Improving skills and care standards in the support workforce for older people: a realist synthesis of workforce development interventions


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Citation

Authors' objectives
Support workers make up the majority of the workforce in health and social care services for older people. There is evidence to suggest that support workers are not deployed as effectively as possible, are often undervalued, and that there are gaps in understanding support worker roles across different care settings. In the context of a population that is growing older, having a skilled and knowledgeable workforce is an imperative. Workforce development includes the support required to equip those providing care to older people with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours to deliver safe and high-quality services. The review answered the question 'how can workforce development interventions improve the skills and the care standards of support workers within older people's health and social care services?'.

Authors' conclusions
The review has resulted in an explanatory account of how the design and delivery of workforce development interventions work to improve the skills and care standards of support workers in older people's health and social care services. Implications for the practice of designing and delivering older person's support workforce development interventions are directly related to the eight CMO configuration of the programme theory. Our recommendations for future research relate both to aspects of research methods and to a number of research questions to further evaluate and explicate our programme theory.

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