

A collage of black and white photographs showing various people in care home settings. Top left: A man in a hoodie laughing. Top center: A woman with glasses smiling. Top right: A woman with blonde hair. Middle: A woman in a hijab looking up, with a man in the background. Bottom: Three people (two men and one woman) looking at a tablet together.

Care homes without nursing in the adult social care sector

2025/26

Contact us: analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk

Introduction

Key findings

320,000
filled posts

10,213
CQC-regulated
locations

10%
employed on a
zero-hours
contract

4.0%
vacancy rate

This summary report accompanies '[The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England, 2026](#)' report and focuses on the workforce employed in **care homes without nursing** that are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Charts shown here display rounded whole numbers and percentages, therefore the charts may not always total to 100%.

Care homes without nursing, also known as care-only homes, are places where personal care and accommodation are provided together, but nursing care is not provided. People may live in these services for short or long periods. Both the care provided and the premises are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The information in this summary is derived from the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS); independent sector information shown in this summary was collected between April 2025 and March 2026, and local authority information was collected as at September 2025. As at March 2026, over half of CQC-regulated locations were recorded in the ASC-WDS (54.1%) and in CQC care homes without nursing this figure was 62.3%.

Within the ASC-WDS, coverage of the CQC-regulated workforce varied by sector, service, job role and geographical area. To produce our analysis we create workforce estimates, enabling us to accurately describe the size and characteristics of the whole adult social care workforce. You can read about our [methodology](#) for creating these and find [data download Excel files](#) with further breakdowns of these on our website.

Skills for Care is an official statistics producer. This means that all official statistics produced by Skills for Care's Workforce Intelligence team will include oversight from the [Office for Statistics Regulation](#) (OSR), ensuring that we follow the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Our Workforce Intelligence analysts are committed to the Code as well as the three principles of trustworthiness, quality and value for all of our data outputs. See our website for our full [statement](#).

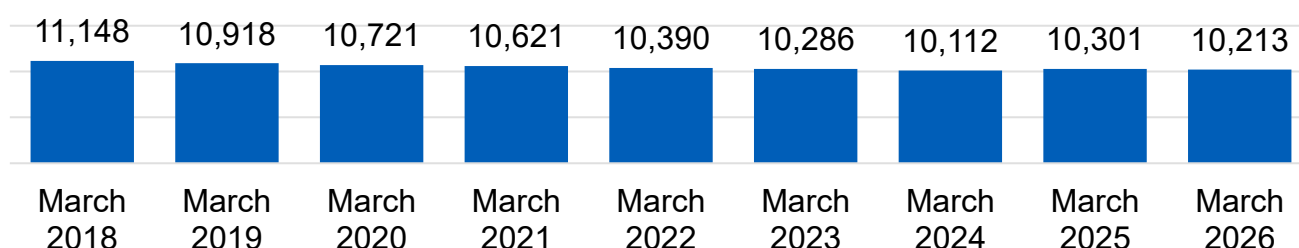
Further information about the workforce employed in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services can be found in the [data visualisation](#) that also accompanies the full report. The visualisation can be filtered by service and job role and shows analysis of all variables collected in the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS).

1. Size and Structure

As at March 2026, there were 10,213 locations regulated by the CQC providing care home services without nursing. This is a decrease from 11,148 in 2018 (-935 or -8%). During this same period, the number of CQC care homes with nursing decreased by 3% and the number of CQC non-residential services increased by 77%, showing a trend of people receiving care in their own homes.

Chart 1. Number of CQC-regulated care home without nursing services, 2018 to 2026

