

Domiciliary care services in the adult social care sector

2024/25

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Introduction

Key findings

595,000

filled posts

15,232

CQC-regulated
locations

35%

employed on a
zero-hours
contract

9.9%

vacancy rate

This summary report accompanies '[The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England, 2025](#)' report and focuses on the workforce employed in **domiciliary care services** that are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Domiciliary care services are defined those services that provide care to individuals in their own home. These services must be CQC-regulated by law and are defined in this report as **CQC non-residential services**. This includes CQC-regulated domiciliary care services, CQC-regulated supported living services and CQC-regulated extra care housing services.

The information in this summary is derived from the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS); independent sector information shown in this report was collected between April 2024 and March 2025, and local authority information was collected as at September 2024. Information relating to individuals employing their own staff (personal assistants) are not included in this summary. As at March 2025, over half of CQC-regulated locations were recorded in the ASC-WDS (54.4%) and in CQC non-residential services this figure was 48.9%.

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 pillars of trustworthiness, quality and value for all of our data outputs. See our website for our full [statement](#).

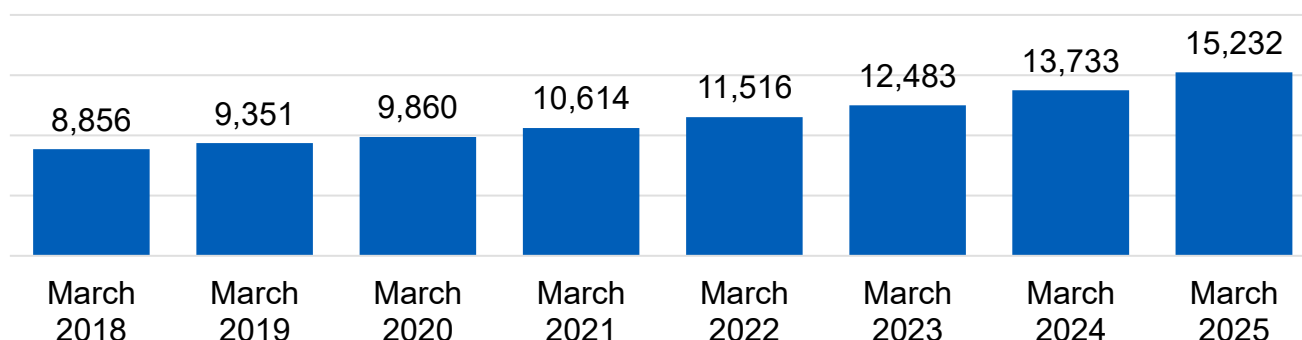
Further information about the workforce employed in CQC non-residential services can be found in the [data visualisation](#) that also accompanies the full report. The visualisation can be filtered by service and job role and shows analysis of all variables collected in the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS).

1. Size and structure

As at March 2025, there were 15,232 locations regulated by the CQC to provide non-residential services. This is an increase from 8,856 in 2018 (6,376 or 72%). During this same period, the number of CQC care homes with nursing decreased by 4% and the number of CQC care homes without nursing decreased by 8%, showing a growing trend of people receiving care in their own homes.

Chart 1. Number of CQC-regulated domiciliary care service locations, 2018 to 2025

