

Creating a Sustainable Adult Social Care Workforce:

International Recruitment in West Midlands Learning & Evaluation

April 2023 – May 2024

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‘I wouldn't want international recruitment to end tomorrow because there are some good people coming over and who we can support. A lot of international recruits ...are trained nurses and midwives and physiotherapists.

They're providing great skills as they are in some of our organizations where they're experienced staff. And it's quite unusual to be able to recruit staff with a lot of experience.’

Local Authority Commissioning Manager

1. Executive Summary

This report was commissioned as part of the West Midlands ADASS International Recruitment programme 23/24 to map the learning from the start of the programme with the purpose of sharing the knowledge and practical application of the initiatives for the future in West Midlands and with other regional and national colleagues.

In February 2022, care workers were added to the Shortage Occupation List and the Health and Care worker visa route. This meant that providing workers met the salary thresholds and had a licensed sponsor, they could be recruited to care worker roles in the UK. Between March 2022/23 it was estimated that 70,000 international recruits took up care roles in the independent sector in the UK (Skills for Care, 2023). Whilst adult social care is commissioned largely by local authorities, it is provided mainly by independent providers, with a high proportion of providers classed as Small or Medium Enterprises (SMEs). At the start of the International Recruitment programme, we simply didn't know how many care providers had recruited international care workers or what the challenges and opportunities would bring for adult social care.

Using a collaborative approach with partners including West Midlands Employers, West Midlands Care Association, all of our 14 local authorities, Skills for Care, regional and national ADASS colleagues, and many others, we have used the principle of subsidiarity to create a regional and sub-regional infrastructure to gain intelligence on international recruitment across adult social care in the West Midlands and to support local authorities, care providers and international recruits with the challenges that international recruitment has brought to the sector, as well as sharing of good practice to improve and sustain the adult social care sector.

Colleagues across West Midlands have contributed significant learning to international recruitment, developing an International Recruitment intelligence hub that has application beyond West Midlands, implementing an International Recruitment Legal and HR hub that attracts interest from care providers within and beyond West Midlands, and developing support offers including a digital support prototype that will reach and support international recruits across the country.

Our distance travelled has been immense, and we have experienced significant challenges with the identification of displaced international recruits following care provider license suspensions and revocations. Our strength has been in the extended collaboration with all partners in this work to create innovative solutions, such as the Sandwell International Recruits Welfare Hub, and the Coventry and Warwickshire work to identify displaced recruits and ethical care providers with sponsorship licenses and vacancies to support those displaced individuals.

We have learned through our Solihull colleagues that when international recruitment is done ethically it provides a significant contribution to adult social care, improving recruitment and retention rates and bringing high-level skills into the sector.

As we look towards 24/25, we aim to build on the learning and the infrastructure developed through collaboration to continue in our ambition to strengthen and sustain adult social care across West Midlands.

I would like to thank all our partners and colleagues who have contributed to what has been achieved in a short space of time.

Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Background	6
3. Project Aims	9
4. Programme Governance	10
5. Learning & Evaluation	13
6. Logic Model Evaluation April 2024	14
7. Project Development Evaluation – Double Diamond Innovation Framework	16
8. Defining the International Recruitment Challenge: The Sandwell Welfare Hub.....	18
9. Extending Collaborative Working	19
10. Collaborative Working at Regional Level	19
WMCA Network & Support for Care Providers	19
11. Collaborative Working at Local Level	21
Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin	21
12. Driving Change through Data and Evidence.....	21
13. WM ADASS International Recruitment Sponsors Dashboard.....	22
14. Strengthening Community Assets.....	25
15. WME Ethical Framework Audit Tool for Care Providers.....	28
16. Advice from Hub Development for Other Areas and Future plans from learning:	32
17. West Midlands Care Association	33
West Midlands Care Provider Association DBS Checks:	33
Proud to Care: Resource for Care Providers	34
18. International Recruitment Buddying Scheme	34
19. Staffordshire & Stoke	35
20. Balancing Technology and Humanity	36
My UK Life	36
21. Transforming Social Care Careers	39
22. Solihull Care Providers.....	39
23. Shifting the Narrative	40
24. Coventry & Warwickshire	40
25. Summary and Conclusion	42
26. Building for the Future 2024	44
WM ADASS – What’s next? For international recruitment in the West Midlands	44
Key Actions Proposed for 24/25:.....	44

27.	Appendices	46
28.	References	53
29.	Acknowledgements	54

2. Background

West Midlands Directors of Adult Social Care (ADASS) represents 14 directors running adult social care across West Midlands. The core purpose of West Midlands ADASS is to support improvement across the sector. West Midlands ADASS responded to the ADASS Time to Act Report (April 23) by taking agency to identify factors impacting adult social care between now and 2035 and to develop a range of ‘future scenarios’ that might require new skills, behaviors, or capabilities for resilience. From this scenario work West Midlands ADASS identified six capabilities needed to help the sector be resilient in all scenarios, creating the Adult Social Care Futures Model (Figure 1).

Workforce challenges were identified as one of the significant factors that will continue to impact social care based on population and economic projections. Recruitment in the adult care sector has become increasingly challenging. Most of adult social care is provided by independent small and medium enterprises (SME’s); (Skills For Care, 2022 b) offering home-based (domiciliary) care, residential, respite and care home services. SMEs are defined in the UK as small and medium enterprises with less than 250 employees, a turnover less than £25m, and gross assets less than £12.5m. A third of SME’s considered exiting the adult social care market in 2022 due to workforce issues and cost pressures (Care England & Hft, 2023). If this loss of 30% SMEs to the NHS and social care system was realised it would add further strain to the Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) system in the NHS, and significantly impact unpaid carers and families, with further consequences on the UK economy.

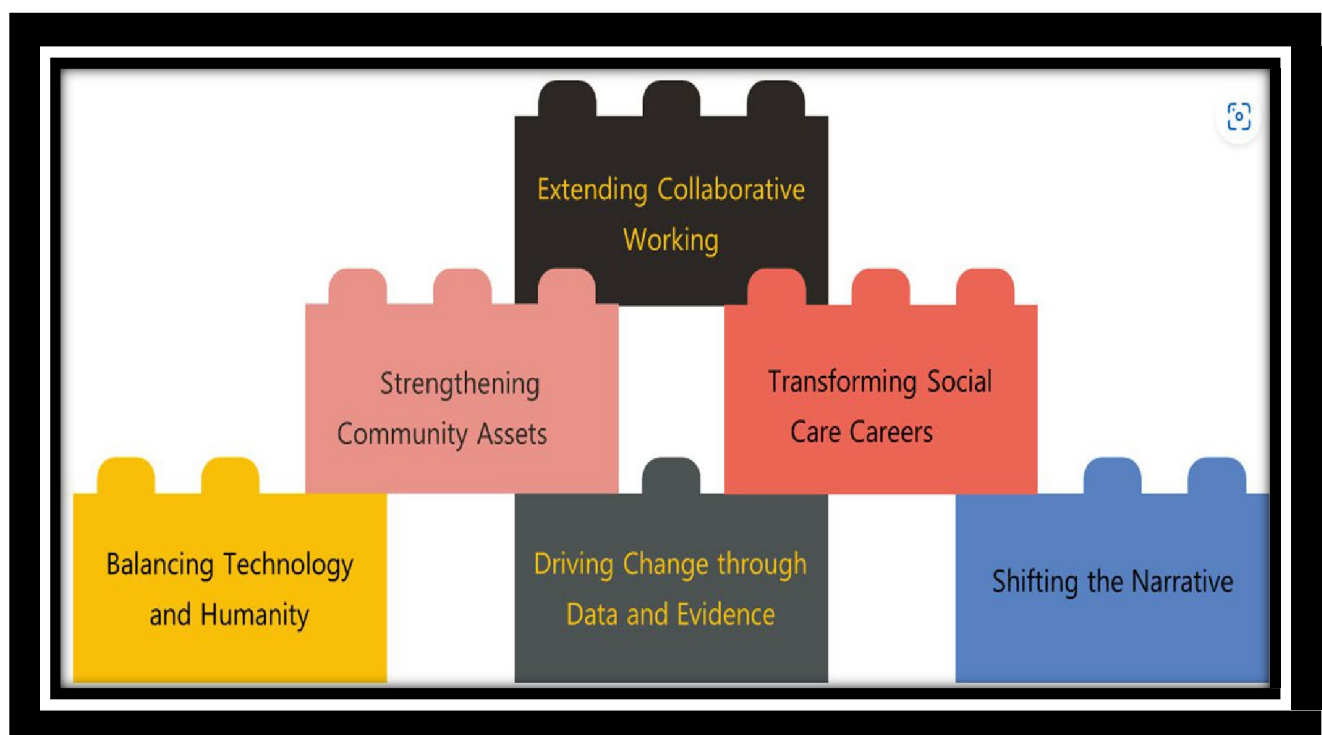
In February 2022, care workers were added to the Shortage Occupation List and the Health and Care worker visa route. This meant that providing workers met the salary thresholds and had a licensed sponsor, they could be recruited to care worker roles in the UK. Between March 2022/23 it was estimated that 70,000 international recruits took up care roles in the independent sector in the UK (Skills for Care, 2023). The Skills for Care report on the state of the adult social care sector and workforce indicates that care providers have been able to recruit care workers internationally to reduce vacancy rates, and that international recruits have improved the care providers turnover rates. International recruits are more likely to work full-time and less likely to be on zero-hour contracts. The Skills for Care Report (2023) has also highlighted some concerns about international recruitment in adult social care, with some providers being put off by the administrative cost and burden. There were also reported incidences of unethical recruitment and exploitation by recruiting agencies and providers.

The International Recruitment Fund 2023 provided an opportunity to strengthen the adult social care workforce. West Midlands ADASS proposed firstly to establish, manage, and maintain a regional ethical international recruitment service, providing a regional hub that provides information, guidance and support to local authorities and care providers. The 2nd part of the proposal was to delegate funds at sub-regional level, through local authorities, to create local offers of training and development, pastoral support, and accommodation support to international recruits.

Using the Social Care Futures 6 capabilities model, West Midlands ADASS plan for International Recruitment (IR) was to shift the negative narrative about social care and explore opportunities to strengthen our community care providers, using anchor institutions (local authorities; Integrated Care Boards; ICBs) to collaborate at regional and local levels with partners, such as our care associations, West Midlands Employers, Citizens Advice Bureau, Skills for Care, and others to build a strong and resilient approach to International Recruitment in the West Midlands.

This report provides the learning and evaluation gained in using the DHSC IR 23/24 Fund to develop an International Recruitment infrastructure within the West Midlands. The report describes the initiatives planned and the progress made over an 8-month period. It shares the experiences of the partners involved, highlighting issues identified for all sectors at local, regional, and national levels. It spotlights the creativity and strength that collaboration can bring to a complex task and suggests application to a sustainable International Recruitment approach for adult social care.

Figure 1. West Midlands ADASS Adult Social Care Futures 6 Capabilities Model



Extending Collaborative Working - rather than any simplistic notion of ‘integration’, this is about collaboration around services and resources across sectors and organisations beyond traditional health & social care boundaries. Collaboration and shared learning are encouraged to promote open conversations, build trust, and explore resourcing options aimed at sustaining and improving adult social care into the future.

Strengthening Community Assets - enabling community-centred care that reflects various needs and preferences, strengthening the use of co-production between health and social care services and local communities through digital and face-to-face means. Mechanisms to support experimentation, learning, and sharing within local communities are also proposed.

Transforming Social Care Careers - improving the outlook for careers in adult social care – through more flexible, rewarding, opportunities, improved career pathways, qualifications, and educational pathways; maintaining a good supply of highly skilled workers to effectively meet sector demand.

Balancing Technology and Humanity - grasping the potential to enhance care through technology and artificial intelligence. Developing a cohesive plan to ensure equitable access to technological advancements, harnessing known good practices and sharing them rapidly; developing a common approach to cost-effective technology investments to avoid regional disparities.

Driving Change through Data and Evidence - developing a better and richer understanding of emerging needs through a shared approach to population health analytics; strengthening data capabilities to inform service planning, workforce development and prevention activities, and support a focus on reducing inequalities; ensuring data to inform action is complemented by robust evidence around what works, when and for whom.

Shifting the Narrative around adult social care – developing a clear and compelling narrative about the role and importance of Adult Social Care (ASC); increasing understanding of the sector and the needs it serves, the way it works, the wider social and economic benefits it brings.

3. Project Aims

The International Recruitment Fund Vision was to enable a support offer to be set up at regional or sub-regional level which can be made available to all providers within the area. These include administrative complexity and costs but also challenges with issues like pastoral support, housing, and travel. DHSC's aim is to promote collaborative arrangements which reduce administrative complexity and burden, particularly for SME providers.

The objectives were to:

1. Apply national standards to establish minimum recruitment and selection requirements – with a focus on ethical recruitment practice.
2. Establish a HR Advisory/Support Hub to support care providers to ensure provision of consistent and equitable information and advice.
3. Work collaboratively with local authorities and care providers to deliver extended support to aid transition to UK social care practice including a pastoral support offer.
4. Work collaboratively to develop and capture new learning on how common barriers to international recruitment can be overcome.

The West Midlands International Recruitment Project applied a logic model (appendix 1) to define the activities and outputs needed to achieve the impacts and outcomes required to meet the National IR Fund vision and objectives. The logic model provided a structured way to review project progress with the project leads and to record learning and evaluation across the project timeframe.

To design the West Midlands Ethical International Recruitment Offer, the Design Council's Double Diamond Innovation Framework was used (The Design Council, 2005). The 4Ds Innovation Framework was based on the common principles used by 11 world-leading companies in designing services and products. The framework has been developed to support public, private and third sector organisations to transform the way they develop and deliver services, tackling some of the most social, economic, and environmental problems across the globe. It has been used in the public sector, notably in both UK and Scottish Governments policy and planning (<https://openpolicy.blog.gov.uk/2019/12/20/looking-back-to-look-forward-what-is-next-for-design-in-policy/>).

The Double Diamond Innovation Framework (The Design Council, 2005) has 4 phases arranged in 2 diamonds. The 1st diamond focuses on the 'Discover' and 'Define' stages and the 2nd diamond focuses on the 'Develop' and 'Deliver' stages. The process is about creating the opportunities for exploring an issue widely and deeply (divergent thinking) before taking focused action (convergent thinking).

The 'Discover' phase is when time is taken to understand the challenge or problem through significant dialogue and then the 'Define' phase gathers the insight and creates a refined definition of the challenge.

The 2nd diamond includes the 'Develop' phase which encourages the creation of different solutions to the defined challenge. The 'Deliver' phase is when the different solutions are tested out at a small scale, leading to rejection of the solutions that were not working and the further development of the solutions that will work.

The 4D's model was set for the project across 4 quarters:

Q1: Discover was planned to establish the project governance and to consider a regional prototype for the Ethical IR hub.

Q2: Define was planned to launch the prototype Ethical IR hub and to initiate the local dialogue about local solutions to the challenge.

Q3: Develop phase was planned to start the local projects and further develop the regional IR hub.

Q4: Deliver phase was to continue to monitor the testing of the regional IR hub and the local projects, which would be described in a final learning and evaluation report. The learning would inform the potential for further development of any successful initiatives.