Source: CQC Care Directory

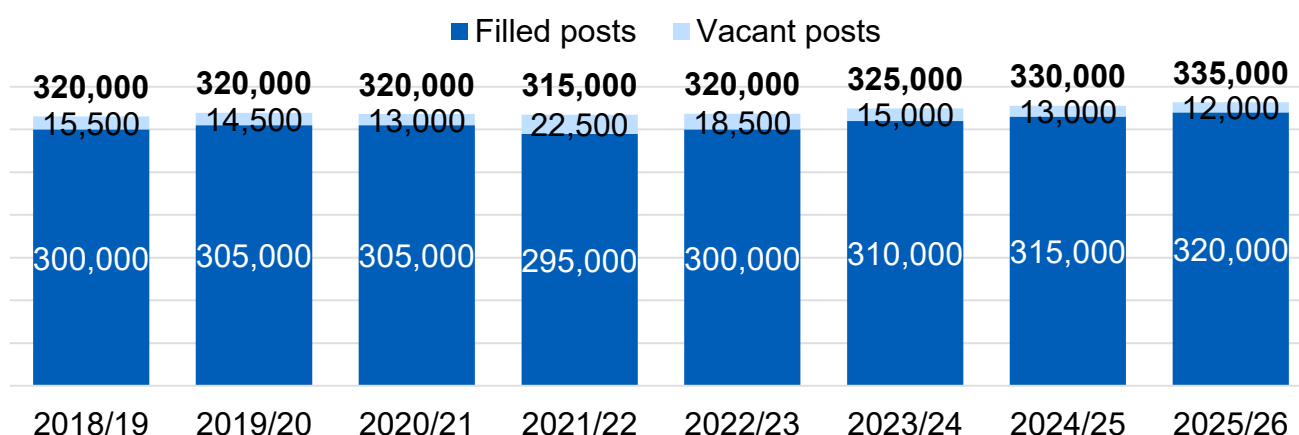


Please see our [filled posts in the adult social care workforce in England: monthly statistics](#) for monthly estimates of filled posts in independent sector CQC-regulated locations, including percentage changes over time.

In 2025/26, care homes without nursing had an estimated workforce of 320,000 filled posts across England and 12,000 vacant posts, making a total of 335,000 posts in the local authority and independent sectors. Between 2024/25 and 2025/26, the number of filled posts in care homes without nursing increased by 5,200 (2%), while the number of vacant posts decreased by 750 (-6%).

Chart 2. Estimated number of adult social care posts in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services (local authority and independent sector only), in England, 2018/19 to 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates



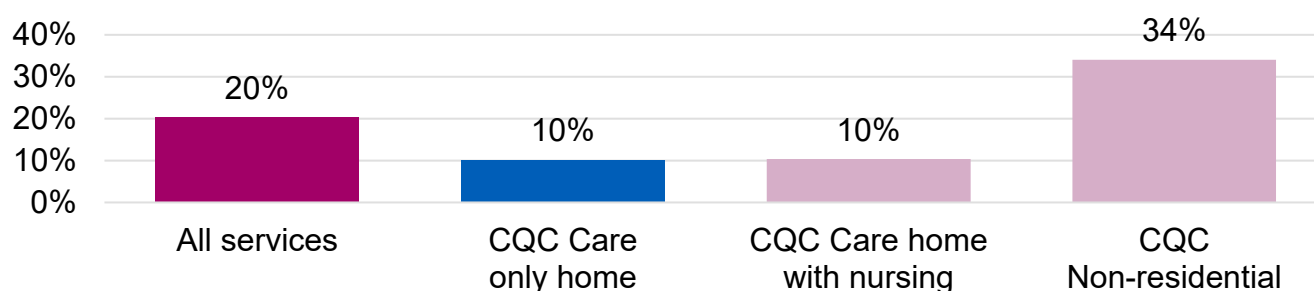
2. Employment overview

There were an estimated 234,000 direct care providing filled posts in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services, 29,000 managers, 450 regulated profession filled posts and 58,000 other filled posts, including ancillary non-care-providing roles.

Around 10% of the workforce in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services were employed on zero-hours contracts, this was higher for care workers, at 13%. Across all filled posts the CQC-regulated care home without nursing workforce had the same reliance on zero-hours contracts as CQC care homes with nursing (10%) and less reliance than within CQC non-residential services (34%). The proportion of CQC-regulated care home without nursing services workers employed on a zero-hours contract has remained the same as in 2024/25.

Chart 3. Estimated proportion of workers employed on a zero-hours contract by main care service (local authority and independent sectors only), 2025/26

