



Care homes with nursing services in the adult social care sector

2025/26

Contact us: analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk

Introduction

Key findings

295,000
filled posts

4,223
CQC-regulated
locations

10%
employed on a
zero-hours
contract

3.9%
vacancy rate

This summary accompanies '[The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England, 2026](#)' report and focuses on the workforce employed in **care homes with nursing**. All care homes with nursing providing personal care must be regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Charts shown here display rounded numbers and percentages, therefore the charts may not always total to 100%.

For comparison, we have included analysis of CQC-regulated care homes without nursing and domiciliary care services. Domiciliary care refers to services that provide care to individuals in their own home. These services must be CQC-regulated by law and are defined in this summary as CQC non-residential services.

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 with nursing this figure was 54.3%.

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 annual workforce estimates to describe the size and characteristics of the adult social care workforce. You can read about our [methodology](#) and find [data download Excel files](#) with 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. See our website for our full [statement](#).

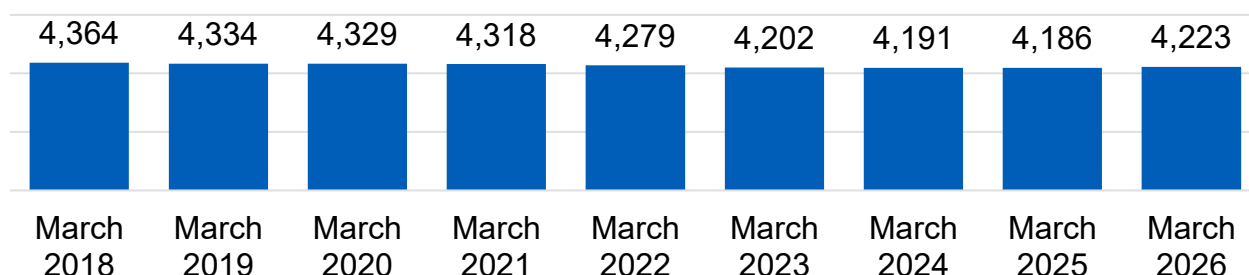
Further information about the workforce employed in CQC care homes with nursing can be found in the [data visualisation](#) accompanying the report. The visualisation can be filtered by service and job role and shows analysis of all variables collected in the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS).

1. Size and structure

As at March 2026, there were 4,223 locations regulated by the CQC to provide care homes with nursing services. This is a decrease from 4,364 in 2018 (-141 or -3%). During this same period, the number of CQC care homes without nursing decreased by 8% 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 homes with nursing locations, 2018 to 2026

Source: CQC Care Directory

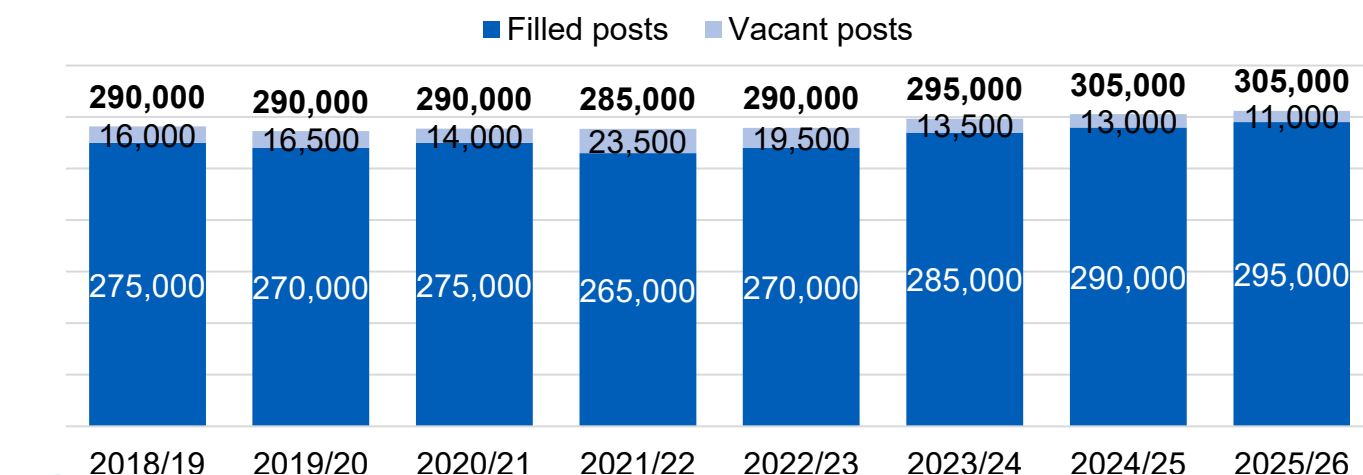


Please see our [filled posts in the adult social care workforce in England: monthly statistics](#) for monthly estimates of filled posts in independent sector CQC-regulated locations, including percentage changes over time.