Source: CQC Care Directory

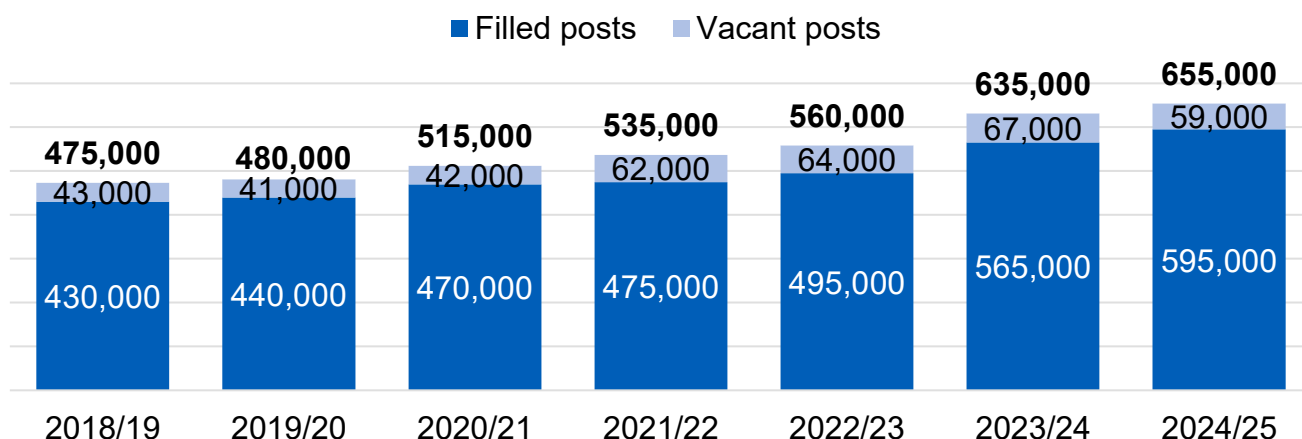


We track the number of CQC-regulated locations in England as well as the estimated number of filled posts in the independent sector on a monthly basis. Visit our [website](#) for more information.

In 2024/25, CQC non-residential services had an estimated workforce of 595,000 filled posts across England and 59,000 vacant posts, making a total of 655,000 posts in the local authority and independent sectors. Between 2023/24 and 2024/25, the number of filled posts in CQC non-residential services increased by 21,000 (3%), while the number of vacant posts decreased by 7,700 (-11%).

Chart 2. Estimated number of adult social care posts in CQC non-residential services (local authority and independent sector only), in England, 2018/19 to 2024/25

Source: Skills for Care estimates



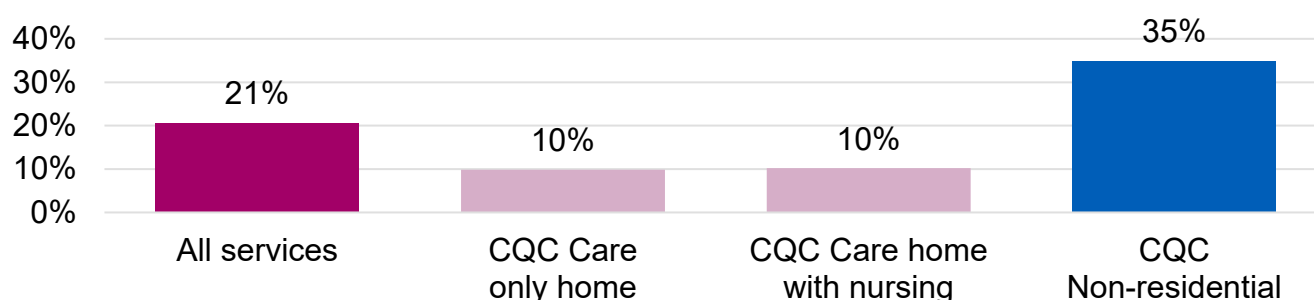
2. Employment overview

There were an estimated 515,000 direct care providing filled posts in CQC non-residential services, 48,000 managers, 2,200 regulated profession filled posts and 27,000 other filled posts including ancillary non-care-providing roles.

Around 35% of the CQC non-residential workforce were employed on a zero-hours contract, this was higher for care workers, at 42%. Across all filled posts the CQC non-residential workforce had a higher reliance on zero-hours contracts than CQC care homes with nursing and CQC care homes without nursing (both 10%). The proportion of CQC non-residential workers employed on a zero-hours contract has decreased by two percentage points since 2023/24.

