



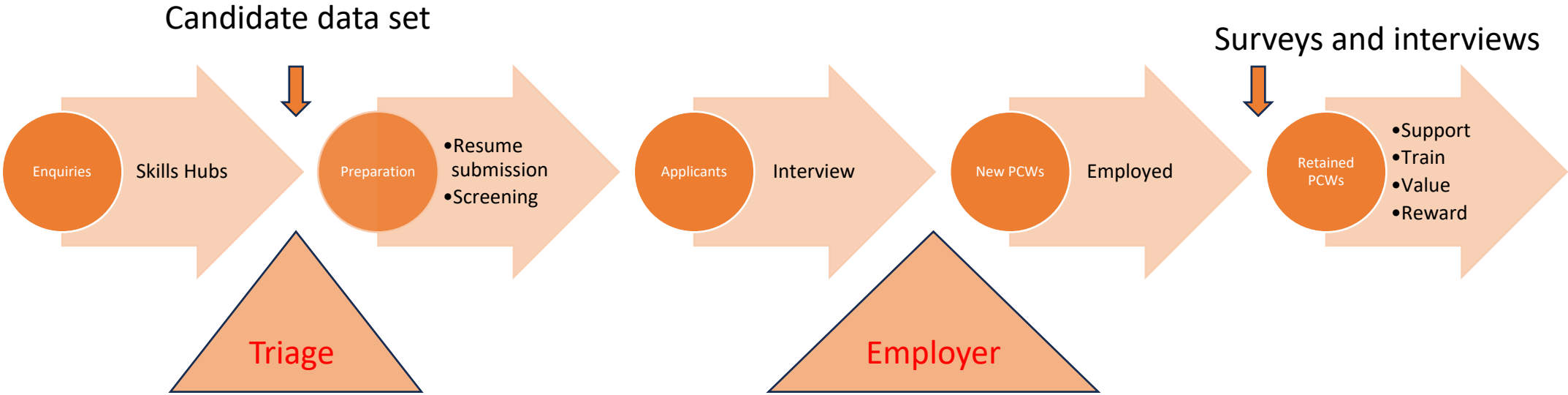
THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA



The Home Care Workforce Support Program Qld – External Evaluation



ATTRACT and RECRUIT



TRAIN and RETAIN



People are
attracted to work
in aged care

When HCWSP started there was a belief that it would be hard to find people who want work in age care. Instead, an early finding of the project was that many

There were over 28,000 inquiries to Skills Hubs.

around 9000 people of those people were assigned to a Regional Workforce Coordinator, and over 2500 were employed.

Cast a Wider Net

Diverse recruitment channels attracted a broader audience to the sector, including those who may not have actively sought such work in aged care.

Higher recruitment yields necessitated thorough screening of potential candidates, which can be time-intensive.

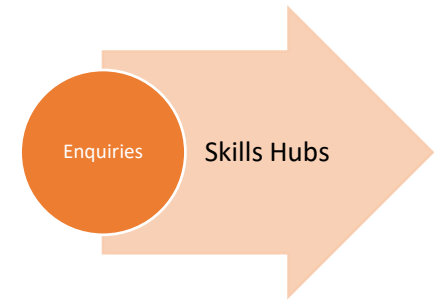
Skills Hubs have played a crucial role in this process, filtering out unsuitable candidates before entering the HCWSP pipeline.

RWC helped develop resumes for those without experience and helped people through checks and employment processes.

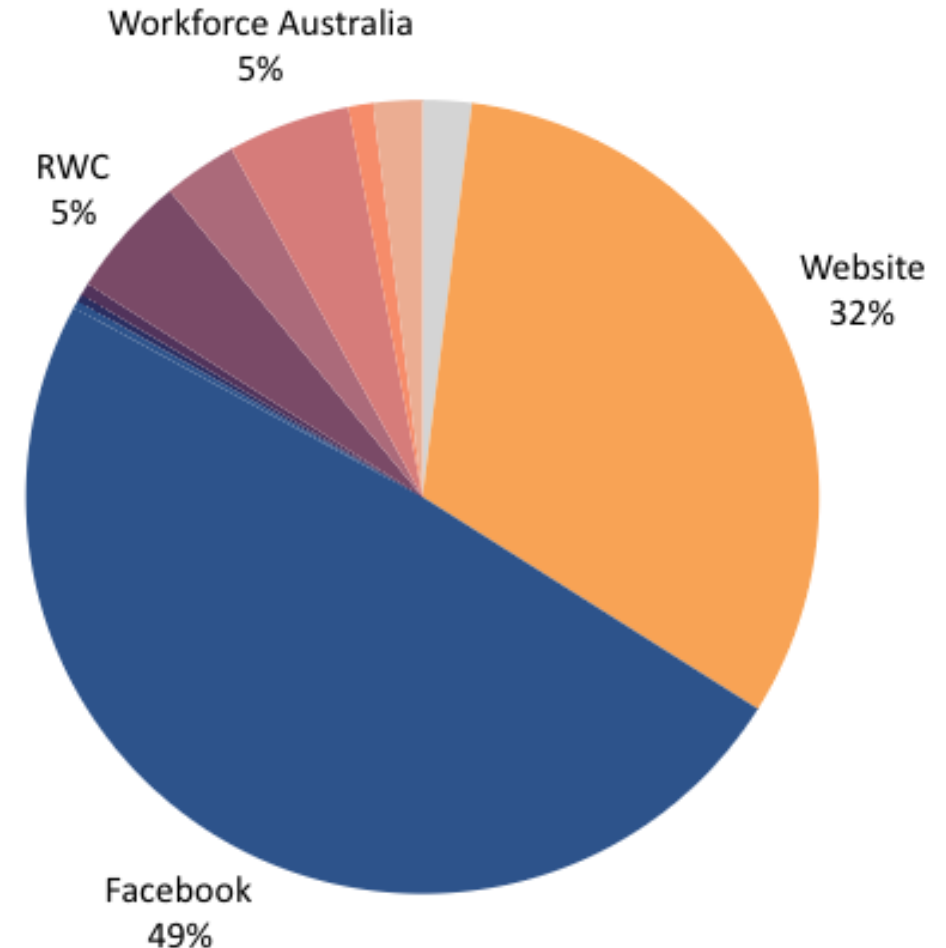


Lead Source

Estimated >28000 enquiries ~ 9000 candidates in the pipeline



Candidate - Lead Source (derived)	n	%
missing	15	<1
Employment Agency	208	2
Employment Website	3033	32
Facebook Ad	4637	49
Live Event	40	<1
Personal Referral	24	<1
Pre-employment program	76	<1
Regional Workforce Coordinator (RWC)	475	5
Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	274	3
Workforce Australia	507	5
Other	110	1



Facebook

While a great share of the candidates were attracted through Facebook advertising, many of these enquiries did not progress for a variety of reasons. Candidates recruited through these means were also slower to progress through both phases of the employment pathway. This result does not suggest that Facebook is not an appropriate means for recruitment, but rather that Facebook may attract people who have not previously worked in age care. This ability to attract a wider range of candidates to aged care may be a major advantage when demand for workers is high.

		Attracted through Other Means		Attracted through Facebook	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Age	missing*	573		945	
	Under 45 years of age	2826	67.7	850	23.02
	Over 45 years of age	1348	32.3	2842	76.98
Relevant Qualification	missing*	102		11	
	No	2094	45.08	3008	65.02
	Yes	2551	54.92	1618	34.98
Candidate - gender	missing*	72		23	
	Male	1195	25.56	1523	33.01
	Female	3460	74.01	3089	66.95
	Other	20	0.43	2	0.04
Previous role - Health Care and Social Assistance	missing*	0		0	
	No	2437	51.34	3063	66.06
	Yes	2310	48.66	1574	33.94
Furthest stage reached (collapsed levels)	Assigned to RWC	416	8.76	470	10.14
	Follow Up/Resume	1086	22.88	1675	36.12
	Submitted to Employer	886	18.66	789	17.02
	Interview	755	15.9	529	11.41
	Employed	1378	29.03	989	21.33
	Commenced Other Employment	226	4.76	185	3.99

Worker Motivations are Highly Altruistic (free-text data)

- Candidates put “people” at the centre of their motivations
- Workers are motivated and rewarded by altruism. This motivation is a huge resource for the aged care sector and should be valued and promoted. It is also important to recognise the highly developed interpersonal and problem-solving skills of aged care workers, and their tremendous resilience. These attributes may not be captured by role titles such as “domestic support”.



