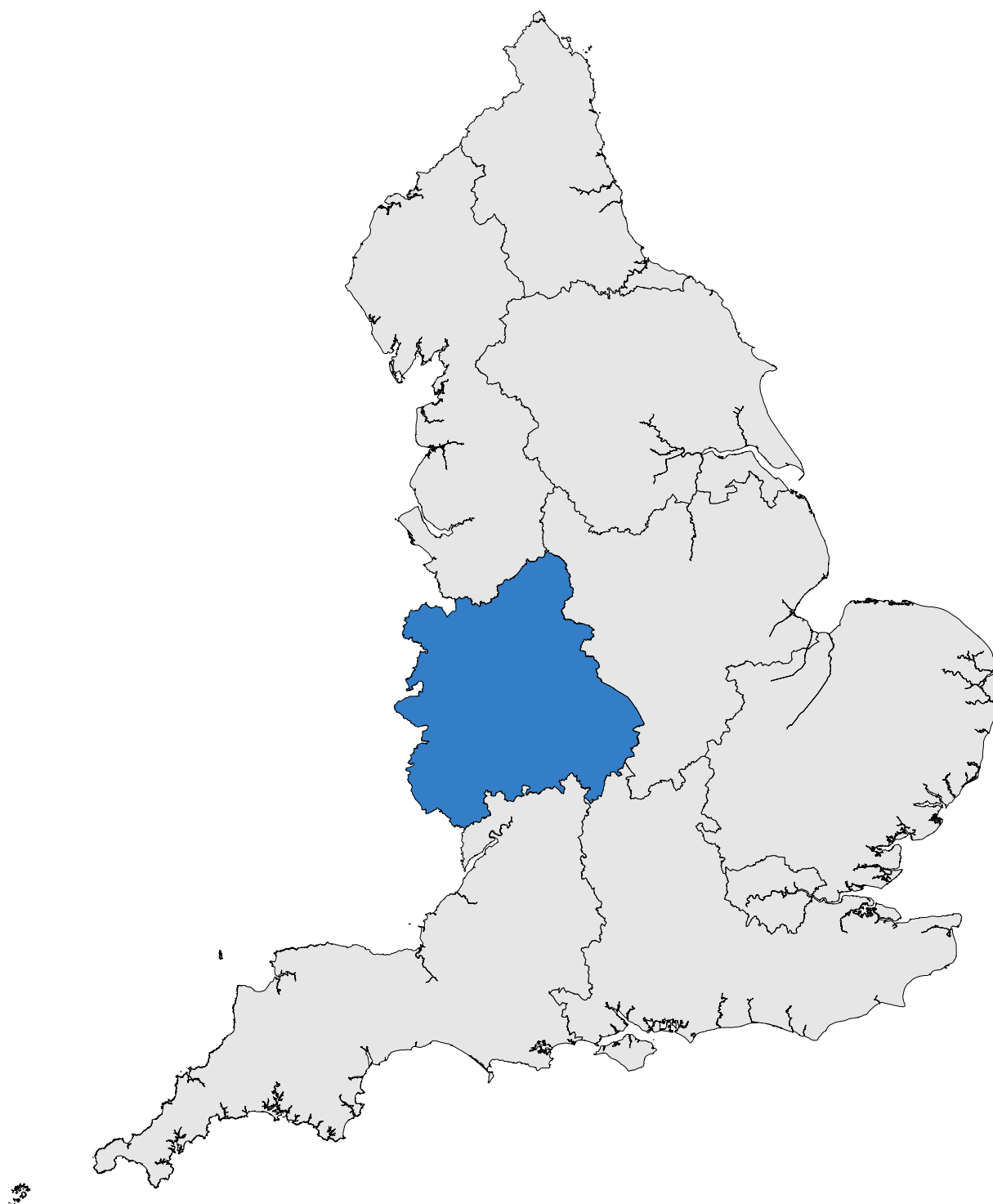


A summary of the adult social care sector and workforce in the West Midlands region

2025/26



A summary of the adult social care sector and workforce in West Midlands

Skills for Care is the leading source of adult social care workforce intelligence. Our expertise comes from the workforce intelligence we collect and our experience of analysing and interpreting social care data. We also work with our network of locality managers across England, who talk with, and learn from, adult social care employers. This workforce intelligence expertise is at the centre of everything we do at Skills for Care.