4. Programme Governance

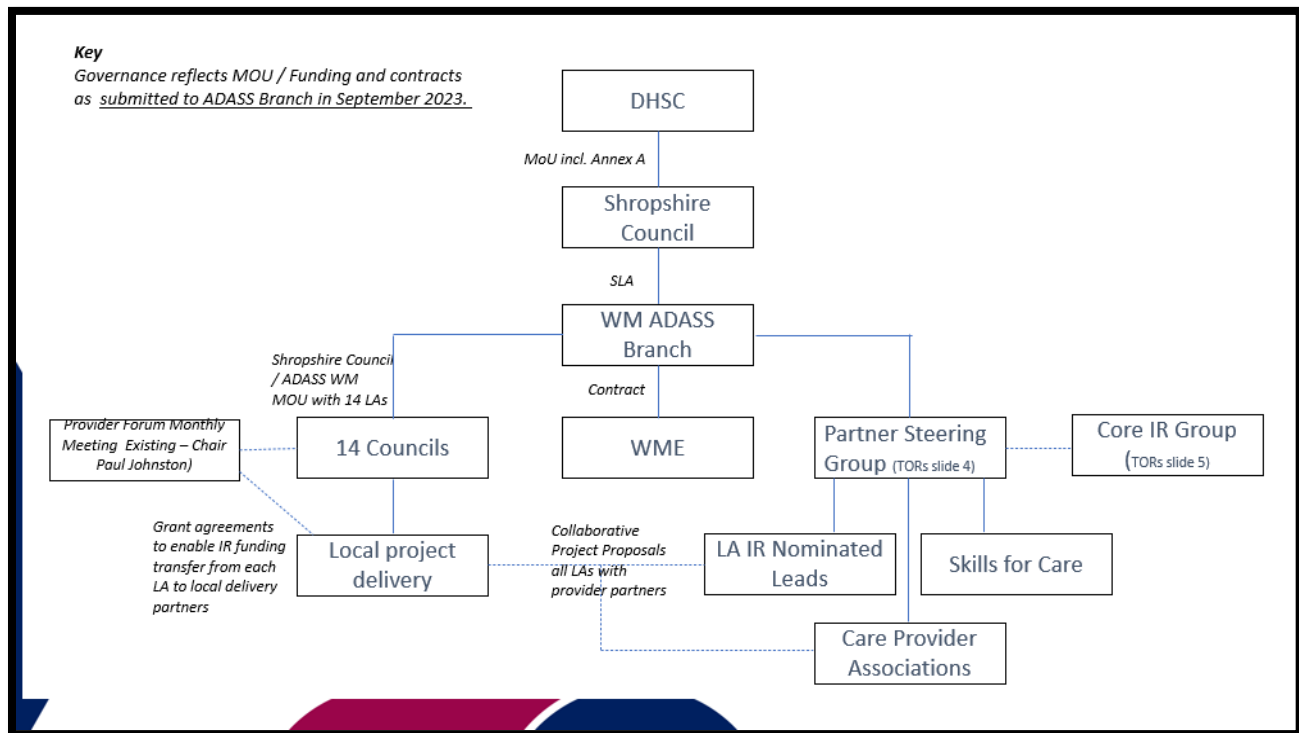
Programme governance for the WM International Recruitment Fund was critical and required time at the beginning of the project to discuss with all stakeholders and put the necessary governance in place. Taking this time at the start of the project saved time as the project progressed through the Double Diamond phases and some initiatives were stopped because they were not working, and other initiatives were developed to respond to better understanding of the International Recruitment challenges.

West Midlands ADASS (WM ADASS) represents 14 directors running adult social care across West Midlands. The core purpose of West Midlands ADASS is to support improvement across the sector. WM ADASS already had good governance frameworks as the organisation is hosted by Shropshire Council governed through a Service Level Agreement. Financial Accountability was governed using a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DHSC and WM ADASS. Shropshire Council agreed to act as the banker for the funding distribution for the project governed under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between WM ADASS and Shropshire Council.

A Memorandum of Understanding was put in place with 14 local authorities to enable WM ADASS to distribute the International Recruitment funding for local development projects. Funding distribution to West Midlands Employers, as a partner in the International Recruitment programme, was governed through a contract between West Midlands ADASS/Shropshire Council and West Midlands Employers.

WM ADASS is made up of 14 local authority Directors of Adult Social Care and is governed as a Branch Committee. The Lead Sponsor for International Recruitment is the Director for Adult Social Care in Shropshire. The development Director for WM ADASS supports the Lead Sponsor in her role, underpinned by a Programme Management Office (PMO). The International Recruitment Governance is set out in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Financial Governance WM International Recruitment Fund 23/24

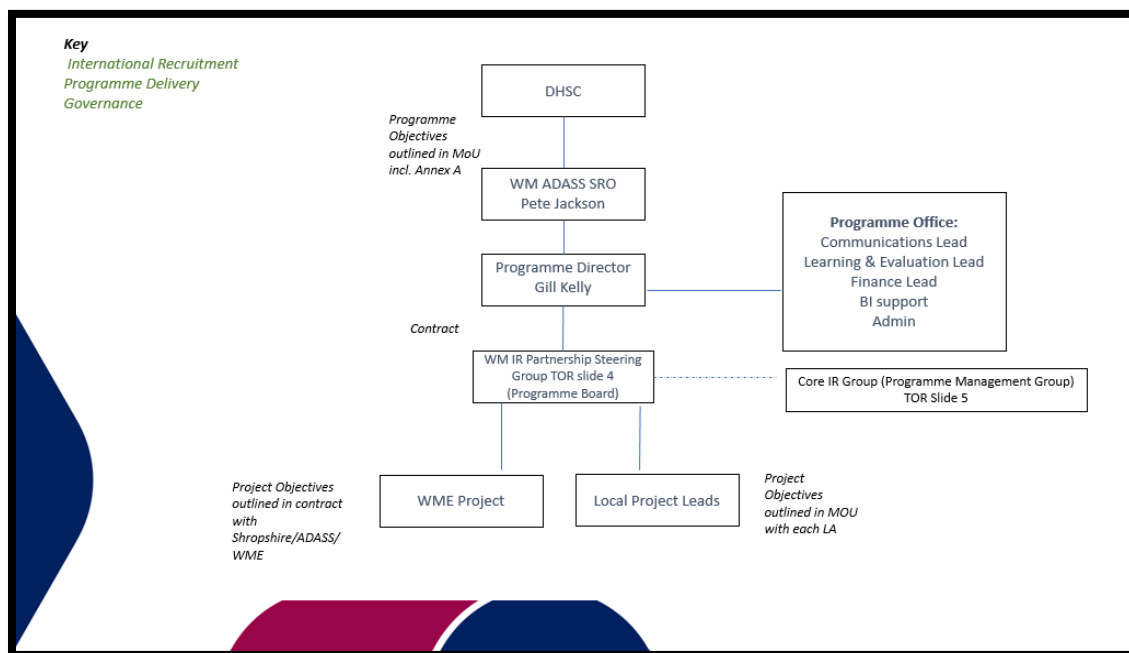


The Partners Steering Group was essential for the Double Diamond approach to the IR programme. The wide network of stakeholders engaged through the Partnership Steering Group enabled a wide discussion about the challenge of International Recruitment and the potential solutions developed to support International Recruitment in West Midlands. The Partnership Steering Group Terms of Reference are shown in appendix 2. At the start of the project, a core International Recruitment group was established to enable the programme office and programme sponsor to brainstorm and discuss ideas over a short period of time before the variety of ideas to support were funded and implemented. The Terms of Reference for the Core IR Group are given in appendix 3. Once the projects were up and running and the IR Steering Group was meeting monthly, the Core IR Group was no longer needed and was stood down in January 2024.

There were 2 main parts to the West Midlands IR project, the 1st as a regional collaboration for the establishment of a West Midlands International Recruitment Hub, providing a regional infrastructure of advice and support to all local authorities, care providers and recruits. The 2nd part was the devolved funding to local authorities' collaborative projects focused mainly on support to providers and recruits. This was underpinned by governance and programme management.

Programme management was established to support the project and all the partners, with regular review of objectives and opportunities to learn and share as the implementation of both regional and local projects developed as shown in Figure 3.

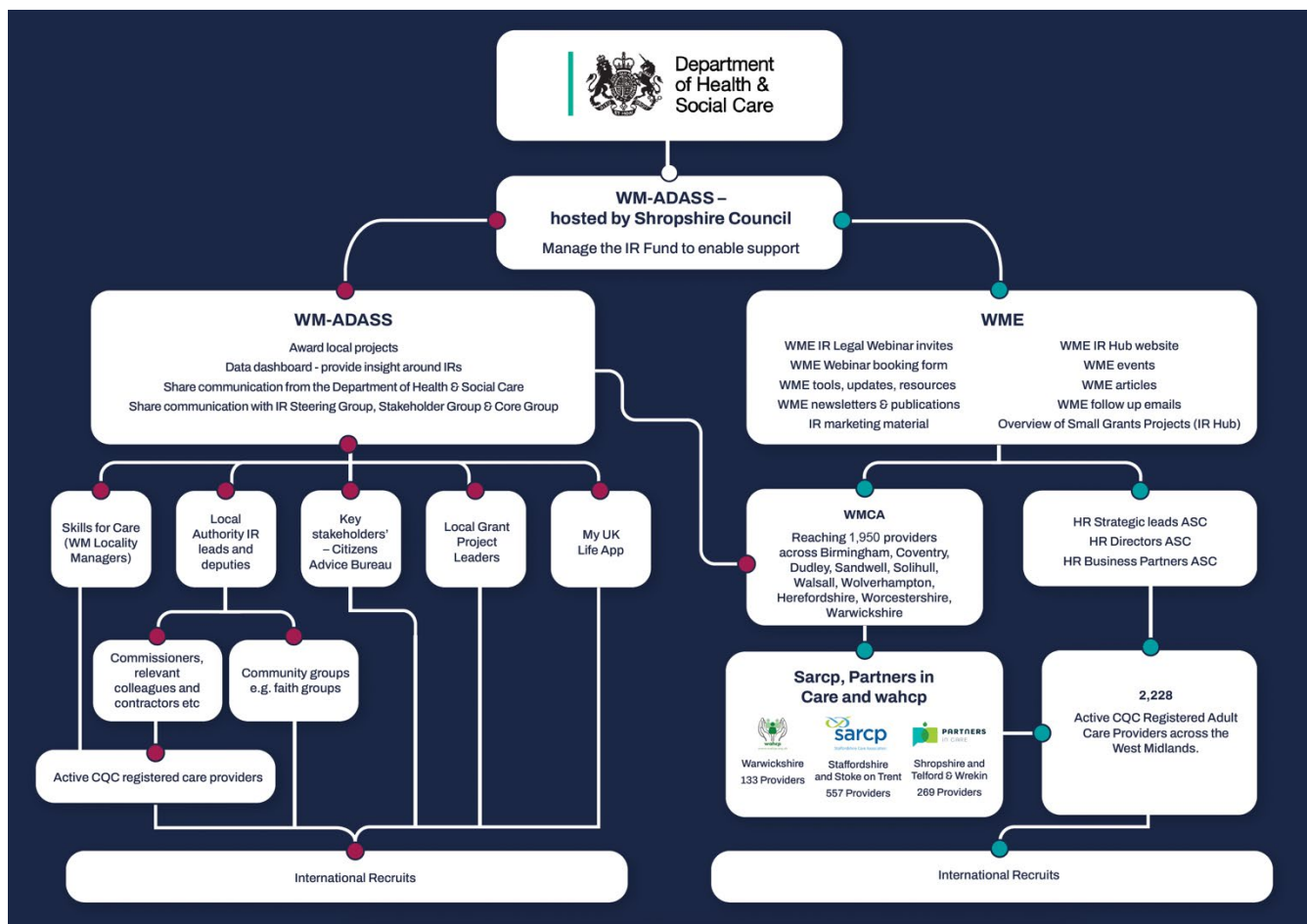
Figure 3. West Midlands International Recruitment Programme Governance.



The recruitment of a Programme Director who had experience with International Recruitment in the Eastern Region was successful in developing the project swiftly and in the cross-border learning between Eastern and West Midlands Regions. Establishing a programme office was more problematic. The Finance Lead was established swiftly with Shropshire Council as part of the initial governance arrangements, and a Learning and Evaluation Lead was engaged at an early stage of development in the programme. This facilitated early and ongoing learning which supported the Double Diamond approach to solution design, particularly to be agile and respond when projects were not working and make connections to support the success of other projects e.g. connecting project leads across the region on similar initiatives.

The engagement of a communications lead took longer than anticipated and once in place it became evident that the input would have been beneficial prior to the launch of the Regional Ethical International Recruitment Hub. Engaging dedicated administrative support for the project was also a challenge. Administration support for a programme based on collaboration is essential and in the absence of dedicated administrative support, the programme benefited from the experience of the WM ADASS Administrator and the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support meetings. The use of AI in project administration is a potential option to explore further.

The diagram below demonstrates how West Midlands collaboration for International Recruitment are working together, maximizing existing communication channels and skillsets, to share International Recruitment related support and information with Care Providers.



5. Learning & Evaluation

A learning and evaluation lead was commissioned as part of the programme management team from the start of the project which enabled the learning to include the process of setting up a collaborative project structure, as well as observing the learning of the project across the timeframe. Learning was an integral part of the project, which enabled a developmental approach, with regular feedback loops into the project governance to inform quarterly reporting to regional and national stakeholders, and to allow agility of response to issues that arose across the project.

Each project commissioned within the International Recruitment programme was led by a named project lead and the Learning and Evaluation Lead met with the Programme Director and each project lead monthly to discuss progress of the project against both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. These dialogues together with the discussions at the Programme Steering Group and Core IR Group provided a rich learning environment for the programme.

6. Logic Model Evaluation April 2024

The key activities planned to achieve the programme objectives were to:

- Establish, manage and maintain a regional IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer working jointly with WME and WMADASS

This was achieved within the planned timescales with the commissioning of specialist Human Resources and Legal Advice from Lester Aldridge in January 2024. The online hub went live in January 2024, the webinars began on 22nd February 2024 and the online support offer was available from January 2024.

- Devolve funding to sub-regions / local areas to lead specific initiatives – particularly focused on pastoral support, training and development, housing, support for International Recruits

The sub-regional grant programme to support local International Recruitment initiatives was administered in September and October 2023 and 8 local projects agreed against the IR Fund Criteria (see appendix 4) with funding from November 2023. The timing was tight to engage with local partners and enable them sufficient time to discuss and create potential solutions to the International Recruitment challenge.

