



**The client:** Skills for Care

**The brief:** Skills for Care wanted to understand more about the digital capabilities of the social care workforce. While there was no shortage of anecdote about the use of ICTs in the sector, there has been little research done on how care staff use mainstream digital technologies. The research was intended to underpin a skills support strategy for the workforce.

**The approach:** SDA conducted primary research using a mix of surveys, telephone interviews and site visits. Two surveys were developed, one for staff and one for managers; both were extensively tested with an employer advisory group. The surveys were disseminated primarily online. In order to increase recruitment, managers were asked to volunteer to help staff complete the survey, and were offered the option of a paper-based version. The response rates were considerably higher than normally attained by similar surveys, with over 500 respondents in total. Just over 15% chose to respond using the paper versions. We also visited eight social care organisations - recruited via the survey - and interviewed over 50 managers and staff on site about their uses of and attitudes to digital technologies and skills.

**The outcome:** A detailed report provided Skills for Care with robust evidence about the capabilities of managers and staff in the sector, as well as an understanding of how technologies are currently used. Findings included a significant mismatch between managerial and staff perceptions of skills, and an untapped enthusiasm amongst frontline staff for increasing the use of digital technologies both for administration and for frontline services.

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