Chart 3. Estimated proportion of workers employed on a zero-hours contract by main care service (local authority and independent sectors only), 2024/25

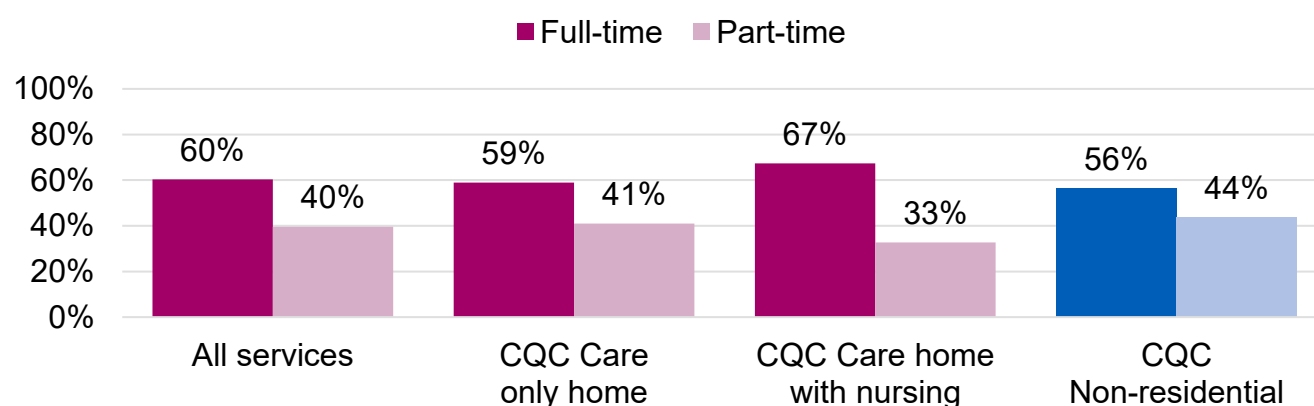
Source: Skills for Care estimates



Over half of staff in CQC non-residential services were employed on a full-time basis (56%) and 44% employed part-time. In terms of employment status, 88% were employed on permanent contracts while 3% 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), 2024/25

Source: Skills for Care estimates



3. Recruitment and retention

The turnover rate among staff in CQC non-residential services was 23.7%, which was lower than that of care homes with nursing (29.7%) but higher than care homes without nursing (22.3%). This equates to an estimated 128,000 workers leaving their role in the previous 12 months. Care workers in CQC non-residential services had a turnover rate of 29.0% (109,000 leavers).

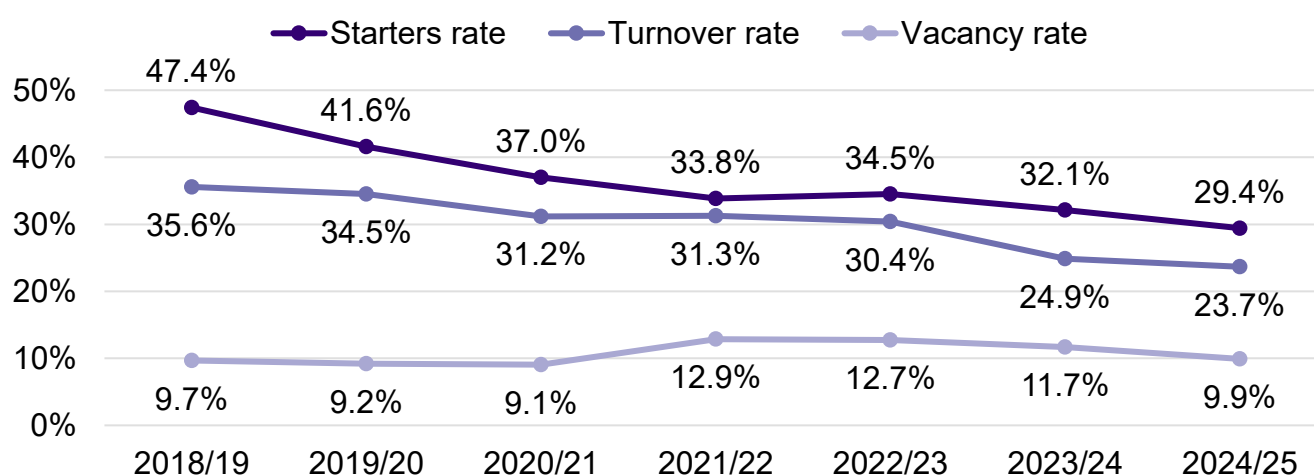
The starters rate in CQC non-residential services has consistently been higher than the turnover rate over time, which highlights a growing workforce. Over half of the workforce were recruited from within adult social care (51%). This means that although the high turnover rate results in employers going 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 non-residential services increased sharply during the COVID-19 period, to a peak of 12.9% in 2021/22, but has since decreased each year down to 9.9% in 2024/25.

