement and employee retention, while ensuring every client had a great experience.

Home Instead first introduced an employee engagement survey in 2010, but only a third of its CAREGivers, most of whom don't have work email, participated. It wanted to re-launch its engagement strategy and partnered with WorkBuzz.

The solution

WorkBuzz held focus groups with CAREGivers to better understand the reasons for low participation and shape the survey questions and communications.

In keeping with Home Instead's mission, we reviewed customer feedback. Although this was outstanding, communication was the biggest source of detractors. We aligned the survey questions to this, by getting feedback on areas like collaboration between CAREGivers and their local office.

The survey was branded 'PEAQ', which stands for Pursuing Excellence through Advancing Quality. PEAQ-branded materials were provided for all offices and Engagement Champions recruited, helping to create a buzz during 'PEAQ Week', when the survey was launched.

To reflect its diverse workforce, Home Instead switched from paper to online surveys, with employees being emailed or text their survey link, with thousands completing this on their smart phones.

To help win hearts and minds, WorkBuzz linked employee engagement to business outcomes, demonstrating the most engaged offices had higher levels of client satisfaction, employee retention and regulatory inspection ratings, including 64 Care Quality Commission (CQC) 'Outstanding' ratings.

As well as using the insight from WorkBuzz to prioritise Home Instead's people strategy, we also aligned the survey questions to the regulatory outcomes. When inspected, this enabled Home Instead offices with high levels of employee engagement to demonstrate they were 'Well-Led'.

The outcome

Over the period of seven years working with WorkBuzz, the CAREGiver response rate has improved from 43% to 78%.

Employee engagement has also increased by 11%, which correlates with a 15% improvement in client satisfaction. During this time, Home Instead has also received a record number of CQC Outstanding ratings, two Princess Royal Training Awards, and was awarded The Queens Award For Enterprise.

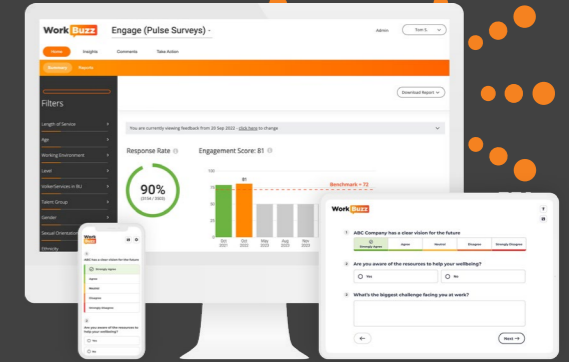
“Working with WorkBuzz provides us with a huge amount of insight into our operation, helping us to improve CAREGiver engagement and retention, and client satisfaction.”

Helen Jones, Communications Manager at Home Instead

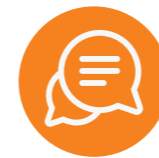


About WorkBuzz

Employee engagement surveys to reach Everyday Heroes in health and social care.



WorkBuzz helps you gather real-time feedback from your people, improve employee engagement and build a culture your team are proud to be part of – wherever they are, and whatever they do.



Listen to your employees at a frequency to suit your business – with annual surveys, pulse surveys and on-demand polls available as standard.



Understand key staff challenges around employee wellbeing, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, and employee retention. Use our best-practice question libraries or work with our team to create your own.



Act on feedback and implement positive change. Work with our team to understand what your data is telling you, and which actions you need to take. Benefit from an engaged, more productive workforce, and see an improvement in employee wellbeing, performance, and retention.

“Great service and easy to do business with. The WorkBuzz team are adaptive, attentive, professional and act as a true partner. Expertise within the team is also a big plus – providing useful insight into the wider world on what is/can impact on the employee experience.”

Ronnie Calderwood-Duncan, EDI Manager, Highways England

**Give your Everyday Heroes a voice -
get started with a demo of the [WorkBuzz platform](#)**