In 2025/26, CQC care homes with nursing had an estimated workforce of 295,000 filled posts across England and 11,000 vacant posts, making a total of 305,000 posts in the local authority and independent sectors. Between 2024/25 and 2025/26, the number of filled posts in CQC care homes with nursing increased by 2,700 (0.9%), while the number of vacant posts decreased by 2,000 (-16%).

Chart 2. Estimated number of adult social care posts in CQC care homes with nursing (local authority and independent sector only), in England, 2018/19 to 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates



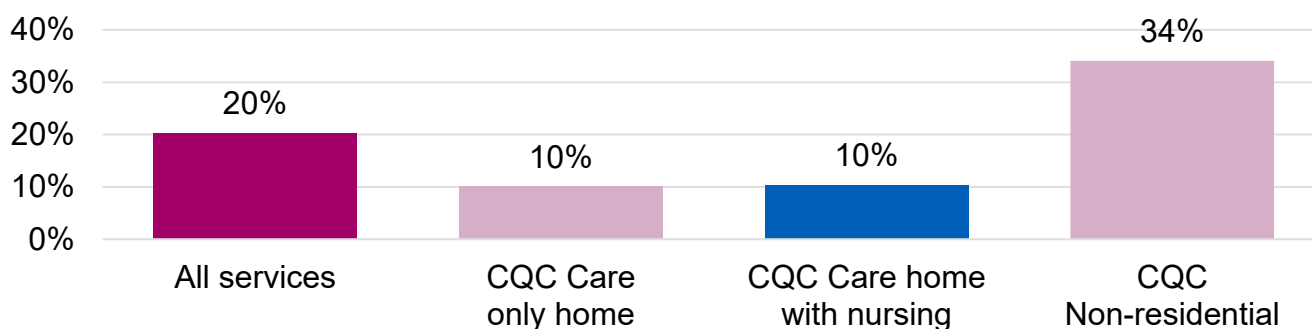
2. Employment overview

There were an estimated 172,000 direct care providing filled posts in CQC care homes with nursing, 13,000 managers, 35,000 regulated profession filled posts and 73,000 other filled posts, including ancillary non-care-providing roles.

Around 10% of the CQC care homes with nursing workforce were employed on a zero-hours contract; this was higher for care workers, at 12%. Across all filled posts the CQC care homes with nursing workforce had a similar reliance on zero-hours contracts to CQC care homes without nursing (10%), and less reliance than CQC non-residential services (34%). The proportion of CQC care homes with nursing workers employed on a zero-hours contract remained unchanged from 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