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

Chart 5. Estimated starter, turnover and vacancy rate trends in CQC non-residential services (local authority and independent sectors only), 2018/19 to 2024/25

Source: Skills for Care estimates



The workforce had an average of 8.2 years of experience working in social care and 4.1 in their current role. The CQC non-residential workforce typically had less experience working in the adult social care sector compared to workers in care homes with nursing (9.6 years) as well workers from care homes without nursing (9.2 years).

4. Demographics

All variables analysed in this section have been impacted by the increase in workers being recruited from overseas. Our analysis shows that people recruited internationally have different demographics and employment characteristics to the rest of the workforce. For example, they are more likely to be male and are typically younger.

78% of workers in CQC non-residential services identified as female. The proportion of workers identifying as male increased for the third consecutive year and reached 22% in 2024/25.

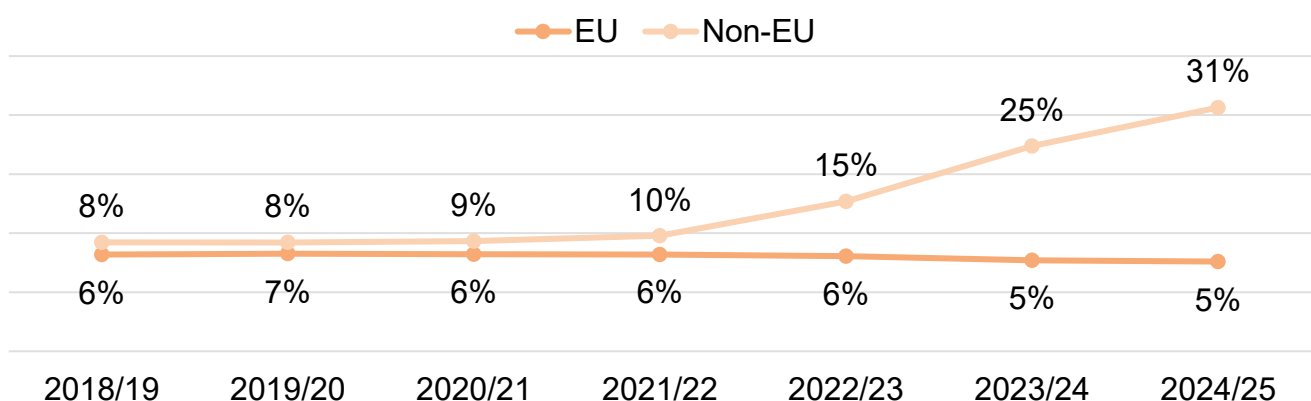
The average age of workers in CQC non-residential services was 42.9, this was similar for care homes without nursing (43.4) and care home with nursing services (43.3). Around 24% of the workforce were aged 55 and over in 2024/25.

The majority of the workforce in CQC non-residential services were of a British nationality (64%), while 31% were of a non-EU nationality and 5% an EU nationality. This was similar for care homes without nursing where 73% of the workforce were of a British nationality and 62% 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 further insight into international recruitment over time in the independent sector, see our [quarterly tracker](#).

Chart 6. Estimated proportion of workers of a non-EU and EU nationality in CQC non-residential services (local authority and independent sectors only), 2018/19 to 2024/25

Source: Skills for Care estimates



The adult social care workforce is ethnically diverse; over half of workers in CQC non-residential services were people of White ethnicity (55%), while nearly one in three were people of Black, African, Caribbean or Black British ethnicity (30%) and just over one in ten were people of an Asian or Asian British ethnicity (12%). 2% of the workforce were people of mixed or multiple ethnicities while another 1% were people of not listed above (other ethnicity).

5. Pay

Across the adult social care workforce, pay varies by job role as well as by sector, main care service and geography area. Care workers make up 71% of all filled posts within CQC non-residential services in the independent sector; therefore, this summary focusses 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.