A logic model approach was used to manage the actions against the objectives. The evaluation against the logic model is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Logic Model Evaluation

Activities	Progress	Comments
Establish, manage, and maintain a regional IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer working jointly with WME and WM ADASS.	Secured services with specialist HR firm to go live 1ST January to 30th June 2024.	Includes: Helpline; Webinars; Metrics; Case studies; Legal updates.
Develop and co-ordinate activity via Regional Hub of IR information, advice and guidance for councils and adult social care providers.	Secured support and services with specialist firm for independent law employment advice and support to go live 1st January to 30th June 2024.	The commissioning of Lester Aldridge enabled both legal and HR support to be available from January 2024.
Devolve funding to sub-regions / local areas to lead specific initiatives – particularly focused on pastoral support, training and development, housing, support for International Recruits.	International Recruitment (IR) Adult Social Care (ASC) programme Local Grants Process was established and run during September to January. £970k has been devolved to 10 local initiatives across 14 local authorities.	Plans are jointly developed between councils and adult social care providers with funding received by a lead local authority and devolved to other delivery partners as required. All proposals have met the DHSC grant criteria (see appendix 4).
Commission communications partner to develop a comms plan that ensures regional offer is well understood and accessible to all.	West Midlands Employers commissioned as communications lead.	The brief focused on promoting the support available via the IR Hub. However, bringing in a communications lead earlier to help understand all streams of work, develop messaging and would have been beneficial. It would also have been beneficial to factor in support to local grant leads in helping them communicate their offer to their region.
Commission an evaluation partner for an independent assessment of the programme's reach and impact.	Evaluation partner in place and capturing the learning and evaluation across the whole project.	
Ongoing programme management and liaison with DHSC team for progress updates and reporting.	Programme management secured and embedded through governance (see figure 3).	Programme Director recruited who was also leading Eastern Region IR project. This has enabled shared learning across regions.

7. Project Development Evaluation – Double Diamond Innovation Framework

The collaboration approach of the WM IR programme enabled good dialogue within the ‘Discover’ phase of the programme, enabling divergent thinking to define the challenge that the programme was aiming to address. The use of the Core IR Group at the start of the programme allowed for the testing out and discussion of the challenges. Initially the scale of International Recruitment in West Midlands was not apparent which led to the request from local authorities and care providers to identify which care providers had already recruited internationally, what were their experiences, and what numbers of International Recruits were in West Midlands and may require support. This was defining the challenge and led to the exploration of the West Midlands Data Hub to gain better intelligence about International Recruitment.

Solutions were being developed in the early ‘Discover’ and ‘Define’ phases, largely due to the pressure on time to implement the International Recruitment Fund. Some solutions developed at that stage were subsequently not implemented, whilst other initiatives were developed at a later stage in Q3 the ‘Develop’ phase when the International Recruitment challenge was becoming more defined. This was particularly in relation to growing knowledge and understanding across the 8 months of International Recruits who had fallen victim to unethical recruitment practices and subsequently were at risk of destitution, losing their right to work and facing deportation. Examples include the decision by Staffordshire and Stoke to change part of their local initiative to target displaced International Recruits (i.e. recruits who were at risk of losing their work visas due to care providers license suspended or due to insufficient work provided by care provider); and the commissioning of an AI prototype to reach and support the growing numbers of International Recruits.

The increasing understanding of unethical practice in international recruitment through Q2 and Q3, also led to the additional ‘Define’ phase of the risk to the care markets across the Region. Care providers were becoming at risk of license suspensions and revocations due to the engagement of International Recruits from unethical recruitment agencies or were at risk of suspensions and revocations because of their limited understanding of the legal and process requirements of International Recruitment. As the stakeholders across the West Midlands developed a greater understanding of the International Recruitment challenge, they were able to design solutions to meet the challenge more effectively. A great example is provided by the response in Coventry and Warwickshire to establish a collaboration with faith groups to identify displaced international recruits and match them with local providers.

The learning here was that the ‘Discover’ and ‘Define’ phase requires investment in time and dialogue to better understand the challenge to be able to create effective and targeted solutions for delivery.

As the 23/24 WM IR programme comes to the end of its defined period, the understanding and definition of the International Recruitment challenge is more refined. It is therefore a pivotal moment to review the solutions created to date and build on the solutions that are answering the defined challenge. It should be considered as the completion of one cycle of the Double Diamond

framework and the opportunity to go back to the 'Discover' and 'Define' phase for creating effective solutions.

Table 2: Double Diamond Framework Evaluation

Q1 Discover Phase complete:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance and procurement arrangements agreed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Hub prototyped by WM Employers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer scoped.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly progress and reporting updates in place.
Q2 Define Phase complete:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Hub is active
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding arrangements with local stakeholders (e.g. councils) agreed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications and evaluation partners commissioned.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer commissioned.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly progress and reporting updates achieved.
Q3 Develop Phase complete:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethical Recruitment Service Offer active
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local delivery of key projects active.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation commenced and interim (early learning) report completed December 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly progress and reporting complete.
Q4 Delivery ongoing:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service delivery is ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition phase for end 23/24 with all partners agreed as June 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final evaluation report end April 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a repeat of the Double Diamond Framework to refine the approach from June 2024

8. Defining the International Recruitment Challenge: The Sandwell Welfare Hub

Early intelligence about risks associated with International Recruitment emerged through collaboration with Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. Sandwell's Modern Slavery lead was identifying international recruits that had been unethically recruited into adult social care. Working with Sandwell to better understand the risks, the WM IR programme gained intelligence from the Sandwell Welfare Hub in October 2023. The Welfare Hub was set up with community partners to offer immediate support and guidance to those affected and to gain intelligence on what was happening to people. The welfare hub was well attended and is set out here in summary. It is a model that could be adopted in other areas and was instrumental in the development of International Recruitment initiatives across the West Midlands.

The Sandwell Welfare Hub on 10th October 2023 was a collaborative effort of 20 agencies & services. The event witnessed:

Diverse Participation: >50 professionals & volunteers dedicated their time and expertise to facilitate the event's operations, demonstrating their commitment to making a positive impact.

Wide Outreach: 69 skilled care workers from 9 different care agencies attended the event, reflecting the widespread reach and significance of the need for support.

Comprehensive Assistance: Attendees received a comprehensive range of services and assistance, including advice, assessments, and essential services spanning housing, health, immigration guidance, human rights advocacy, exploitation screenings, scams awareness, and financial advice.

Immediate Relief: Crucial welfare provisions, including food, clothing, and shopping vouchers, were made available to ensure immediate relief for attendees.

The Sandwell Welfare Hub yielded valuable insights into International Recruitment:

Diverse Attendees: The event brought together individuals from 9 different care agencies across various locations, underscoring the widespread need for support.

Financial Challenges: Eight individuals courageously disclosed that they had paid substantial sums to come to the UK, highlighting the financial challenges faced by many.

Skilled Workforce: 95% attendees assessed by West Midlands Care Association (WMCA), possessed the skills and qualifications necessary for employment in the care sector, emphasising the untapped potential within this group.

Immediate Support: Families left the event with essential provisions, including food, clothing, and supermarket vouchers, providing much-needed assistance.

Referrals for Ongoing Support: 3 individuals were referred into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for further support and assessment, emphasising the importance of ongoing assistance.

Safe Accommodation: One individual was placed in safe accommodation due to modern slavery concerns and continues to receive support.

Follow-Up Appointments: All 69 individuals have follow-up appointments with agencies for immigration advice, health screening and support, and modern slavery and exploitation support, ensuring continued assistance.

Left in destitution: 54 individuals disclosed they had come to the UK to work, and the care agency did not have work to give them, leaving them without work/financial security, many had been here since last year and not given any work

Changing trend: Workers stated that they were initially given work, but when more people started to arrive, their work declined from 30-40 hours to just 20 hours.

Non-Compliance with Sponsorship License: No individuals were working the 39 hours directed by the sponsorship license and, as a result, were not paid the £20,400 salary that is a condition of the sponsorship license.

The impact of the Welfare Hub is best articulated through the feedback received from attendees:

"I have never experienced this level of support and care in the UK. I am overwhelmed with gratitude."

"I found this really helpful, and I am no longer afraid. Thank you to everyone for all the welfare support."

9. Extending Collaborative Working

Extending collaboration is one of the West Midlands ADASS building blocks for resilience in adult social care and has been a principle used within the International Recruitment Project. It is through collaboration that some significant work to create an International Recruitment infrastructure across West Midlands has been achieved.

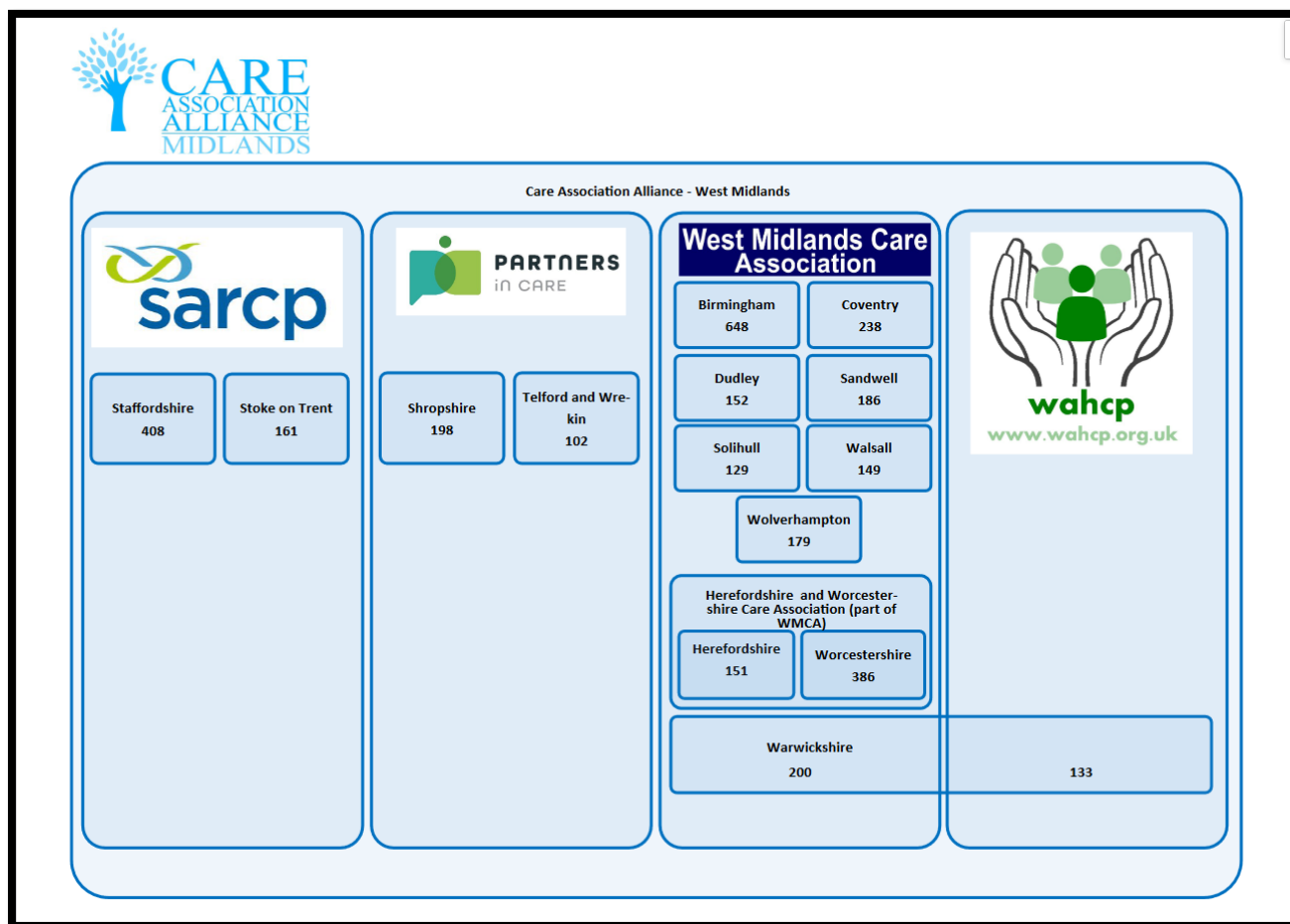
The governance established in West Midlands to implement the International Recruitment infrastructure supports collaboration around services and resources across organisations. It enabled collaboration at regional level and collaboration at a local level, building on the principle of subsidiarity, making the best use of resources that can be applied at regional level whilst benefiting from the community reach and initiative at local level.

10. Collaborative Working at Regional Level

WMCA Network & Support for Care Providers

WM ADASS has created a collaboration at regional level with West Midlands Care Association (WMCA) to use the existing resources and communications infrastructure of the care associations to engage care providers about International Recruitment and facilitate engagement with regional and local support offers. There are over 3000 care providers across the West Midlands and the majority are SME's.

Figure 4. West Midlands Care Association Alliance Networks



The Care Association Alliance as shown in figure 4 is an established network and infrastructure for WMCA to communicate and engage with the adult social care market.

A working relationship between WMCA and West Midlands Employers (WME) has already been established and is integral to the success of the centralised offering to the care associations. Working together with WME, WMCA is creating links for care associations with the WME/WM ADASS IR Hub, connecting the available regional resources including legal and HR advice and ensuring it is made available to care providers.

What was not apparent at the start of the programme was the number of care providers that are not members of any care association. Approximately one third of care providers are members of a local care association but the reach of the care associations is much greater than that as all care associations engage with the wider market on projects and networks, reaching over 70% of care providers.

This created a need to explore additional communication channels to reach all care providers across the West Midlands. The collaboration between the Communication Lead and the WMCA Communication Lead is crucial for the development of these new channels.

11. Collaborative Working at Local Level

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin

The needs of International Recruits as displaced workers initially came to light through the local Citizens Advice Service (CAS) as international staff were accessing CAS for support. Within this context cases of destitution were uncovered as some international staff had not been receiving a salary or been given the appropriate quality of accommodation. Many heart-breaking stories emerged.

Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin's proposal for IR programme funding was therefore defined by the understanding of the emerging problem of displaced International Recruits. The aim was to support re-deployment of displaced workers into secure adult social care employment.

Representatives from the local authorities, the CAB, and Partners in Care (Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin) convened together with a small group of supportive ethical employers and designed their initiative.

The aim was to provide a guaranteed interview for displaced workers. If the workers did not have the necessary skills, they would be supported to develop the necessary skills to qualify them for employment in the care sector. The funding was to be targeted on funding ethical employers' costs to enable them to employ displaced international workers. This would fund visa costs and the necessary support.

The intelligence from CAB was that many displaced workers were frightened – many having feared for their livelihood and wellbeing, and it was crucial that the new employers were able to support the wellbeing of their new staff. The fund would support people out of challenging situations into employment and the community with short term good accommodation for 6 months provided through a paid back salary scheme - as part of the package and with buddy support for the new member of staff.

To date 29 individuals have contacted CAB to indicate that they have been displaced, with CAB currently supporting 12 people. 3 have successfully been placed with new employers and sponsorships, with a further 9 individuals currently being supported into employment. The ethical employers have indicated that there is a significant challenge at present in getting licenses to employ the displaced workers, with waiting times increased to 16 weeks with the Home Office. A potential employer indicated that he could provide 33 places but is waiting for the approval of licenses. This is a known and large employer in the area.

12. Driving Change through Data and Evidence

Driving Change through Data and Evidence: WM ADASS has a track record of developing intelligence to support local authorities e.g. CQC readiness. This work has been built upon during the first stages of the International Recruitment programme to respond to the local authorities requests to better understand the emerging risks to international recruits and agency suppliers and care providers. Strengthening data capabilities for international recruitment provides intelligence to

inform service planning, workforce development and prevention activities, and support a focus on reducing inequalities; ensuring data to inform action is complemented by robust evidence around what works, when and for whom.

13. WM ADASS International Recruitment Sponsors Dashboard

WM ADASS engaged business intelligence advice support as part of the IR programme to consider what intelligence was available to support local authorities and care providers with adherence to legislation, sponsorship regulation and ethical recruitment. Early intelligence from Sandwell Local Authority indicated that incidents of non-ethical recruitment through a few recruitment agencies were emerging and would potentially impact local care market quality and sustainability. Understanding what early intelligence could assist local authorities and care providers was therefore a priority for WM ADASS.