Reasons for wanting to work in aged care



to help people
to make a difference in
people's lives



Work independently



Career advancement



to gain new skills



Flexibility of hours
Fit with family



Career change

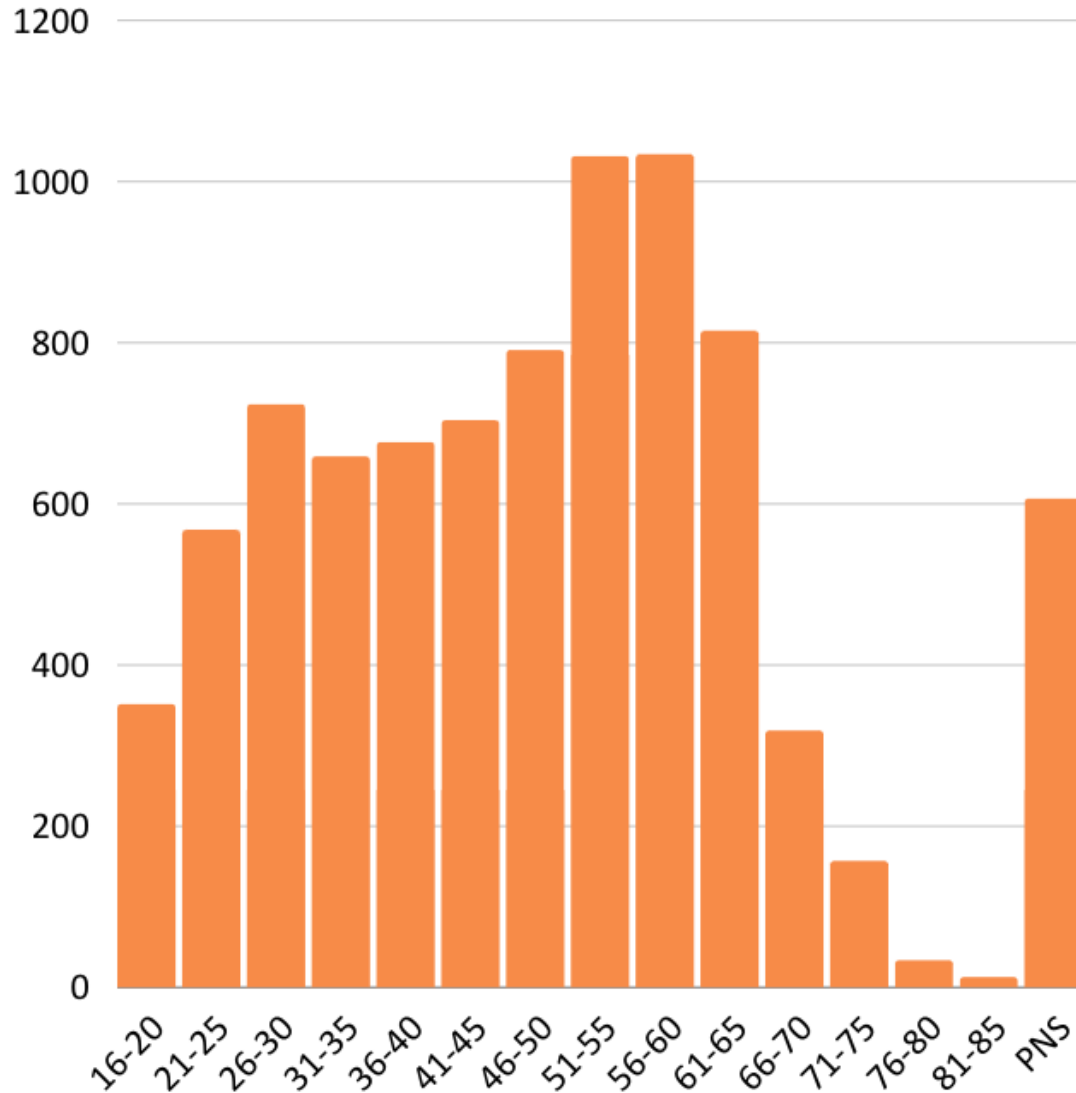
Aged Care Needs to Embrace Diversity

Skills Hubs staff reported that at the start of HCWSP, when employers were in dire need of staff, they were able to refer a wider range of candidates.

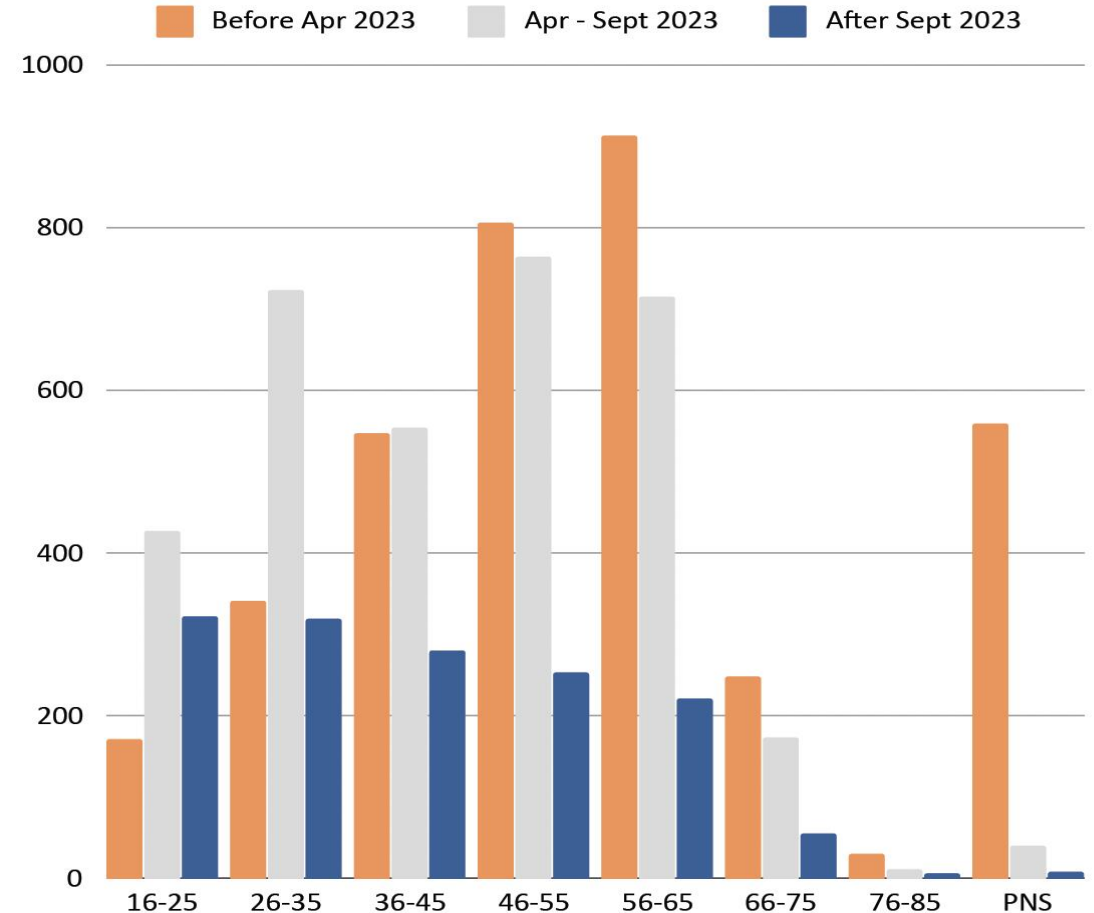
However, when the workforce gap had started to be filled, and needs were steadier, there was a sense that employers became more selective, often not opting for candidates that they would find harder to place with clients. These included men, and clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



Age



Before April 2023 -most candidates were 46-65 years.
The from April - shift towards younger candidates.



Candidate age by date of entry to the Skills Hubs program.

Aged Care Needs Diversity - Age

Older workers

- Contribute to the expansion of the available workforce.
- Can offer valuable peer support to clients
- Remaining engaged in meaningful work fosters healthy aging by promoting connection and purpose.
- Many older individuals may rely on additional income during their later years.

Older employees often encounter challenges with the physical demands of the role, a hurdle that may be less pronounced for younger workers.



Aged Care Needs Diversity - Gender

30% of candidates were male, but mostly early in the program.

Care worker profiles on the Skills Hubs site feature how men can be kind and competent as care workers, and trusted and valued by their clients. However, employers still generally felt that men were harder to match with clients.

While aged care workers are stereotyped as female, sometimes the best woman for the job is a man.