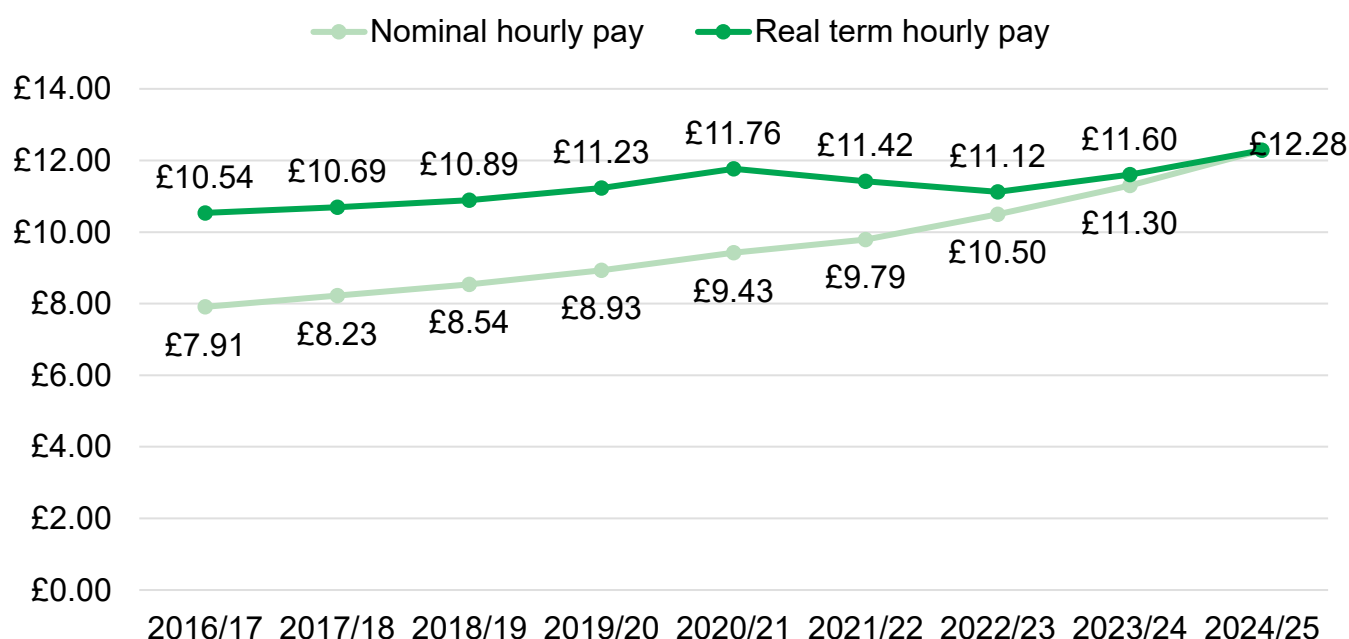
- **'Nominal'** pay shows the actual pay rates as they were at the time.
- **'Real term'** means that historical pay rates have been adjusted to take inflation into account and have been calculated using the [Consumers Price Index](#) (the official measure of inflation of consumer prices in the UK) and expressed in prices as at March 2025.

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 report, the NLW was £11.44 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 non-residential services. Between 2016/17 and 2024/25, nominal pay has increased by £4.37 (55%) while real terms, pay has increased faster than inflation, increasing by £1.75 (17%).

Chart 7. Estimated average mean nominal and real term hourly pay of care workers in CQC non-residential services (independent sector only), 2016/17 to 2024/25