Significant work has been undertaken to create an International Recruitment data dashboard showing all licenced sponsors in England who are also CQC-registered care providers and recording all instances of licence suspensions and revocations for West Midlands-based providers, including the number of workers affected by UKVI action. This has been received positively by the 14 local authorities in West Midlands and is supporting both the regional IR hub and collaboratives as well as the local IR initiatives.

Through the Programme Director's connection with the Eastern Region the data hub was expanded to include suspension and revocation data from the East of England and has subsequently been extended to include this data from South West and South East regions. The IR Dashboard has been shared with DHSC in view of its potential to support the mitigation of IR risks across all England regions.

Using the Double Diamond Innovation Framework the definition of the problem was created through dialogue with local authority partners as follows:

Problem Statement:

- Local Authorities recognise the importance of international recruitment to the care system, with recruits adding much needed capacity. However, data about international recruitment is limited and not sufficiently granular to allow local authorities to maintain oversight of the extent of IR activity within the local care market.
- Often the first indication that a local authority has of the involvement of international recruits within their market is on receipt of a formal notice of licence suspension or revocation from the Home Office – by which time the risk of worker displacement is significantly heightened.

Proposed Solution:

An "International Recruitment Sponsors Dashboard" combining Home Office and CQC datasets to present a full picture of CQC-registered sponsor organisations, registered care locations and

licence suspensions and revocations. The dashboard is intended to help “make International Recruitment a success” within Adult Social Care.

Approach:

WM-ADASS became concerned about a small number of cases within the region of sponsor organisations operating outside of the terms of their licence. It was apparent that there was no easy way of identifying the scale of the problem, with the information held in the daily Home Office list of licenced sponsor organisations being insufficient to develop meaningful insights. WM ADASS compiled a list of questions needed from the data and sought to identify the number and location of sponsor organisations that were likely to be active within the Adult Social Care market, by “matching” the organisation name within the Home Office International Recruitment (IR) Sponsors List against the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Active Directory of Registered Providers. This helped establish the extent and distribution of IR sponsorship within the care market.

Using the CQC data to identify all CQC registered locations associated with registered providers that are also IR Sponsors it was possible to identify providers that operate from multiple registered locations, often in several local authority areas and indeed regions. The inference from this was that recruits might be deployed by the sponsor across several registered locations – meaning the risk of “displacement” in the event of licence revocation could present in several local authority areas.

Data was processed from these two principal sources within a Microsoft Power BI dashboard to create helpful visualisations of the data, enabling dynamic searching by a range of features to provide greater market insight.

Data from West Midlands records of suspensions and revocations was incorporated to provide intelligence on “recruits at risk of displacement” and have asked for similar data relating to other regions to be made available.

The IR Sponsors dashboard has been presented to DHSC and the DASS regional IR Leads, gathering feedback on the presentation and usefulness of the dashboard and suggestions or requests for enhancement.

A “test user” group is in place to trial the use of the dashboard and have a rollout plan to make the Dashboard available to nominated users in each region and to each LA.

A “change request” was made within the NECS Capacity Tracker, recommending the collection of data about international recruits at location level.

Potential uses for the IR Sponsors dashboard include:

- Provides oversight of IR Sponsorship activity within region and LA boundaries, including awareness of the scale and distribution of international recruits;
- Supports development of targeted support offer to sponsor organisations;
- Supports development of targeted place-based support offer to international recruits, in particular those affected by licence revocation;

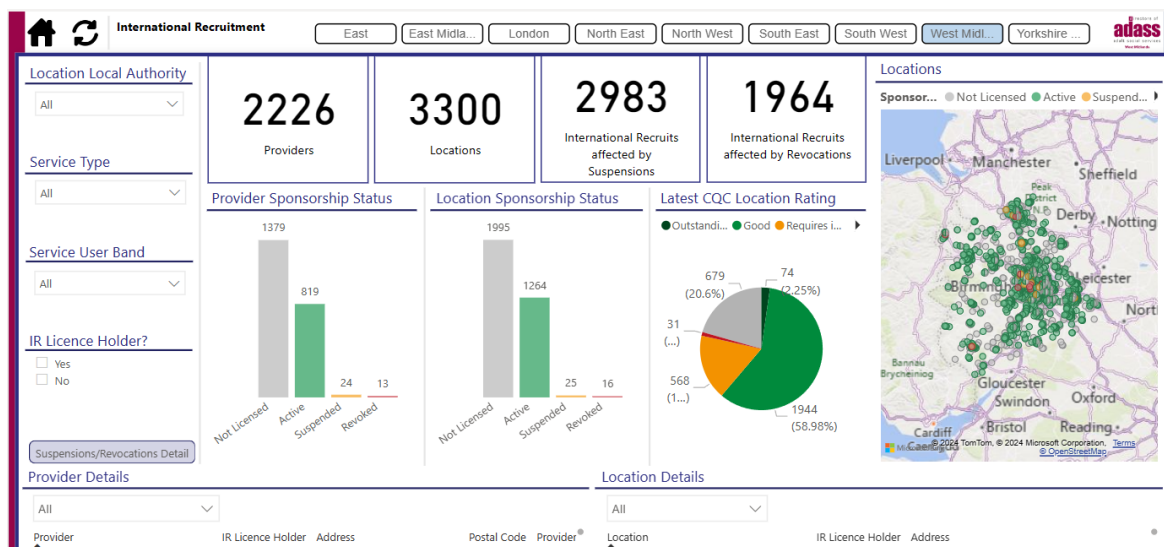
- Supports risk mitigation / contingency planning, particularly for areas with high concentrations of IR activity;
- Supports sharing of early warning (suspension) and issue escalation (revocation) notifications and implementation of risk mitigation plans aimed at redeploying recruits at risk of displacement

There is an IR Dashboard User Guide and access to the dashboard is enabled through a Microsoft Power BI “App”. Authorised users are sent a link to the App together with the user instructions.

Features on the Dashboard include:

- Providers and locations
- Suspensions and revocations of licences with affected number of international recruits
- CQC rating of locations

Figure 5. A graphic taken from the IR Data Hub and shows the position within the West Midlands region on 26th April 2024:



In brief:

- There are 2,226 CQC-registered care providers in the West Midlands, operating from 3,300 registered locations
- 819 providers currently hold an active IR sponsorship licence. These are associated with 1,264 locations in the region.
- 24 providers – operating from 25 locations – have had their licences suspended by UKVI pending investigation. 2,983 recruits are employed by providers who are subject to suspension.
- 13 providers in 16 locations have had their licences revoked. There are 1,964 international recruits affected by revocation and who are at risk of having their skilled worker visas rescinded.

UKVI is currently finalizing a data sharing agreement to provide information about the number of Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) allocated to each licenced sponsor, and the number of CoS that have been used by them. This data will enable dashboard users to identify providers with potential “spare” capacity who might be able to offer jobs to displaced workers, thereby mitigating the risk that large numbers of recruits are unable to work due to visa cancellation.

Officials at DHSC have commented that the IR Dashboard “... has been nothing short of transformational in changing the course of national policy on various levels including:

- Contextualising risks arising from international recruitment and the knock-on impact on continuity of care.
- Assuring UK Visas and Immigration about the inherent value of providing aggregated sponsor data to local authorities to not only empower them in carrying out their statutory duties but also enable them to help direct enforcement activity that helps disrupt unscrupulous actors.
- Addressing a ministerial priority by helping facilitate a process that supports improved in-country matching of displaced overseas recruits and reputable providers.

14. Strengthening Community Assets

The West Midlands International Recruitment model is targeted at harnessing and strengthening community-based care providers through a resilient and competent workforce. The key service development was to create a regional ethical international recruitment hub, providing HR and legal advice and support to all care providers and local authorities. With most adult social care providers classed as SME’s there was limited ability for many care providers to afford and access the HR and legal advice and support that is needed to navigate the legal frameworks to recruit internationally and to ensure license and CQC criteria is maintained.

West Midlands Employers: Developing an IR Regional Ethical Recruitment Service & Hub.



WM SOCIAL CARE

• International Recruitment Hub •



West Midlands Employers support 32 local authority employers with recruitment and employment and were commissioned as a key partner to support the West Midlands IR project. A project lead was appointed from the start and has been a driving force in the development of the IR Hub.

Through co-production with local stakeholders, WM Employers scoped, developed, and commissioned a HR and legal IR infrastructure organized as a Hub that can be accessed remotely, enabling reach into rural and urban communities, and crucially to the wide range of SME care providers.

As part of the learning and evaluation, the WME project lead and the appointed legal partner, Lester Aldridge provided the details about the development and the impact of the IR Hub. Lester Aldridge are one of the largest law firms in the south of England, with offices in Bournemouth, Southampton, and London. They specialise in providing advice and support to the care sector and comprise an award-winning dedicated Care team who are recognised nationally for the high-quality advice and assistance they provide on regulatory matters to care providers and local authorities. They work closely with their Employment & HR team, who specialise in providing care sector-specific advice on business immigration, employment, and HR matters.

The team are picking up the difficulties that care providers have been having since January 2024 with delays for applications for sponsorship or renewal of licenses, with reported 1600 applications on the waiting list. The concerns raised are also providers who are in urgent situations when police have turned up saying that they are investigating potential allegations of modern slavery and

providers are calling for advice. The Hub is also starting to identify people whose employers have had their licenses revoked and the international recruits are needing to find new employment. Initially there were insufficient safeguards in place for International Recruitment of care workers which has created the problem of displaced care workers that the sector is now understanding. People are also having a hard time keeping up with changes in policies that are happening.

The support provided is giving care providers information that enables them to be more confident about international recruitment. Figure 6 below summarises the webinars and support offered through WME IR Hub between January to April 2024.

January to April

4/10 webinars

Legal and HR queries

- 7 LA's via webinar signposting
- Self-referral 2 SMS direct HUB
- Q & A 36 resolved 100%
- Legal support other 13 WME **signposting**

January to April

4/10 webinars

- WME direct reach 507
- Total attendee's joint comms 321

Comms support via WMCA and LA

January to April 4/10 webinars poll results

- 93 responses out of 321 attendees 29%

Average ratings across 4 polls out of 5

- Content 4.8
- Comms 4.8
- IR knowledge 3.6

The numbers contacting the helpline and hub have increased as Lester Aldridge has noted from contacts across England that West Midlands has gained a positive reputation on its approach for International Recruitment and that is attracting concerned care providers and international recruits.

The West Midlands Ethical IR Hub is a one stop shop information and guidance to local authorities and 3000 care providers across West Midlands as demonstrated through the weblink below:



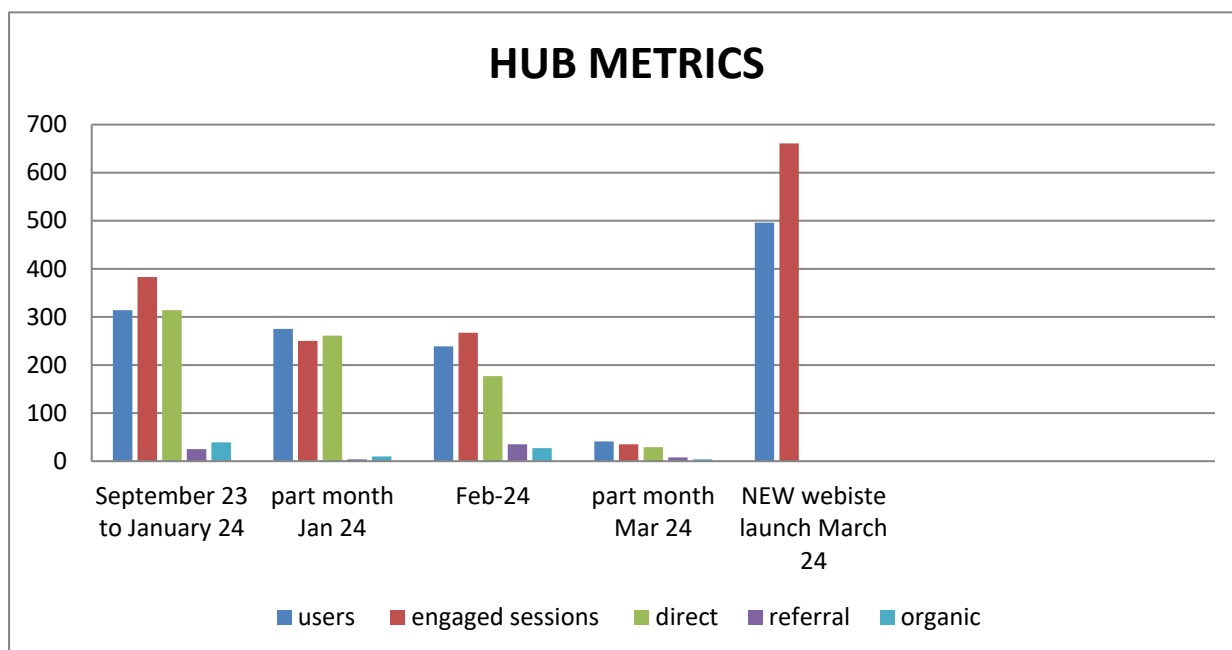
www.irwestmids.co.uk

The Hub is there to support small providers who do not have access immediately to legal and HR advice. The hub holds a lot of information for local authorities and providers including:



The West Midlands International Recruitment Hub monitors the interactions with the service and the number of users, number of engaged sessions, direct contacts, referred contacts are monitored monthly. The Hub was initially launched in January 2024 and had a boosted launch with the launch of the webinars in March 2024. The engagement of a communications lead and network connections via the West Midlands Care Association to all care associations has boosted the engagement with the Hub. This is shown in Figure 7 below, and is detailed in appendix 5, West Midlands Employers Hub Launch report March 2024.

Figure 7. West Midlands IR Hub Metrics on Engagement January to end March 2024



15. WME Ethical Framework Audit Tool for Care Providers

WM Employers co-created an audit tool with partners and stakeholders to support Independent Care.

Providers to have a better understanding of the steps and information needed when “making a decision” on agency supplier. Following extensive research, and information that came to light in early stages of the programme about displaced international care workers, license suspensions and revocations WM Employers designed tools to enable and empower care providers to have everything in one place and use this as a robust tool with a vision of best practice being undertaken. Going forward this will bring about changes that can support and embed knowledge and bring about a reduction in displaced workers, suspensions, and revocations. It will be a legacy beyond this project, and is available on the digital link given below:



<http://digipub.htdl.co.uk/books/ttts/>



There are 3 parts to the audit tool to complement the IR Hub with the products and services on offer to care providers:

Part 1 provides an IR specific programme questionnaire for use with agency suppliers already on the approved list of Ethical Recruiters NHS. Whilst the suppliers will have gone through a process to confirm their understanding of the IR Code of Practice (legislation) the questions used do not look at some of the practicalities of recruiting Internationally but focus on the knowledge around the Code of Practice only. The questions cover: supplier information; services and sourcing; training; legislation, best practice, and safeguarding.