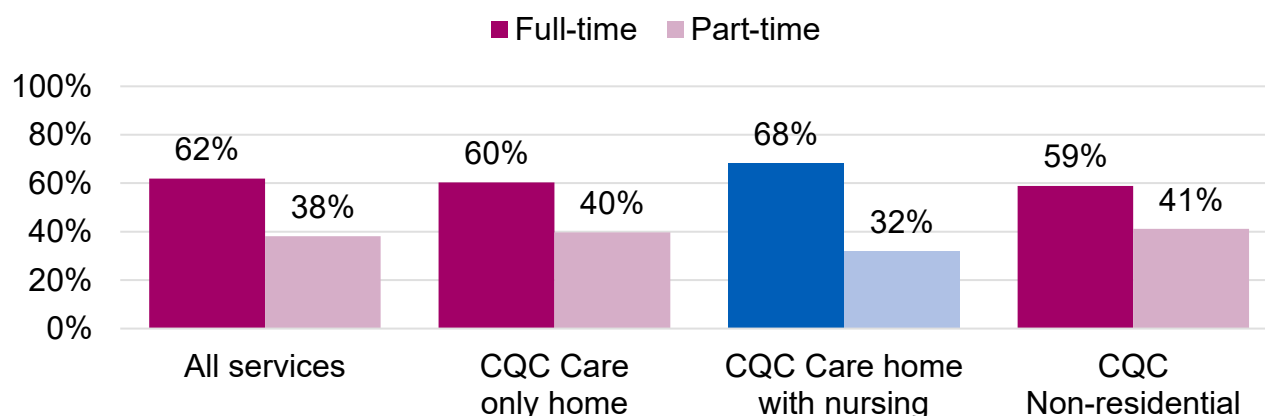
Source: Skills for Care estimates



Over two-thirds of staff in CQC care homes with nursing were employed on a full-time basis (68%) and 32% were employed part-time. In terms of employment status, 90% were employed on permanent contracts while <0.5% were employed on temporary contracts. 10% 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 care homes with nursing was 27.8%, which was higher than that of CQC non-residential services (23.5%) and CQC care homes without nursing (21.4%). This equates to an estimated 73,000 workers leaving their role in the previous 12 months. Registered nurses in these care homes had a higher turnover rate, at 32.3% (9,200 leavers).

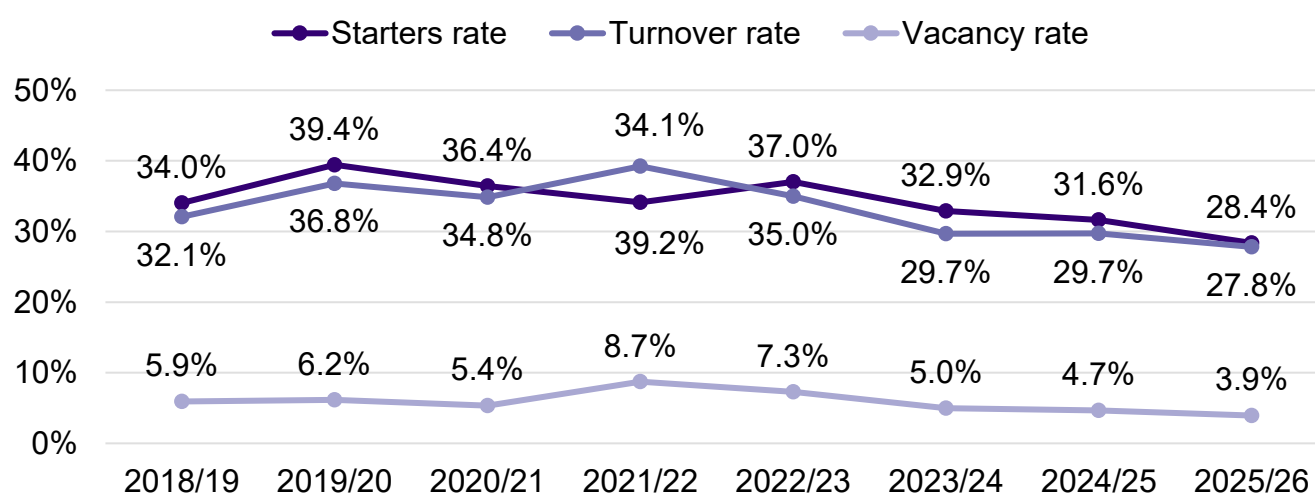
The starters rate in CQC care homes with nursing services has generally been higher than the turnover rate over time, which highlights a growing workforce. Almost half of the workforce were recruited from within adult social care (48%). This means that although the high turnover rate results in employers 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 care homes with nursing services increased sharply in 2021/22 during the COVID-19 period, to a peak of 8.7%, but has decreased each year since down to 3.9% 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 care homes with nursing (local authority and independent sectors only), 2018/19 to 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates



The workforce had an average of 9.5 years of experience working in social care and 4.8 years in their current role. The CQC care homes with nursing workforce typically had more experience working in the adult social care sector compared to workers in CQC non-residential services (8.0 years) as well as workers from CQC care homes without nursing (9.1 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 care homes with nursing identified as female. The proportion of workers identifying as male increased from 18% in 2022/23 to 22% in 2024/25 and remained at 22% in 2025/26, up from 18% in 2022/23.