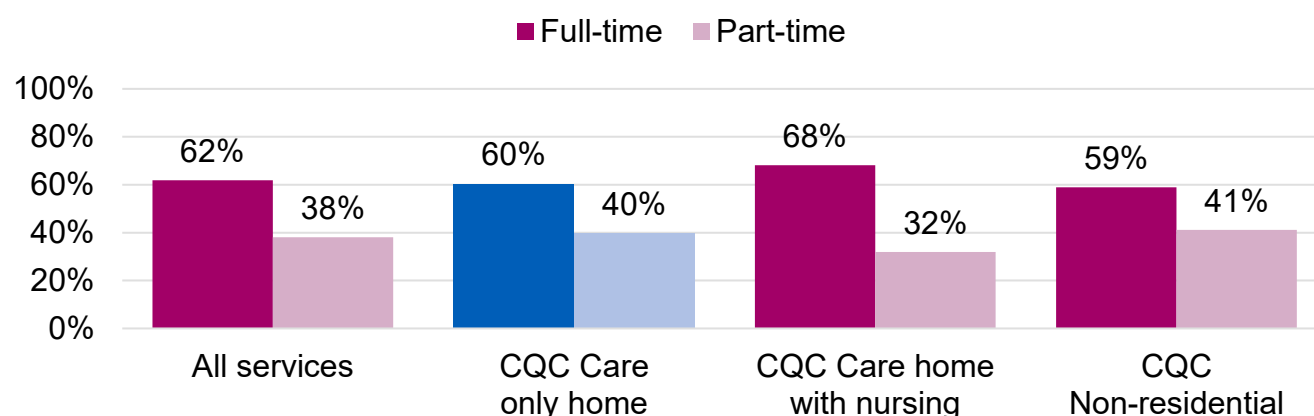
Source: Skills for Care estimates



Three fifths of staff in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services were employed on a full-time basis (60%) and 40% employed part-time. In terms of employment status, 90% were employed on permanent contracts while 1% were employed on temporary contracts. 9% were indirectly employed, that is staff employed on bank, pool, agency and/or other contract types.

Chart 4. Estimated full-time/part-time status of the adult social care workforce by main care service (local authority and independent sectors only), 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates



3. Recruitment and retention

The turnover rate among staff in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services was 21.4%, which was lower than that of care homes with nursing (27.8%) and CQC non-residential services (23.5%). This equates to an estimated 62,000 workers leaving their role in the previous 12 months. Care workers in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services had a higher turnover rate, at 26.5% (35,000 leavers).

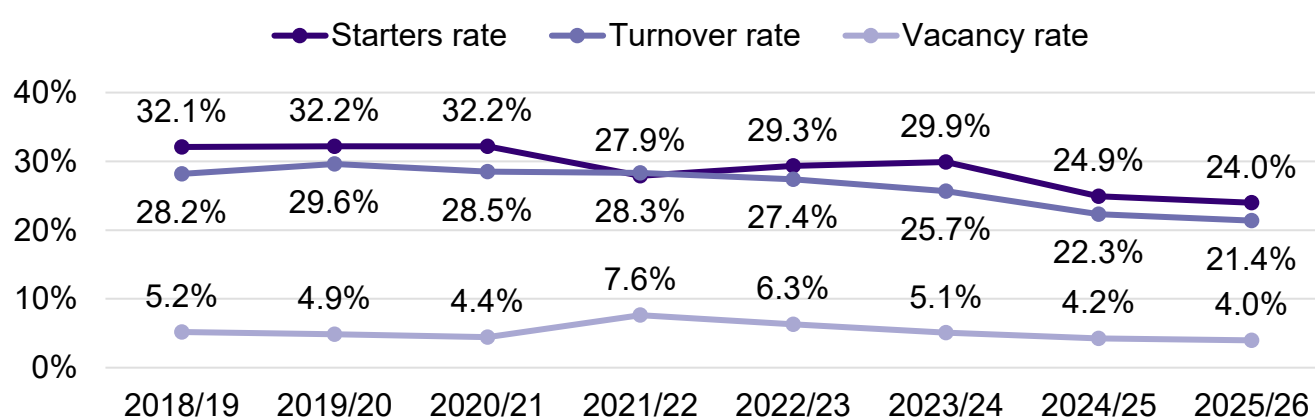
The starters rate in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services has consistently been higher than the turnover rate over time, which highlights a growing workforce. Over half of the workforce were recruited from within adult social care (54%). This means that although the high turnover rate results in employers going through the recruitment process, with its associated costs, the skills and experience of many workers are retained by the sector.

A post may become vacant due to a worker leaving their job, but a vacancy may also be created to grow the existing workforce. The vacancy rate in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services increased sharply during the COVID-19 period, to a peak of 7.6% in 2021/22, but has since decreased each year down to 4.0% in 2025/26.