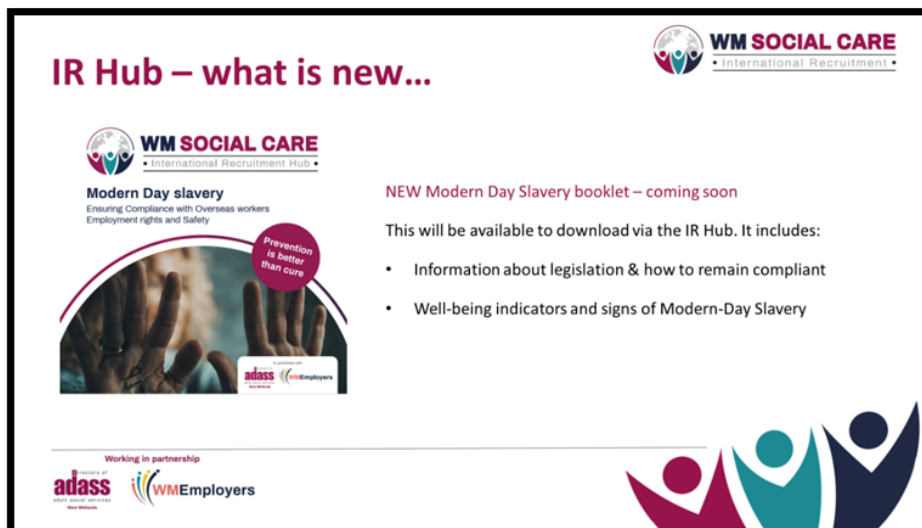
Part 2 is a tool for Independent Care Providers to cross reference supplier answers with legislation, policy, safer recruitment, and best practice for international recruitment. The questionnaire and reference document can support quality assurance and enable care providers to have a clear understanding of their requirements when choosing a supplier.

Parts 1 and 2 are designed to work alongside Part 3.

Part 3 is the Ethical Recruitment E-Booklet, which has prompts for care providers to ensure all

areas are covered from licenses, visas, sourcing, compliance, onboarding, and pastoral care.

Building on the greater understanding of the potential risks of unethical recruitment practice for some international recruits, WME has designed an advice booklet with partners about Modern Slavery, which will be published and available on the Hub in May.



IR Hub – what is new...

WM SOCIAL CARE
International Recruitment Hub

Modern Day slavery
Ensuring Compliance with Overseas workers
Employment rights and Safety

Prevention is better than cure

NEW Modern Day Slavery booklet – coming soon

This will be available to download via the IR Hub. It includes:

- Information about legislation & how to remain compliant
- Well-being indicators and signs of Modern-Day Slavery

Working in partnership
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The WME Ethical IR Hub holds considerable resources about training and development, pastoral support; legal advice; data and insight about international recruitment; buddying schemes for international recruits; support for refugees and international recruits.



Hub Communications

WM SOCIAL CARE
International Recruitment Hub

West Midlands – working together to support international recruits

- ✓ Training and development
- ✓ Legal advice
- ✓ Data and insight about international recruitment
- ✓ Pastoral support
- ✓ Support for refugees and international recruits
- ✓ Buddying Schemes for international recruits

Local International Recruitment programmes -
have been designed and developed to support local needs.

Please contact your Care Association or Local Authority to find out more about what is available in your area.

www.irwestmids.co.uk

Working in partnership
adass **WMEmployers**

Free legal webinars have been set up and there is good engagement with small providers across the West Midlands. There has been a lot of requests from providers to engage and find out how to recruit international care workers ethically and legally. The webinars cover wide-ranging topics and it has provided an open forum for care providers to ask questions for which previously they would have been reluctant to ask as may have thought they would need to engage and pay for legal advice.

The main themes for webinar include information about how you get started on international recruitment; How you manage your sponsorship management systems; CQC regulations; and How we can use best practice; How to retain overseas recruits; and How to avoid unconscious bias to have best recruitment.

Questions related to 'checklist for compliance to recruit international recruits' including practical support about storage and handling of documents ensuring they have hard copies as well as electronic copies. This may seem like a simple issue but without this practical advice in place the care providers could risk non-compliance. A resource from the webinars will be FAQ's to go on IR Hub website following webinars and the webinars are recorded and can be shared as resources after the events.

Free IR Legal Webinars



Webinar	Session 1	Session 2
Overview of international recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update of recent and upcoming changes to the rules for recruiting overseas staff. An overview of the international recruitment sponsorship process. Some tips around ethical recruitment. 	22 nd February	9 th May
Sponsorship management focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance on using the Sponsorship Management System, an online tool, to manage your sponsorship licence and certificates of sponsorship. A review of Right to Work duties and discussion about what needs to be done when undertaking Right to Work checks. 	7 th March	23 rd May
Overseas recruitment – compliance focus	14 th March	6 th June
Managing and retaining overseas staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overview of duties as a sponsor after employment starts. Tips on how to integrate overseas staff into organisations. What costs can be recovered if an international recruit's employment ends. 	11 th April	13 th June
Managing unconscious bias in international recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overview of effective recruitment practices. Tips and tricks for interviewing objectively. 	25 th April	20 th June

Working in partnership




- There is an opportunity to ask our legal experts questions at the end of every webinar.
- All webinars take place from 10am-11:15.
- You can register for our webinars here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z3T27PP>
- The sign up form is also on the homepage of the IR Hub.



WME Communications Lead has developed a regular E-Bulletin to send to care providers across West Midlands using the network capabilities of WMCA. The E-Bulletin provides essential contact details for legal and HR advice helpline and spotlights initiatives for international recruitment across the region that have been supported through the local IR grant, e.g. Coventry & Warwickshire which is detailed later in this report.

E-Bulletin





What's new?

Welcome to our monthly E-Bulletin. This edition covers the results of research, a look at new changes to the rules for recruiting overseas staff, and a spotlight on the local IR Projects, as the support available and a chance to hear from the local IR Projects that are currently underway.

We are delighted to let you know the International Recruitment Hub has been opened with more information about the local projects and resources available.

All CQC Registered Adult Care Providers and Local Authorities across the West Midlands can access this guidance to support:

- Recruitment across the workforce
- Efforts to attract and retain staff and ensure the care sector
- Efforts to maintain high standards of care across the West Midlands

[Access the IR Hub](#)

FREE LEGAL HELPLINE

The IR Hub legal helpline is available until the end of June 2024.

All CQC Registered Independent Adult Social Care Providers across the West Midlands are entitled to 30 minutes free legal advice.

Helpline: 01202 786 107

Email: irhub@wmca.co.uk

More information on the IR Hub can be found on the IR Hub website.

International Recruitment E-booklet

Recruiting from overseas can be challenging, using a recruitment agency that is experienced and specialises in international recruitment can save time, costs and ensure ethical recruitment.

WMCA has created free webinars and developed a FREE E-Bulletin, containing Top Tips, which can be accessed on the IR Hub. This also includes a checklist, which you can use when speaking with Managed Service Providers and agencies, to help you ask the right questions and make a more informed decision.

Our IR E Bulletins share news and IR related support. They also shine a spotlight on the local IR Projects, as the projects progress.

In our second E Bulletin, we share more about the project led by Coventry & Warwickshire Local Authorities.

The next issue will be published on the 16th May

Visit the News area on the IR Hub – www.irwestmids.co.uk – for more information



16. Advice from Hub Development for Other Areas and Future plans from learning:

If another region wanted to set up a hub it is important that they research with their partners what the area needs. Then it is crucial to 'Do your homework on the organisations that you want to work with e.g. legal and HR support'. When setting up an online line, it is important to understand the technical requirements for a website and get the support that is needed and the branding for the Hub needs to be strong so that people can quickly identify.

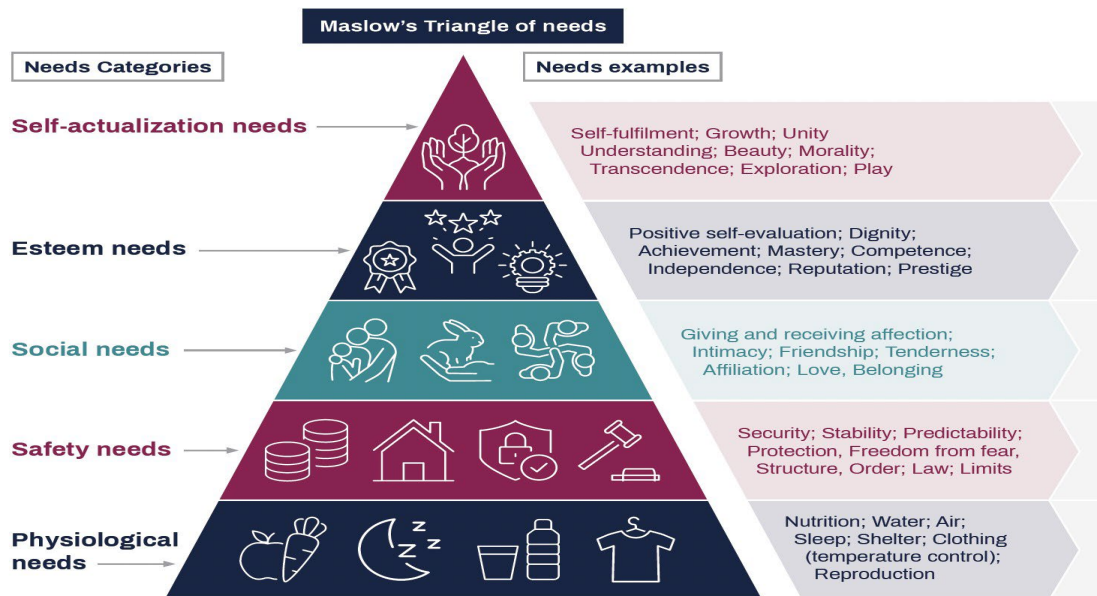
Lester Aldridge stated that it was helpful that West Midlands Employers had a plan in place and was clear on the support that was needed. Good communication and collaboration have been essential in the creation and implementation of the Hub and in its success in supporting care providers and local authorities.

Moving forward, West Midlands Employers suggest that the whole challenge of workforce recruitment and retention for adult social care requires additional consideration, perhaps using the Double-Diamond model to 'Discover' and 'Define' the challenge and then co-create the solutions for delivery. International Recruitment is one strand of work to support workforce challenges, but there is opportunity to develop a sustainable model from this hub to support small care providers for all recruitment and retention. For Example, the ethical audit tool to ask right questions for ethical supply can be used for whole of agency supply.

West Midlands Employers were cognizant of the importance of providing pastoral care to international recruits to help people to settle into their new community and their new workplace. Learning from research on recruitment of overseas nurses highlighted the importance of pastoral care to include assistance with settling into accommodation, making sure people knew how to access public services, that people and their dependents were safe, able to access food, and communicate with their community (Palmer, 2021). Without this support the research indicated a significant risk to the mental health of international recruits and their dependents.

To ensure that the needs of international recruits were a priority for recruiting agencies and care providers, WM Employers in partnership with WM ADASS and stakeholders developed Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to guide support to international recruits. This is illustrated in the E-Booklet for care providers to guide choices of agency suppliers.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs was also used as part of the assessment criteria for the West Midlands local IR grant application process to ensure that the local initiatives would target support to the International Recruits for pastoral care as well as for higher needs such as training and development.



The model is shown as a pyramid. On the lower levels, there are basic human needs that must be met before a person can move up to the peak of the pyramid and enjoy their full potential.

From the bottom to the top, the pyramid shows the following needs:

- physiological needs
- safety needs
- love and belonging
- esteem
- self-actualization

For international recruits their most important needs on arrival will be practical ones such as food and warmth, accommodation, access to finances, and safety. Moving up the hierarchy, international recruits will also need to build connections and engage with their new communities. The workplace will be an important part of their community. Once their more fundamental needs are met, ongoing support can help a person build confidence and self-esteem, resulting in personal fulfilment.

17. West Midlands Care Association

West Midlands Care Provider Association DBS Checks:

WMCA established a service through the IR Fund to pay and organise for DBS checks for new international recruits. The funding will provide approx. 1000 searches for providers based within West Midlands, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Warwickshire. To date 427 DBS checks have been completed and the data from those checks indicate 3 main origins of international recruits: Nigeria (40%); India (17%); Zimbabwe (16%) and the ratio of 68% female to 32% male.

Proud to Care: Resource for Care Providers

WMCA is currently working with WM ADASS and partners to create a Displaced Individuals Register by local authority area. It is developed and waiting to go live to enable signposting of care providers to contacts at local authorities. This work has been based on work previously carried out by WMCA with Solihull and

Wolverhampton local authorities as a job matching project. This is a significant creation of a new solution as the International Recruitment challenge is being better defined and will play a significant role in the regional support offer to local authorities and international recruits to place valuable displaced social care workers into vacant social care posts. The challenge will be co-ordinating this with the task of applying and gaining the correct sponsorship licences in a timely manner to avoid deportations.

The register will be publicly viewable through WMCAs recruitment website. When WMCA receives notice of a revocation it will post anonymised details of the general geographic location and approximately how many individuals are affected and therefore looking for employment. Care providers are encouraged to sign up to be notified when a new notice is posted. The rationale being that the vast majority of care providers who have recruited from overseas have had a very positive experience regarding the calibre of the recruits and would be open to recruiting more if they have available vacancies and sponsorship licenses. Local authorities who are trying to place displaced individuals struggle to identify providers who fit into this category, particularly when they are outside the local authority border so the plan is that this register may go some way to connect interested parties.

The register has the potential to also operate as a mechanism for collecting employment data from displaced individuals looking for work as WMCA have already developed online data collection mechanisms from its previous job matching project with Solihull and Wolverhampton. This could also potentially be brought into play where there is a suspension notice or for recruits who are unhappy with their sponsored employer and are looking to move to another employer with a Certificate of Sponsorship.

18. International Recruitment Buddying Scheme

WMCA is administering a Buddying Support Scheme covering the local authority areas of Birmingham, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton, and Worcestershire.

It is widely accepted that pastoral care is an important and often overlooked element of international recruitment. For many of these recruits, moving to the UK is a major cultural change and any support the employer can put in place to mitigate this should be encouraged. Buddying is a long-established practice as part of induction processes and indeed does not have to be limited to those recruited from overseas.

Buddying involves allocating a member of staff (or several) who acts as a friendly point of contact to the recruit outside of the formal management and HR structure. The buddy is there to give practical advice on how things work in the UK and to be someone the new recruit can turn to for informal advice.

Barriers to setting up successful buddying schemes are mainly knowledge of what a buddying scheme entails and lack of time amongst staff to act as buddies. WMCA's project addresses both these issues by making online resources available on practical advice on setting up a buddying scheme

(<https://www.wmca.care/recruitment/international/resources/buddyingadvice>)

backed up by a weekly webinar for the duration of the project. Providers can also apply for a small cash grant of 1200 pounds to go towards staff backfill costs or other costs associated with buddying.

The grant process is a simple online application form and WMCA authorise and pay the grant depending on application criteria. The grant is paid in 2 amounts. 1) on attendance of a buddying webinar 2) after return of an employee survey about the support they have received (usually 6 weeks later).

19. Staffordshire & Stoke

Staffordshire and Stoke local authorities are working in collaboration with Staffordshire Association of Registered Care Providers (SARCP) to support care providers through the provision of culturally sensitive training, and information, advice and guidance, to support international recruits to successfully settle into their employment and local community.

Workshops have been held for care providers and has highlighted the need for ongoing support to SME care providers to understand the legal and regulatory requirements for international recruitment. The local initiatives have been able to signpost care providers to the West Midlands IR Hub for additional legal and HR advice and support. Providers indicated that they needed clarity on changes to policy for international recruitment as they have found it hard to keep up with the rapid changes.