Aged Care Needs Diversity - CALD

Around 33% of the candidates were from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds. These people can take longer to get through the employer stage.

Employers emphasised the advantages of CALD workers in their ability to match workers with clients who share similar cultural backgrounds, thus facilitating the resolution of cultural and language barriers.

However, challenges were also noted, particularly regarding language barriers hindering their capacity to deliver person-centred care, and instances of clients exhibiting discriminatory attitudes.




Aged Care Needs Indigenous people

Around 5% of the candidates were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. Time to event analysis did not show any significant difference in speed to employment for these people, however this result may be due to low statistical power. The data suggests the process may have been slower for some indigenous candidates.

The support and growth of indigenous care workers are especially crucial for improving support in rural and remote communities, as well as enhancing capabilities within the workforce to deliver culturally sensitive, client-centred care to indigenous clients.





The program demonstrated that it is possible to drive rapid recruitment of the right people.

But the "right people" varied according to market demands.

Candidate Entry to HCWSP

Comparing three periods from the start of the program to before April 2023, April 2023 September 2023, and after September 2023.

Comparing these three periods:

- Candidates tended to be younger in later parts of the program
- There were proportionally more males at the start of the program than at the end.
- There were proportionally more workers from CALD background at the end than at the beginning



Candidate Profiles



Class One: 30%

Majority female, not qualified, later entry.

Preferred work: domestic assistance



Class Two: 29%

Majority female, younger, qualified, later entry.

Preferred work: medical and personal care



Class Three: 16%

More likely male, not qualified, not CALD, earlier entry with gradual decline.

Preferred work: gardening, maintenance, domestic assistance, transport and community.



Class Four: 25%

Majority female, younger, qualified, earlier entry with increasing presence.

Preferred work: Personal Care, Domestic Assistance, Transport & Community, Gardening & Maintenance

Speed to Market Matters

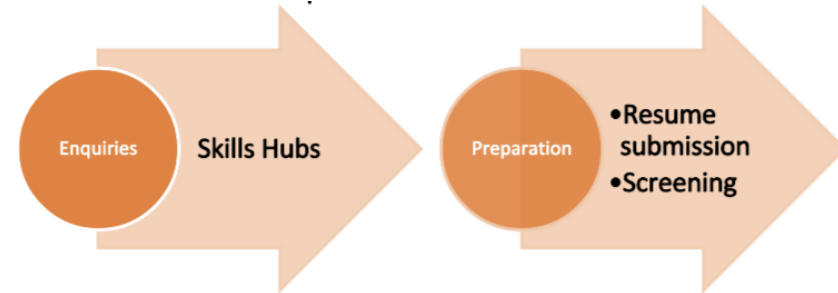
- Checks, references and clearances, and inefficient HR processes meant workers were waiting unreasonable lengths of time before being able to start work.
- 50% of candidates took more than 4 weeks from submission to employer to starting work. Most people wanted to start immediately or within two weeks.
- We need to find ways to help people speed through the employment process, not struggle through it.
- We need to manage expectations and help people maintain enthusiasm.



Speed to Market: Skills Hubs Phase

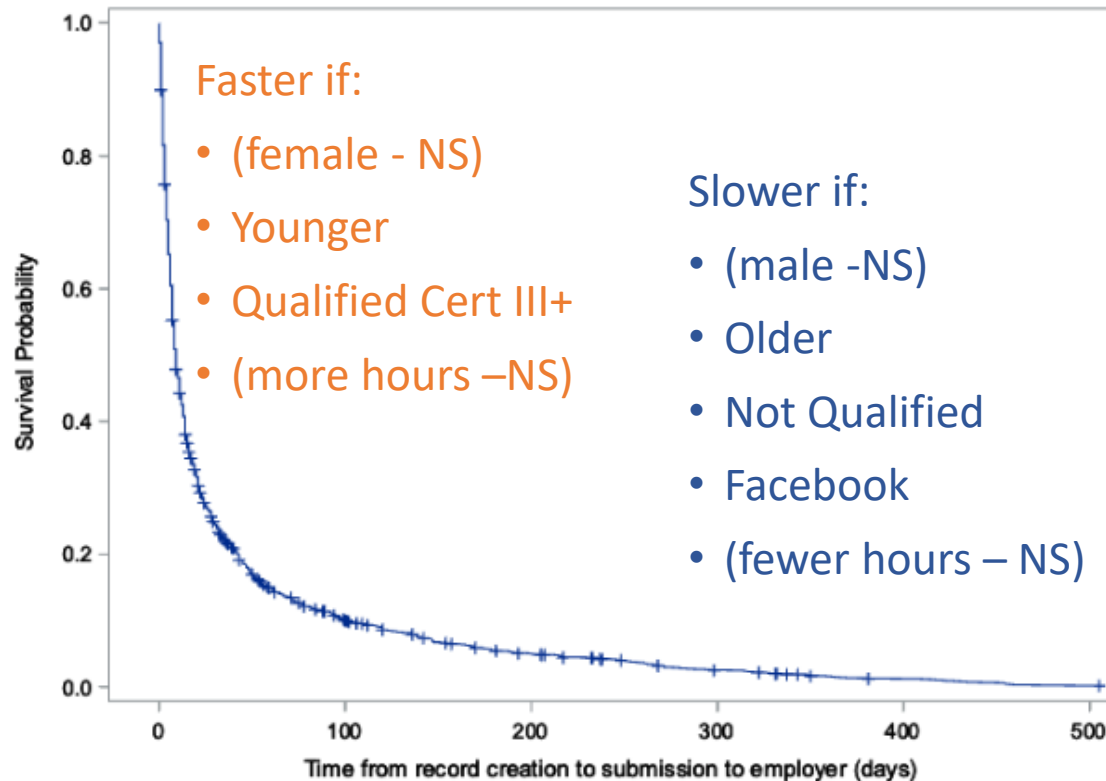
Over the course of the program, the Skills Hubs phase reduced from:

- **13** days at the June report, to
- **11** days at the November report, and to
- **8** days at the Final Report



The time to event analysis on the following slide provides a graphical representation in these increased rates of progress (speed) through the employment processes.