Source: Skills for Care estimates

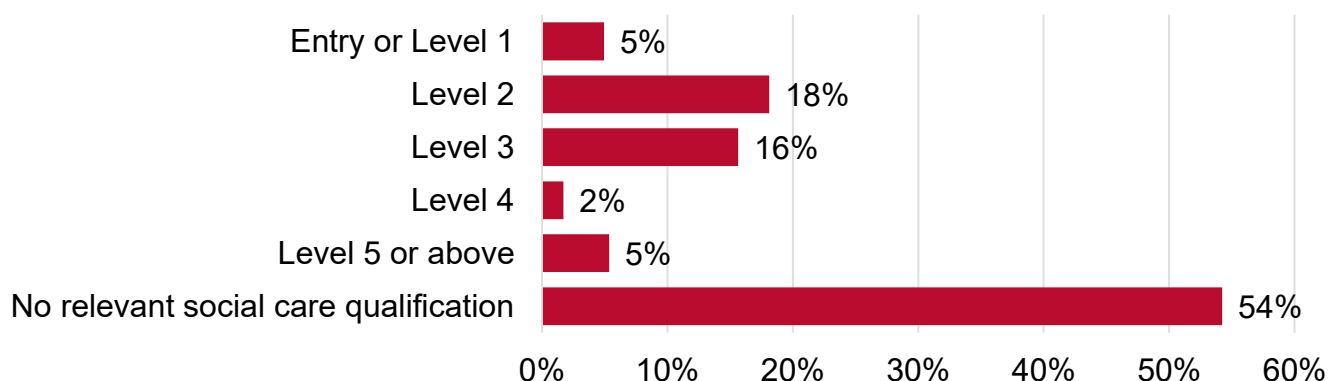


6. Qualifications

Around 46% of the workforce in CQC non-residential 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 non-residential services (local authority and independent sectors only, excluding regulated professions), 2024/25

Source: Skills for Care estimates

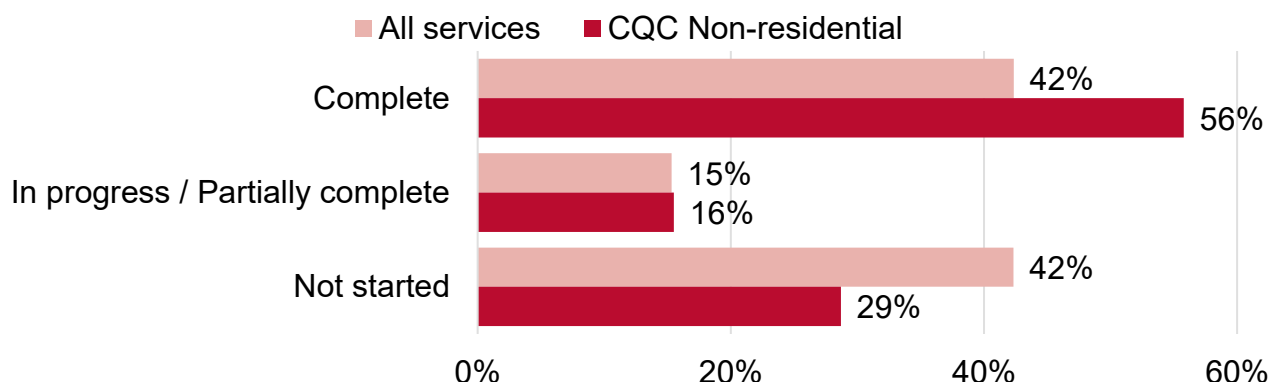


Different job roles require workers to be qualified at different levels. In CQC non-residential services 38% of direct care workers were qualified at Level 2 or above and 37% of managers were qualified at Level 5 or above.

As well as qualifications, if a worker is 'new to care' their employer should consider using the [Care Certificate standards](#) to form part of a robust induction programme. The 16 standards define the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of specific job roles in the health and social care sectors. 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 non-residential services (local authority and independent sectors only), 2024/25

Source: Skills for Care estimates



Further resources

As a producer of official statistics, we provide outstanding workforce intelligence which 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 accompanies our flagship publication: [The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England](#). This detailed report 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, local authority area and NHS ICB 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.

Trackers

We publish [tracking information](#) about the adult social care workforce on a monthly and quarterly basis. These trackers do not use weighted estimates (as shown in our other annual reports) but do give a good indication of moving trends through the year. Trackers are available for recruitment and retention, filled posts and international recruitment.

Commission our services

Skills for Care are producers of official statistics and 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 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 [our website](#).

We welcome feedback from our users and are happy to respond to queries regarding any of the information outlined in this summary report. Contact us at analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk.

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