The information in this summary has been produced by Skills for Care using the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS). Data collected through the ASC-WDS is used to create workforce models that produce estimates of the adult social care workforce and its characteristics.

Throughout this report, charts and tables display rounded whole numbers and percentages which may not always total 100%. Data is suppressed (shown with an *) if the unrounded number of filled posts is less than 10 (less than 25 for starters, leavers and vacant posts) or if the results were found to be atypical following further investigation.

Independent sector information in this report was collected between April 2025 and March 2026, local authority information dates from September 2025 and direct payment recipient data was collected in February 2026.

Shirley Way, Head of area:

I am pleased to present this comprehensive regional analysis of the adult social care workforce in the West Midlands. High-quality workforce intelligence remains essential to supporting the sustainability and transformation of adult social care. As demand for services continues to grow and care becomes increasingly complex, understanding the size, shape and skills of the workforce is critical to effective workforce planning and service delivery.

This report provides valuable insight into workforce trends across the West Midlands, including vacancies, turnover, demographics, pay, qualifications and workforce development. The evidence helps employers, commissioners and partners make informed decisions to support a resilient and sustainable workforce.

The latest data highlights both progress and ongoing challenges. Workforce numbers have continued to grow, supported by international recruitment and people already living in the UK from overseas joining the sector. However, the number of British workers in adult social care continues to decline, reinforcing the importance of building a strong domestic workforce pipeline alongside international recruitment. The report also reflects the growing shift towards community-based and non-residential services, which now represent an increasingly significant part of the sector.

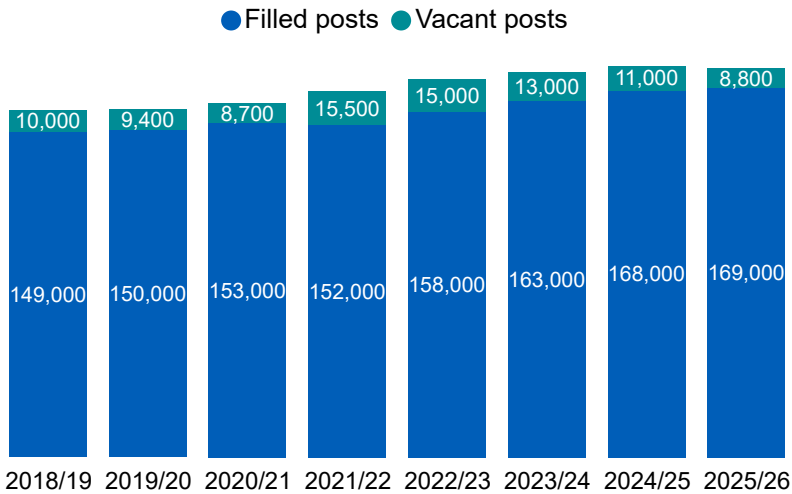
Adult social care continues to make a substantial contribution to the regional and national economy. However, challenges remain around pay progression, recruitment and retention. The evidence continues to show that positive workforce conditions, investment in learning and development, and clear career pathways are key to attracting and retaining skilled staff, as well as supporting the delivery of high-quality care. I would like to thank all providers, local authorities and partners who contribute workforce data to Skills for Care. Your continued support enables this analysis and strengthens workforce planning across the West Midlands.

A summary of the adult social care sector and workforce in West Midlands, 2025/26

In 2025/26, the adult social care sector in the West Midlands region had an estimated **2,000** organisations with **4,400** care-providing establishments. The total number of posts was **178,000**, an increase of -0.4 % since 2024/25. Of these posts, **169,000** were currently filled by a person, referred to as 'filled posts' (an increase of 0.9 % since 2024/25) and **8,800** vacant posts (vacancies) that employers were actively seeking to recruit somebody into (a decrease of -19.8 % since 2024/25).

