



**18th April 2023**

# **Driving Up Training & Life Long Learning in Long Term Care - A Skills Partnership**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# 1. What is the Ambition of our Skills Partnership?

The ambition of this Skills Partnership for the Long Term Care sector is to assess, prepare and address the LTC workforce skill needs in order to meet current and future challenges; including the significant increase in demand for such services, the evolving expectations as to quality, the digital transformation, ongoing and in some cases growing staff shortages, sometimes difficult working conditions and the lack of training opportunities.

The European Commission set out in 2022 its own policy vision for the Long Term Care sector through its Communication on the European Care Strategy. This Skills Partnership aims to contribute to the practical implementation of the European Care Strategy, in particular in the area of soft (person-centred) and digital skills. It also aims to contribute to the European Skills Agenda and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

This Skills Partnership will particularly focus on two key skill sets deemed most urgent:

- ▶ Digital Skills, to equip LTC professionals with the skills to make the most of the digital transition;
- ▶ Person-centred and soft Skills, to equip LTC professionals with the skills to apply high quality person-centred support to those who draw on LTC services.

By re-skilling and up-skilling the LTC workforce with

modern, up-to-date training and education in these two fields, this Skills Partnership will help to ensure the Long-Term Care sector can improve and extend its social impact, can increase the sector's attractiveness and tackle staff shortages, and also increase the sector's economic impact.

It will also impact gender equality in Europe by improving access to quality care for women who draw on such support, which can also reduce the "informal care pressure" on women as a consequence.

It will also improve the skills of a predominantly female workforce, thus with the possible impact of improving wages, working conditions and career paths. It may also help to attract more men into the sector.

Within the European Commission's 14 industrial eco-systems, LTC situates itself within the Health eco-system. Yet -despite some synergies and policy objectives such as the integration of health and care- it generally operates very differently to mainstream healthcare-type services such as hospitals, primary healthcare provision and others; in terms of types of providers, sectoral objectives, funding, legal frameworks and professions. This Skills Partnership aims to complement the existing Skills Partnership for Health (BeWell) to bring in the LTC sector, with its own specificities and skill needs. The Partnership will also aim to engage with the existing Skills Partnership for Health to discuss issues such as the integration of health and care, as well as the Skills Partnership for the Social and Proximity Economy as many LTCP are social economy actors. It may do so with other skills Partnerships on an ad hoc basis where needed.

## **2. What are the Challenges we intend to find solutions for?**

There is over a 100,000 Long Term Care Providers (LTCP) throughout Europe, employing over 6.3 million long-term care workers in the EU (in 2019); some 3.2% of the total EU workforce, a large majority of which are women. The Long Term Care sector has huge job creation potential too, in large part due to the ageing population, changing expectations from the welfare state in terms of social protection coverage for long-term care risks but also evolving family patterns. It is expected that over 1.6 million LTC workers are needed by 2050 to keep the current coverage at the same level.

The Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality Long Term Care defines 'long-term care' means a range of services and assistance for people who, as a result of mental and/or physical frailty, disease and/or disability over an extended period of time, depend on support for daily living activities and/or are in need of some permanent nursing care. The daily living activities for which support is needed may be the self-care activities that a person must perform every day, namely activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, eating, getting in and out of bed or a chair, moving around, using the toilet, and controlling bladder and bowel functions, or may be related to independent living, namely instrumental activities of daily living, such as preparing meals, managing money, shopping for groceries or personal items, performing light or heavy housework, and using a telephone.



The European Care Strategy highlights various skill needs within the Long Term Care sector; when it states that "the skills required are constantly evolving and becoming increasingly complex. The sector needs workers with soft skills, digital skills and specialised knowledge (e.g. on certain types of diseases such as Alzheimer's or chronic diseases, or on diagnostics and treatment methods, for instance via telecare)". The EU Care Strategy also highlights that "Approaches that are person-centred and conducive to independent living are often lacking"; in large part due to a lack of investment into training for the appropriate soft-skills required to provide person-centred care and support.

The European Care Strategy is accompanied by a Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care, which stated that "the skills required in the care sector are increasingly complex" and "carers often need to have technological expertise (...) digital skills and communication skills (...) and skills to handle complex needs and work in multi-disciplinary teams". The Recommendation also highlights the need for "designing and improving the initial and continuous education and training to equip current and future long-term care workers with the necessary skills and competences, including digital ones".

Digitalisation and new person-centred approaches requires a new set of skills and qualifications that can enable workers and managers to deliver on these changes and new approaches; for instance, using assistive technologies or using supported decision-making instead of traditional guardianship measures.