Staffordshire and Stoke colleagues are using the WM ADASS IR data hub to gain intelligence about the International Recruitment risks to the care market. International Recruits that are displaced are reaching out to request support to find new placements with care providers, but the challenge is the time to identify new providers and ensure that they have the sponsorship licences to support any new International Recruits. There is a concern that there is a waiting list for new sponsorship licences which increases the risk of running out of time to support individuals into new placements.

Staffordshire and Stoke have created an Information, Advice and Guidance pack for employees and employers and has started a collaboration with Bridgit Care to make this pack accessible as a digital support pack via My UK Life prototype.

Initially, Staffordshire and Stoke had planned to use part of the local IR grant to recruit adult social care nurses, but the intelligence gathered in working with the local care providers indicated that the need was in supporting existing international recruits through training and placement of displaced recruits. An agile approach was taken and the grant funding allocated was redirected to increase the training and support for care providers and international recruits.

20. Balancing Technology and Humanity

Balancing Technology and Humanity: The International Recruitment programme provides a great opportunity to enhance support for social care staff, unpaid carers and those receiving care. WM ADASS is working with tech companies and data analysts to develop AI signposting and support that can offer different languages and culturally specific support. This will be developed over the coming months.

My UK Life

My UK Life is an innovative proof of concept platform aimed at enhancing ethical recruitment practices and providing comprehensive support to international recruits within the adult social care sector across the West Midlands. This platform will serve as a Regional Hub, offering information, advice, and guidance while also incorporating pastoral support initiatives for international recruits.

The platform will integrate and build upon existing programs to create a centralised hub that simplifies access to vital information and facilitates the settlement process for international recruits. Through AI-driven self-help features and signposting, the platform will offer a more personalised service, reducing the need for face-to-face interactions and consequently, associated costs.

Key Deliverables are:

Development and launch of a proof-of-concept model by Spring 2024, including:

- A Self-Help Portal providing informational resources, guidance, and AI-personalised advice for independent navigation of life and work in the UK.
- The WhatsApp Support Function offers real-time assistance from various expert personas, with the convenience of multilingual support.
- An Employment Opportunities Area with job listings, resources for job transitions, and personalized job alerts.
- The feasibility of a Community Forum is being explored to allow immigrants, organizations, and employees to connect and share opportunities.
- Evaluation mechanisms for the solution to support evaluation beyond the proof-of-concept.

The prototype is being developed with engagement of local authority partners, care providers, and international recruits. The prototype is developed to connect with the WM IR Hub and with other local initiatives such as those developed in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, which signposts support to CAB and other local support services.

Figures 8 to 11. Provide illustrations of the AI prototype; developed by Bridgit Care ‘My UK Life’

Figure 8.

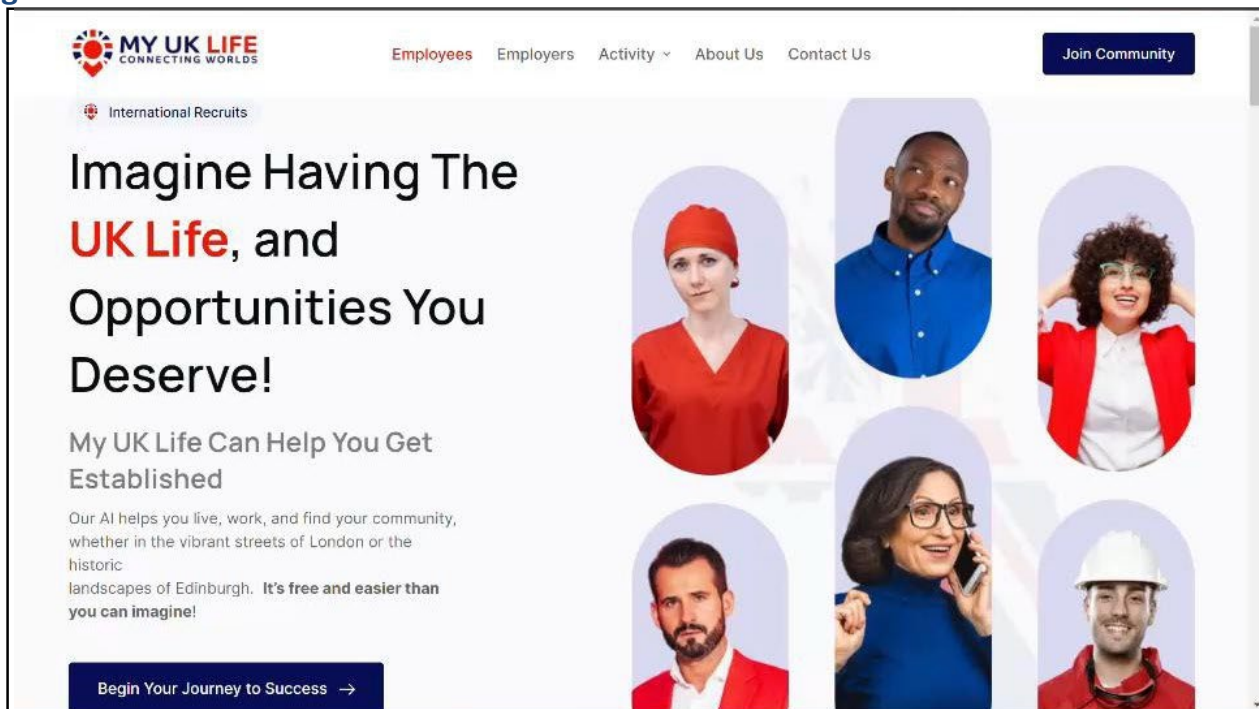


Figure 9.

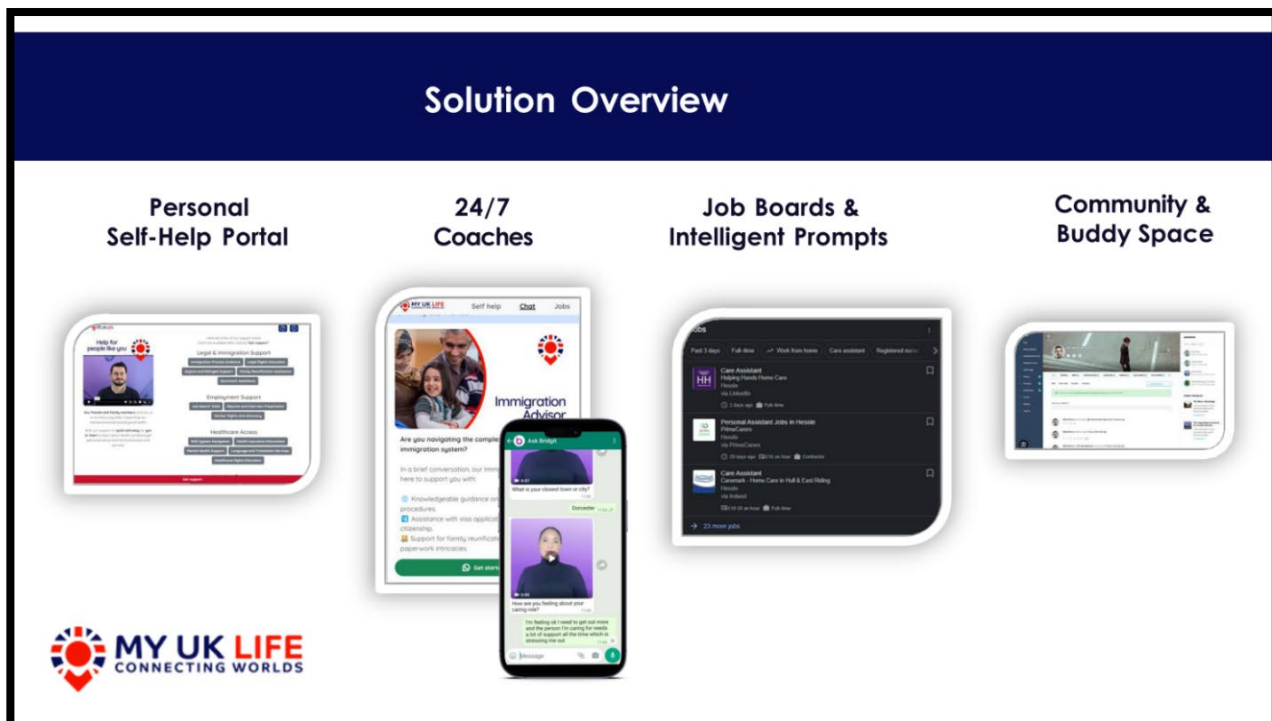


Figure 10.

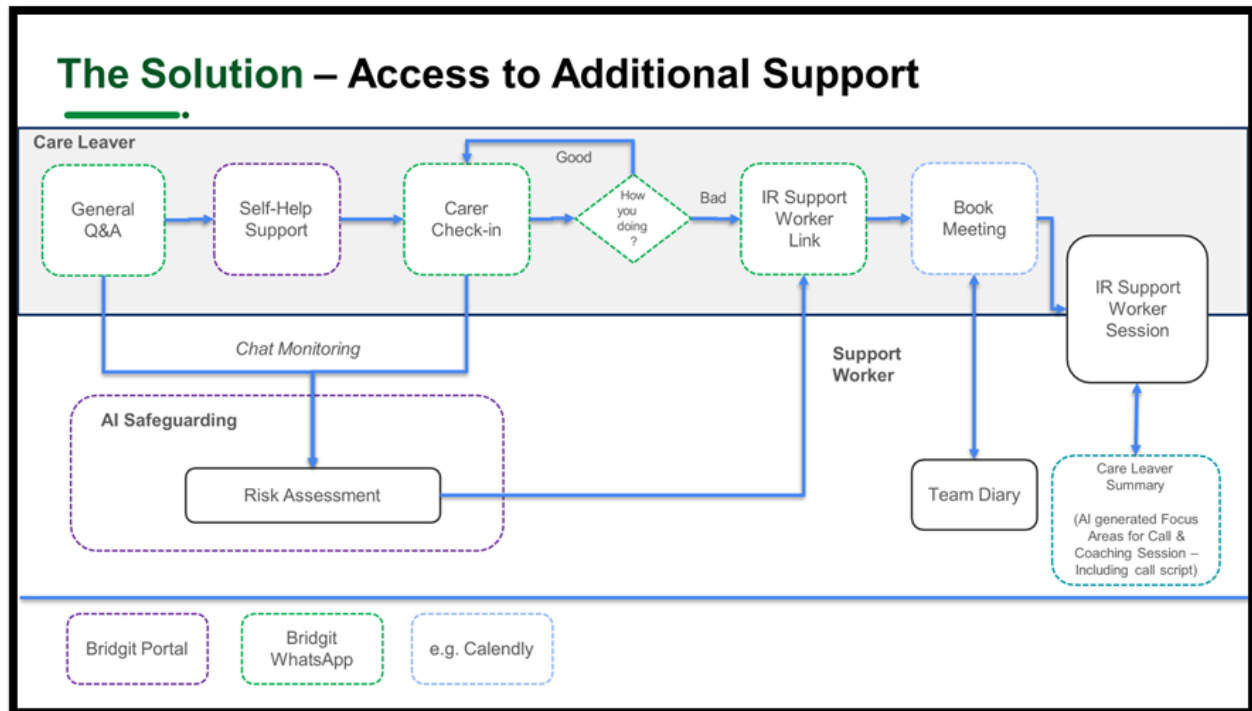
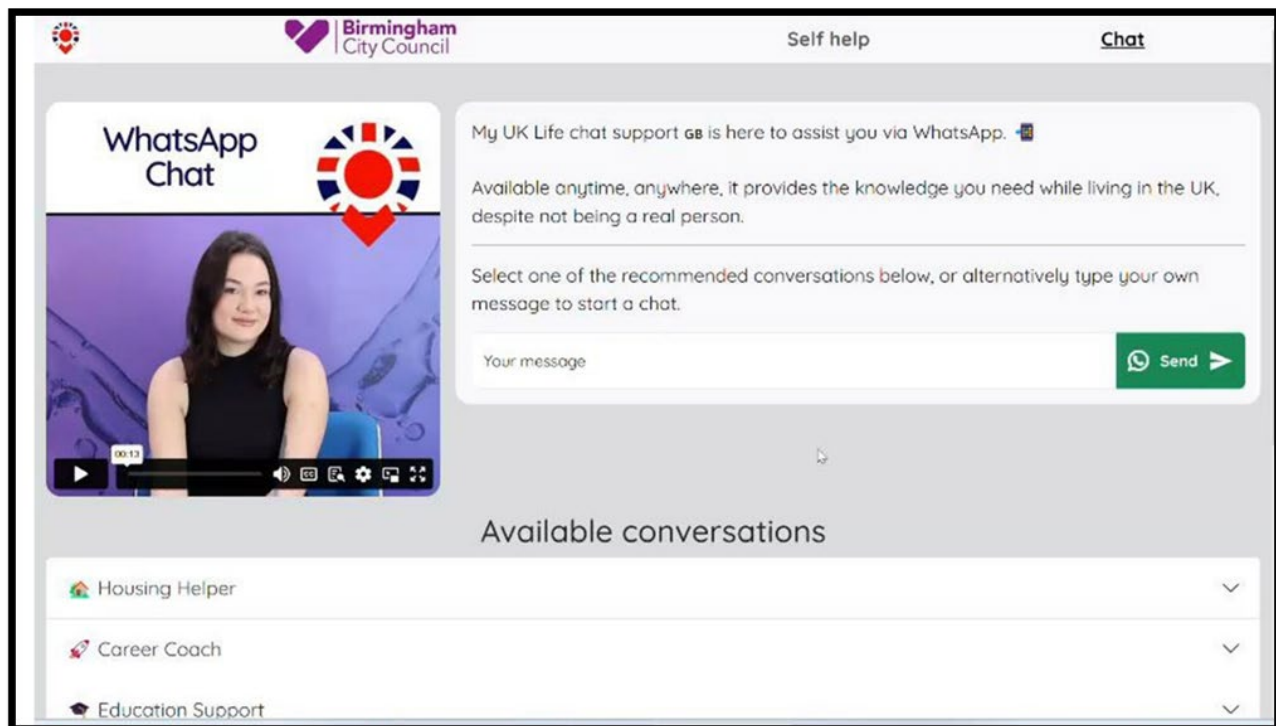


Figure 11.



21. Transforming Social Care Careers

We have heard from domiciliary care providers how recruiting international care staff since the changes in February 2022 has transformed their capacity to offer flexible working for local recruits. International recruits tend to work full-time and thus provide the much-needed capacity to enable providers to respond to local recruits' needs. This has improved retention and enabled providers to offer more care packages to local authorities and health systems. Bringing new skills into the social care workforce through international recruitment is also improving the outlook for careers in adult social care to maintain a good supply of highly skilled workers to effectively meet sector demand.

22. Solihull Care Providers

Solihull is working in collaboration with domiciliary care providers who provide ethical recruitment to international recruits to create good practice guide and support for all providers.

Two of Solihull main domiciliary care providers contributed to the learning on international recruitment. Social Care Academy deliver care services for children, young people and adults within Solihull, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire. Nationwide Care Services has 11 branches based in the Midlands and look after people within their own homes with illness, ill health, physical disabilities, elderly, frail. Nationwide Care Services have 1300 employees, of which 300 are international recruits.