Factors affecting speed through Skills Hubs Phase

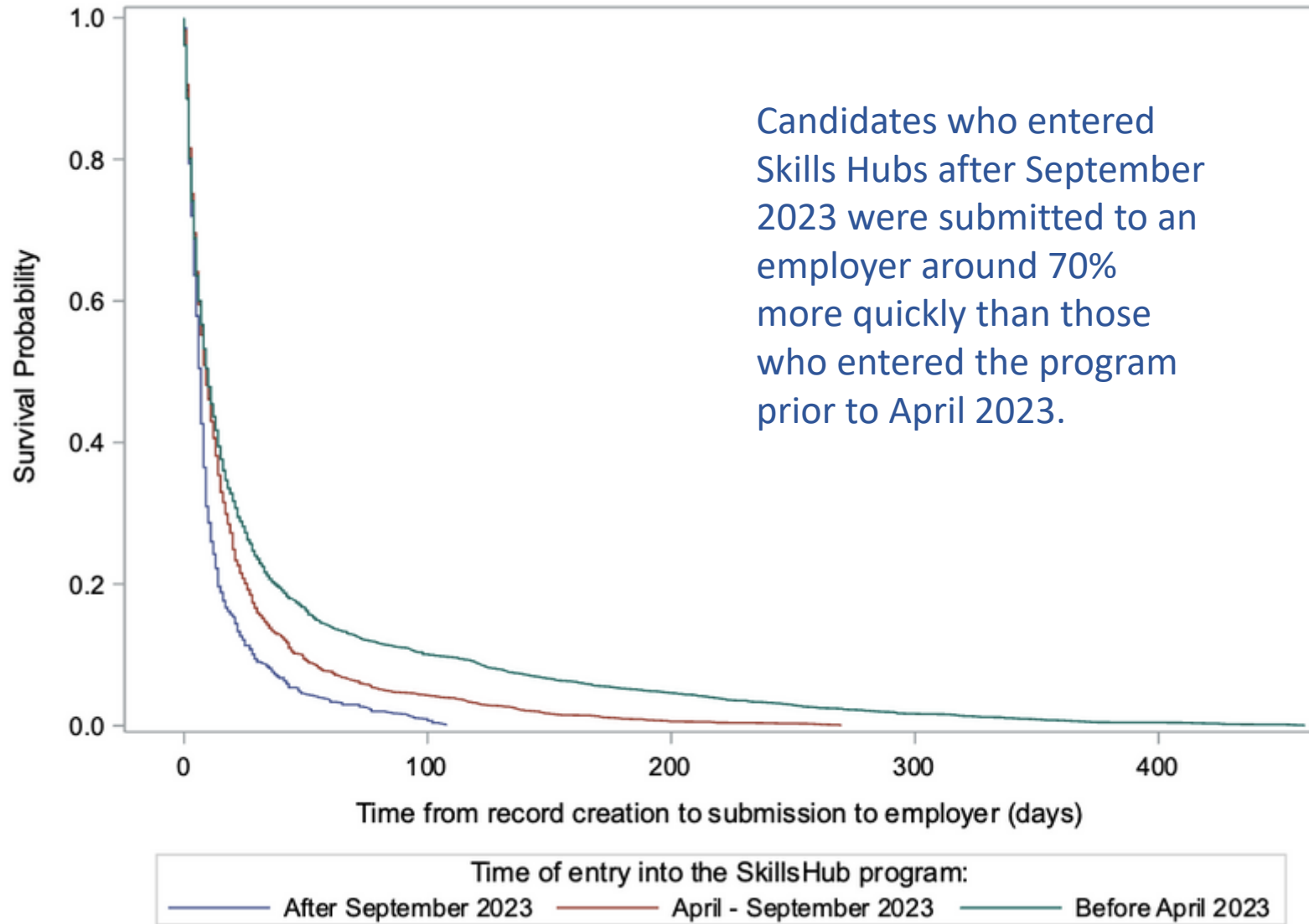


Variable	Level	n*	HR	95% CI
Gender	Male	334	ref	
	Female	1401	1.062	0.938, 1.201
Age	16-40	598	ref	
	41-65	630	0.856	0.769, 0.952
	65+	77	0.694	0.541, 0.892
CALD**	No	1114	ref	
	Yes	535	0.999	0.898, 1.112
Qualification	None	653	ref	
	Skills set or other	164	1.135	0.952, 1.354
	Nursing, Cert III or Cert IV	926	1.177	1.061, 1.305
Work Hours Preference	Up to 15 hours	175	ref	
	Up to 30 hours	845	1.135	0.957, 1.345
	More than 30 hours	597	1.161	0.973, 1.384
	Flexible	11	1.192	0.647, 2.196
MMM	1 or 2	1439	ref	
	3, 4 or 5	267	0.998	0.872, 1.142
	6 or 7	21	1.291	0.821, 2.030
	Unknown	15	1.138	0.684, 1.8983
Source	Facebook Ad	689	ref	
	Employment Website	669	1.408	1.260, 1.573
	Regional Workforce Coordinator	108	1.555	1.266, 1.911
	Workforce Australia	129	1.454	1.200, 1.761
	Other	140	1.181	0.981, 1.421

Table 2.3.5 Characteristics hazard ratios based on univariate models of time to stage completion.

*The different n-sizes are due to missing data. Only candidates with non-missing values per characteristic could be included in the models.

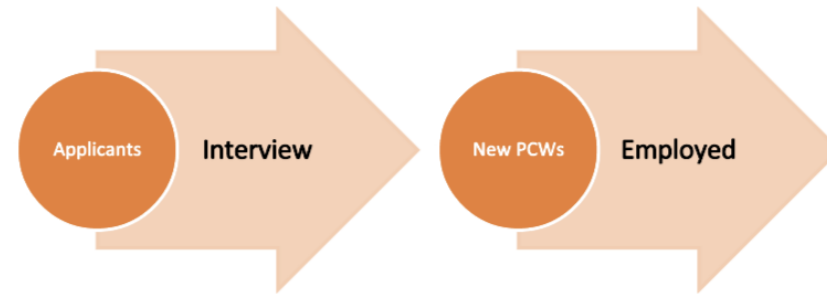
**Candidates who indicated they preferred not to answer the CALD question were not included in the hazard ratio estimate.



Speed to Market: Employer Phase

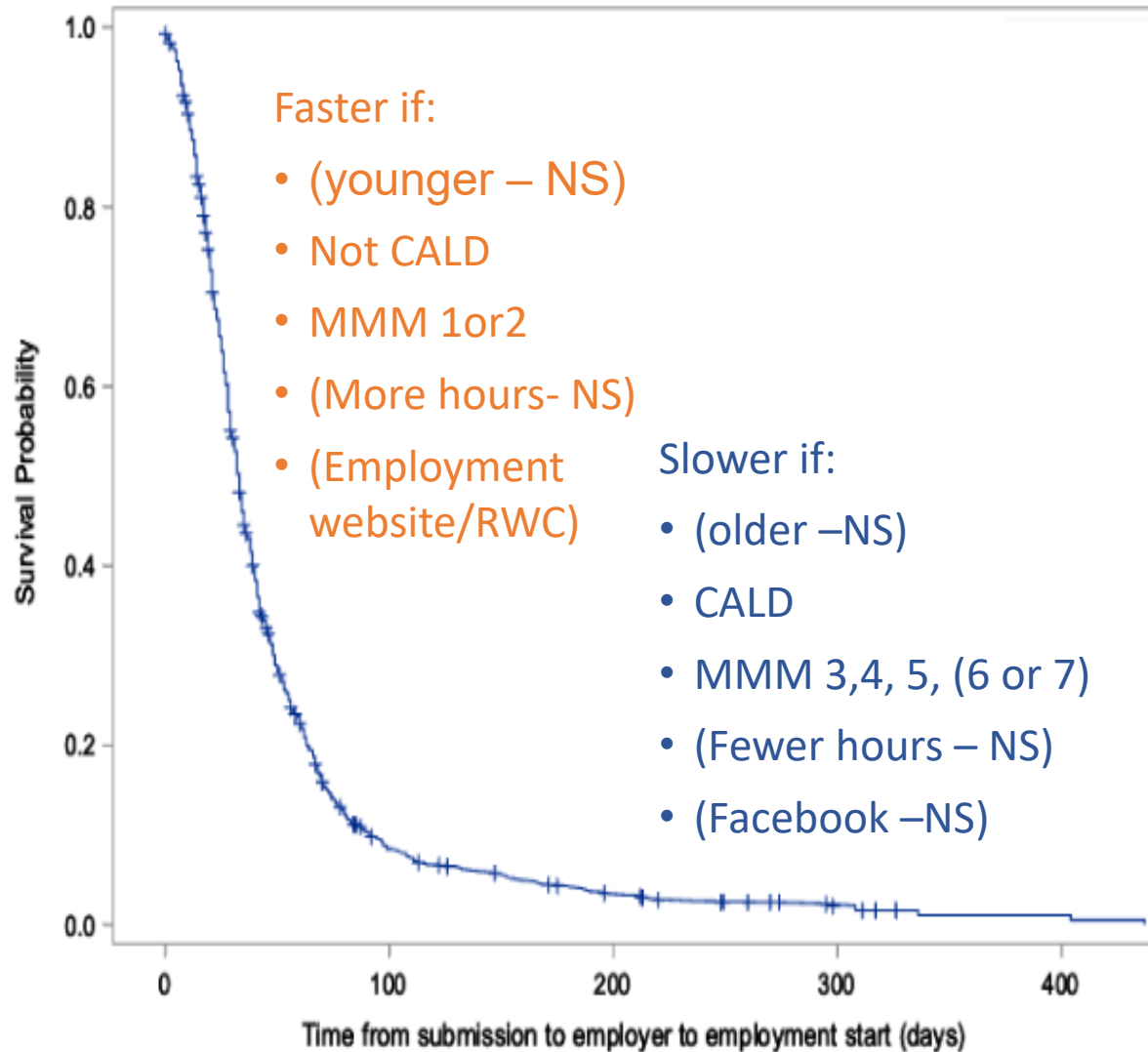
The employer phase reduced from:

- **48** days at the June report, to
- **34** days at the November report, to
- **28** days for this Final report



The increase in the speed for the employer stage was less dramatic than for the Skills Hubs phase.