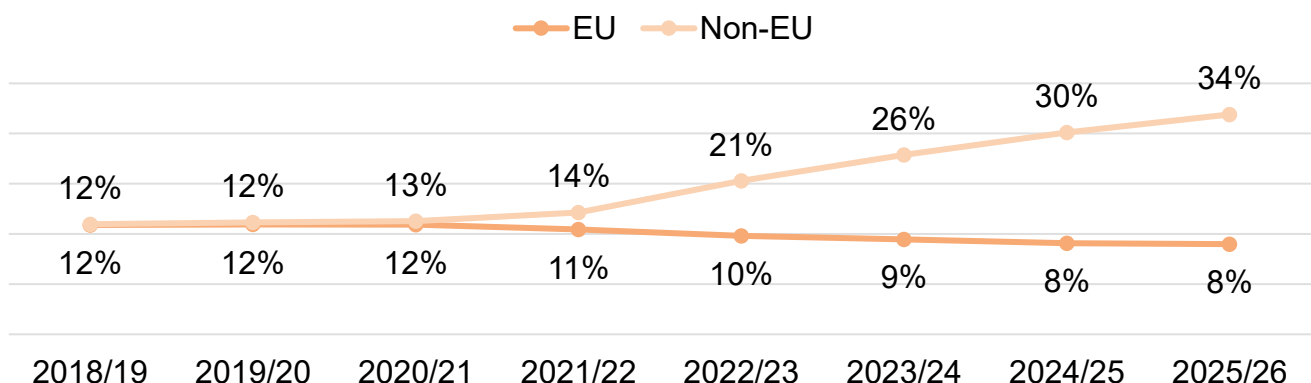
The average age of workers in CQC care homes with nursing was 43.5. This was similar to CQC non-residential services (42.8) and CQC care homes without nursing (43.3). Around 25% of the workforce were aged 55 and over in 2025/26.

The majority of the workforce in CQC care homes with nursing were of a British nationality (58%), while 34% were of a non-EU nationality and 8% were of an EU nationality. The proportion of British workers was similar for CQC non-residential services, where 60% of the workforce were British but lower than CQC care only homes, where 70% were British.

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 care homes with nursing (local authority and independent sectors only), 2018/19 to 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates



Over half of workers in CQC-regulated care homes nursing services were people of White ethnicity (57%). A further 22% were people of Asian or Asian British ethnicity, 17% were people of Black, African, Caribbean or Black 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. This summary focuses on independent sector care worker pay in CQC care homes with nursing only; care workers make up 47% of the independent sector CQC care home with nursing workforce. 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.

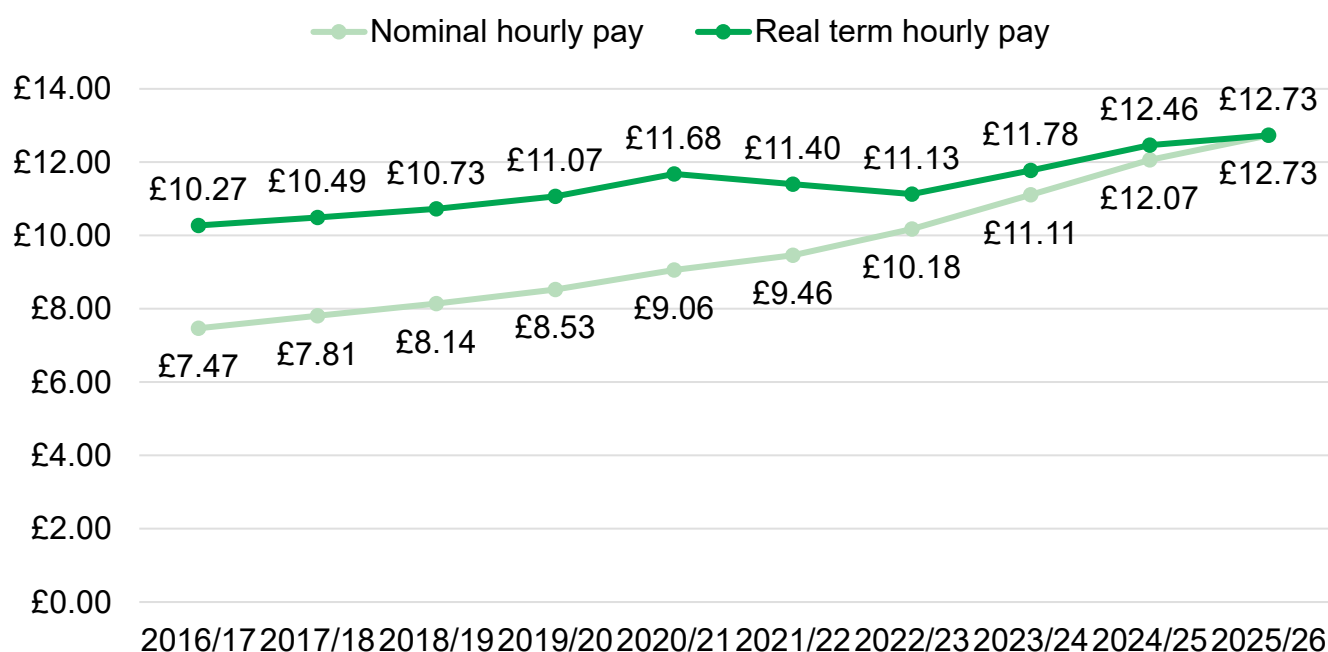
- **'Nominal'** pay shows the actual pay rates as they were at the time.
- **'Real term'** means that historical pay rates have been adjusted to take inflation into account and have been calculated using the [Consumers Price Index](#) (the official measure of inflation of consumer prices in the UK) and 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 for this report, 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 care homes with nursing. Between 2016/17 and 2025/26 nominal pay has increased by £5.26 (70%) while real term pay has increased faster than inflation, by £2.46 (24%).