A recent report by the OECD (International Social Security Review, Vol. 75, 3-4/2022) states that “long-term care workers have generally lower qualifications than do health workers, (...) with very low requirements for personal care workers. (...) Personal care workers do not always have sufficient knowledge and training, which can affect the quality of care delivered (...). A better match between skills, tasks and job roles would be beneficial for LTC workers and for the people receiving care. A higher prevalence of training on dementia and person-centred care are in fact positively associated with care quality”.

Access to training for LTC workers is hindered by several factors such as chronic underfunding towards the sector, the heterogeneous size of employers, the lack of social dialogue in several countries and other reasons.

In this context, there is a clear need for developing a comprehensive European partnership to tackle the skills gaps in the LTC sector, covering not only the skills needs of front-line staff -predominantly women- but also of managers and directors of services. The specificities of LTC would also require the need to tackle the skill gaps of those who directly or indirectly draw on LTC services (such as informal carers); for instance in order to make the most of telecare services. The skill gaps will focus primarily on the soft skills (person-centred approaches) and digital skills as both are very relevant across all jobs in LTC and generally insufficiently met by existing training. This Partnership will initially be rooted in already consolidated networks of LTCsPs, longstanding cooperation with its members and

several existing research and good practices. The ambitions will be to expand the Partnership in the months and years to come, supporting the overall growth strategy for the sector (in terms of responding to the raising and evolving demand) and, most importantly, bringing all relevant stakeholders together to ensure that those who draw on long term care services can get quality and digitalized support, using person-centred approaches. For this to be achieved, improvements will need to be made to ensure that all workers in LTC get access to continuous professional development opportunities they need to provide such care and support.



### 3. What does the Partnership intend to do?

The headline target of this Skills Partnership is to contribute to and enable the training of at least 60% of LTC professionals every year, paid for or provided by their employer, including on areas related to digitalisation and person-centred care by 2030; in line with the targets set by the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan. In numbers, this means at least 3.8 million LTC workers trained every year by 2030.

Other initiatives will be to:

- ▶ Enlarge the partnership to a broader range of stakeholders including sub-sectors, different public authorities, academics and other stakeholders.
- ▶ Provide concrete opportunities to build the capacity (skills) of LTC professionals across Europe, including through the development of training, curricula and other continuous professional development activities (such as micro-credentials), as well as skills recognition
- ▶ Facilitate dialogue between the various facets of the LTC sector and other existing Blueprints, for instance the Blueprints for Health, Social Economy and Micro-electronics.
- ▶ Raise awareness about LTC, what role it plays, its impact on social inclusion, job creation and gender equality and the need to invest more, including in skills development.
- ▶ Identify, create and improve intelligence, data, research and best practices around LTC skills, including needs,

existing trainings, upcoming trends, and more. Synergies with the work done by CEDEFOP in terms of skills intelligence will be developed.

- ▶ Establish synergies with other cross-European projects active on skills in LTC or linked sectors, such as Eldicare.
- ▶ Work against discrimination, and for gender equality, social inclusion, health equality and equal opportunities within the Long Term Care sector and the health sector more broadly.

To help the Skills Partnership achieve its ambitions, it will also develop an application for a Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills in Long-Term Care at the earliest stage possible in order to not delay the need for rapid progress in this field and capitalise on the European Year of Skills for 2023. If approved, this will have a multiplier effect on the other activities this Skill Partnership intends to do. Through the Blueprint, we will (amongst many activities):

- ▶ Identify the existing and future skill needs in LTC
- ▶ Create European-wide curricula and training programmes for LTC professionals, on digital skills and person-centred skills
- ▶ Target to train at least 1,500 LTC professionals throughout the duration of the project, with many thousands more coming afterwards
- ▶ Establish a European Strategy for Skills in LTC for the years ahead; alongside a Sustainability Plan to make the most of the project's outputs.

## 4. How will the Skills Partnership Monitor Progress and Impact?

This Skills Partnership will monitor progress via yearly reports measuring and assessing the following (non-exhaustive) indicators:

- ◆ Approval of the Blueprint application and following quality of the project's outputs
- ◆ Number of Trainings provided
- ◆ Number of Workers Trained (included through data from Eurostat)
- ◆ Scope and coverage of the Partnership (number of members, number of members by type and country, etc)
- ◆ Data collection and Skills intelligence on LTC produced or impacted via Partnership
- ◆ Initiatives linked to upskilling or re-skilling produced or impacted via Partnership, such as trainings or curricula developed or piloted. This includes new training tools (offline and online)
- ◆ Communication and Exploitation initiatives: such as n° meetings / year, n° public events, dissemination to stakeholders via social media or other posts, n° of members presentations delivered / year, etc.

For any questions, please contact Thomas Bignal, Head of policy, EASPD:

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## Partnership as of 18/04/2023:

### European networks



### Local organisations



