

Hope you've been enjoying the summer so far. Is anyone off on a summer holiday soon?

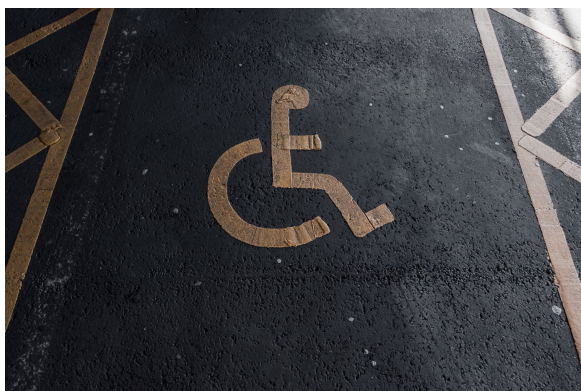
At this time of year, many people will be looking forward to some well-deserved time away, whether that's a full holiday, a few days of rest, a trip, or simply time with family and friends.

For care organisations, however, the summer period can also bring its own set of workforce challenges. Annual leave needs to be balanced carefully. Services still need to be safely and consistently staffed. For many team members, the impact of school holiday childcare arrangements can also create additional pressure points within teams, with staffing shortages or additional shift cover sometimes increasing the risk of fatigue and burnout if not managed thoughtfully.

At times like this, it can be helpful for leaders to take a step back and consider not only how rotas are being covered, but how the experience feels for the people holding those shifts. Small, intentional actions can make a meaningful difference. This might include planning ahead where possible, checking in regularly on team capacity, and being mindful of where overtime or additional cover may be becoming the norm rather than the exception.

It can also be valuable to create space for honest conversations within teams, so staff feel able to flag when pressures are building, rather than once they are already feeling stretched. Encouraging rest where possible, protecting breaks, and recognising the impact of school holiday periods on working lives can all help to reduce avoidable strain.

While summer will always bring a degree of additional complexity in care settings, a supportive and proactive approach can help ensure that both staff wellbeing and safe, consistent care remain central throughout this period.



July is Disability Pride Month, a time to recognise and celebrate the identity, achievements, and lived experiences of disabled people.

It also offers an important opportunity to reflect on how inclusion is experienced in practice across teams, services, and everyday workplace culture.

Inclusion is not only about awareness or celebration during specific months, but about whether people are consistently supported to live and work with dignity, independence, and choice.

This month reminds us that disability is a natural part of human diversity, encouraging a shift in thinking away from assumptions and generalisations, and towards a deeper understanding of individual strengths, preferences, and lived experience. In care and support settings, this is particularly important, where the way people are understood and supported directly shapes their quality of life. Research continues to highlight that disabled people still face inequality across employment, health, and social participation. Around half of disabled people in the UK report experiencing discrimination in their daily lives, reinforcing the importance of environments where inclusion is actively embedded rather than passively stated.

In adult social care, around 1 in 5 people working in the sector are disabled. This brings a further responsibility for employers to ensure workplaces are genuinely accessible, supportive, and responsive to individual needs. Evidence also shows that disabled employees can face additional barriers to progression, and that reasonable adjustments are not always consistently implemented, which can impact confidence, wellbeing, and retention over time.

For organisations, this is not only about compliance, but about culture. National initiatives such as the [Disability Confident campaign](#) highlight the importance of employers actively removing barriers, improving understanding, and supporting both recruitment and retention of disabled people.

Disability Pride Month is not only a moment of recognition, but a reminder of the ongoing responsibility organisations hold in shaping environments where people feel able to participate fully, contribute confidently, and feel a genuine sense of belonging.

Do you have any new managers in your team, or managers who may benefit from refreshing their confidence and up-to-date knowledge, so they feel better equipped to support their teams, manage challenges early, and maintain a positive working culture?



In busy care environments, managers often play a key role in holding teams together, supporting communication, and navigating difficult conversations in a calm and constructive way. Making space for their development can therefore have a meaningful impact on wider team wellbeing and stability.

The Acas [Conflict Management Skills online course](#) provides practical support for managers looking to strengthen their confidence in handling workplace issues early and effectively.



We've certainly experienced some very warm weather already this summer, and with several weeks still ahead where further heatwaves remain a possibility, keeping people safe and well during periods of high temperatures continues to be an important consideration for care providers.

As periods of extreme heat become more common, taking a proactive approach can help protect both the people receiving care and the teams providing it. While hot weather can affect everyone, some people are at greater risk than others.

Mencap has highlighted that people with a learning disability may be particularly vulnerable during periods of extreme heat. Some individuals may find it more difficult to recognise or communicate when they are becoming too hot, may require additional support to stay hydrated, have underlying health conditions that can be affected by high temperatures, or live in environments where keeping cool is more challenging.