Both organisations started to recruit internationally because they had a lot of difficulties in recruiting local carers. Initially they started international recruitment as a trial to see if it worked. We wanted to recruit staff that would stay and provide stability in the workforce and recruited staff with a five-year visa. Prior to international recruitment, both providers had had to hand back care hours to local authorities due to the lack of staff to support. Since recruiting internationally, both organisations have been able to provide 100% of all packages against the care frameworks they have with local authorities.

Both organisations have made international recruitment a success. They have found that culturally there has been a positive response for carers that were able to cater for people of different ethnicity. The qualifications and the experience that international carers have brought to the service is of a higher standard. They were able to understand a lot more in terms of complex care because a lot of the international staff that do apply are physiotherapists, doctors, and nurses.

Both organisations have recruited staff themselves and not through independent agencies and have been very careful in terms of recruiting the right people and making sure the fact that they recruit getting staff to stay within the business firstly, but also have the knowledge, skills and experience from their past employment or education, which enhances the service. All recruits are expected to drive; have a good command of English; receive accommodation provided by the employer for 3 months to settle in; and are provided with support to access community such as faith groups; schools; GPs; community centres, so that they can settle into their community and are not lonely.

Both providers introduced good practice for induction training of International Recruits that is also improving the training and development of local recruits and existing social care staff. They have established a 12-week induction programme to ensure all new recruits are at the same standard. The training includes emotional intelligence training and development to ensure that recruits are competent in communication skills and culturally aware of behaviours to support their clients.

International Recruits also provided insight to us about their experience:

'I've been here for 15 months now. I wanted to find a job where I can manage to get a better salary to send my kids to school. I had established a career in chemistry back home, but it appeared as if it wasn't paying me very well, and I decided to change my career completely. So I decided to embark on this new career in care in the UK'.

'I would say they should be able to manage their finances here. They have big bills that you must pay at the end of every month. So it's different from our country. What I'm saying is that you have to be able to manage your, your finances properly.'

'So the carers within domiciliary care, they have to drive from client to client. So have to pay for insurance and fuel, and receive mileage payments from the employer to help'.

'I would like to be a nurse, qualified nurse.'

'Well, as for me, I would love to continue with this career in care. Yes. Taking up a management post is as time progresses as I as opportunities open in the future'.

23. Shifting the Narrative

The International Recruitment programme provides a significant opportunity to invest in the adult social care workforce through the development of a regional hub, with access for all care providers to HR advice and legal advice to promote and support ethical recruitment and retention.

The local IR initiatives are promoting the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of the international workforce. These initiatives are also supporting locally recruited adult social care workers and the ambition is that it will impact stress, burnout, and turnover, providing appropriate resources and support, and recognising and rewarding the contribution and achievements of the workforce.

24. Coventry & Warwickshire

The Commissioning Leads at Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council have been working incredibly hard on their local IR initiative. They surveyed care providers to understand the scale of international recruitment in the market and to identify how they could support providers. Early intelligence from the survey and from the West Midlands data dashboard indicated that suspension and/or license revocations could significantly destabilise the local care market.

This is a ground-breaking initiative driven by the passion of the 2 commissioners to understand the challenge of International Recruitment in their local care market to ensure that the care market was

stable and able to respond to the population needs for adult social care.

'We were starting to pick up intelligence. There was also a lack of information on the extent of the issue and we didn't really understand the impacts, the risk and how that was likely to affect the general sustainability of the local care market. We were getting alerts from ADASS around organizations having their licenses for international recruits suspended or revoked. We were very conscious that we weren't aware of many of these organizations. They weren't the organizations we commissioned daily, and we felt we needed to find out about them. And because the numbers of international recruits being employed by these organizations was significant. One was just under just under 500 people being employed based in Coventry, but not doing any work in Coventry as far as we knew. So, it was important. We got to the bottom of that and started this process of kind of intelligence gathering, and that was the first thing we did.'

The intelligence gathered indicated that the suspensions and license revocations were impacting mostly home care providers. These are services that will predominantly be commissioned through personal budgets and private income to support people at home. The risk is significant if care providers are suspended and the care is not provided, as can lead to people's needs escalating.

The commissioners have used their capacity for job fairs to target the matching of ethical providers with displaced international recruits. International recruits attended from Coventry and Warwickshire and from further afield, including Northern Island, Stoke on Trent, Milton Keynes, Northampton, and London.

One international recruit that was identified through the work was walking 4 hours to work every day and had received no work from his sponsors in Milton Keynes. Through the commissioners' support in identifying an alternative provider, the international recruit was supported by an ethical provider initially with a bus pass and free food, but the provider couldn't offer him more than 20 hours as they were not a sponsorship organisation. The commissioners' found an ethical provider with a sponsorship licence and through an interview process was successful and now has a new employer.

The commissioners have indicated that this work to identify displaced recruits and potential sponsorship licences in ethical care providers is time consuming:

- Many IR's contacting other providers in the area asking to move to those organisations due to poor conditions, hours or a lack of work.
- International care recruits are approaching Coventry's Migration Team requesting information on how to access visas to work in other sectors.
- Potential impact on other employment markets e.g. taxi drivers

Coventry and Warwickshire have been successful in getting people back into work by identifying providers with sponsorship licence vacancies. At the time of reporting 8 had been placed and 15 further international recruits were being matched to providers.

Looking beyond this initiative, the commissioners recommended that there should be an international recruitment representative for each council as a co-ordinator who would look at what is happening with international recruitment in the local area and be able to work with other leads

across the region. This would build further as a regional and sub-regional infrastructure to support international recruitment and stabilise areas in the care market, particularly services predominantly commissioned through personal budgets.

25. Summary and Conclusion

The West Midlands International Recruitment project for 23/24 planned to achieve the vision and objectives for the International Recruitment Fund to enable a support offer to be set up at regional and sub-regional level to all providers within the area. DHSC's aim was to promote collaborative arrangements which reduce administrative complexity and burden, particularly for SME providers. West Midlands embraced the International Recruitment project under the umbrella of adult social care workforce and adult social care market sustainability, drawing upon the 6 components of the West Midlands Futures Model of Sustainability to guide its work.

Extending Collaborative Working was a key component of the IR project, working with West Midlands Employers and West Midlands Care Association at Regional level to build an IR infrastructure to support local authorities and care providers with support for International Recruitment. Collaboration was a key criterion for the approval of local (sub-regional) grant allocations to extend this sustainability component to all levels. This proved fruitful in the projects that have been successful, such as the Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin work with Citizens Advice Bureau. Collaboration at Regional and sub-regional levels has built trust and explored resourcing options aimed at sustaining and improving adult social care into the future, such as the development of the West Midlands Care Association Proud to Care Displaced Individuals Register, and the Citizens Advice Bureau support to displaced international recruits in Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin.

Strengthening Community Assets was demonstrated at Regional level through the significant innovation and reach by West Midlands Employers with the IR Hub, the legal and HR support, the webinars and the development of practical toolkits to support ethical recruitment. At sub-regional level, there has been significant innovation in the development of local support and signposting for care providers from Staffordshire and Stoke, Coventry & Warwickshire, and Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin, which has been invaluable in providing input into the digital prototype of support to both care providers and International Recruits being developed by Bridgit Care.

Transforming Social Care Careers has been at the heart of the Solihull care providers work in recruiting international workers. There are great examples from Solihull about recruiting ethically and how this can significantly stabilise the care market and bring high-level skills into the adult social care sector. By increasing the workforce, Solihull care providers have demonstrated an improving outlook for domestic careers in adult social care through more flexible, rewarding, opportunities, improved career pathways, qualifications, and educational pathways, maintaining a good supply of highly skilled workers to effectively meet sector demand. The Solihull care providers had successfully turned around the crisis in care following the pandemic with the vision and reality of creating stability in adult social care over the last 3 years, reporting that they have not had to hand any care hours back to the local authority thus meeting the care needs of the local population.

Balancing Technology and Humanity has been a key factor in the commissioning of Bridgit Care to

develop a digital prototype to support International Recruits with access to information and support. As the International Recruitment programme progressed, and knowledge of displaced international recruits emerged, West Midlands ADASS looked to the resources and innovations that had been developed to support other groups, such as informal carers. Bridgit Care were asked to consider the application for reaching International Recruits and have worked closely with WME, the local authorities, care providers and international recruits to create a digital prototype. This is a great example of harnessing known good practices and sharing them rapidly; developing a common approach to cost-effective technology investments to avoid regional disparities.

Driving Change through Data and Evidence has been a critical component of the IR programme in the West Midlands. WM ADASS in collaboration with Shropshire Council used its existing regional database that was in place to support local authorities to better gather intelligence on the use of International Recruitment across the Region. The nature of the care market meant that the intelligence needed to reach beyond the West Midlands Region, as care providers may have additional services in other regions. The IR data hub has proved an invaluable intelligence tool to support local authorities to understand what is happening in the care market and the risks associated with licence suspensions and revocations. This has strengthened data capabilities to inform service planning, workforce planning, and prevention activities, that reach well beyond West Midlands to support other regions across England and central government departments.

Shifting the Narrative around adult social care was a key ambition of the Cavendish Report on adult social care workforce (2021),

‘For too long, the social care workforce has been seen as a last resort to manage decline. I believe we should be much more ambitious, seeing it as an innovative, person-centred cadre who do not simply carry out “basic” tasks but also build stronger relationships with individuals, family and neighbour networks which improve outcomes. This would, in turn, raise the job satisfaction, respect and status of the workforce and in some cases, pay.’

West Midlands ADASS futures model suggests that developing a clear and compelling narrative about the role and importance of adult social care and the wider social and economic benefits it brings is a key component to the sustainability of the sector in the context of population changes and systemic changes. This International Recruitment programme in the West Midlands has highlighted significant risks to the sector through the poor practice of some unethical international recruitment. To shift the narrative, Coventry and Warwickshire have demonstrated collaboration in excellent commissioning practice acting on early intelligence, working with the local care market and partners such as church and faith groups, to stabilise the market and coordinate new placements of displaced international recruits into ethical care employers with vacancies.

Solihull care providers have demonstrated that ethical international recruitment can be an asset to the stability of the care market and can shift the narrative on adult social care careers. The employment of International Recruits has enabled care providers to offer the flexible employment that domestic care workers seek and thus improved recruitment and retention in the domestic workforce.

As the West Midlands 23/24 International Recruitment programme completes its 1st year, the collaboration means that West Midlands is better prepared to support care providers, local

authorities and international recruits moving forward into 24/25. There are new challenges that will need to be addressed and the next section proposes how West Midlands can respond as it continues to build adult social care for the future.

26. Building for the Future 2024

WM ADASS – What’s next? For international recruitment in the West Midlands

West Midlands ADASS identified workforce as a significant priority to address for adult social care over the next 10 years. International Recruitment for adult social care was one workforce response to the care crisis following the pandemic. It remains an important contributor to the workforce challenges, as demonstrated by ethical care providers and recruitment agencies, who have been able to stabilise their care offer and improve recruitment and retention rates. Unfortunately, unethical practice of some agencies has led to a significant challenge for adult social care, with the care market impacted by license suspensions, revocations, and displaced international recruits.

West Midlands has responded through collaboration to understand International Recruitment and to develop innovative solutions to support local authorities, care providers, and international recruits, to make this a successful workforce intervention.

The next step is to build on the work done to date and to develop the actions into a plan with deliverables for preparing for 2024/25 programme with a stronger focus on redeploying displaced International Recruits. West Midlands aims to use the time between now and 30th June to focus funds carried forward to develop our thinking on the processes and actions to support 24/25 programme.

Key Actions Proposed for 24/25:

1. **Infrastructure Development:** Continue to build on the infrastructure developed in 2023/24. This includes enhancing the collaboration between WM ADASS, WME, WMCA, 14 local authorities’ current systems and processes to support the regional structure for support and placement of Displaced IRs.
2. **Regional Structure Focus:** Explore the potential for the existing Regional Infrastructure with Shropshire Council acting as host to provide support and facilitate the placement of Displaced IRs. This will involve identifying further key stakeholders, defining the structure's scope, and establishing clear objectives to respond to the DHSC Prospectus through a refreshed Annex A
3. **Integrate international recruitment** with wider workforce initiatives. This can be achieved by aligning international recruitment strategies with overall workforce development plans to ensure a cohesive approach.
4. **IR Dashboard & data enhancement:** Enhance the IR dashboard to serve as an intelligence tool for England. This tool will monitor the suspensions and revocations of providers, start to monitor displaced international recruits and enable care providers, local authorities, and international recruits to access pastoral advice and guidance on international recruitment more easily.


5. **AI Prototype Roll-out:** Plan the roll-out of the AI prototype as self-help support International Recruits. Determine the necessary steps for implementation, including pilot testing, feedback collection, and full deployment.
6. **Mitigating risk:** development of risk log and mitigating actions to manage key identified risks across the process map that will be required to manage regional email address, suspensions and revocations process and requirement for DASS to assure provider capacity and workforce vacancies
7. **Financial planning:** Review of grant expenditure for 2023/24 with view to creating a spending profile for 2024/25 which provides continuity and enhancement of existing collaboration but with clearer focus on displace IRs
8. **Market Risk and sustainability** – engagement with Local authority Commissioners and Directors to assure local market and workforce pressures
9. **Evaluation and administrative support** – Important that we build in evaluation and administrative support into future programme

For each of these steps, the deliverables will include:

- A project plan outlining the actions, timelines, and responsible parties for the infrastructure development.
- A report on the feasibility and implementation plan for the Regional Structure, including a stakeholder engagement and communication strategy.
- A strategic document linking international recruitment with wider workforce initiatives, including a roadmap for integration with the national Workforce Strategy being developed by Skills for Care .
- An enhanced version of the IR dashboard hosted by Shropshire with enhanced features and user guides.
- A roll-out plan for the AI prototype, including stages of deployment and metrics for success.

