Rethink health and social care workforce to solve NHS backlog – CEO of Recruitment and Employment Confederation

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One of the leading figures in the UK's recruitment sector has called for a strategic review of Britain's health and social care workforce in order to resolve the debilitating NHS backlog.

Neil Carberry, CEO at the Recruitment and Employment Confederation – the voice of the UKs £40bn recruitment industry – says the lack of a proper plan for people working in health and social care is impeding efforts to tackle the record 7 million people waiting for hospital treatment.

Speaking to Newcross Healthcare's Voices of Care podcast, the former managing director for people and infrastructure at the CBI, says it's time the healthcare sector stopped looking at permanent staff, part-timers and agency staff as separate entities.

"I think the idea that we have a health care workforce that can be easily sliced and diced needs to be done away with. We need to start thinking about a workforce that is one workforce, and do some long-term thinking about why people want to work in health.

"The UK has more people who are off work long term sick, and therefore economically inactive, than other countries right now. That has to be about NHS backlogs. Part of the challenge for all of us is to work out how we resolve that. How do we deal with NHS backlogs within a context of fiscal controls and make sure that what we're doing is meeting patient needs in a really good way."

The recruitment sector, he argues, is one of the UK's great undersold success stories and has a crucial role to play in enabling the beleaguered NHS to get back on its feet

"It is about helping employers, whether they're companies or indeed hospital trusts, to do things more efficiently, more effectively, and meet needs that they cannot meet on their own, particularly with regards to temporary work.

"The critical thing for the industry is that we should be advisers, we should be partners with clients to make sure that we're helping them navigate difficult times. We talk about our 500 health and social care members as 'NHS staffing partners' because that's what they strive to be."

Elsewhere on the podcast Mr Carberry shares his thoughts on how the pandemic helped to forge important partnerships between agencies and hospital trusts, digital right to work checks and the challenges of creating a sustainable labour market that properly reflects the changes that have taken place in health and social care since 2016.

Separately, recent research conducted by YouGov for Newcross Healthcare, a leading provider of carers and nurses, found that more than a quarter of care workers (27%) said they were looking to leave the sector in the next 12 months, while only 1 in 5 members of the public said they would consider a career in the care sector compared to two-thirds (67%) who would not due to factors such as low pay, the 'off-putting' nature of the work, stress and long hours.

Hosted by healthcare expert Suhail Mirza, the podcast episode featuring Neil Carberry is available now alongside previous episodes in the series on Newcross Healthcare website https://www.newcrosshealthcare.com/voicesofcare as well as onYouTube, Spotify, Apple and a range of other podcast platforms.

You can see the full podcast here: https://youtu.be/XRj_UFAqImI

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