In the West Midlands region, there were **11,000** filled posts in local authorities, **147,000** in the independent sector and **10,750** posts working for direct payment recipients.

Number of posts from 2018/19 to 2025/26 (all sectors)



From this point, the figures in this report refer to the **158,000** filled posts in local authorities and the independent sector in the region. Filled posts for those working for direct payment recipients are not included.

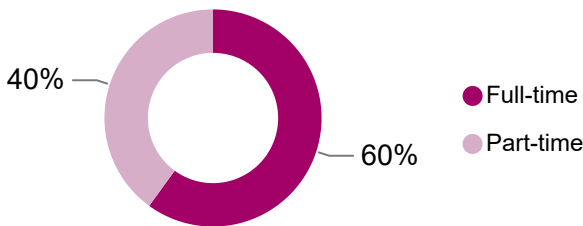
Employment overview

The majority (**88 %**) of the workforce in the West Midlands region were employed on permanent contracts. Over half of the workforce (**60 %**) usually worked full-time hours, while **40 %** usually worked part-time.

Around **22 %** (or **34,000** filled posts) of the workforce were employed on a zero-hours contract.

The full-time equivalent (FTE) ratio in the region was **0.80**, which was lower than the England average of **0.81**.

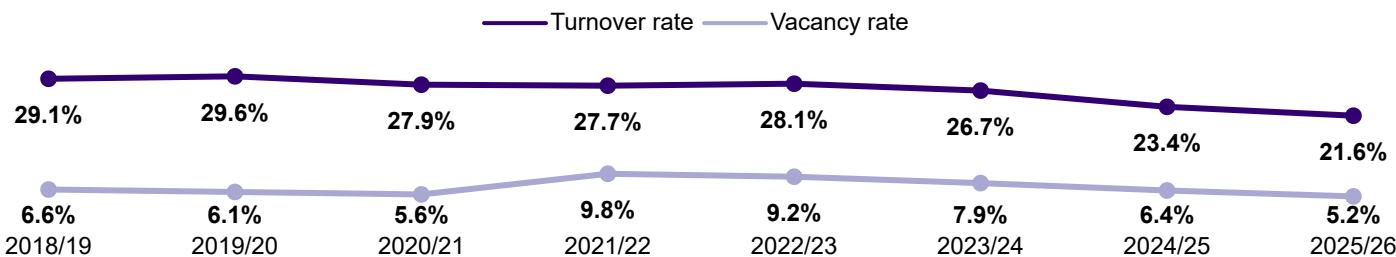
Working time status



Recruitment and retention

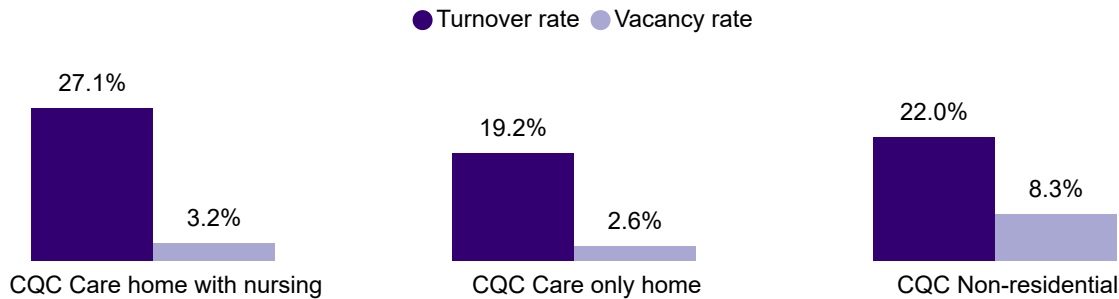
Skills for Care estimate that the staff turnover rate in the West Midlands region was **21.6 %**. Not all turnover resulted in workers leaving the sector, since **52 %** of starters were recruited from within the adult social care sector. Therefore, although employers need to recruit to these posts, the sector retains their skills and experience.