27. Appendices

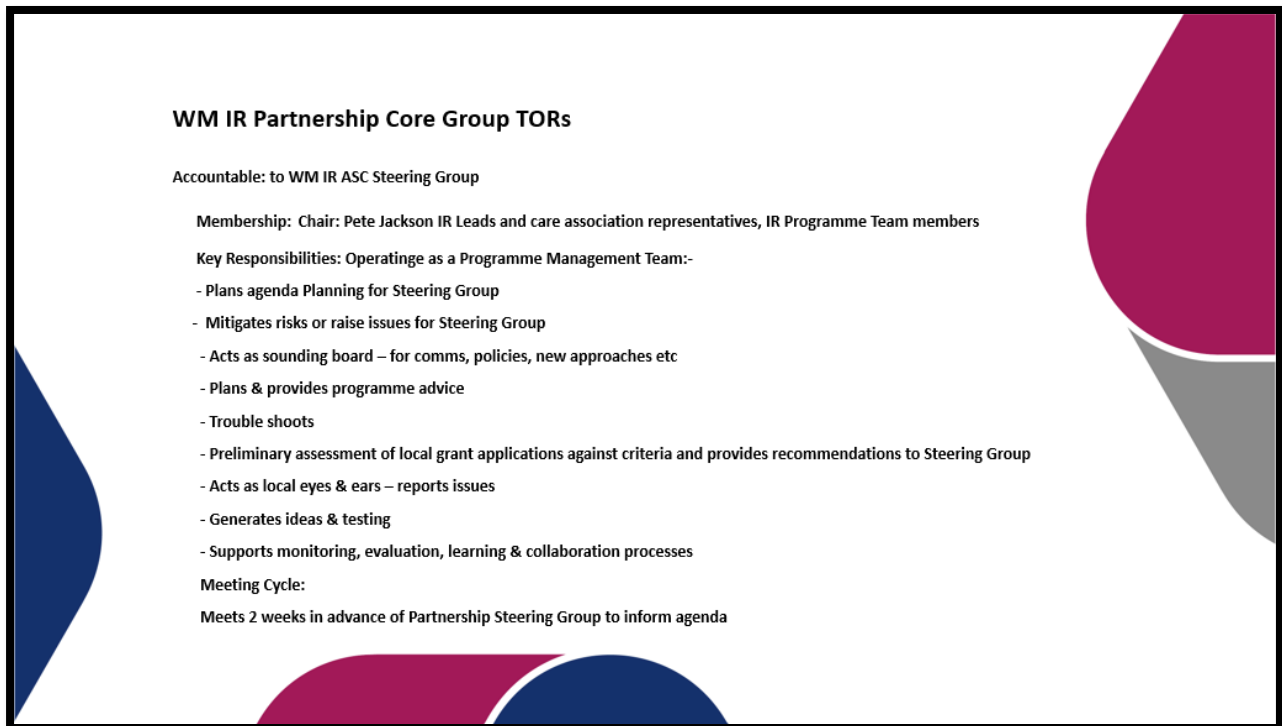
Appendix 1: IR Fund vision, objectives, and the WM International Recruitment Logic Model

<div>  <p>WM ADASS Vision 2022 http://wm-adass.org.uk</p> <p>International Recruitment</p> </div> <div> <p>IR Fund Vision: This fund is being established to enable a support offer to be set up at regional or sub-regional level which can be made available to all providers within the area. These include administrative complexity and costs but also challenges with issues like pastoral support, housing and travel. DHSC's aim is to promote collaborative arrangements which reduce administrative complexity and burden, particularly for SME providers.</p> </div> <div> <p>Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply national standards to establish minimum recruitment and selection requirements – with a focus on ethical recruitment practice 2. Establish a HR Advisory/Support Hub to support care providers to ensure provision of consistent and equitable information and advice 3. Work collaboratively with local authorities and care providers to deliver extended support to aid transition to UK social care practice including a pastoral support offer 4. Work collaboratively to develop and capture new learning on how common barriers to international recruitment can be overcome </div>				
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Impacts	Outcomes
<p>14 Directors of Adult Social services and their teams</p> <p>WM-ADASS Workforce Network</p> <p>WM-ADASS Programme Team</p> <p>West Midlands Employers</p> <p>Regional Care Associations and Providers</p> <p>Department of Health and Social Care</p> <p>Skills for Care</p> <p>HR Leads Forum</p> <p>Programme budget 3rd party funding and/or support</p>	<p>Establish, manage and maintain a regional IR Ethical Recruitment Service Offer working jointly with WME and WM ADASS</p> <p>Develop and co-ordinate activity via Regional Hub of IR information, advice and guidance for councils and adult social care providers</p> <p>Devolve funding to sub-regions / local areas to lead specific initiatives – particularly focused on pastoral support, training and development, housing, support for refugees</p> <p>Commission communications partner to develop a comms plan that ensures regional offer is well understood and accessible to all</p> <p>Commission an evaluation partner for an independent assessment of the programme's reach and impact</p> <p>Ongoing programme management and liaison with DHSC team for progress updates and reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ethical recruitment service offer comprising: HR recruitment service, employment law support and a framework of approved ethical recruitment agencies • WM ADASS and WME microsite set up with information, advice and guidance. • A range of focused and collaborative IR initiatives underway by councils & providers focusing on key areas of DHSC fund • Comprehensive communications plan • Independent evaluation of impact of regional offer and fund – including final report • Development of core programme management team, quarterly reporting to DHSC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More confidence and capacity with recruiting internationally including support for providers to source & screen candidates, interview, etc • A 'one-stop-shop' of tailored ASC information, advice and guidance for providers and councils on IR, supporting equity of access • Local initiatives that meet local context, challenges & demographics and build on what works to provide maximum impact • To help ensure a fair, accessible and equitable offer of support for the region, with all providers communicated with • Evidence of impact for funders as well as regionally. Best practice understood and captured for scaling, barriers to IR better understood • Robust governance, financial & programme management and evidence for DHSC of progress & impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More capacity and capability in the region to recruit ethically internationally • More providers recruiting ethically from overseas leading to a more diverse and sustainable market • Recruitment and retention improved • Increase in safety, quality and people's outcomes being met due to increased market capacity • West Midlands is seen as an attractive region and adult social care recruiter, recruits want to & are equipped to stay • A greater understanding and new learning on how common barriers to IR can be overcome

Appendix 2: WM IR Partnership Steering Group Terms of Reference

WM IR Partnership Steering Group TORs – Reports to ADASS Branch
<p>Accountable: to ADASS Branch through to Shropshire County Council and through to DHSC</p> <p>Membership: Chair: Pete Jackson; Nominated IR Leads from each LA; West Midlands Employers; Care Associations; Programme Team, Skills for Care, ADASS Team members.</p> <p>Governance:</p> <p>The Steering Group is the Programme Board with the role to deliver the aims of programme providing advice, monitoring, review, and recommendations to WM ADASS Branch and DHSC</p> <p>Aims (as per logic model) :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Apply national standards to establish minimum recruitment and selection requirements – with a focus on ethical recruitment practice 2) Establish a HR Advisory/Support Hub to support care providers to ensure provision of consistent and equitable information and advice 3) Work collaboratively with local authorities and care providers to deliver extended support to aid transition to UK social care practice including a pastoral support offer 4) Work collaboratively to develop and capture new learning on how common barriers to international recruitment can be overcome <p>The Steering Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensures communications & engagement with all stakeholders - Provides regional monitoring of IR delivery programme: metrics; quarterly and final evaluation and learning; supports learning & collaboration - Assesses / approves local grant applications and provides recommendations to ADASS Branch - Reports to WM ADASS Branch on progress and learning/evaluation <p>5) Meeting Cycle – Monthly</p>

Appendix 3: Core IR Group Terms of Reference



Appendix 4: DHSC IR Grant Conditions 23/24

Grant conditions

- Local partnerships should consist of local authorities and care alliances or other groupings of local providers. The Skills for Care locality manager may also be able to support the partnership
- partnerships should cover a region or a subregion and make sure that the services offered through the partnership are available to all adult social care providers within that area
- the services offered through the partnership should aim to boost international recruitment for the local area
- participation in the partnership should ensure that all partners are engaged in the decision-making process, ensuring the grant money is spent in a way that adds value to the partners
- the services offered through the partnership will help ensure ethical recruitment and employment practice
- any recruitment activity supported by the partnership must adhere to the code of practice for international recruitment
- the focus of the support services will be on the recruitment and employment of care workers. However, the interventions could also support the recruitment and employment of other adult social care staff, including nurses, occupational therapists and social workers

- partnerships will monitor the impact of the interventions and provide information to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to help evaluate the impact of the fund through a light touch quarterly return. The grant funding can be used in part to support local monitoring and evaluation
- partnerships should consider opportunities for working with the NHS to share good practice, for instance in relation to pastoral support. In some areas, it may work well to discuss these issues at the people board of the integrated care system (ICS)
- partnerships should engage Ukrainian, Afghan and other foreign nationals with a right to work in the region and employers to ensure that opportunities to work in the adult social care sector are promoted
- partnerships should consider how to spread existing good practice, as well as develop new innovative solutions
- grant expenditure should be focused on shared solutions that are available to all providers within the footprint of the partnership

Appendix 5: West Midlands IR Hub Interaction Report March 2024



IR_West_Midlands_-_Website_Report March 2024.pdf

Appendix 6: Sandwell Guidance on Addressing Potential Modern Slavery in Domiciliary Care Agencies.



1. Reporting Concerns

Any concerns or suspicions of modern slavery within domiciliary agencies should be reported promptly. The following agencies should be notified:

1. Reporting Concerns Through SHOP:

Through the Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP), concerns related to potential modern slavery within domiciliary agencies will be reported. The SHOP serves as a collaborative platform involving local partners, including:

- **Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA):** Concerns should be reported through the local SHOP contact. The SHOP contact will facilitate communication with the GLAA.
- **Police:** Suspicious activities or potential modern slavery cases should be reported to the police using the established Fib Form process. The police will investigate and take necessary legal actions.
- **HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs):** HMRC plays a role in addressing potential financial aspects of modern slavery cases, such as illegal wages and exploitation.
- **Immigration Authorities:** Reporting concerns to immigration authorities is crucial in cases involving potential immigration violations or exploitation related to immigration status.
- **Local Authority:** The local authority, as part of SHOP, plays a key role in coordinating responses, sharing information, and providing support to potential victims.

2. Extended Agency Engagement:

In addition to the core SHOP partners, extended agencies also collaborate in addressing concerns related to potential modern slavery within domiciliary agencies. These agencies include:

- **Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children's Social Care (CSC) Commissioning Teams:** Concerns should be shared with the ASC/CSC commissioning teams responsible for overseeing the services provided by domiciliary agencies. These teams will review the concerns and take appropriate action, including potential contract termination.
- **UK Sponsorship Team:** Any concerns related to breaches of sponsorship license conditions should be reported to the UK Sponsorship Team at SponsorComplianceTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk. This includes situations where individuals are charged fees unlawfully.
- **Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS):** If there are reports of recruitment organisations, agencies, or collaborations charging fees for work-finding services, these concerns should be reported to the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate. This is illegal under the Employment Agencies Act 1973. Reports can be made via email at eas@beis.gov.uk or by completing the online form for complaints about pay and work rights.

- **Care Quality Commission (CQC):** If concerns are raised about the quality of care provided by a domiciliary agency, they should be reported to the Care Quality Commission. Reports can be made through the CQC's online feedback form or by emailing enquiries@cqc.org.uk.
- **Jobs Aware:** Job scams or unfair working practices should be reported to Jobs Aware, which provides free help and advice to UK workers who have been affected. Incidents can be reported via the Jobs Aware website at <https://www.jobsaware.co.uk/report>.

3. Follow-Up and Investigation

Upon receiving the concerns, the respective agencies will initiate investigations as needed. This may include multi-agency meetings, interviews, site visits, and gathering evidence to assess the validity of the concerns.

4. Collaborative Action

Agencies involved will collaborate to ensure a coordinated response. This may involve sharing information, conducting joint investigations, and developing action plans to address the issues identified.

5. Support and Victim Care

Where individuals are identified as potential victims of modern slavery, they will be provided with appropriate support and care in accordance with established protocols. NRM referrals will be made, and local victim pathways will come into play.

6. Possible outcomes

suggested actions that each agency could take in response to potential modern slavery concerns within domiciliary agencies, including the addition of cease-and-desist orders for the police and local authority:

Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA):

- **Conduct Investigations:** Investigate allegations of labour exploitation, abuse, and violations of labour standards within domiciliary agencies.
- **Interview Workers:** Interview workers who may have been subjected to exploitation, taking care to ensure their safety and confidentiality.
- **Work with SHOP:** Collaborate closely with the Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership (SHOP) to share information and coordinate actions.
- **Enforce Labour Laws:** Take legal actions against agencies found in violation of labour laws and exploitation of workers.
- **Raise Awareness:** Provide guidance and training to domiciliary agencies on labour standards and workers' rights.

Police:

- **Investigate Suspicious Activities:** Thoroughly investigate any reports of modern slavery, trafficking, or criminal activities within domiciliary agencies.
- **Collect Evidence:** Gather evidence related to potential crimes, exploitation, or human trafficking.
- **Interview Potential Victims:** Interview individuals who may have been victims of modern slavery, ensuring their safety and well-being.
- **Issue Cease and Desist Orders:** When necessary, issue cease and desist orders to domiciliary agencies involved in illegal activities.
- **Work with Other Agencies:** Collaborate with SHOP, local authorities, and immigration authorities to coordinate responses.
- **Prosecute Perpetrators:** Take legal actions against individuals and agencies involved in criminal activities.

HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs):

- **Review Financial Records:** Examine financial records of domiciliary agencies to identify potential irregularities such as illegal wages or tax evasion.
- **Investigate Pay Practices:** Investigate payment practices within domiciliary agencies, particularly looking for evidence of wage exploitation.
- **Enforce Tax Laws:** Take legal actions against agencies found in violation of tax laws and financial exploitation of workers.
- **Cooperate with Law Enforcement:** Collaborate with law enforcement agencies to share findings and support investigations.

Immigration Authorities:

- **Address Immigration Violations:** Investigate potential immigration violations within domiciliary agencies, including issues related to visas and work permits.
- **Assess Immigration Status:** Assess the immigration status of individuals involved, ensuring they are aware of their rights and obligations.
- **Provide Support:** Offer support and assistance to individuals whose immigration status may be compromised due to exploitation.

Local Authority:

- **Coordinate Responses:** Coordinate responses to potential modern slavery cases with relevant agencies and partners, including the SHOP.
- **Provide Support Services:** Offer support services, such as housing, healthcare, and social services, to potential victims.
- **Issue Cease and Desist Orders:** When appropriate, issue cease and desist orders to domiciliary agencies engaged in illegal activities.

Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children's Social Care (CSC) Commissioning Teams:

- **Review Contracts:** Review contracts with domiciliary agencies to ensure compliance with care standards and legal requirements.
- **Terminate Contracts:** If concerns are substantiated, consider terminating contracts with agencies involved in exploitation.
- **Support Victims:** Provide support and care services to individuals who may be victims of exploitation.
- **Human Rights assessments:** where possible where extreme destitution Human Rights assessments should be undertaken.

UK Sponsorship Team:

- **Address Sponsorship Violations:** Investigate and address any breaches of sponsorship license conditions, including unlawful fees charged to individuals.
- **Take Legal Action:** Take legal actions against agencies found in violation of sponsorship license conditions through license revocations.

Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS):

- **Investigate Illegal Fees:** Investigate reports of recruitment organisations charging fees for work- finding services, which is illegal under the Employment Agencies Act 1973.
- **Take Enforcement Actions:** Take enforcement actions against agencies found in violation of employment agency standards.

Care Quality Commission (CQC):

- **Assess Care Quality:** Assess the quality of care provided by domiciliary agencies and address concerns related to care standards.
- **Take Regulatory Actions:** Take regulatory actions against agencies found in violation of care standards.

Jobs Aware:

- **Support Workers:** Provide support and advice to workers affected by job scams or unfair working practices.
- **Investigate Scams:** Investigate incidents of job scams and unfair practices and take necessary actions against offending parties.

These suggested actions highlight the roles and responsibilities of each agency in addressing potential modern slavery concerns within domiciliary agencies and ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals involved. Collaborative efforts and information sharing among agencies remain critical to an effective response.

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Care Providers

International Recruits

West Midlands Care Association

Partners In Care (Shropshire, Telford, & Wrekin)

SARCP (Staffordshire & Stoke)

Citizens Advice Bureau (Shropshire, Telford, & Wrekin)

Church and Faith Groups

Skills for Care (National, Regional, and Local)

Shropshire Council

West Midlands ADASS

West Midlands Employers

The 14 Councils of the West Midlands

ADASS Regions e.g., NWADASS & established Academies, and National partners e.g., LGA

DHSC

UKVI

Bridgit Care

Lester Aldridge