To see monthly changes in the starter, turnover and vacancy rate in the independent sector, see our [recruitment and retention tracker](#).

Chart 5. Estimated starter, turnover and vacancy rate trends in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services (local authority and independent sectors only), 2018/19 to 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates



The workforce had an average of 9.1 years of experience working in social care and 5.0 in their current role. The CQC-regulated care home without nursing services workforce typically had less experience working in the adult social care sector compared to workers in care homes with nursing (9.5 years), but more experience than workers from CQC non-residential services (8.0 years).

4. Demographics

High levels of international recruitment since 2022/23 has contributed to the change in workforce demographic trends in this section. For example, care workers and support workers recruited internationally both on the Health and Care Worker visa and via other routes, were more likely to identify as male and were more likely to be younger.

78% of workers in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services identified as female. The proportion of workers identifying as male increased for the third consecutive year and reached 22% in 2025/26, up from 17% in 2022/23.

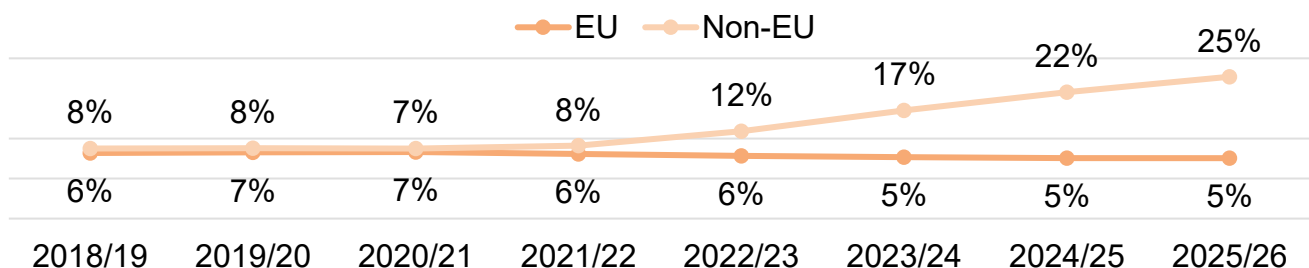
The average age of workers in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services was 43.3. This was similar for care homes with nursing (43.5) and CQC non-residential services (42.8). Around 26% of the workforce were aged 55 and over in 2025/26, this highlights both the experience within the current workforce and the importance of understanding and planning for future workforce changes.

The majority of the workforce in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services were of a British nationality (70%), while 25% were of a non-EU nationality and 5% an EU nationality. The proportion of British workers was higher than CQC non-residential services where 60% of the workforce were of a British nationality and 58% in care home with nursing services.

The chart below shows that over time the proportion of non-EU workers has increased substantially, which is linked to the increase of international recruitment. For information about the estimated number of people arriving in the UK and starting direct care providing roles in the adult social care independent sector, see our [International recruitment quarterly tracker](#).

Chart 6. Estimated proportion of workers of a non-EU and EU nationality in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services (local authority and independent sectors only), 2018/19 to 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates



Two thirds of workers in CQC-regulated care homes without nursing services were people of White ethnicity (67%). A further 18% were people of Black, African, Caribbean or Black British ethnicity, 12% were people of Asian or Asian British ethnicity, and 2% were people of mixed or multiple ethnicities. The remaining 2% were people of ethnicities not listed above.

5. Pay

Across the adult social care workforce, pay varies by job role as well as by sector, main care service and geographical area. Care workers make up 44% of all filled posts within CQC-regulated care home without nursing services in the independent sector. This summary focuses on hourly pay of those care worker only. To see pay information for other job roles, services or sectors, please see the green pay pages of 'The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England' [data visualisation](#).

Our pay analysis shows pay in both nominal and real term amounts.

