



DIAGNOSTIC GUIDE

What your schedule is trying to tell you

A workforce checkup for uncovering the signals behind staffing, scheduling, and labor costs

Diagnosing your workforce health

Workforce management sits at the center of senior care operations. Scheduling and timekeeping help teams manage shifts day to day, but they also reveal symptoms within operational strain, labor costs, and employee engagement.

This guide is a practical workforce checkup that highlights eight common scheduling and labor patterns. Use it to spot what may be happening beneath the surface, investigate the right questions, and identify where connected workforce management can help leaders respond sooner.



Symptom #1:

Overtime is concentrated among the same employees

When the same names keep appearing in overtime reports, the schedule may be revealing a coverage model that depends too heavily on a few reliable employees.

- Behind the symptom:

- Burnout risk
- Staffing shortages
- Overreliance on top contributors

- Questions to ask:

- Are the same employees consistently covering workforce gaps?
- Which departments, shifts, or locations generate the most overtime?
- Is overtime driven by temporary shortages or a recurring staffing issue?
- What would happen if our highest-overtime employees left tomorrow?
- Are we relying on overtime instead of addressing the underlying workforce need?



The remedy:

Track overtime by employee, shift, department, and location to spot recurring coverage gaps earlier and reduce reliance on the same employees to keep schedules whole.

Symptom #2:

Certain shifts are always difficult to fill

Hard-to-fill shifts can show where workforce demand, employee availability, and recruiting focus are no longer lining up.

- **Behind the symptom:**

- Less attractive shifts
- Recurring coverage gaps by unit or day
- Shifting labor demand
- Misaligned recruiting priorities
- Prioritizing headcount over coverage

- **Questions to ask:**

- Which shifts remain unfilled the longest?
- Are staffing gaps concentrated on evenings, overnights, weekends, or holidays?
- Which open shifts eventually require overtime or agency coverage?
- Do our recruiting priorities reflect our most common schedule shortages?
- Which shifts generate the highest decline rates from employees?



The remedy:

Compare open shifts against hiring activity to recruit for the roles, days, and time periods where coverage most often breaks down.

Symptom #3:

Last-minute call-offs are increasing

A rise in call-offs can be an early signal that schedule pressure is starting to affect reliability, engagement, or day-to-day consistency.

- Behind the symptom:

- Limited flexibility
- Work-life balance strain
- Emerging disengagement

- Questions to ask:

- Which shifts have the highest call-off rates?
- Are call-offs increasing following periods of high overtime?
- Are certain departments or managers experiencing higher absenteeism?
- Do new hires call off more frequently than longer-tenured employees?
- What patterns emerge when we compare attendance, turnover, and scheduling data?



The remedy:

Review call-offs alongside overtime, tenure, department, and manager-level trends to identify where schedule strain may be putting employees at risk.

Symptom #4:

Agency reliance keeps growing

As agency use becomes more routine, it can start to point beyond short-term coverage needs and toward deeper workforce stability challenges.

- **Behind the symptom:**

- Temporary coverage becoming permanent
- Persistent hiring gaps
- Retention instability
- Higher labor costs
- Hidden staffing shortages

- **Questions to ask:**

- Which roles generate the highest agency spend?
- What percentage of open shifts are being filled by agency staff?
- How has agency usage changed over the last year?
- Which facilities rely most heavily on agency coverage?
- If agency workers were unavailable tomorrow, where would coverage break down?



The remedy:

Track where and why agency use grows to understand whether hiring gaps, retention challenges, or hidden staffing shortages are driving higher labor costs.

Symptom #5:

Schedules frequently change after they're published

When schedules shift repeatedly after publication, the original plan may not be reflecting the realities managers and employees face on the floor.

- **Behind the symptom:**

- Reactive planning
- Demand mismatch
- Manager burden
- Schedule uncertainty
- Employee frustration

- **Questions to ask:**

- How often do schedules change after publication?
- What are the most common reasons for schedule revisions?
- Which departments experience the most changes?
- How much manager time is spent reworking schedules each week?
- How different is the final worked schedule from the schedule originally posted?



The remedy:

Compare the published schedule to the final worked schedule to pinpoint where plans break down and reduce last-minute changes over time.

Strengthen scheduling predictability:

Integrating your scheduling and time & attendance solutions gives you insights to design schedules around your workforce realities.

Symptom #6:

Managers are filling shifts manually

When coverage depends on constant manual follow-up, managers may be sacrificing time leading their teams by spending more time fixing the schedule.

- **Behind the symptom:**

- Administrative burden
- Limited scheduling visibility
- Time lost to coverage tasks
- Constant firefighting
- Processes that do not scale

- **Questions to ask:**

- How many hours per week do managers spend building schedules?
- How much time is spent texting, calling, or emailing staff about coverage?
- Which scheduling tasks are still fully manual?
- Do any of your scheduling processes live offline (e.g., texts and calls to personal devices, printed schedules, emailed spreadsheets)?
- What activities are managers being pulled away from because of scheduling demands?
- How frequently are managers filling shifts outside normal business hours?



The remedy:

Identify manual scheduling tasks and the time they consume to streamline coverage workflows and give managers more time to support employees.

Symptom #7:

Labor costs surprise you at payroll time

When labor costs are only clear once payroll is underway, scheduling decisions may be happening without the visibility needed to manage spend in real time.

- **Behind the symptom:**

- Late cost visibility
- Hidden overtime and premiums
- Budget disconnects
- Limited real-time insight
- Delayed issue detection

- **Questions to ask:**

- When do we typically discover labor overruns?
- Which labor expenses are driving the largest budget variances?
- How much overtime was planned versus unplanned?
- Do schedulers have visibility into labor costs while building schedules?
- Which locations consistently exceed labor budgets?



The remedy:

Integrate scheduling and time & attendance data to give schedulers real-time visibility into labor costs, helping them address overtime, premiums, and budget variances before payroll closes.

Symptom #8:

Employees aren't picking up available shifts

When open shifts sit untouched, employees may be signaling that availability is not the only barrier.

- **Behind the symptom:**

- Full utilization
- Workforce fatigue
- Preference mismatch
- Ineffective shift communication
- Greater need for flexibility

- **Questions to ask:**

- Which open shifts receive the fewest responses?
- How quickly are available shifts typically claimed?
- Are employees actively declining extra shifts, or simply not responding?
- Do employees have an easy way to view and claim open shifts?
- Are certain departments showing signs of schedule fatigue or disengagement?



The remedy:

Analyze response rates, shift preferences, and claim patterns to make open shifts easier to see, accept, and align with employee needs.

An opportunity to streamline workforce management

No workplace is perfect, especially as demands continue to evolve and senior care organizations keep their eyes on growth. But when scheduling and timekeeping data is difficult to access, interpret, or connect, leaders may miss the early signs of workforce strain.

If you had difficulty answering any of the questions in this guide, it may be time to take a closer look at how your workforce processes are connected.



Connect with Viventium + Apploi to see how better workforce management can support clearer communication, stronger planning, greater flexibility, improved work-life balance, and a more stable environment for long-term retention.