Factors affecting speed through Employer Phase

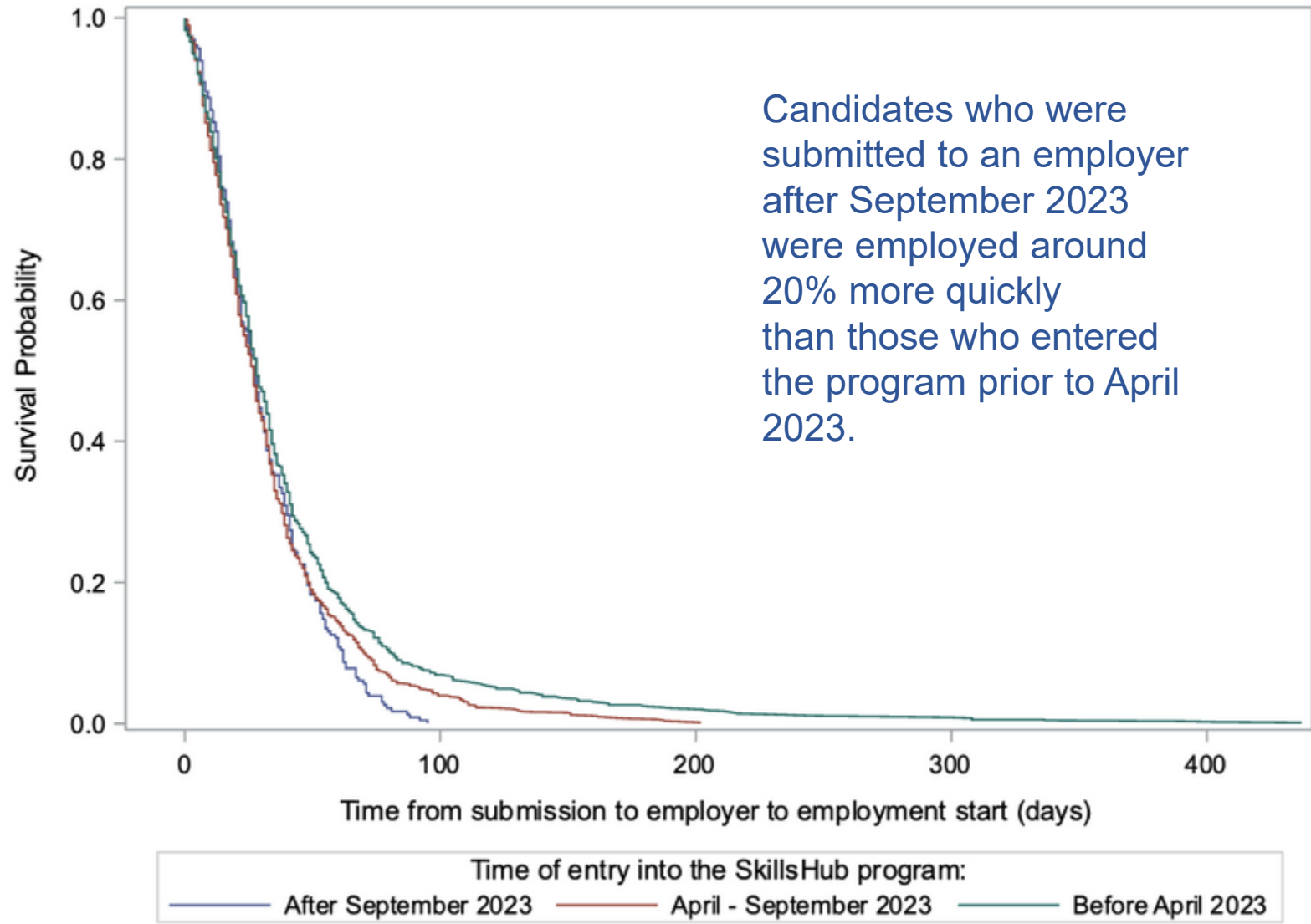


Variable	Level	n*	HR	95% CI
Gender	Male	187	ref	
	Female	930	1.031	0.877, 1.212
	Other	1	NA	
Age	16-40	365	ref	
	41-65	629	1.054	0.921, 1.206
	65+	52	0.850	0.629, 1.148
CALD**	No	750	ref	
	Yes	313	0.845	0.735, 0.970
Qualification	None	411	ref	
	Skills set or other	104	1.044	0.836, 1.304
	Nursing, Cert III or Cert IV	603	1.043	0.916, 1.188
Work Hours Preference	Up to 15 hours	120	ref	
	Up to 30 hours	544	1.108	0.905, 1.355
	More than 30 hours	369	1.064	0.862, 1.312
	Flexible	9	1.306	0.637, 2.678
MMM	1 or 2	928	ref	
	3, 4 or 5	174	0.817	0.690, 0.968
	6 or 7	14	0.801	0.441, 1.455
	Unknown	2	0.414	0.101, 1.690
Source	Facebook Ad	467	ref	
	Employment Website	390	1.118	0.971, 1.287
	Regional Workforce Coordinator	79	1.162	0.912, 1.480
	Workforce Australia	86	1.128	0.891, 1.429
	Other	92	1.034	0.822, 1.301

Table 2.3.6 Characteristics hazard ratios based on univariate models of time to stage completion.

*The different n-sizes are due to missing data. Only candidates with non-missing values per characteristic could be included in the models.

**Candidates who indicated they preferred not to answer the CALD question were not included in the hazard ratio estimate.





Worker Experience



Relationships with Clients

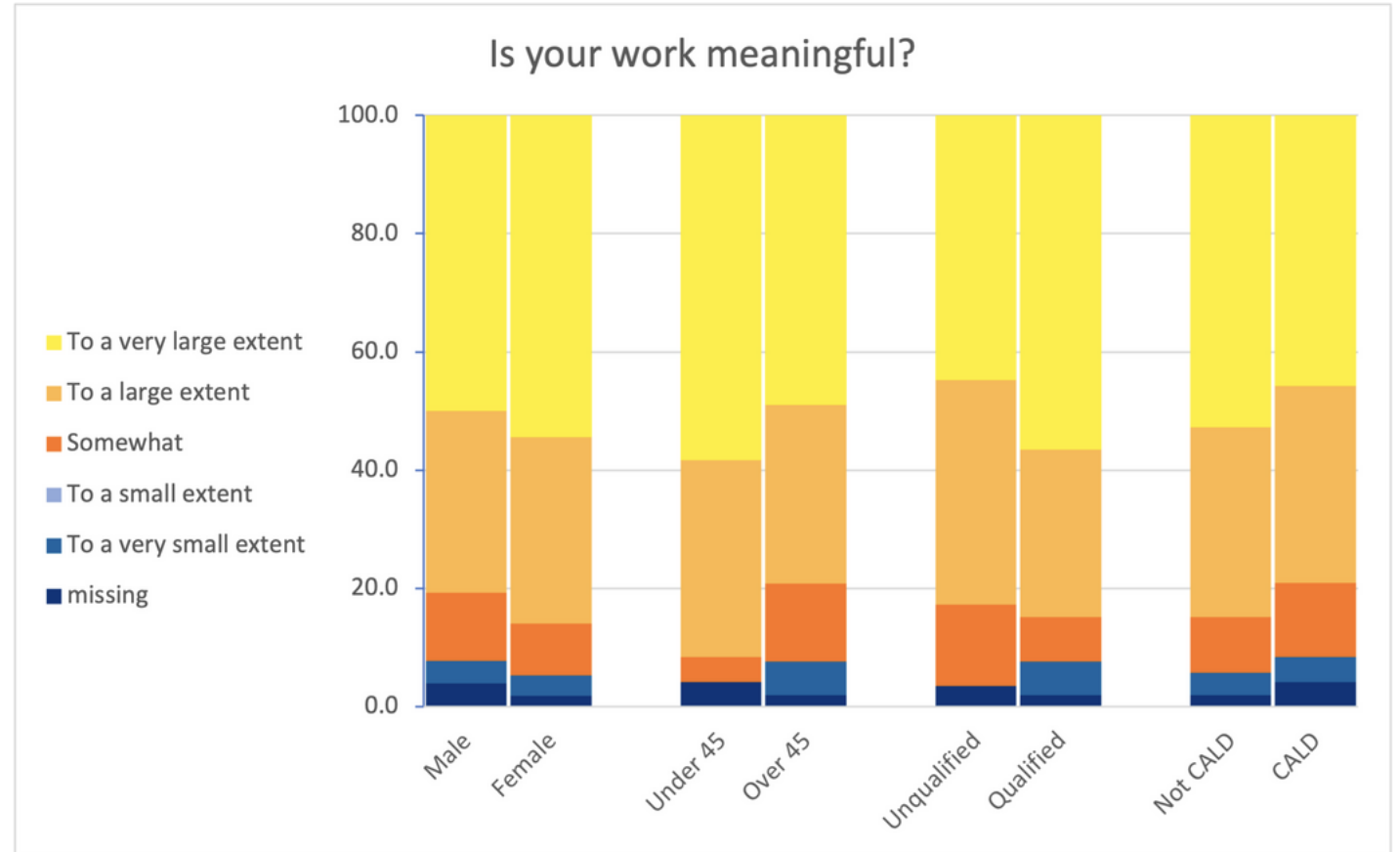
Building and sustaining connections with clients was a primary motivator and reward for workers.