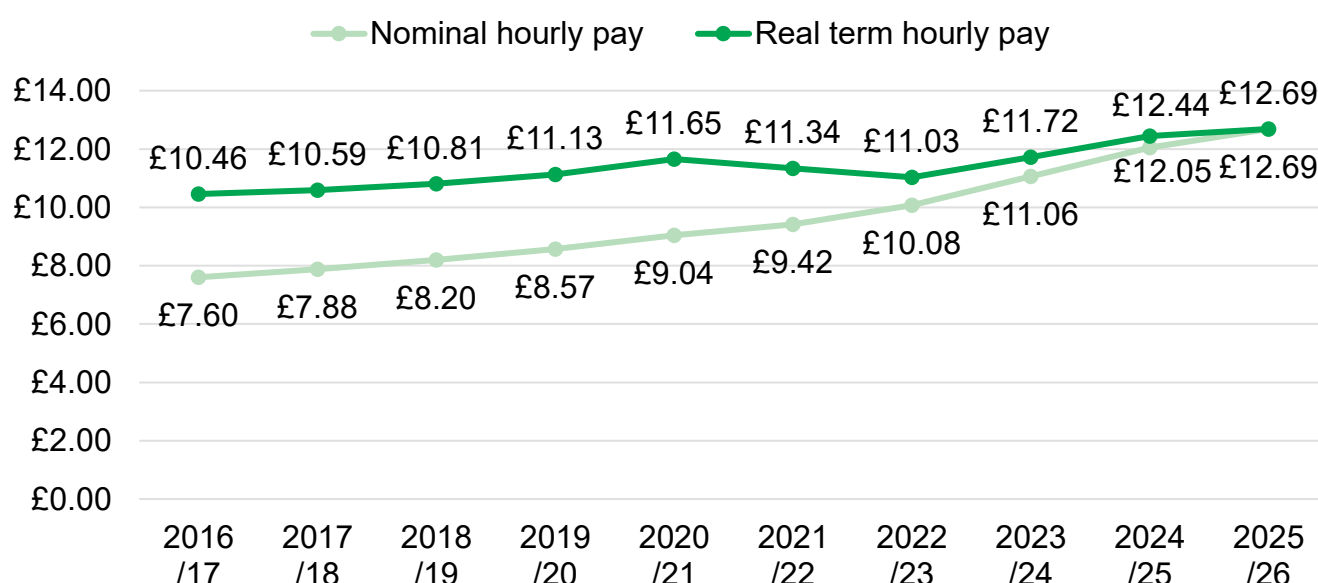
- **'Nominal'** pay shows the actual pay rates as they were at the time.
- **'Real term'** means that historical pay rates have been adjusted to take inflation into account and have been calculated using the [Consumers Price Index](#) (the official measure of inflation of consumer prices in the UK) and expressed in prices as at March 2026.

The [National Living Wage](#) (NLW) was first introduced on 1 April 2016 at £7.20 per hour for workers aged 25 and over. Over time the age threshold has been reduced and at the time of data collection of this summary, the NLW was £12.21 per hour for workers aged 21 and over.

The chart below shows the nominal and real term pay trends for average mean hourly pay for independent sector care workers in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services. Between 2016/17 and 2025/26, nominal pay has increased by £5.09 (67%) while real terms pay has increased faster than inflation, an increase of £2.23 (21%).

Chart 7. Estimated average mean nominal and real term hourly pay of care workers in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services (independent sector only), 2016/17 to 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates

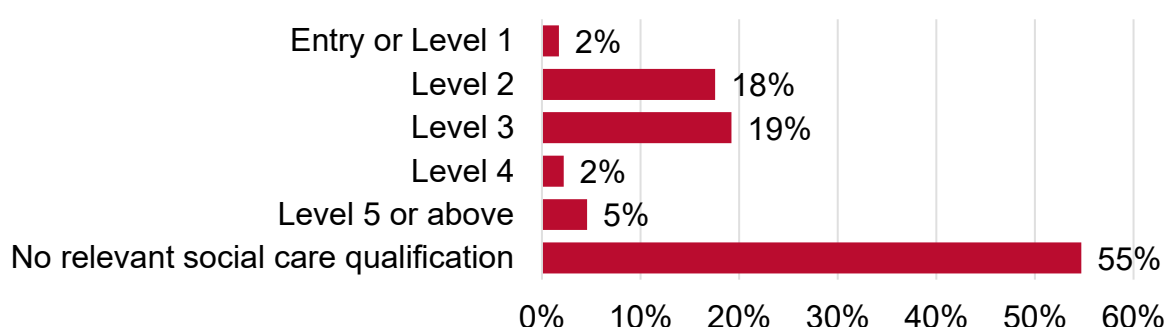


6. Qualifications

Around 45% of the workforce in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services held a qualification relevant to social care. This excludes staff in regulated professions who must be qualified to perform their roles (e.g. social workers, registered nurses or occupational therapists).