Turnover and vacancy rate trends



Turnover and vacancy rates by service types in 2025/26 are shown in the chart below.

Turnover rate and vacancy rate by service type



The starters rate in the West Midlands region between 2024/25 and 2025/26 changed by **-2.3** percentage points, from **26.9 %** to **24.6 %**.

The West Midlands region had an estimated sickness rate of **4.8** days per employee. This was **0.4** days lower than the England average of **5.2** sickness days per employee.

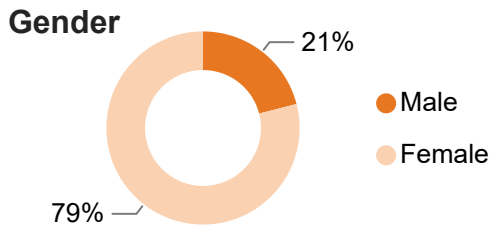
4.8
average sickness days taken

Adult social care has an experienced 'core' of workers. Workers in the West Midlands region had an average of **8.9** years of experience in the sector, and **71 %** of the workforce had been working in the sector for at least 3 years.

For more information about changes in the workforce since March 2026, please see our [Monthly Statistics](#) on the Workforce Intelligence website.

Demographics

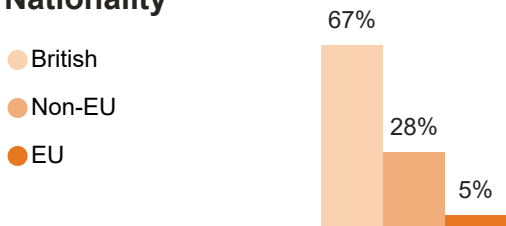
79 % of employees in the adult social care workforce in the West Midlands identified as female, compared to 48% of the economically active population in England (Census, 2021). Employees who identified as female were less likely to be in manager roles, particularly senior management roles (**72 %**), than in direct care-providing roles (**79 %**).



For further information about gender identity information, including how 'other' gender responses are recorded and analysed, click to read the [Workforce Demographics](#) chapter in full.

The average age of the adult social care workforce in the region was **42.9** years. Around **23 %** of adult social care workers were aged 55 and over, compared to 22% of the economically active population in England. From a workforce planning perspective, these workers may retire within the next ten years.

Nationality



In the West Midlands region, around **67 %** of the adult social care workforce had a British nationality, **28 %** had a non-EU nationality, and **5 %** had an EU nationality.

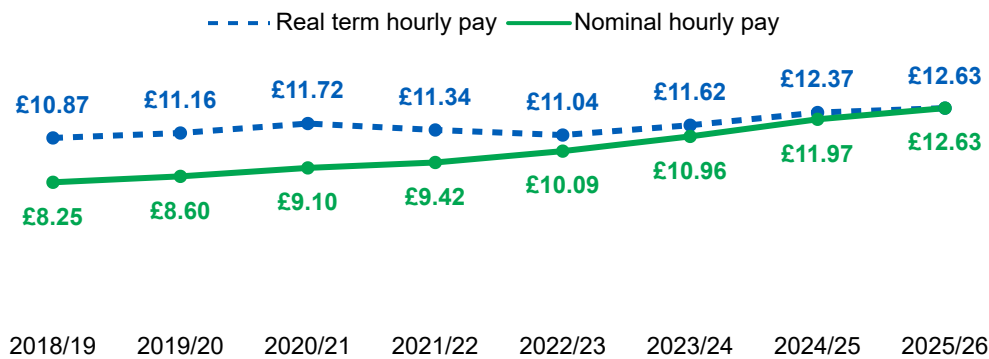
A total of **57 %** of the adult social care workforce in the region were people of White ethnicities. A further **15 %** were people of Asian or Asian British ethnicities, **25 %** were people of Black, African, Caribbean or Black British ethnicities. Registered nurses remained one of the most ethnically diverse job roles, where **55 %** were people of Black, Asian or minority ethnicities. Senior managers and occupational therapists were among the least ethnically diverse job roles, where **24 %** and **29 %** respectively, were people of Black, Asian or minority ethnicities.