Chart 7. Estimated mean nominal and real term hourly pay of care workers in CQC care homes with nursing (independent sector only), 2016/17 to 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates

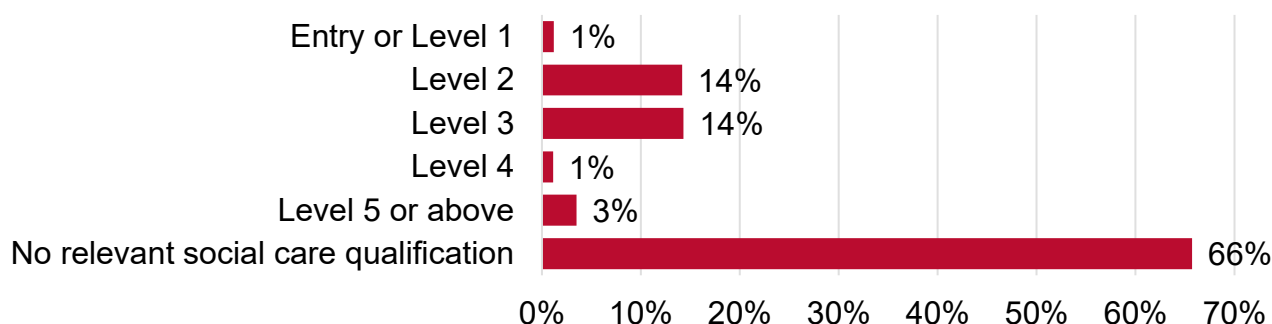


6. Qualifications

Around 34% of the workforce in CQC care homes with nursing 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 care homes with nursing (local authority and independent sectors only, excluding regulated professions), 2025/26

Source: Skills for Care estimates

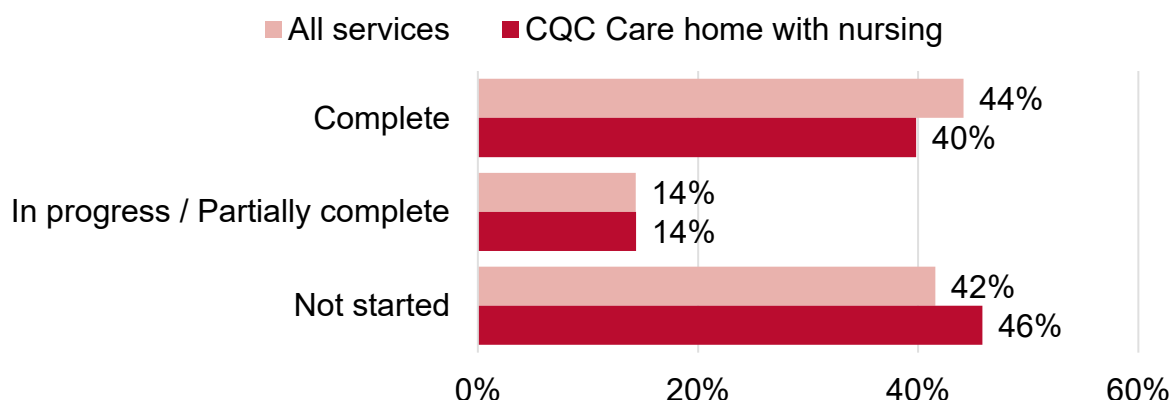


Different job roles would be expected to be qualified at different levels. In CQC care homes with nursing, 39% of direct care workers were qualified at Level 2 or above and 32% of managers were qualified at Level 5 or above.

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 care homes with nursing (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



facebook.com/skillsforcare

linkedin.com/company/skills-for-care

info@skillsforcare.org.uk
skillsforcare.org.uk

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