Chart 8. Estimated highest social care qualification level of the adult social care workforce in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services (local authority and independent sectors only, excluding regulated professions), 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates

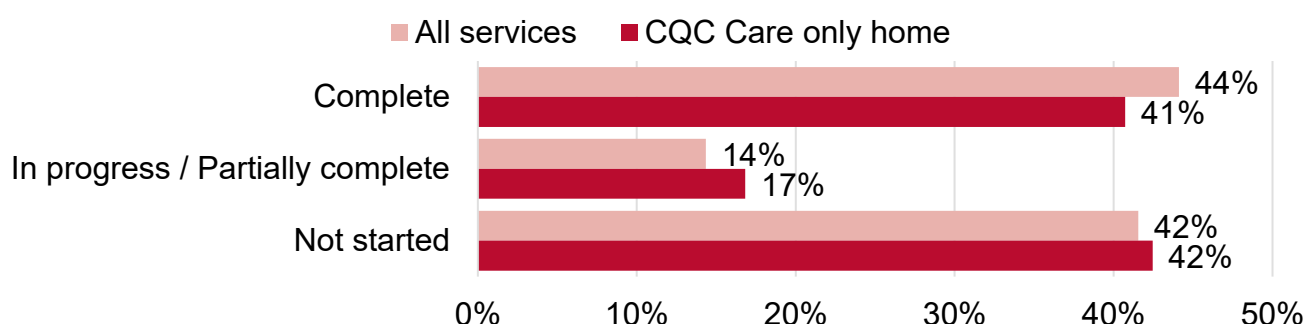


Different job roles would be expected to be qualified at different levels. In CQC-regulated care home without nursing services 45% of direct care workers were qualified at Level 2 or above and 33% of managers were qualified at Level 5 or above.

The [Care Certificate standards](#) are an agreed set of 16 standards that define the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of specific job roles in the health and social care sectors. They are an employer-led certificate of competence designed to support a robust induction programme for workers that are 'new' to the sector. The standards are typically undertaken by direct care providing workers but are open to all job roles in adult social care.

Chart 9. Estimated Care Certificate standards status of all adult social care roles in CQC-regulated care home without nursing services (local authority and independent sectors only), 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates



Further resources

As a producer of official statistics, we provide outstanding workforce intelligence that the Government, strategic bodies, employers, and individuals rely upon to help them make decisions that will improve outcomes for the people who use care services. This section provides an overview of some of the reports and resources published by our Workforce Intelligence team. To access these reports and visualisations, please refer to the relevant pages on our [Workforce Intelligence website](#).

National information

This summary report accompanies our flagship publication: [The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England](#). The detailed publication analyses the size and structure of the workforce, as well as key workforce characteristics and additional analysis on international recruitment and factors affecting turnover and CQC ratings. There is also a data visualisation, which can be filtered by service and shows further information alongside this summary report.

Regional and local information

We have several data visualisations and written reports which provide an annual overview of adult social care services and the workforce in each region and local authority area. We have visualisations showing one area at a time, and visualisations that show variable comparisons amongst regional and local areas. Our area summary reports detail the workforce characteristics within that area, with additional insights.

Monthly statistics – workforce trackers

We publish [tracking information](#) about the adult social care workforce including;

- [Filled posts in the adult social care workforce in England: monthly statistics](#)
- [Recruitment and retention monthly tracker](#) and
- [International recruitment quarterly tracker](#).

Commission our services

Our Workforce Intelligence team are the experts in adult social care workforce insight. The data we collect in the ASC-WDS gives an unrivalled overview of the adult social care workforce in England. Beyond the wealth of information already available publicly on our website, you can [commission the services](#) of the Workforce Intelligence team to produce bespoke reports and analysis for your organisation or area.

Skills for Care is guided by core values. Throughout everything we do, we're inclusive, motivated, passionate, ambitious, collaborative and trustworthy. For more information about the Skills for Care strategy, our vision, mission, values and plan to achieve our mission, visit [the Skills for Care website](#).

For bespoke analysis of workforce information or to answer any specific questions you have about the adult social care workforce, please contact us at analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk.

Skills for Care

West Village,
Wellington Street,
Leeds,
LS1 4LT

info@skillsforcare.org.uk
[skillsforcare.org.uk](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)



facebook.com/skillsforcare

linkedin.com/company/skills-for-care