Pay

The National Living Wage (NLW) was **£12.21** per hour at the time the data was collected. For more information about the NLW, please see Chapter 5 of [‘The State of the adult social care sector and workforce, 2026’](#).

In April 2026, after the data in this report was analysed, the National Living Wage had increased to **£12.71**. Nominal pay shows pay rates as they were at the time, whereas real term pay rates are adjusted to take inflation into account. Hourly rates are expressed in 2025/26 prices.

Care worker and support worker average pay by sector (independent sector)



The chart shows that in the West Midlands region, real term pay first peaked in 2020/21. It decreased the following two years, due to high inflation over the period. Real term pay increased again in 2023/24 and was at its highest in 2025/26.

Pay varies by sector, as shown in the chart, with local authority pay generally higher than independent sector pay. Average care worker and support worker pay in the local authority sector was **£14.40**, **£1.77** more than in the independent sector.

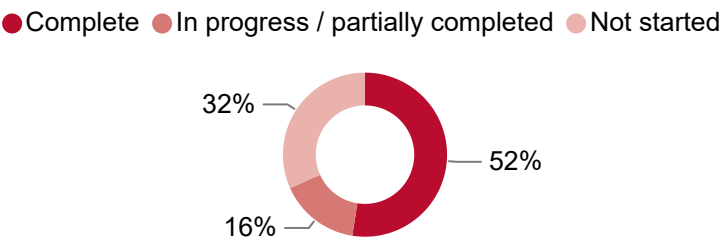
Care worker and support worker average pay by sector, 2025/26



Qualifications

Skills for Care believes that everyone working in adult social care should have access to learning and development so they can carry out their roles effectively and provide high-quality care and support.

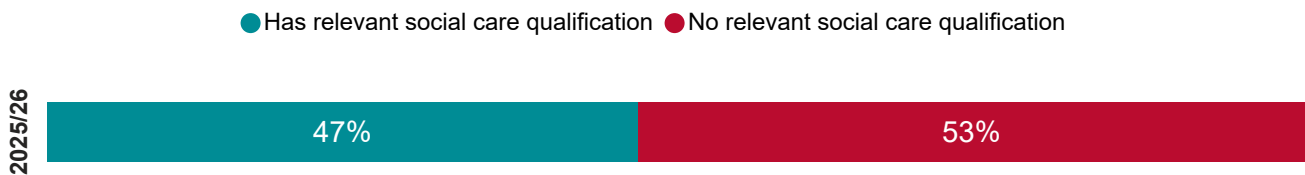
Direct care workers' Care Certificate standards status



In the West Midlands region, around **69 %** of direct care-providing staff had engaged with the Care Certificate (achieved, partially completed, or were working towards).

Around **47 %** of direct care-providing staff held a relevant adult social care qualification in the West Midlands region. This was higher than the England average of **45 %**.

Direct care workers with a relevant social care qualification



2025/26

Workforce projections

If the adult social care workforce grows proportionally to the number of people aged 65 and over in the population, the number of total posts needs to **increase by 21%** (38,000 additional posts).

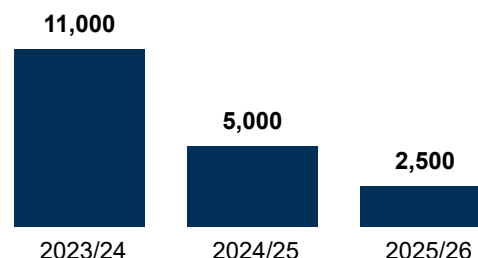
This would take the number of **total posts in 2040** to around **216,000**.

Current and projected required total posts



International recruitment

The chart shows data for direct care-providing roles in the **independent sector** in the West Midlands region. International recruitment remained high in 2023/24, largely due to care worker roles being added to the Shortage Occupation List in February 2022. In April 2024, this was replaced by the Immigration Salary List, with the same adult social care sector job roles eligible occupations on the skilled worker route.