[Here is their guidance to help people with a learning disability understand how to stay safe during hot weather, providing practical information that can support both individuals and those caring for them.](#)

Bmindful Psychology has also highlighted that many people with ADHD and Autism may experience increased sensory overload during periods of hot weather.

[Read their blog here.](#)

Reviewing your service's hot weather plans, ensuring care plans reflect individual heat-related risks, and making sure teams feel confident in recognising and responding to the effects of extreme heat are becoming increasingly important parts of delivering safe, person-centred care.

July 14th marks [International Non-Binary People's Day](#), an awareness day that highlights non-binary identities and the experiences of people whose gender identity does not sit exclusively within "male" or "female" categories.

This day is an important reminder that inclusion is not only about policy or awareness, but about the everyday environments we create within services and teams. The way staff are supported to understand, respect, and reflect people's identities has a direct impact on whether individuals feel safe, seen, and treated with dignity.



In care settings in particular, where relationships and communication are central to good support, small moments matter. Language used in care plans, assumptions made in conversation, or the confidence staff feel in asking respectful questions can all influence the experience of both service users and colleagues. When these areas are not consistently considered, there is a risk that people may feel overlooked or hesitant to express who they are fully.

Research from Stonewall has highlighted that many non-binary people still avoid disclosing their identity in healthcare, education, and workplace settings due to concerns about misunderstanding or discrimination. For employers, this is a reminder of the responsibility held at organisational level to create psychologically safe environments where people do not feel they need to hide or explain themselves in order to receive appropriate support.

Simple but consistent actions, such as using inclusive language, checking assumptions, and supporting staff through ongoing learning, all help build a culture where inclusion is lived in practice rather than simply stated in policy. For leaders, it is also an opportunity to reflect on how well inclusion is embedded across services, and whether staff feel equipped and supported to provide care that respects each person's identity without hesitation or uncertainty.



In August, Skills for Care are hosting one of their [Being Prepared for CQC Assessment seminars](#), offering practical support for providers preparing for upcoming CQC assessment activity.

These interactive seminars are designed to help services better understand the CQC Single Assessment Framework and what is expected when demonstrating safe, effective, and well-led care. Participants explore how to approach assessment with confidence, including how to evidence quality effectively and how to involve staff teams in preparation. The focus is on practical, real-world application, helping organisations translate expectations into everyday practice.

The seminar also provides insight into current CQC priorities, quality assurance approaches, and what inspectors will be looking for during assessment. Alongside this, attendees receive practical resources and toolkits to support implementation back within their service.



We'd love to hear from you:

What conversations are currently shaping how you think about workforce support, wellbeing, or retention in your organisation?



Thought for the month:

Self-care is often spoken about as something personal and individual, something we each take responsibility for in our own time and in our own way. And whilst that is true, it is only part of the picture.

The environments people work in play a significant role in how easy or difficult it feels to actually prioritise self-care. In busy care and support settings, where the focus is so often on others, it can be easy for staff to quietly place their own wellbeing at the bottom of the list.

Employers have a meaningful role in shaping this experience. Not by taking responsibility away from individuals, but by creating conditions where self-care feels possible rather than pressured or out of reach. This might look like encouraging realistic workloads, respecting breaks, normalising time away from work without guilt, and creating space for honest conversations about capacity and wellbeing.

When self-care is supported in this way, it becomes less about isolated acts of recovery and more about a culture that sustains people day to day. In practice, this often leads to teams who feel more balanced, more valued, and better able to remain engaged in their roles over time.

International Self-Care Day on the 24th offers a helpful moment to promote self-care to teams, and is a reminder that while self-care is personal, it is also influenced by the systems, expectations, and cultures we are part of every day. Often, it is not about adding more wellbeing initiatives, but about removing the subtle barriers that make it harder for people to look after themselves in the first place.

This might look like a number of simple, everyday actions within teams and leadership:

- Explicitly stating that breaks are expected, not optional
- Protecting time for admin so it doesn't spill into personal time
- Quick end-of-shift check-ins ("what's one thing you're leaving behind today?")
- Peer support buddy systems for busy periods
- Avoiding glorifying overwork or "pushing through" language
- Responding calmly when someone raises capacity concerns
- Ensuring overtime is not becoming an unspoken expectation within teams

Where in your organisation does self-care feel genuinely supported, and where might there still be space to make it easier for people to care for themselves in the middle of their work?

 Further reading/watching:

 [Thoughtful Performance Review Questions](#)

 [Playday August 5th: The importance of Play In Child Development](#)

Vacancies slowing your service down?

We can pre-screen candidates fast and get them in front of you for interview — reach out now and let's solve your hiring gaps fast.

Warm wishes for the month ahead.



Connecting compassionate care providers with skilled professionals to build strong, values-aligned teams that enhance care quality and service outcomes.



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