Workers took pride and satisfaction in the difference they could make in older peoples' lives. It is the connection to their clients that brings their job meaning and keeps them going under difficult circumstances.



Workers Feel their work is meaningful

- Most workers felt their work was meaningful, and that they were making a difference in older people's lives, to a large extent or greater.
- There was a slight trend for older and qualified workers to rate the meaning of their work more highly.
- (survey data)



Professional Boundaries are Complex

Professional boundaries can be a source of tension between care workers and employers.

Care workers recognise close client relationships as a central motivator, but employers need to establish firm professional boundaries to protect the worker, the client and the organisation.

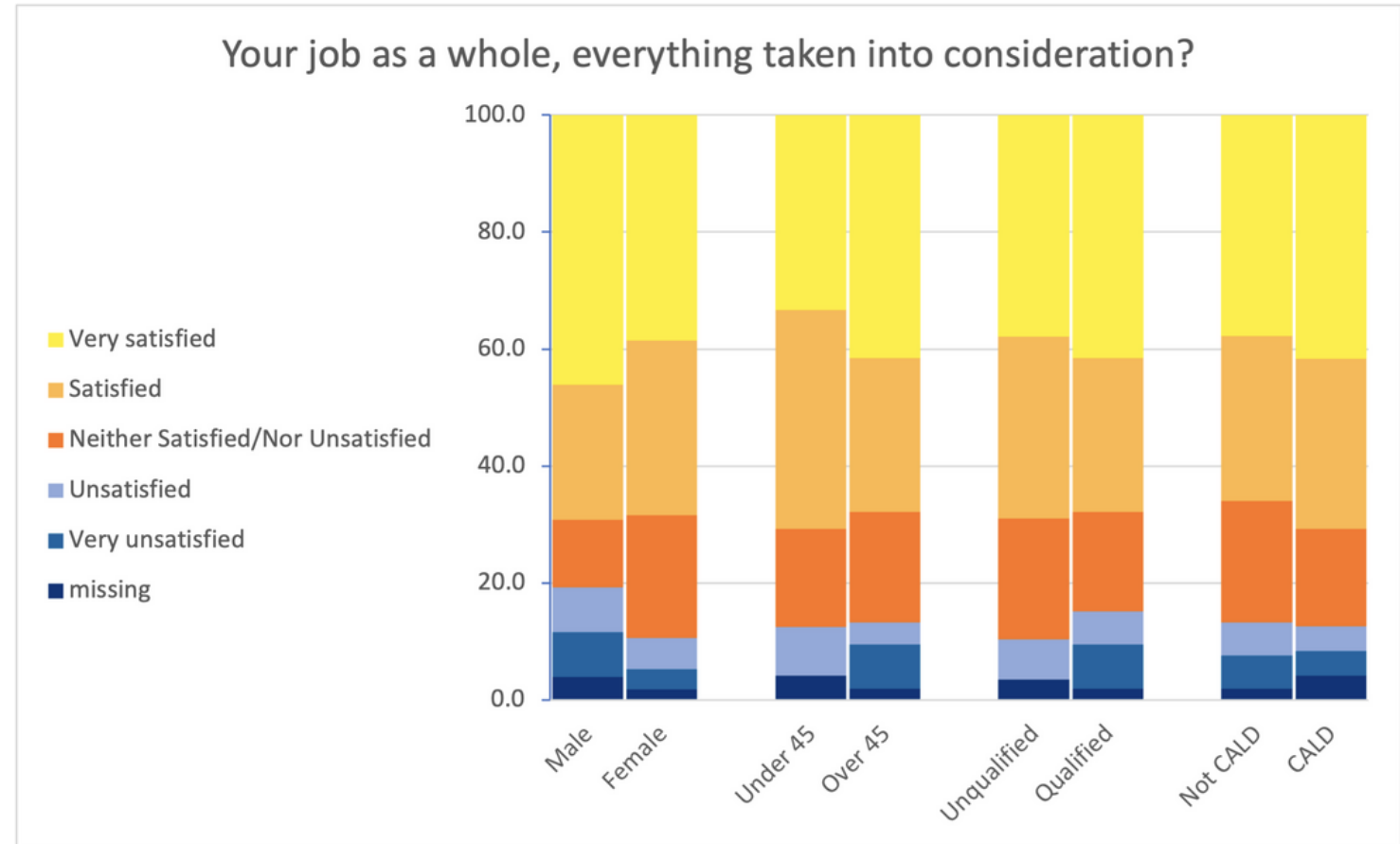
Employer strategies to maintain boundaries sometimes disrupted the relationship between worker and client by moving workers around.

Other employers strongly believe in the importance of relationships as a vital component of quality care.

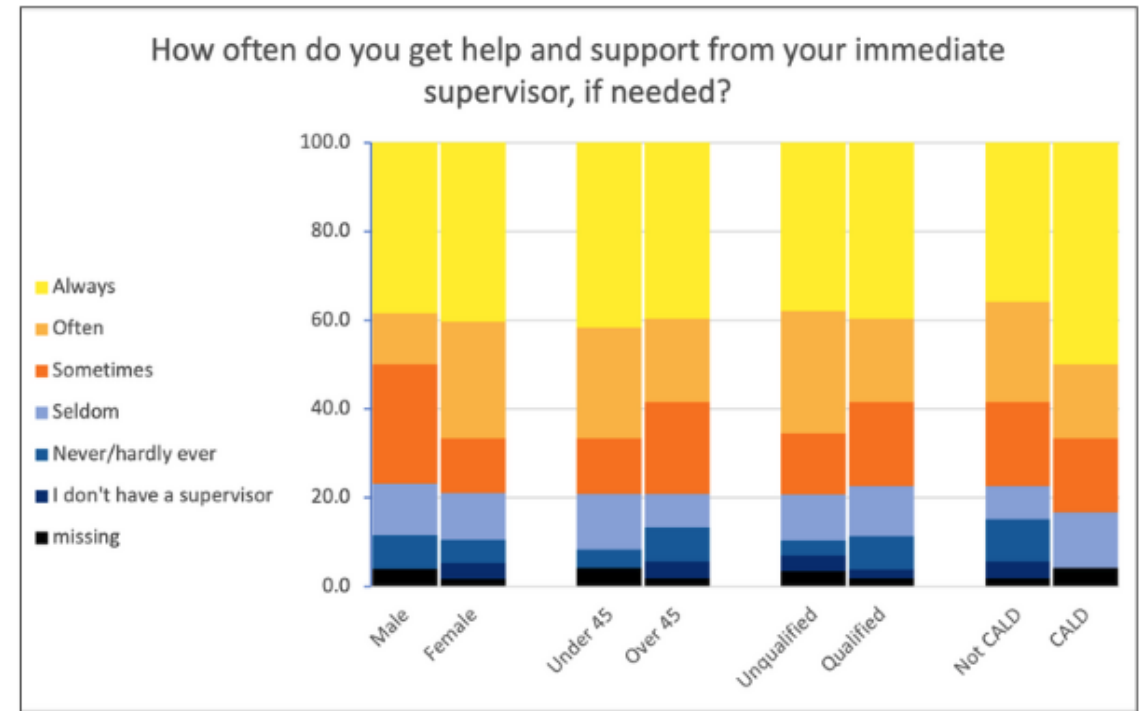
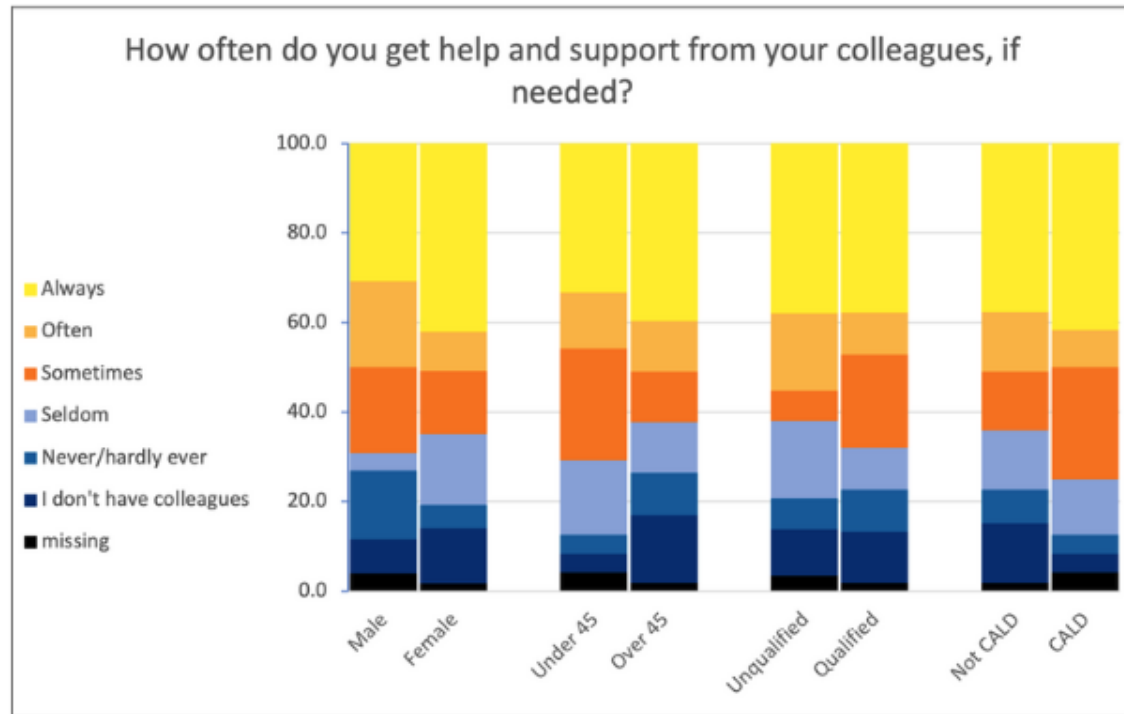