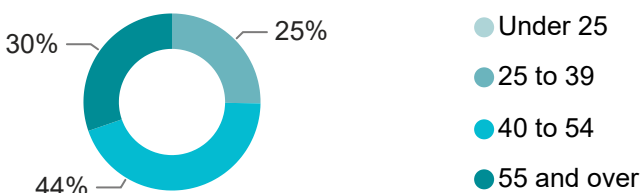


The number of international starters peaked in 2023/24 before decreasing in 2024/25 and 2025/26. Across England, in the first quarter of 2025/26, an estimated **2,000** workers were recruited internationally, compared with **7,500** workers recruited internationally in the same quarter of 2024/25.

For more information about quarterly international recruitment trends, please see our [international recruitment tracker](#) on the Workforce Intelligence website.

Registered managers

Registered manager age bands



In the West Midlands region, the proportion of registered managers that were aged 55 and above was **30 %**. From a workforce planning perspective, these workers are close to retirement age.

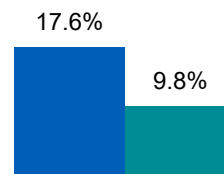
The proportion of registered managers in the West Midlands region with a level 5 or above qualification was **66 %**.

The vacancy rate of registered managers changed from **11.0 %** in 2024/25 to **9.8 %** in 2025/26, lower than the England rate of **10.2 %**.

The turnover rate of registered managers changed from **14.9 %** in 2024/25 to **17.6 %** in 2025/26, lower than the England rate of **19.7 %**.

Registered manager (RM) turnover & vacancy rate

● RM turnover rate ● RM Vacancy rate



Click to find out more information about [registered managers](#) on our topic page. Skills for Care also **provide support** for registered managers. You can follow the links below to find out more.

[Registered manager networks](#)



[Developing new managers and deputies](#)



[Membership for registered managers](#)



Factors affecting turnover

Using ASC-WDS information from the **independent sector**, we assessed which variables influenced adult social care workers' likelihood to leave their posts. From this, key variables were identified that could be compared to turnover rates. The information below shows the relationship between these key variables and turnover between March 2025 and March 2026.

Care workers in a role with several positive employment factors were more likely to remain in post than care workers in a post that did not. Five of the variables which affect turnover were analysed to observe their combined effect.

These variables were:

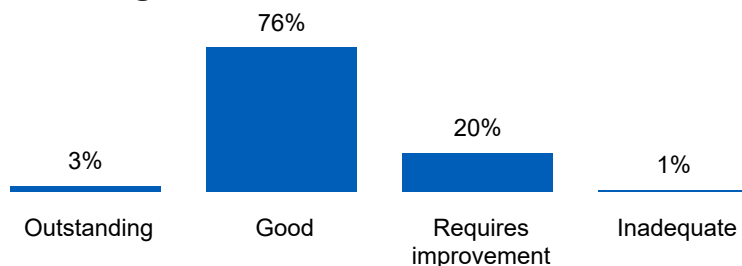
- Pay on or above the local authority area average
- Not being on a zero-hours contract
- Receiving training
- Having a qualification relevant to social care
- Working full-time

For more information please see Chapter 9 of '[The State of the adult social care sector and workforce, 2026](#)'.

CQC ratings

As at March 2026, the West Midlands region contained **2,437** CQC-regulated locations.

CQC ratings - March 2025



In the West Midlands region, the majority (**76%**) of CQC ratings were reported as **good**. This was similar to across England, where **81%** of CQC-regulated services were recorded as **good**.

Further Resources

National level data

The state of the adult social care sector and workforce data visualisation and report can also be found on our website. This allows you to understand the adult social care sector at a national level.

Local level data

Interactive visualisations have been created at local levels to enable you to see and understand your workforce intelligence in a more visual way. One allows you to see your area in more detail and another to compare areas.

Commission our services

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.

For more information please email analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk