

‘Good employers wanted’. Strategies of Polish employment agencies towards posted workers in home care sector

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Employers struggling with labour shortages, retention and competence mismatches may opt for the implementation of innovative strategies towards attracting workers. This paper will use the “good employer” lens to shed light on the practices undertaken by employment agencies posting workers in EU countries. These employers’ actions are the result of internal policies of the companies aimed at brand improvement as well as individualising employee-employer relations. This paper will examine ‘good employer’ perspective in relation to a particularly vulnerable group of mobile workers, that is Polish workers posted by private labour market intermediaries to carry out care work in German households.

To illustrate the activities of the posting entrepreneurs, the paper will draw on the results of qualitative research coming from different projects (POWBridge, EuroAgencyCare) carried out between 2016-2021. A total of 16 interviews (semi-structured interviews, also including vignettes) were conducted with representatives and owners of employment agencies (both family businesses and multinational corporations) specialized in home care services. Additionally, 19 interviews with researchers, care market experts, social partners or other migration facilitators will be implemented.

The collected empirical material showed that, regardless of the characteristics of the actors posting workers to the domestic care sector in Germany, they make similar efforts towards live-in care workers. Unable to change the specific conditions of employment in home care (e.g. 24/7 work, low wages, physical and emotional strain), employers who post workers pursue additional strategies in terms of selection and recruitment, support and professional development of workers, and problem-solving assistance in the host country.

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