Job Satisfaction

- While most workers expressed some degree of satisfaction with their jobs, the ratings are not as high as might be expected by their motivations.
- This assessment appears to be matched by a perception that they have little job control, little time to complete their tasks, and find the work emotionally demanding.
- Many felt frustrated that they cannot meet their clients' needs.
- Workers identified that they often have to do tasks that ought to be done in a different way.



Supervision and support



There is a wide need for more support for workers, both from supervisors and from colleagues. In the interviews, workers reflected on the isolation from supervisors and colleagues due to the need to work independently in the client's home, with little or no chance to debrief or problem solve problems with colleagues. In interviews, workers sometimes talked about difficulties with their employers, feeling unsupported and unheard.

Worker Wellbeing

Around 40% of workers rated their health below “very good” or “excellent,” with older workers more likely to rate their health as “fair” or “poor.”

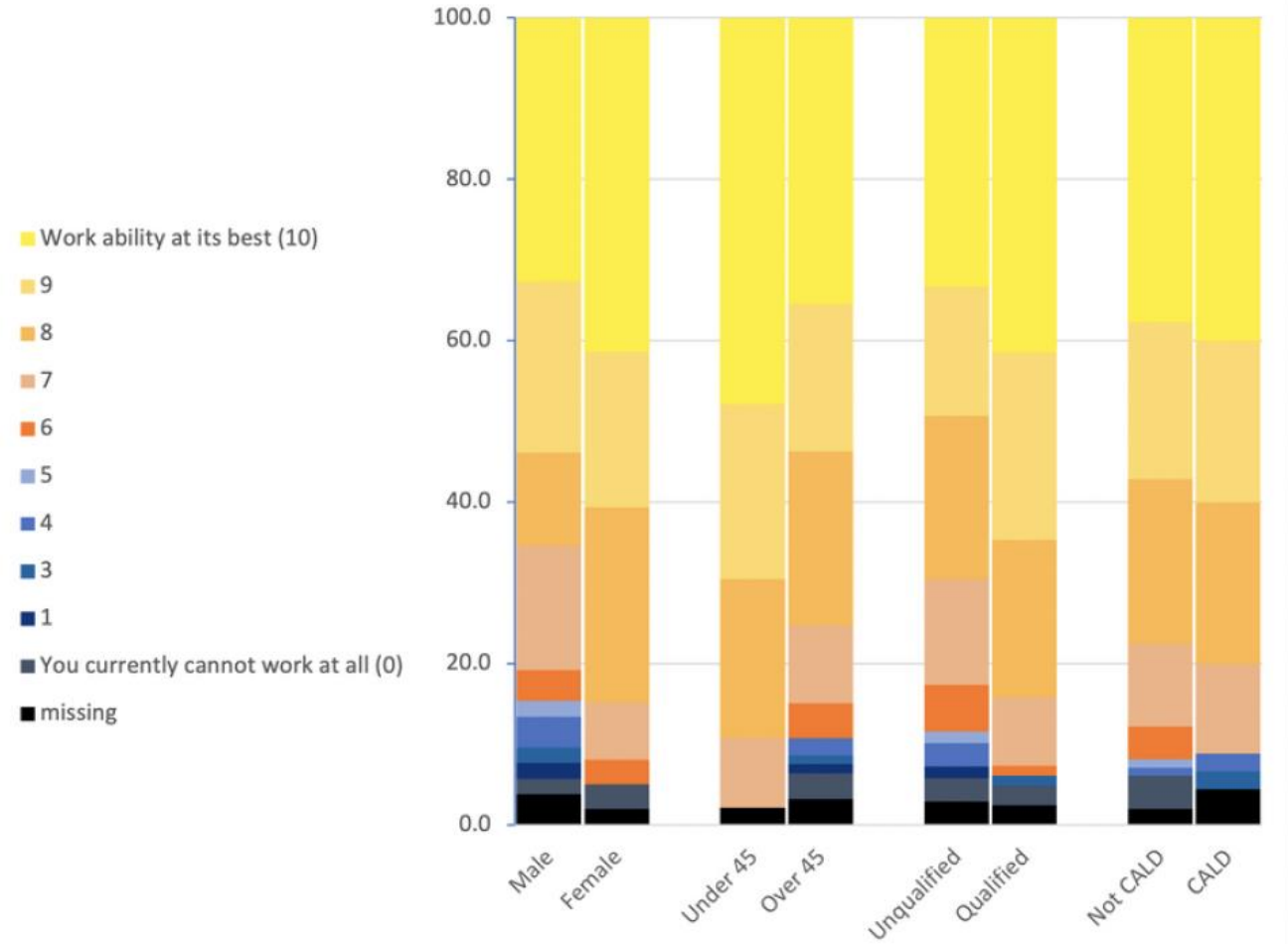
Care for care workers is crucial, as reflected in workability scores and ratings of bodily pain.

Despite their resilience, workers often require more support, debriefing opportunities, and wellbeing strategies, particularly considering the challenging and confronting aspects of the work, alongside potential health issues, which may be exacerbated in extreme climates.



Survey results: Workability

Current work ability compared to highest work ability ever
(Assume that your work ability at its best has a value of 10 points. How many points would you give your current work ability?)



Worker Resilience

The workers generally characterise themselves as highly resilient and adaptable, able to think under pressure, and with a positive approach to setbacks.

Younger workers scored higher than older workers on some of these resilience measures, which may correlate with older workers poorer personal health and lower estimates of workability.



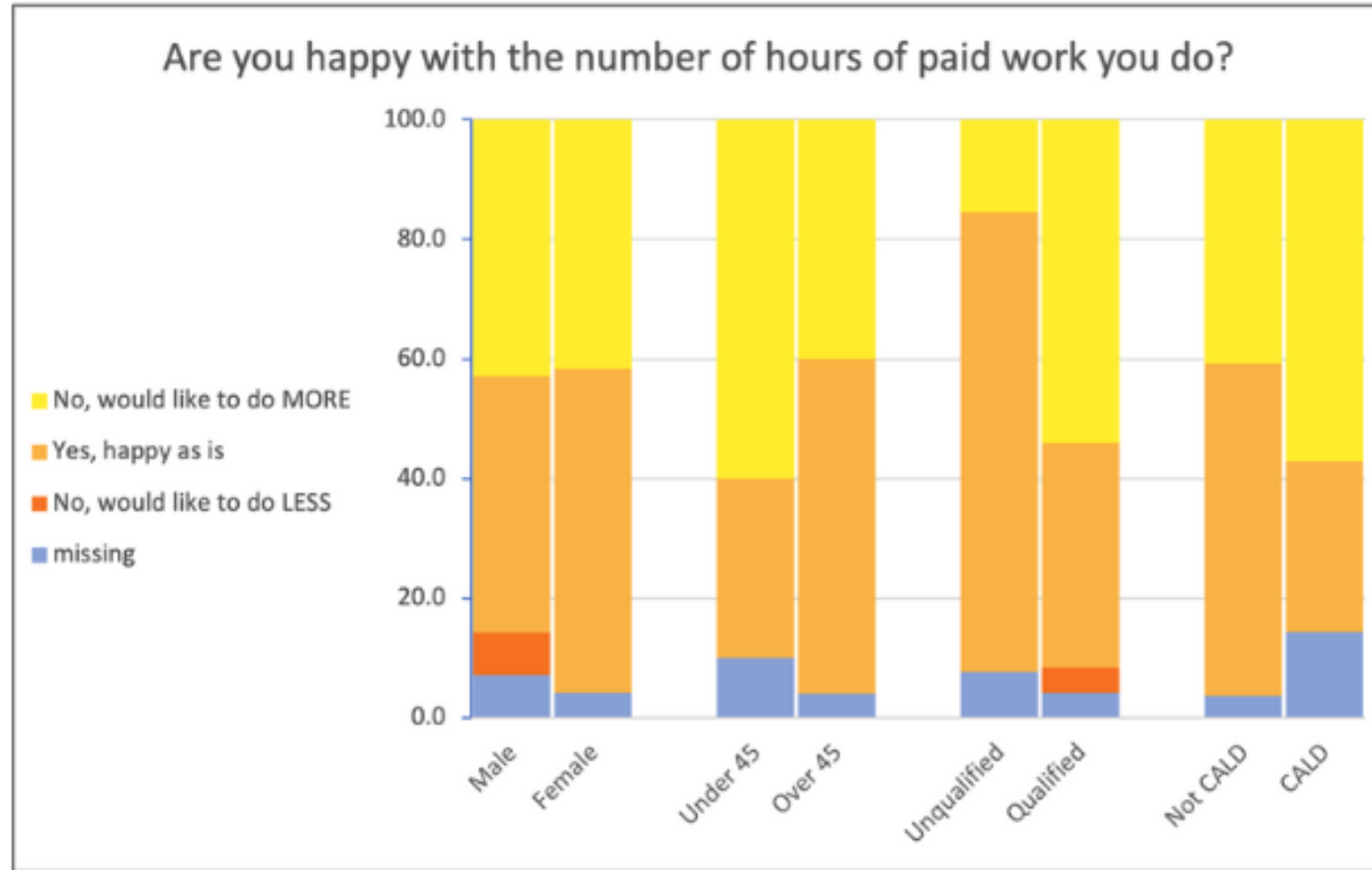
Workers Need Hours

Candidates wanting 30 or more hours, and those who were flexible with their hours tended to progressed more quickly (although not statistically significant). However, paradoxically, inadequate hours of employment was a source of staff dissatisfaction.

Moreover, most people are attracted to the work because of flexibility in hours, with a preference for between 15 and 30 hours per week.



Survey results: paid hours



Workers may be Qualified ... or Willing to Learn

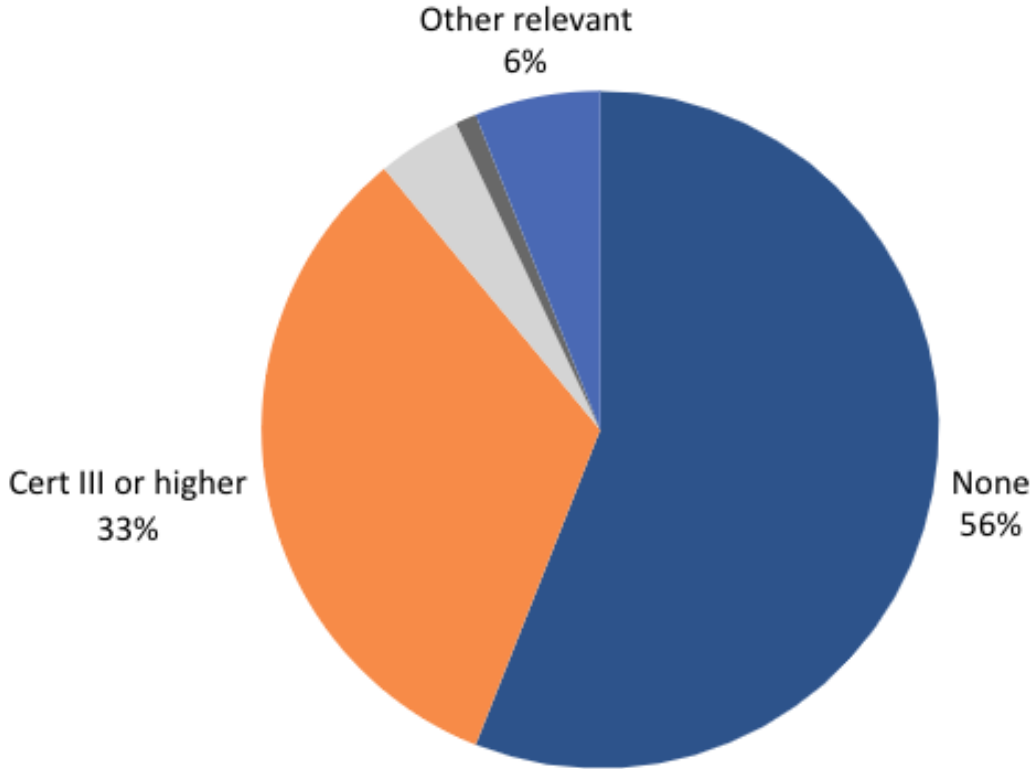
Not all of those who want to work in aged care have formal relevant qualifications. However, many of these workers have lived experience as carers, capacities for compassion and care, problem solving skills, and other skills. These people may need on the job training.

Candidates with Cert III, Cert IV or nursing qualifications progressed through the Skills Hubs pathway more quickly. This effect reflects both a preference and requirement for workers, as well as that these people were perhaps more prepared for aged care work.



Qualifications

Highest relevant qualification (completed)	n	%
missing	113	1
Registered Nurse	191	2
Enrolled Nurse	209	2
Cert IV.	438	5
Cert III	2230	24
Skill Set	14	<1
Other (relevant)	571	6
Other (not relevant)	354	4
None	5279	56
	9286	100



RECOMMENDATIONS and INSIGHTS

The program demonstrated that it is possible to drive rapid recruitment of the right people.

- Attracting people to work in aged care is more than a “job finder” function.
- From the first enquiry, and throughout their employment, workers need support in making the journey into employment, maintaining and upgrading their skills, and dealing with the challenges of their jobs.
- A system such as the Skills Hubs process, and supported by the hive, streamlines recruitment, screening, and helps with job readiness. This system could include standardised screening, checks, and induction processes.
- The system also provides direct support to employers in meeting their staffing needs, according to their vacancies. If employers do not have to concentrate on recruitment they may be better able to concentrate on staff support and retention.
- The profile of aged care work needs to be raised, so care workers feel proud and valued by the community

RECOMMENDATIONS and INSIGHTS (cont.)

the industry (and community) may be narrow in their view of what an aged care worker looks like

- Workers may not be qualified, but they have relevant experience, interpersonal skills, and are keen to learn
- A particular focus of support could be applied for:
 - Older workers
 - Men
 - Rural and remote care workers
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers
 - Workers from CALD, and especially those newly arrived in Australia.

Life experience, people skills, and kindness matter

RECOMMENDATIONS and INSIGHTS (cont.)

Care workers need more support

- Care workers need more formal opportunities, and paid time, for professional networking, debriefing and problem solving.
- Care workers often need more support from their supervisors
- Skills development should be a paid part of the care worker's role.
- There needs to be a greater understanding of how workers can build therapeutic relationships with the older people they care for, while maintaining their professional boundaries, and how clients can get the most from their side of the interaction.
- The community is part of the care network

Cultural Change is Necessary

Survey responses reveal a significant demand for increased support from colleagues and supervisors.

In interviews workers expressed feelings of isolation from supervisors and colleagues due to the nature of working independently in clients' homes, with limited opportunities for debriefing or collaborative problem-solving.

Workers occasionally shared concerns about challenges with their employers, and feeling unsupported and overlooked.



Consortium members felt the program ended just as it was starting to achieve optimal impact.

Much time and effort went into engaging with employers, building their trust, and opening them up to new ways of operating.

The opportunity for change was beginning to be realised in terms of employment of staff, but greater opportunities to better support staff, and ultimately provide better client care, were emerging.

The approach can extend well beyond a matter of dealing with workforce shortages.



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